

Attendance Allowance

Extra money to help you

Information and
advice to help you
love later life



April 2015

What is Attendance Allowance?

Although many people continue to enjoy good health well into later life, some people find that they need help with daily living.

Attendance Allowance (AA) is a benefit for people who are 65 or over who have a physical or mental disability. It is a tax free benefit and is not means-tested, so you can apply regardless of how much income or savings you have.

This leaflet explains how to increase your chance of making a successful claim.



Can I claim it?

If you do not already receive Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP) you may be able to claim Attendance Allowance.

You could be eligible if you:

- Are 65 or over (if you are under 65, you may be eligible for Personal Independence Payment instead).
- Could benefit from help with personal care, such as getting washed or dressed, or supervision to keep you safe during the day or night.
- Have any type of disability or illness, including sight or hearing impairments, or mental health issues.
- Have needed help for at least six months. *If you are terminally ill you can make a claim straight away.

Attendance Allowance is not means-tested, so your income and savings are not taken into account. You do not actually have to receive help from a carer, as Attendance Allowance is based on the help you need, not the help you actually get.

You do not have to spend your Attendance Allowance on care – it is up to you how you use it. Attendance Allowance can help you to stay independent in your own home.

Do not delay in making a claim if you think you could be eligible.

Can I claim it? (continued)

Attendance Allowance is awarded based on your care needs, not just on your medical condition.

Many applications are turned down because people do not mention or clearly explain how their illnesses or disabilities affect their lives. It is important not to underestimate your needs when filling in the form.

Think about all the things you cannot do, or have trouble with, because of your condition. Do not leave things out, even if you feel you can just about manage.

If you are claiming because you have **personal care needs**, you should give a detailed description of any difficulties you have with:

- getting dressed or undressed
 - taking a bath or shower
 - using the toilet
 - using stairs
 - getting in and out of a chair or bed
 - washing or shaving
 - eating
 - taking medication
 - getting around your home, for example if you have sight loss or dementia
-

If you are claiming because you need **supervision** to avoid danger to yourself or others, say why you need this help. This could be because:

- you are unsteady on your feet
- you are prone to falls or accidents
- you cannot see or hear very well,
- you get confused or suffer from anxiety
- you have seizures or dizzy spells, perhaps because of diabetes or epilepsy
- you find it difficult to control your behaviour
- you cannot be safely left alone
- you forget to do things like locking doors or turning off the oven
- you need help to answer the phone or read and understand your post



Can I claim it? (continued)

There are other things it is important to explain:

- Attendance Allowance does not usually take into account problems with housework, cooking, or shopping. If you mention problems with these activities, make sure you also include other problems as you are unlikely to receive support if this is the focus of your application.
 - Do not just say that you have particular conditions or disabilities, explain how they affect your daily life.
 - Emphasise what you cannot do rather than what you can. What happens if you do not receive the help you need? Describe any accidents, falls or times you have hurt yourself or had problems when trying to do things by yourself.
 - If you have good days and bad days, complete the form with details of one of the bad days, including how often it happens.
 - Make a list of things that you struggle to do by yourself, even if you have developed special ways to cope with certain activities. If an activity takes you much longer than it would somebody without a disability, or if it is difficult to do safely, this can be taken into account.
 - Give plenty of information in your own words about the difficulties you have even if they are embarrassing. Do not worry if you need to repeat yourself.
-

- Include any supporting letters from your GP, consultant or occupational therapist or a copy of your care needs assessment if you have one.
- Consider including a care diary to show your needs over a few different days.
- If there is a charity that provides help and support for people with your condition or disability, contact them to see if they have any specific advice on what to include on the claim form.

How much is Attendance Allowance?

There are two weekly rates. The rate you receive depends on the help you need. The rates are:

- **£55.10** if you need help throughout the day **or** at night.
- **£82.30** if you need help both throughout the day **and** at night.

These rates apply from April 2015 to April 2016.

Claiming Attendance Allowance will not reduce any other income you receive, and it is tax-free. If you are awarded Attendance Allowance you may become entitled to other benefits such as Pension Credit, Housing Benefit or Council Tax Reduction, or an increase in these benefits.



How do I apply?

