

Factsheet 34

Attendance Allowance

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1 What is Attendance Allowance?

Attendance Allowance (AA) is a benefit for people over State Pension age who need help with personal care or supervision by day, or someone to watch over them by night, because of physical or mental disability.

Entitlement is based on the help you could reasonably do with, not any help you actually receive. You can spend it on whatever you want but it can be taken into account for the social care means-test.

AA is not taxable, is not based on National Insurance contributions, and is not means-tested, so you do not have to give details of your income or savings. It is paid on top of other benefits or pensions, except for

Supplement. If you receive AA, you may qualify for, or receive more of, other benefits, see section 7.

2 Who qualifies for Attendance Allowance?

To qualify for AA, you must fulfil all the following conditions:

have reached State Pension age of 66 years

satisfy one of the disability tests (section 3.1) and have done so for six months (if you are terminally ill, there are special rules, see section 4.3)

not be subject to immigration control

satisfy the residence conditions.

State Pension age increases

From 6 May 2026, State Pension age starts increasing again and will reach 67 by 6 March 2028.

You can find your own State Pension age and the date you reach it by using the calculator at www.gov.uk/calculate-state-pension or by phoning the Future Pension Centre on 0800 731 0175

Residence conditions

Usually, you must have been in Great Britain for at least 104 weeks out of the last 156 weeks when you claim AA. You must usually be habitually resident in the UK. The residence tests may not apply if you:

- claim under the special rules for terminally ill people
- are a UK citizen living in an EEA state or Switzerland and you are habitually resident there, you

3 Conditions of entitlement

3.1 The disability tests

You can claim AA if you need help with personal care, supervision or watching over because of physical or mental disability. It does not matter if you live alone or with other people, or if you have a carer. It does not matter whether you actually get any help. What matters is that you reasonably require help. You can satisfy day or night time conditions or both. They are explained below.

Day time

You must reasonably require either frequent attention throughout the day in connection with your bodily functions, *or* continual supervision to avoid substantial danger to yourself or others.

Night time

You must show you require either prolonged or repeated attention, *or* require another person to be awake for a prolonged period or at frequent intervals to watch over you to avoid danger to yourself or others.

Rates

You receive **lower rate AA** if you fulfil *either* the day *or* night conditions. You receive **higher rate AA** if you fulfil *both* day *and* night conditions.

3.1.1 Daytime disability conditions

You meet the daytime

Walking is a bodily function so needs arising from mobility problems count but only at home or when visiting others or attending social activities. For example, help getting in and out of a car, using a walking frame or wheelchair or storing them after use.

You may qualify if you need continual supervision to avoid the risk of danger to yourself or others.

Continual does not mean non-stop so breaks of an hour or so are fine. This might be if you are at risk of falls, getting confused, having fits or seizures, or if your condition deteriorates or relapses without much warning. You may meet the condition if you need someone with you when on renal dialysis.

3.1.2 Night-time disability conditions

You meet the night-time conditions if you need attention for a *prolonged* period (one spell of at least 20 minutes) or *repeatedly* (two or more shorter spells) during the night. This might be for difficulties going to the toilet, getting in and out of bed, moving in bed or settling to sleep.

You may need *watch over you* for a prolonged period (20 minutes or more) or at frequent intervals (usually at least three times a night) to avoid the risk of danger e.g. from falls or wandering.

3.2 Examples of people who may be entitled

Arthur is 68 and has arthritis and depression. He manages most things, but he often lacks the motivation to get up, get dressed, eat or socialise. His arthritis makes gripping, bending and moving around difficult, so he needs to take his time doing most things and limits how often he attempts them. He qualifies for AA as he needs *attention*. The rate he gets depends on whether this is just during the day or night or both.

Hazel is 77 and has dementia. During the day, a relative stays with her all the time to help keep Hazel safe, as she is forgetful and sometimes wanders off or turns the gas on without lighting it. Hazel normally sleeps all through the night. Her husband applied for AA on her behalf (as he has help).

Ask your doctor for an SR1 form which is free of charge and gives details of your diagnosis and treatment but not your prognosis. Send the SR1 form with an AA claim form and make sure you tick the special rules box. You do not need to complete all the form – just the parts mentioned next to the special rules box.

Someone else can apply on your behalf. This allows you to receive AA if you do not wish to know or ask about your prognosis. Claims should be handled within 10 to 14 days. Awards are usually made for three years at a time and can be renewed if the criteria still apply.

4.4 Filling in the claim form

You must describe on the claim form how your disability affects you and a medical examination is not normally necessary. The form is quite long and you may want assistance filling it in. You can get help from:

a friend or relative who knows about your needs and difficulties

independent advice agency like Age UK, Age Cymru or Age Scotland

an appointee or an attorney (see factsheet 22, *Arranging for someone to make decisions on your behalf*, for more information)

the AA helpline. They may be able to arrange for a home visit to help complete the form.

