

Attendance Allowance



Extra money to help you



What is Attendance Allowance?

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

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

How much is it worth?

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

- **£68.10** (lower rate) if you need help in the day **or** at night
- **£101.75** (higher rate) if you need help in the day **and** at night.

Claiming Attendance Allowance won'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 Support (also known as Council Tax Reduction), or an increase in these benefits if you already receive them.

You don't have to use your Attendance Allowance to pay for 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, having meals delivered, or for taxis to get you to and from the shops.

Good to know



While Attendance Allowance 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 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.
- You've needed help for at least six months – unless you're terminally ill, in which case 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. In Wales, contact your local Age Cymru.



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

Jimmy, 72



How do I apply?

There are different ways to apply for Attendance Allowance.



Phone

You can get a claim form by calling the Attendance Allowance helpline on **0800 731 0122**.



Online

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

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.



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're 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.

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 Age UK Advice on **0800 169 65 65** or visit **www.ageuk.org.uk**. In Wales, phone Age Cymru Advice on **0300 303 44 98**.

Don't downplay your needs. Give plenty of information in your own words about your personal circumstances.

- Explain the effects of any disabilities and health conditions you have and how they interact with each other. For example, if you have arthritis but also find it hard to motivate yourself because of your mental health, make sure you mention how the combination of the two affects your ability to carry out daily activities, such as having a wash.
- List things that you struggle to do without help, even if you've developed your own ways to cope. Mention if an activity takes you much longer than it would take somebody without a disability, or if it's difficult to do it safely. Mention 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, give 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's 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 your application focuses on these activities. See pages 8-9 for examples of what to include.

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 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, putting on skin cream, washing, or drying your hair? Do you need reminding when it's time to wash?

Going to the toilet

Do you need help adjusting your clothes after using the toilet, using the toilet during the night, or 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 recognising when your clothes are inside out or need changing?

Mealtimes

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

Help with medical treatment

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

Communicating

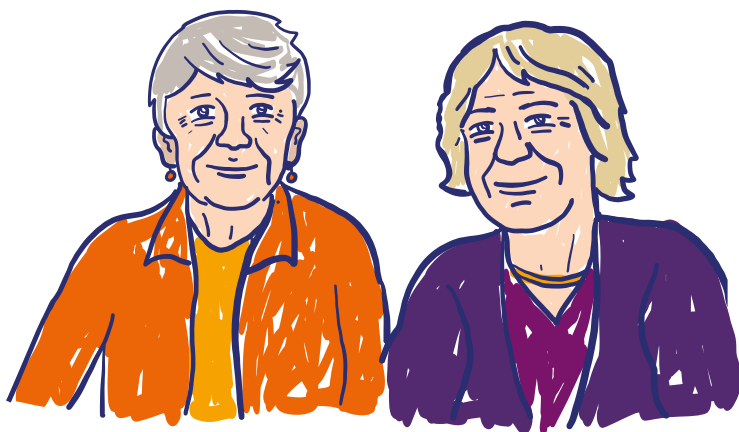
Do you need help understanding or hearing people, being understood by them, answering the phone, or reading and writing letters or emails?

Supervision

Do you need someone to be there in case you have a seizure or pass out? Do you lack awareness of danger, or 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, or moving safely from room to room?



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

Lisa, 70

What to do next

If you think you may be eligible for Attendance Allowance:

- Call the Attendance Allowance helpline on **0800 731 0122** to request a form, or download a form online from **www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance**.
- 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 possible, as Attendance Allowance can't be backdated to cover any period before the date of your claim.

What if my application is turned down?

- Consider all the common care needs on pages 8-9. Have you missed any out?
- Ask your local Age UK whether you should challenge the decision. In Wales, speak to your local Age Cymru.
- 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 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.ageeni.org

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

www.agescotland.org.uk

Attendance Allowance helpline

Call the helpline to get a claim pack for Attendance Allowance.

Tel: **0800 731 0122**

www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance

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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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