You can get a **claim form** by calling the Attendance Allowance helpline on **0345 605 6055** (textphone: 0845 604 5312).

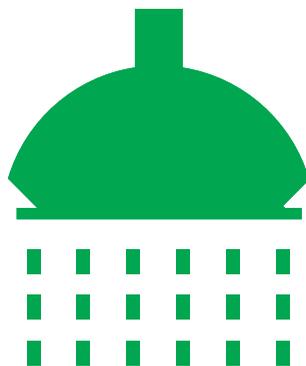
You can also download a claim form or claim online at www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance

If you need help to complete the form, contact **Silver Line Scotland** on **0800 4 70 80 90** and speak with an adviser. We can arrange for someone from the Department for Work and Pensions to visit you in your home to help complete the application.

Common care needs to include

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 make-up; washing or drying your hair?



Going to the toilet

Do you need help adjusting your clothes after using the toilet, for example because you're partially sighted; finding the toilet in unfamiliar places; using the toilet during the night; changing clothes or bedding if you have an accident?

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?



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?



Help with medical treatment

Do you need help identifying your tablets; reading and understanding instructions about taking medication; managing a condition like 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? These could all be because of hearing or sight loss, for instance.

Supervision

Do you need someone to watch over you in case you have a seizure or pass out; in case you lack awareness of danger, or could be a danger to yourself or others; or in case you get confused, forgetful or disorientated? Do you need someone to give you medication for angina or asthma attacks; or to help calm you down during a panic attack?

Getting around indoors

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

Myth-busting

Some people miss out on Attendance Allowance because they mistakenly believe they don't qualify or are put off by the claims process. They might think:

'My claim was turned down.'

Your circumstances may have changed since the last time you applied, especially if it was a while ago. If your care needs have increased, you may find you are now eligible.

'My income is too high.'

It is assessed purely on your disability or health condition and your care or supervision needs. It is not means-tested so it does not matter what you earn or how much you have in savings.

'I do not want a carer coming in.'

You do not have to spend Attendance Allowance on a carer. Many older people spend it on other types of help in the home, or equipment to help them stay independent.

'I do not have a carer.'

You do not need to have a carer or someone looking after you. You qualify based on the help you need, not the help you actually receive.

What if my application is turned down?

If your application is turned down, ask an advice agency such as your local Citizens Advice Bureau about whether you should challenge the decision. Do this quickly as you only have one month to challenge the decision from the date it was sent to you.

Remember that your needs may change and increase, so even if you are not eligible for Attendance Allowance now, you may be able to claim successfully in future.

Useful organisations

Silver Line Scotland

Silver Line Scotland (in partnership with Age Scotland) provides information, advice and friendship to older people, their relatives and carers. The helpline is open 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

Telephone: 0800 4 70 80 90

Textphone: 0845 226 5851

(Monday to Friday, 8am – 8pm).

Telephone interpretation is also available.

Attendance Allowance helpline

Call the Attendance Allowance helpline team to make a claim

Tel: 0345 605 6055

Textphone: 0845 604 5312

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

Email: adviceline@carersuk.org

www.carersuk.org/scotland

Carers Trust Scotland

Carers Trust Scotland (formerly The Princess Royal Trust for Carers) has been operating in Scotland since 1991. They 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.

Telephone: 0808 800 9060

(9am-8pm Monday to Friday,
10am -2pm Saturday)

Email: via the website.

**www.citizensadvice.org.uk
or www.cas.org.uk/bureaux**

This information guide has been prepared by Age Scotland and contains general advice only, it should not be relied on as a basis for any decision or action and cannot be used as a substitute for professional advice.

Neither Age Scotland nor any of its subsidiary companies or charities accepts any liability arising from its use and it is the reader's sole 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 Scotland or any of its subsidiary companies or charities.



Silver Line Scotland
0800 4 70 80 90

www.agescotland.org.uk



www.facebook.com/agescotland



www.twitter.com/agescotland



www.youtube.com/agescotland

Age Scotland, part of the Age Network, is an independent charity dedicated to improving the later lives of everyone on the ageing journey, within a charitable company limited by guarantee and registered in Scotland. Registration Number 153343. Charity Number SC010100.