

Carer's Allowance

Extra money if you're looking after someone





Am I a carer?

You may not think of yourself as one, but if you look after a partner, relative or friend who would find it difficult to manage without your support, then you are a carer. The person you care for may have a physical or mental illness, or a disability.

As a carer, you may be eligible for Carer's Allowance. Many people mistakenly believe they can't claim it.

Do any of these statements apply to you?

‘I’m just doing what anyone would do in my position.’

Lots of people don’t see themselves as a carer because they consider the support they give a loved one as simply their duty. This doesn’t mean you’re not eligible for help.

‘I didn’t choose to help my partner, I just had to – so I can’t qualify for anything.’

You don’t have to have chosen to be a carer to qualify for help. Plenty of carers simply find themselves in the position of being a carer because of their circumstances.

‘I claim a disability benefit so I can’t be eligible for a carer’s benefit too.’

You can claim Carer’s Allowance and still get your Attendance Allowance, Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment benefits.

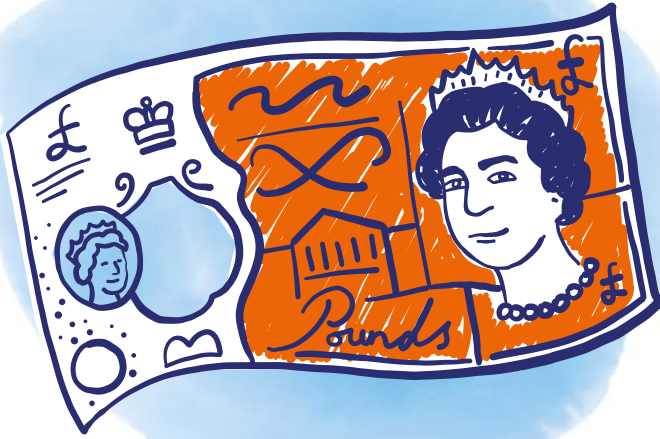
‘I can’t claim Carer’s Allowance if I’m receiving my State Pension.’

You may still receive some Carer’s Allowance, or you may receive a carer premium or carer addition instead. See page 6 to find out more.

Good to know



This guide just looks at Carer’s Allowance. To find out about the other practical, financial and emotional help you may be entitled to, see our free guides **Advice for carers** and **Caring for someone with dementia**.



What is Carer's Allowance?

Carer's Allowance is paid to people who spend at least 35 hours a week caring for someone who is ill or has a disability.

How much will I get?

Carer's Allowance is £66.15 per week.

Good to know



Claiming Carer's Allowance can also help you qualify for higher rates of Pension Credit, Housing Benefit or Council Tax Support, or allow you to claim these benefits for the first time.

Can I claim it?

To qualify for Carer's Allowance, you must:

- spend at least 35 hours a week caring for someone (whether you live with them or not)
- care for someone who receives either Attendance Allowance, Disability Living Allowance care component (at the higher or middle rate), Personal Independence Payment daily living component (at either rate), Armed Forces Independence Payment or Constant Attendance Allowance
- not be earning more than £123 a week
- not be in full-time education.

The 35 hours can include time spent:

- physically helping the person
- doing practical tasks for them, such as cooking
- generally keeping an eye on them, for example by making sure they're taking the correct medication.

Next steps



See our guide **More money in your pocket** to find out more about some of the other benefits someone needs to claim for you to be eligible for Carer's Allowance. Age Cymru have their own version of this guide.

What if I receive my State Pension?

If your State Pension is less than £66.15 a week, you can claim Carer's Allowance to top it up to that level.

If your State Pension is more than £66.15 a week, then you won't be paid Carer's Allowance. This is because State Pension and Carer's Allowance are classed as 'overlapping' benefits, which can't be paid at the same time.

But it's important that even if your State Pension is more than £66.15 a week, you still make a claim.

Even if your State Pension is over £66.15 a week, you can still be awarded an 'underlying entitlement' to Carer's Allowance. This means you could be entitled to a carer premium. This is extra money with any means-tested benefits you claim, such as Pension Credit and Housing Benefit.





Will it affect the benefits of the person I care for?

Yes, it could. If the person you care for receives a severe disability premium (or addition) added to one of their benefits, that extra money stops if you receive Carer's Allowance.

However, if you only have an underlying entitlement to Carer's Allowance, that won't affect their benefits.

Get advice from your local Age UK or contact Carers UK (see page 11) if you think the person you care for may be affected, as it can be complicated.

