

Carer's Allowance

A BENEFIT TO HELP WITH
THE COSTS OF CARING





Are you 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. They may have a disability or have a physical or mental illness or mental incapacity. Some carers do not realise they can claim Carer's Allowance. They may think

"I'm just doing what anyone would in my position."

Lots of people do not see themselves as carers, as they see the support they give as part of their relationship. This does not mean you are not eligible for help.

"I claim a disability benefit so I can't be eligible for a carer's one too"

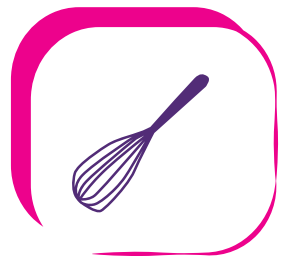
If you have a disability yourself you can claim Attendance Allowance, Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment and claim Carer's Allowance too if you are someone's carer.



What is Carer's Allowance?

The main benefit specifically for carers is Carer's Allowance. To qualify for it, you must:

- Spend at least 35 hours a week caring for a disabled person. It does not matter whether or not you live with them.
- Care for someone who receives Attendance Allowance, Disability Living Allowance care component (at the highest or middle rate), or Personal Independence Payment daily living component (at either rate), Armed Forces Independence Payment or Constant Attendance Allowance.
- Not be in full-time education or earning more than £120.00 a week. The 35 hours can include time spent:
 - Physically helping the person.
 - Doing practical tasks for them such as cooking.
 - Keeping an eye on the person, for example making sure they do not try to do something which would be dangerous for them.



What happens if I am receiving State Pension?

If your State Pension is more than £64.60 a week, then you will not be paid Carer's Allowance. However, if your State Pension is less than this, you can claim Carer's Allowance to top it up to £64.60 a week. This is because State Pension and Carer's Allowance are 'overlapping' benefits.

If you receive State Pension of more than £64.60 a week, and also qualify for Carer's Allowance you will be awarded an 'underlying entitlement' to Carer's Allowance. This means you meet all the criteria for Carer's Allowance but that it will not actually be paid to you because your State Pension is too high.

The good news is that this underlying entitlement may entitle you to extra money paid with any means-tested benefits you claim, such as Pension Credit and Housing Benefit. This extra money is known as a carer premium, or carer addition.

If you are receiving Universal Credit, call the **Age Scotland helpline** for advice on **0800 12 44 222**.

What will happen to any benefits claimed by the person I care for?

If the person you care for receives a severe disability premium or addition as part of a means-tested benefit they claim, this extra money will be stopped if you receive Carer's Allowance. An underlying entitlement to Carer's Allowance will not affect the benefits of the person you care for.

Get advice from the Age Scotland helpline if you think the benefits of the person you care for may be affected.

How much is Carer's Allowance?

Carer's Allowance is paid at £64.60 per week from April 2018 to March 2019. From Summer 2018 carers in Scotland who receive Carers Allowance will receive Carers Allowance Supplement as an automatic 6 monthly payment of £221 from the Scottish Government. You will qualify if you are living in Scotland and receiving Carers Allowance on the qualifying date which will be set by the Scottish Government.

Claiming Carer's Allowance can also help you to qualify for higher rates of means tested benefits such as Pension Credit or Council Tax Reduction or entitle you to claim these benefits for the first time.



How do I apply?

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

You can download a form or make a claim online by visiting **www.gov.uk**

If you were entitled to Carer's Allowance before you made a claim, you can ask for it to be backdated for up to three months.

What if my application is turned down?

If your application is turned down, or you are not happy with the decision, you can ask for a mandatory reconsideration. This gives you the opportunity to say why you think their decision is wrong. Ask an advice agency such as your local Citizens Advice Bureau or Council's Welfare Rights service for help to challenge the decision. Do this quickly as you only have one month to challenge the decision from the date it was sent to you.



What happens if my circumstances change?

The rules for Carer's Allowance recognise that your circumstances, and those of the person you care for, may change from time to time. If your circumstances change, it is very important that you report this to the Carer's Allowance Unit as soon as possible.

Changes may include:

- Taking a break from caring
- You reach State Pension age
- You or the person you care for going into hospital
- The person you care for moving into a care home permanently or temporarily
- An increase in your earnings
- Travelling abroad to look after the person you care for
- The disability benefit of the person you care for being stopped because they are in hospital or move to a care home
- The person you care for dies

You can take breaks from caring and still receive Carer's Allowance. The rules are very complicated and you should get advice from the **Carers UK Adviceline** on **0808 808 7777** or the **Age Scotland helpline** on **0800 12 44 222** if you need information about how your own benefit may be affected.



Useful organisations

Age Scotland helpline 0800 12 44 222

The Age Scotland helpline provides information, friendship and advice to older people, their relatives and carers.

If you need an interpreter call **0800 12 44 222** and simply state the language you need e.g. Polish or Urdu. Stay on the line for a few minutes and the Age Scotland helpline will do the rest.

You can call us on **0800 12 44 222** for a copy of our publications list or download copies from our website at **www.agescotland.org.uk**.

Carer's Allowance Unit

Call to claim Carer's Allowance.

Tel: **0800 731 0297**

www.gov.uk/carers-allowance-unit

Carers Scotland

Carers Scotland offers general help and advice for all carers through its free Carers Line helpline. They are part of Carers UK.

Carers Line: **0808 808 7777**

www.carersuk.org/scotland

Carers Trust Scotland

Carers Trust Scotland are the largest provider of comprehensive carer support services in Scotland.

Tel: **0300 123 2008**

www.carers.org/scotland

Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)

Your local Citizens Advice Bureau can provide you with face-to-face information and advice. To find your local Bureau, contact

Citizens Advice Direct on **0808 800 9060** or see the **Citizens Advice Scotland** website **www.cas.org.uk/bureaux**

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