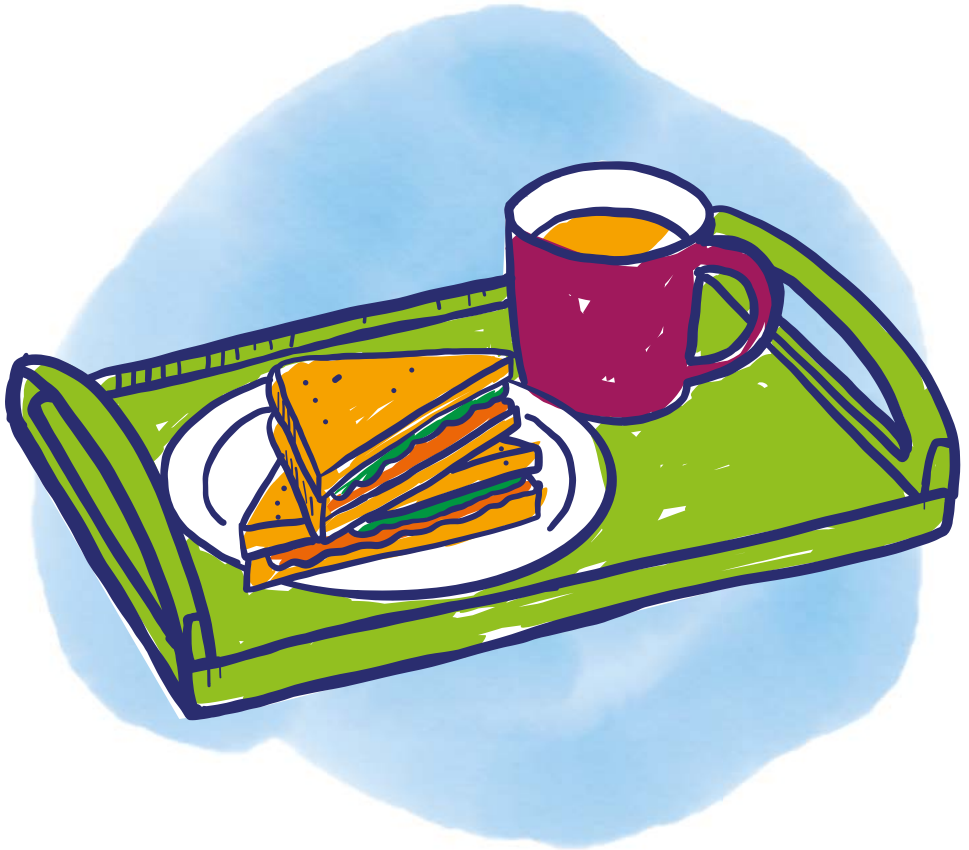


Attendance Allowance



Extra money to help you



What is Attendance Allowance?

Attendance Allowance (AA) is extra money if you need help at home due to a disability or illness.

If you're over State Pension age (currently 66 years old for both men and women) and you need help with your personal care because of a physical or mental disability or illness, you may be able to claim AA.

“Claiming Attendance Allowance has helped me get some independence back.”

Jim, 72



How much is it worth?

There are 2 different weekly rates of AA. The rate you get depends on the help you need. You get:

- **£73.90 (lower rate)** if you need help in the day **or** at night
- **£110.40 (higher rate)** if you need help in the day **and** at night.

Claiming AA doesn't reduce any other income you receive, and it's tax free. Claiming it can even help you get other benefits such as Pension Credit, Housing Benefit or Council Tax Reduction – or an increase in these benefits if you're already getting them.

You don't have to use your AA to pay for a carer. Many people spend the extra money on other types of help in the home, or on equipment to help them stay independent.

For example, it could help you pay bills, get meals delivered, or cover the cost of taxis to get you from A to B.

Good to know

While AA is based on the help you need, it's up to you how you spend it – it doesn't have to be spent on care.

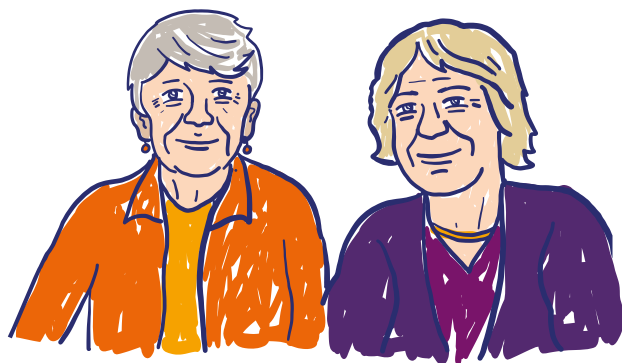
Can I claim it?

You could be eligible for AA if these all apply to you:

- You're over State Pension age (if you're not, you might be eligible for Personal Independence Payment instead).
- You have any kind of disability or illness (physical or mental).
- Your disability or illness means you need help with personal care, such as help getting washed or dressed, or supervision to keep you safe.
- You've needed help for at least 6 months – unless you're terminally ill, in which case you can claim straight away.

AA isn't means-tested, so your income and savings don't affect your eligibility.

If you're already claiming Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment, you can continue to get these after you reach State Pension age. If you've been asked to claim AA instead of your current benefit, contact your local Age UK. In Wales, contact your local Age Cymru.



“Attendance Allowance changed our lives – now my wife doesn't have to do everything for me.”

Lisa, 70



How do I apply?

There are different ways you can apply for AA:



Online

You can make an application online at www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance.



By post

You can get a paper form to fill out and post back by calling the Attendance Allowance helpline on **0800 731 0122** or by downloading one at www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance.