How can I claim it?

There are different ways to claim Carer's Allowance.



Online

You can download a form or make a claim online by visiting www.gov.uk/carers-allowance/how-to-claim



Phone

Contact the Carer's Allowance Unit on **0800 731 0297** for a claim form.

In Northern Ireland, you can request a claim form from the Disability and Carers Service on **0800 587 0912**.

What if my application is turned down?

If your application for Carer's Allowance is turned down, ask your local Age UK for help.

It's important to do this as soon as possible, as you only have one month to challenge a decision.

“Age UK helped me successfully appeal. They were really helpful.”
Mansi, 72



What if my circumstances change?

If your circumstances change, report this to the Carer's Allowance Unit (see page 11). Do this as soon as possible to avoid being overpaid any benefit as you'll have to pay this back.

If you take a break

You can take a break from caring for up to four weeks in any 26-week period without your Carer's Allowance being affected.

If you go into hospital

Your Carer's Allowance is still paid for up to 12 weeks.

If the person you care for goes into hospital

Your Carer's Allowance will continue for up to 12 weeks or until the person's disability benefit stops. Their disability benefit will stop after four weeks if they are in an NHS hospital.

If the person you care for goes into a care home

You will only be able to keep claiming Carer's Allowance if the person you care for continues to receive a disability benefit and you still care for them for at least 35 hours a week. The disability benefit of the person you care for will stop after four weeks, unless they're paying their own care home fees.

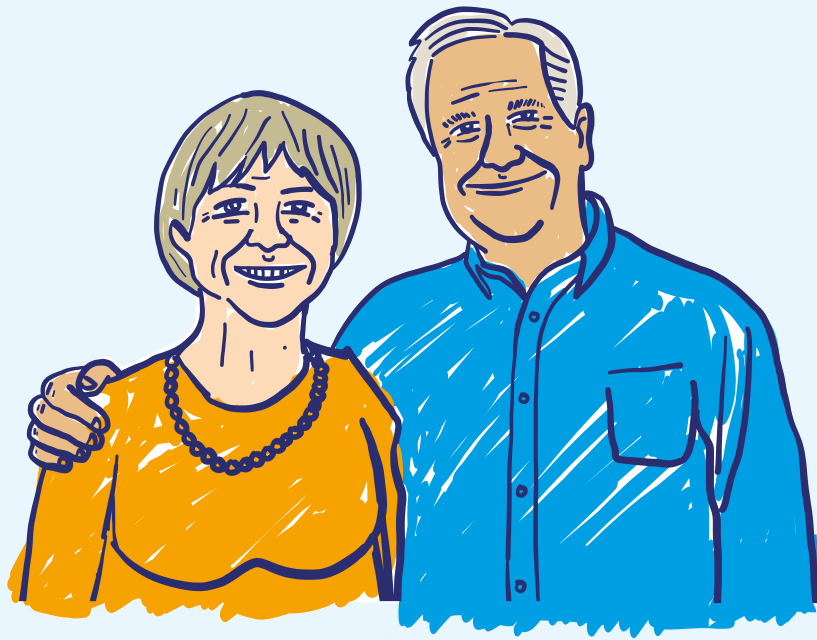
If the person you care for dies

Your Carer's Allowance will continue for up to eight weeks.

Good to know



If you get a carer premium or carer addition this may also be affected if your circumstances change. Get advice from your local Age UK (see page 11) if this is the case.



John contacted Age UK to find out if he could claim Carer's Allowance.

'My wife has dementia and I help her get dressed and make sure she takes her medication. I never really thought of myself as a carer – I just do what anyone else would in my situation.

'I went to my local Age UK to ask for their advice and was so glad I did. They told me that I couldn't get Carer's Allowance because I was already getting my State Pension, but I did have an underlying entitlement to it. This meant I could get an extra £36 added to my Pension Credit. This has taken the pressure of money worries off my shoulders and means I now have that little bit extra each month.'

Useful organisations

Age UK

We provide advice and information 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: **0800 022 3444**

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

Carer's Allowance Unit

Tel: **0800 731 0297**

Textphone: **0800 731 0317**

www.gov.uk/carers-allowance-unit

In Northern Ireland, contact **0800 587 0912**

Carers UK

Tel: **0808 808 7777**

www.carersuk.org

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What should I do now?

You may want to read some of our other relevant guides, such as:

- **More money in your pocket**
- **Attendance 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 will also be able to help answer any questions you have about anything you've read.

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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