Many people prefer to get advice from an independent agency rather than the DWP, because an independent agency can help if there are problems with the claim, like processing delays or appeals.

4.4.1 Filling in the form yourself

Take your time

Read the notes and form before you start and then go through the questions carefully. Once you have finished, read through what you have written to make sure it is clear and check you have not missed anything out. Do not worry if you make mistakes and need to cross things out. The form does not have to be tidy but try to write clearly.

Your disability or medical condition

The claim form asks for information about your illness or disability. It is very important to describe the impact on your everyday life. Decision makers have guidance outlining the main needs likely to arise from different health conditions.

One medical condition. Your situation may be unusual or your condition may be especially severe. It is important to describe your particular needs.

Give full details

Explain your situation, bearing in mind the rules in section 3. As AA is for people needing help with personal care or supervision, concentrate on help you need with bodily functions like breathing, hearing, seeing, eating, drinking, washing, dressing/undressing, bathing, toileting, taking medication and staying safe.

Generally, tasks like housework, cooking and

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Help you might need

In some places, the form asks if you need help with certain activities. Remember it does not matter whether you actually receive help. You may live alone and not have anyone to help; or you may prefer to manage on your own, even though help would make a real difference. For example, you may not feel safe to get in or out of a bath alone but you could manage with help.

You may get dressed on your own but only very slowly. You might get out of breath or experience discomfort. You may have to do things sitting down or you can only put on certain types of clothes. You may need reminding or encouragement. Give as much information as possible about how your difficulties affect dressing and changing.

The form asks about any aids or adaptations you use. Describe any problems using them, any help you need and how you may still need help despite the aids and adaptations. It is important to explain the difficulties you have and how help from another person could make a difference, as this is how you qualify for AA.

Keep notes or a diary

It may help to keep a note over a few days of the times when you need help or have difficulty doing something on your own, or when you felt you needed someone to keep an eye on you.

If your condition varies so you have good days and

It can be helpful to include a personal statement from a carer or relative who has observed how your disability affects you and the help you need, and a statement from a healthcare professional.

It helps if the person knows a little about the rules for AA so that they can include the most relevant information.

4.4.2 Helping someone else to apply

You might want to make notes about the difficulties you experience, to make sure you do not forget anything.

Medical evidence

You do not have to send any specific medical evidence with your AA claim. However, if you have a patient summary from your GP or letters from specialists, it might help your claim if you enclose these with your claim form.

5 Decisions and payment

You are sent a decision on your claim in writing. AA may be awarded indefinitely or for a fixed period, depending on your circumstances.

If you are awarded it for a fixed period, you are sent a renewal claim form, normally about four months before the end of the period.

5.1 Rates of payment

The Attendance Allowance weekly rates for 2024/25 are:

Higher rate	£108.55
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Lower rate	£72.65
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5.2 Payment

AA is normally paid directly into your bank or building society account. It can be paid to an appointee (someone acting on your behalf) or someone with power of attorney if you are not able to act for yourself.

If you are unable to open or manage an account, you can ask to use the Payment Exception Service which allows you to withdraw your benefits from PayPoint outlets. If you are unable to use any of these methods of payment, you should contact the DWP.

AA is usually paid four weekly in arrears, although it can be paid at any interval of less than four weeks, and in certain circumstances, weekly in advance. You can choose to have AA paid with your State Pension or another social security benefit.

You can also notify the DWP about the change before the six-month period has lapsed but the higher rate is only paid after the six-month qualifying period.

Asking for your award to be looked at again does not

6.3.1 AA in hospital

similar institution, if you are maintained free of charge^{or}

The rules operate slightly differently for registered nursing homes, see section 6.3.3 overleaf.

6.3.3 AA in a nursing home

If you are a nursing home resident and maintained free of charge by the NHS, for example, you receive NHS Continuing Care, the DWP can decide you are in an and your AA will be treated as in section 6.3.1.

If the home does not employ doctors, qualified nurses or other health professionals, or you do not receive medical or other treatment at the home from them, your accommodation should be treated as a care home, and the same rules apply as in section 6.3.2.

If you pay the whole nursing home costs (-), you can carry on being paid AA indefinitely. You can also continue to receive AA if *self funding* but receive NHS Funded Nursing Care payments, providing none of the costs of qualifying services (accommodation, board or personal care) are paid out of public funds.

For more information about the above, see factsheet 20, *NHS Continuing HealthCare and NHS-funded nursing care*.

NHS continuing healthcare and NHS-funded nursing care in Wales.

6.3.4 AA when visiting home

If you leave hospital or a care home, but expect to return within 28 days, AA can be paid at a daily rate for days at home. If you return home permanently, it can be paid as normal. The days you enter and leave the home or hospital count as days at home.

