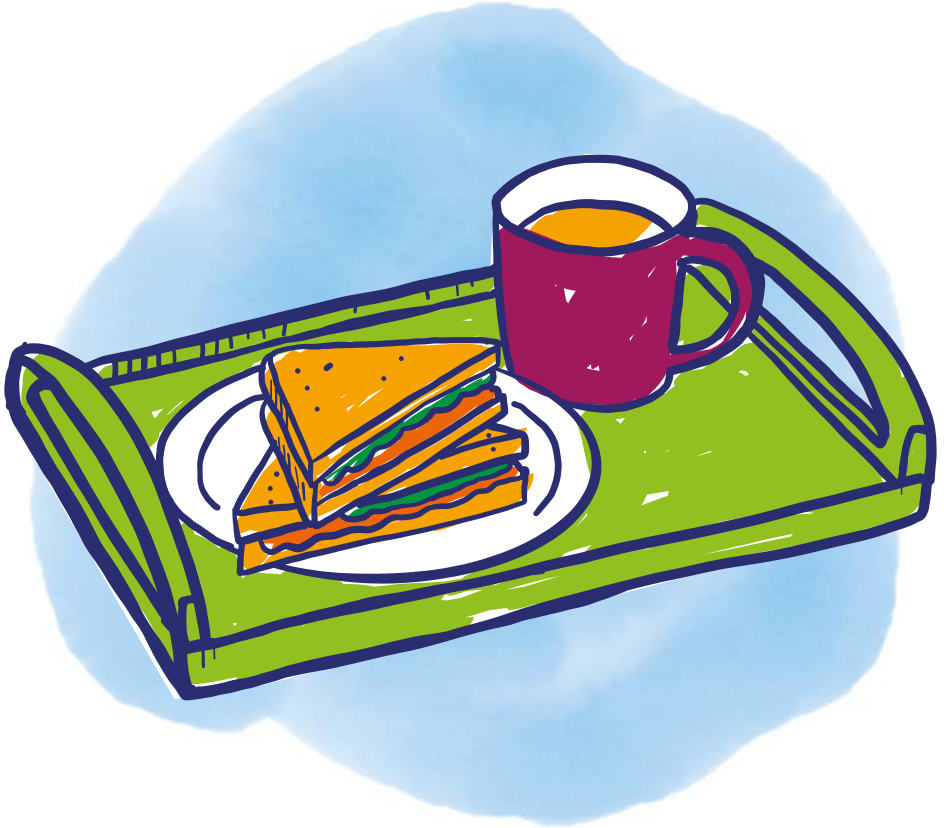


# Attendance Allowance

Extra money to help you





## What is Attendance Allowance?

**Attendance Allowance is extra money available to those who may need extra help at home due to an illness or disability.**

If you're over State Pension age and you need help with your personal care because of physical or mental illness or disability, you may be able to claim Attendance Allowance.

This guide explains what you could be eligible for and how to increase your chance of making a successful claim.

## How much is it worth?

There are two weekly rates. The rate you get depends on the help you need. You'll get:

- **£58.70** (lower rate) if you need help in the day **or** at night
- **£87.65** (higher rate) if you need help both in the day **and** at night.

These rates apply from April 2019 to April 2020.

Claiming Attendance Allowance won't reduce any other income you receive, and it's tax-free. If you're awarded it, you may become entitled to other benefits such as Pension Credit, Housing Benefit or Council Tax Support (also known as Council Tax Reduction), or an increase in these benefits.

You don't have to spend your Attendance Allowance on a carer. Many older people spend the extra money on other types of help in the home, or equipment to help them stay independent. For example, it could help you pay for heating bills, delivery of pre-cooked meals or taxis to get you to and from the shops.

### Good to know



Attendance Allowance is based on the help you need – not whether you actually get help or not. And 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 if all of the following apply to you:

- You're over State Pension age (if you're under, you may be eligible for Personal Independence Payment instead).
- You have any type of disability or illness, physical or mental.
- Your disability or illness means you need help with personal care, such as getting washed or dressed, or supervision to keep you safe during the day or night.
- You have needed help for at least six months (if you're terminally ill you can make a claim straight away).

Attendance Allowance isn't means tested so your income and savings don't affect your eligibility.

If you're already claiming Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP), you'll continue to receive these payments after you reach State Pension age. If you've been asked to claim Attendance Allowance instead of your current benefit, contact your local Age UK.

### Next steps

If you're not sure whether you should be claiming AA or PIP, visit [www.gov.uk/state-pension-age](https://www.gov.uk/state-pension-age) to check your State Pension age.

To find out more, visit [www.gov.uk/new-state-pension](https://www.gov.uk/new-state-pension).

## How do I apply?

You can get a claim form by calling the Attendance Allowance helpline on **0800 731 0122**. You can also download a claim form online at **[www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance](http://www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance)** and send it by post to the Attendance Allowance Unit.

In Northern Ireland, contact the Disability and Carers Service on **0800 587 0912** or go to **[www.nidirect.gov.uk](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk)** to download a claim form.

Making a claim by phone may be the better option because when you call, the date will be recorded on your form. If your application is successful, your first payment will be from the date of your phone call. However, if you use the online 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 benefits paid.