If you claim by post, it's usually best to phone up to ask for a claim form. This is because the date you call will be recorded on your form. If your application is successful, your first payment will be from that date.

If you download the form, your first payment will be based on when your form was received by the Attendance Allowance Unit. This could be a difference of a few weeks' worth of money.



Filling in the claim form

On the claim form, describe how your disability or illness affects you and be clear about the impact it has on your life.

Most decisions about AA claims are based just on what you say in the form, so it's important you explain all the things you can't do or have trouble with because of your condition. There's more advice about this on the next few pages.

Good to know

Your local Age UK might be able to help you fill in the form. In Wales, contact your local Age Cymru.

To find your local Age UK, you can phone the Age UK Advice Line on **0800 169 65 65** or visit **www.ageuk.org.uk**. In Wales, you can phone Age Cymru Advice on **0300 303 44 98** or visit **www.agecymru.wales**.

When you're filling in the form, don't downplay your needs.

- Explain the effects of any health conditions you have and how they interact with each other. For example, if you have arthritis but you also find it hard to feel motivated because of your mental health, mention how that combination affects your ability to do daily activities – for example, washing and dressing.
- List things that you struggle to do without help, even if you've developed your own ways of coping. Say if an activity takes you longer because of your disability or illness, or if it's difficult to do it safely. Say if you need reminding or encouraging to do certain things.
- Explain how often you need help.
- Describe any accidents, falls or other occasions when you've been hurt or injured.
- If you have good and bad days, give details of one of the bad days, including how often they happen.
- Attach any supporting information – for example, a patient summary from your doctor's surgery, doctor's letters, your care plan or prescription lists.
- If there's a charity that provides support for people with your disability or illness, ask them if they have any specific advice on what to include on the claim form.

Decisions about AA claims don't usually factor in problems with housework, shopping and gardening – so you're unlikely to receive support if your application focuses too much on these. If you struggle with these activities, make sure you give details of other problems as well. See pages 8-9 for examples of what to include.



Care needs to include

It's worth thinking about the care needs you have before you begin your AA application form. Here are some examples of things to consider.

Washing, bathing and looking after your appearance

Do you need help getting in and out of the bath or shower, adjusting shower controls, shaving, washing, drying your hair, or putting on skin cream? Do you need reminding when it's time to wash?

Going to the toilet

Do you need help getting to the toilet, adjusting your clothes, using the bathroom during the night, or changing clothes or bedding if you have an accident?

Getting dressed and undressed

Do you need help with fastenings, shoelaces and buttons – because of arthritis, for instance – or with recognising when your clothes are inside out or need changing?

Mealtimes

Do you need any help eating and drinking? Do you need to be reminded to eat? If you have sight loss, do you need someone to tell you where food is on your plate or to read out menus?

Managing medical conditions

Do you need help identifying medicines, reading instructions about taking medication, managing a condition, recognising when your condition is getting worse, or adjusting your hearing aid?

Communicating

Do you need help understanding or hearing people, being understood by them, answering the phone, or reading or writing letters or emails?

Supervision

Do you need someone there in case you have a seizure or pass out? Do you get confused, forgetful or disoriented? Could you accidentally put yourself or others in danger – for example, by leaving the door unlocked or leaving the gas on?

Getting around safely

Do you need help using stairs, getting up from chairs, getting in and out of bed, or moving safely from room to room?



What to do next

- If you think you might be eligible for AA, call the Attendance Allowance helpline on **0800 731 0122** or go online at **www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance** to get started.
- Speak to your local Age UK if you'd like more information or some help with completing the claim form. In Wales, speak to your local Age Cymru.
- Claim as soon as you can, as AA can't be backdated before the date of your claim.

What if my application is turned down?

- You can ask the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to look at their decision again, which is called 'mandatory reconsideration'. If they won't change their decision, you can ask for an appeal with an independent tribunal.
- Double-check the common care needs on pages 8-9. Are there any you missed that you could include?
- Ask your local Age UK for support. In Wales, speak to your local Age Cymru.
- Remember that your needs may change – so even if you're not eligible for AA now, you may be able to claim successfully in the future.

Useful organisations

Age UK

We provide information and advice for people in later life through our Age UK Advice Line, publications and website.

Age UK Advice: 0800 169 65 65

Lines are open seven days a week from 8am to 7pm.

www.ageuk.org.uk

In Wales, contact Age Cymru Advice: **0300 303 44 98**

www.agecymru.org.uk

In Northern Ireland, contact Age NI: **0808 808 7575**

www.ageni.org

In Scotland, contact Age Scotland: **0800 124 4222**

www.agescotland.org.uk

Disability Service Centre

Call the Attendance Allowance helpline to get a claim form.

Tel: **0800 731 0122**

www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance

This information guide has been prepared by Age UK and contains general advice only, it should not be relied on as a basis for any decision or action. Neither Age UK nor any of its subsidiary companies or charities accepts responsibility to ensure any information is up to date and accurate. Please note that the inclusion of named agencies, websites, companies, products, services or publications in this information guide does not constitute a recommendation or endorsement by Age UK or any of its subsidiary companies or charities.

What should I do now?

You may want to read some of our relevant information guides and factsheets, such as:

- **More money in your pocket**
- **Carer's Allowance**

You can order any of our guides or factsheets by giving our Advice Line a ring for free on **0800 169 65 65** (8am-7pm, 365 days a year).

Our friendly advisers are there to help answer any questions.

All of our publications are available in large print and audio formats.

There's plenty of really useful information on our website, too. Visit **www.ageuk.org.uk/moneymatters** to get started.

If contact details for your local Age UK are not in the below box, call Age UK Advice free on **0800 169 65 65**.



0800 169 65 65
www.ageuk.org.uk



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