Overview

Attendance Allowance is a non-means tested benefit for people aged 65 or over who need help with their personal care because of a physical or mental disability. It is paid at two different rates and how much you get depends on the level of care that you need because of your disability.

You cannot claim Attendance Allowance at the same time as Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment.

Attendance Allowance does not cover mobility needs.

Other benefits you get may increase if you get Attendance Allowance.

What you will get

Attendance Allowance is paid weekly at 2 different rates - the one you get depends on the level of help you need.

- **Lower rate — £55.10.** Level of help you need: Frequent help or constant supervision during the day, or prolonged or repeated help or supervision at night
- **Higher rate — £82.30.** Level of help you need: Help or supervision throughout both day and night, or you’re terminally ill

If your claim is successful it is always advisable to have a benefit check for the household. You may get extra Pension Credit, Housing Benefit or Council Tax Reduction if you get Attendance Allowance -or it may be possible for someone to claim Carer’s Allowance.
Eligibility

You can get Attendance Allowance if you’re 65 or over and the following apply:

- you have a physical disability (including sensory disability, eg blindness), a mental disability (including learning difficulties), or both
- and your disability is severe enough for you to need help caring for yourself or someone to supervise you, for your own or someone else’s safety

You must also:

- be in Great Britain when you claim - there are some exceptions, e.g. members and family members of the Armed Forces
- have been in Great Britain for at least 2 of the last 3 years
- be habitually resident in the UK, Ireland, Isle of Man or the Channel Islands
- not be subject to immigration control (unless you’re a sponsored immigrant)

How to claim

Call the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Attendance Allowance Helpline on 0345 605 6055 or Textphone: 0345 604 5312 Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm.

They will send out an information pack and self-assessment form. It is important to include as much detailed and accurate evidence about your care needs at this stage. You can also find the forms online at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/attendance-allowance-claim-form.

Attendance Allowance can be backdated to the date of your claim. This is usually the date you call the enquiry line (if you return the claim pack within 6 weeks) or the date the DWP receive your form if you opt for the online form. It usually takes 40 working days to deal with your claim. It can be quicker if you’re terminally ill.

When making a claim for benefits it is always advisable to speak with an expert that understands the entire benefits system. As well as help with completing benefit forms, an expert can help you work out what you’re entitled to or to appeal a decision you disagree with.

There are some exceptions to these conditions if you’re living in another European Economic Area (EEA) country or Switzerland.
You might need a medical assessment to complete your application in which case you will get a letter saying you need to attend an assessment to check your eligibility. The letter will explain why and where you must go.

At the assessment, you’ll be asked for identification. You can use a passport or any 3 of the following:
- birth certificate
- a full driving licence
- life assurance policy
- bank statement

Special rules - if you’re terminally ill
There are ‘special rules’ so you get Attendance Allowance more quickly if you’re not expected to live more than 6 months. You must:
- complete an Attendance Allowance form
- include a DS1500 medical condition report or send it soon after - these are free and you can only get them from a doctor, specialist or consultant

You can do this on behalf of someone else without their permission. The letter about the money awarded won’t mention ‘special rules’.

Appeal a decision
You can appeal against the decision about your Attendance Allowance if you’re unhappy with it.

Phone or write to Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and ask for the decision to be looked at again - this known as a ‘mandatory reconsideration’. This must be done within one month of the decision letter. The telephone number and address will be on your decision letter.

You should explain why you think the decision is wrong and show any evidence you have to support this.

DWP will write to you in due course to tell you they’ve made a new decision or the decision has not been changed.

They’ll send you 2 copies of the ‘mandatory reconsideration notice’ which explains the reasons for changing or not changing the decision.

You can then appeal to the Social Security and Child Support Tribunal if you’re still unhappy.
Useful contacts

Disability Information Scotland Call our helpline on 0300 323 9961 for basic information on welfare rights and benefits or to find your local advice service.

Search the Scottish Disability Directory online for details of local disability information services and welfare rights services at www.disabilityscot.org.uk/directory

Citizens Advice Scotland – to find a local bureau call 0808 800 9060 or search the website at www.cas.org.uk/bureaux

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Attendance Allowance helpline:
Telephone: 0345 605 6055 or Textphone: 0345 604 5312

Government Information Service (GOV.UK) www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance

Age Concern - Silver Line Scotland
For information and advice, all day, every day call 0800 4 70 80 90 or search their website at www.ageuk.org.uk/scotland/

Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance (SIAA). Provide information on advocacy. Also provide a directory to find your local advocacy organisation – www.siaa.org.uk

Carers Trust - to find a local carers centre search online at www.carers.org/carers-services/find-your-local-service

Need some help? Contact us on the details below for more info

Helpline: 0300 323 9961
Text: 0778 620 0707
info@disabilityscot.org.uk
www.disabilityscot.org.uk