Action

For information on living in a care home, see our factsheets on care and care homes. Contact Age UK Advice or Age Cymru Advice to order.

In **Scotland**, contact Age Scotland for information

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Universal Credit does not have an equivalent to the PC severe disability addition but tell DWP about an AA award as it can help in other ways. You or your partner getting AA can trigger payment of a limited capability for work-related activity element if you do not get one already.

Deductions made from HB or UC because other adults share your household (non-dependant deductions) stop if you get AA.

If you do not receive any means-tested benefits or have had a claim refused before, an award of AA may make you entitled for the first time. You need to make a new claim and you may be able to receive payments backdated to the time your AA started.

It is a good idea to make the new claim while waiting for the AA decision to ensure you do not lose out. Ask that a decision is not made until you have had the AA decision.

If you are not sure of your position, get help from a local advice agency staff may be able to check your entitlement and help you with any claims. You can also use our benefit calculator at www.ageuk.org.uk/benefits-check

If your AA claim stops for any reason, it is very important to notify DWP if you receive any other benefits, as you may be overpaid and may have to repay any overpayment.

For more information, see factsheet 48, *Pension Credit*, factsheet 17, *Housing Benefit* and factsheet 21, *Council Tax*.

In **Wales**, see factsheet 21w, *Council Tax in Wales information about the tax and help you might get towards your bill*.

In **Scotland**, see the guide *Council Tax and Council Tax Reduction*.

7.4 Care at home

A local authority can take AA into account when assessing whether, and how much, you must pay for local authority home care services received. See factsheet 46, *Paying for care and support at home*, for more information. In **Wales**, see Age Cymru factsheet 46w, *Paying for care and support at home in Wales*. In **Scotland**, see Age Scotland guide, *Care and support at home: assessment and funding*.

7.5 Benefits for carers

If you are awarded AA and you have a carer, they may be entitled to claim CA, CSP, Universal Credit (carer element) or an extra amount of

Your benefits can be reduced if someone is paid CA, CSP, or the carer element of Universal Credit to look after you, if you also receive the

Useful organisations

Alzheimer's Society

www.alzheimers.org.uk
Telephone 0333 150 3456
Scotland www.alzscot.org
Telephone 0808 808 3000

Advice, information and support to people with dementia, their families and carers by helpline and local branches.

Asthma + Lung UK

www.asthmaandlung.org.uk/
Telephone 0300 222 5800

Information if you have chest problems and breathing difficulties.

Carers Trust

www.carers.org
Telephone 0300 772 9600

Offers practical help and assistance to carers.

Carers UK

www.carersuk.org
Telephone 0808 808 7777

Information and support for carers, including information about benefits.

Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland

www.chss.org.uk
Telephone 0808 801 0899

Information and support for issues regarding chest, heart and stroke.

Citizens Advice

England go to www.citizensadvice.org.uk
Wales go to www.citizensadvice.org.uk/wales
Scotland go to www.cas.org.uk
In England telephone 0800 144 8848
In Wales telephone 0800 702 2020
In Scotland telephone 0800 028 1456

National network of advice centres offering free, confidential, independent advice, face to face or by telephone.

Dementia UK

www.dementiauk.org

Telephone 0800 888 6678

Works to improve the quality of life of dementia patients and their carers. In some areas, provides Admiral Nurses who support you at home.

Disability Service Centre

www.gov.uk/disability-benefits-helpline

DWP helpline providing advice or information about claims for Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payment or Attendance Allowance that you have already made:

Attendance Allowance (AA)

Telephone 0800 731 0122

Disability Living Allowance (DLA)

If you were born on or before 8 April 1948

Telephone 0800 731 0122

If you were born after 8 April 1948

Telephone 0800 121 4600

Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

Telephone 0800 121 4433

Disability Law Service

www.dls.org.uk

Telephone 0207 791 9800

Free legal advice to disabled adults, their families and carers.

Disability Rights UK

www.disabilityrightsuk.org

Telephone 0330 995 0400

Information and advice about issues affecting disabled people.

Gov.uk

www.gov.uk

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Macmillan

www.macmillan.org.uk

Telephone 0808 808 0000

Information, practical advice and support for cancer patients, their families and carers.

Mencap

www.mencap.org.uk

Telephone 0808 808 1111

Charity for people with learning disabilities and their families

Mind

www.mind.org.uk

Telephone 0300 123 3393

Information and advice for people with mental health problems.

Parkinson's UK

www.parkinsons.org.uk

Telephone 0808 800 0303

Support, advice and information for people with

Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID)

rnid.org.uk

Telephone 0808 808 0123

Provides information and support for deaf and hard-of-hearing people.

Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB)

www.rnib.org.uk

Telephone 0303 123 9999

Information and advice for people with sight problems.

Scope

www.scope.org.uk/helpline

Telephone 0808 800 3333

Information and advice services run by and for disabled people.