**“Claiming Attendance Allowance has really helped me regain some of my independence.”**

Jimmy, 72



## Filling in the claim form

On the claim form you'll need to describe how your illness or disability affects you.

Most decisions about Attendance Allowance claims are based solely on what you say in the claim form, so it's important you are clear about all the things you can't do or have trouble with because of your condition.

Some applications are turned down because people don't mention, or aren't clear about, how their illness or disability affects their lives.

To find your local Age UK, you can phone Age UK Advice free on **0800 169 65 65** or visit **[www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)**.

**Don't downplay your needs. Explain the effects of your disabilities and health conditions and how they interact with each other.**

- Give plenty of information in your own words about your personal circumstances.
- List things that you struggle to do without help, even if you've developed ways to cope. Mention if an activity takes you much longer than it would for somebody without a disability, or if it's difficult to do it safely. Include if you need reminding or encouraging to do things.
- Focus on how often you need help. To qualify for the lower rate of Attendance Allowance, you have to show you need help 'frequently' during the day or at night.
- Describe any accidents, falls or occasions when you've hurt yourself.



- If you have good and bad days, complete the form with details of one of the bad days, including how often they happen.
- Attach any supporting information, like doctor's letters, your care plan, or prescription lists.
- If there is a charity that provides help and support for people with your condition or disability, ask them if they have any specific advice on what to include on the claim form.

Attendance Allowance applications don't usually take into account problems with housework, shopping and gardening. If you struggle with carrying out these activities, make sure you give details of other problems as well, as you're unlikely to receive support if these activities are the focus of your application. See pages 8-9 for examples of what to include.

## Good to know



Your local Age UK might be able to help you fill in the form to increase your chances of being awarded Attendance Allowance.

# Common care needs to include

It's worth thinking about which care needs apply to you before you begin your application form. Here are a few examples of what 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; putting on skin cream; washing or drying your hair?

## Going to the toilet

Do you need help adjusting your clothes after using the toilet; using the toilet during the night; changing clothes or bedding if you have an accident?

## Getting dressed or undressed

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

## Mealtimes

Do you need any help eating and drinking? For example, if you have sight loss, do you need someone to tell you where the food is on your plate, or read out menus?

## Help with medical treatment

Do you need help identifying your tablets; reading and understanding instructions about taking medication; managing a condition such as diabetes; recognising whether your condition is deteriorating; adjusting your hearing aid?



## Communicating

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

## Supervision

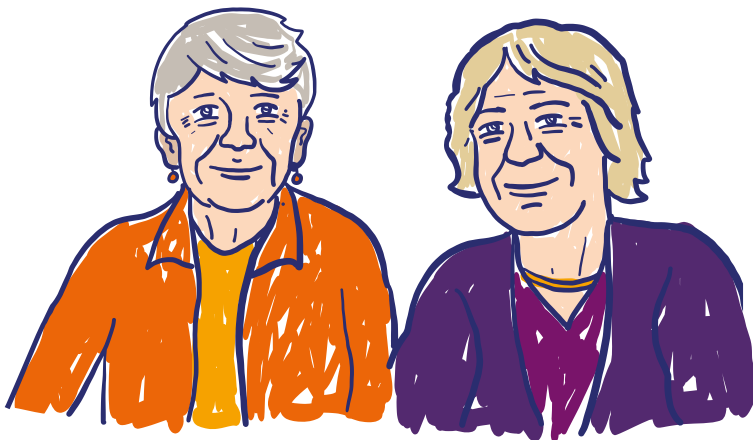
Do you need someone to watch over you in case you have a seizure or pass out; lack awareness of danger; get confused, forgetful or disoriented? Could you be a danger to yourself or others, for example by leaving the door unlocked or leaving the gas on?

## Getting around safely

Do you need help navigating stairs; getting up from a chair; getting in and out of bed; moving safely from room to room?

**“Attendance Allowance changed my wife’s life  
– now she doesn’t have to do everything for me.”**

Lisa, 70



## What to do next

If you think you may be eligible for Attendance Allowance:

- You can get a claim form from the Attendance Allowance helpline or visit **[www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance](http://www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance)** to download a form online.
- In Northern Ireland, call the Disability and Carers Service on **0800 587 0912** (textphone **028 9031 1092**) or download a claim form at **[www.nidirect.gov.uk](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk)**.
- Speak to your local Age UK if you would like more information or some help with completing the claim form.
- Claim as soon as possible, as Attendance Allowance cannot be backdated to cover any period before the date of your claim.

## What if my application is turned down?

- Look at all the common care needs on pages 8-9. Have you missed any out?
- Ask Age UK whether you should challenge the decision.
- Remember that your needs may change, so even if you're not eligible for Attendance Allowance now, you may be able to claim successfully in the future.

# 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](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)**

In Wales, contact Age Cymru: **0800 022 3444**

**[www.agecymru.org.uk](http://www.agecymru.org.uk)**

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

**[www.ageni.org](http://www.ageni.org)**

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

**[www.agescotland.org.uk](http://www.agescotland.org.uk)**

## Attendance Allowance helpline

Tel: **0800 731 0122**

Textphone: **0800 731 0317**

## Disability and Carers Service

Tel: **0800 587 0912**

Textphone: **0800 012 1574**

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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**
- **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 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](http://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](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)**



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