

Attendance Allowance





What is Attendance Allowance?

Attendance Allowance is a weekly benefit for people of State Pension age who have a long-term physical or mental disability that means they need extra help. This includes people with dementia. It is paid directly to the person with the disability and is available in England, Scotland and Wales.

There's an equivalent benefit in Northern Ireland, also called Attendance Allowance. You can find out more on the NI direct website: nidirect.gov.uk/articles/attendance-allowance

There are two legal terms used in the application process

for Attendance Allowance. 'Supervision' means that a person needs someone to check on them and make sure they're alright. 'Attention' refers to someone needing help with their personal care.

If the person you care for needs attention and/or supervision, and has done so for six months or more, they could be eligible for Attendance Allowance. They may or may not already be receiving help to manage their health or care needs.

There are two rates of funding, depending on how much care the person needs:

- The lower rate is £60 per week

and is for people who need frequent help or constant supervision during the day OR night

- The higher rate is £89.60 a week and is for people who need care through the day AND night

How to apply: England, Scotland and Wales

To apply for Attendance Allowance in England, Scotland or Wales, you'll need to fill in the Attendance Allowance application form, which you can download from:

gov.uk/government/publications/attendance-allowance-claim-form

The form needs to be posted to the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) – you cannot submit your application online. You'll need to send it to the freepost address:

Freepost DWP Attendance Allowance

You don't need a stamp or postcode.

If you don't have access to a computer or printer, you can call the Attendance Allowance helpline

to ask for a copy of the form, as well as alternative formats, such as braille, large print or audio CD. The Attendance Allowance helpline number is **0800 731 0122** and the textphone number is **0800 731 0317**.

You can also request accessible formats online at:

secure.dwp.gov.uk/request-an-accessible-format/contact

If you are deaf, you can have an agent translate your call into text by downloading the Relay UK application for your mobile phone or tablet (or by using Relay through your Minicom or Uniphone) and dialling **18001** before the helpline number above. Find out more about how this works at:

relayuk.bt.com

The DWP also has a video relay service for British Sign Language (BSL) users. Visit signvideo.co.uk/downloads

If you have any technical difficulties with the form, contact the DWP online helpdesk by email: dwponline.helpdesk@dwp.gov.uk or by phone: **0800 169 0154**.



How to apply: **Northern Ireland**

If you live in Northern Ireland, you can download an Attendance Allowance application form here:

nidirect.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/AA1%20Attendance%20Allowance%20claim%20form.pdf

It can be handed in at a Jobs and Benefits Office, or posted to:

**Attendance Allowance
Disability and Carers Service
Mail Opening Unit
PO Box 42
Limavady
BT49 4AN**

If you have any queries, phone **0800 587 0912**. If you are deaf or have speech difficulties, you can use textphone number **0800 012 1574**.

If you use BSL or Irish Sign Language (ISL) you can use the video relay service at:
dwpnidandchelpline.signvideo.net/

Special rules for people with a terminal illness

People who meet the Government's definition of terminal illness – that is, if their death can be 'reasonably expected' within six months – can apply for Attendance Allowance using 'special rules'. It doesn't matter how long they have had their illness, or how long they've needed help.

Special rules can speed up the application so the benefit is paid sooner. If the person qualifies, they will be eligible for the higher rate of payment.

As well as the Attendance Allowance application form, you will need to send in a form called DS1500. You can get this form from your doctor or specialist and they will either fill it out for you or give it to you to fill out.

If this hasn't arrived by the time you've filled out the Attendance Allowance application form, you should send in your application form anyway. You can post the DS1500 form later, once it has arrived, or ask your doctor or other healthcare professional to send it directly to the DWP.

The DWP has announced that special rules will be extended to cover people whose death is expected within 12 months, but it hasn't yet confirmed when this will take effect.

Getting help applying for Attendance Allowance

Attendance Allowance application forms can be difficult and take a long time to complete. It can also be hard to measure how much care a loved one really needs when you've been helping them for a while, and it has become the norm.

You may want to ask a friend or family member who is familiar with the person's care needs to help you fill in the form, or you can contact one of these charities for help:

- Age UK: **0800 055 6112** or ageuk.org.uk
- Citizens Advice: **0800 144 8848** or citizensadvice.org.uk

A relative, carer or friend can fill in the form on behalf of the person with dementia if they're unable to do it themselves, but the person who needs care must sign it. If they can't, an appointee, deputy or someone with lasting power of attorney can sign instead.

Find out more about lasting power of attorney at: dementiauk.org/lasting-power

You can become a deputy by filling in a form at gov.uk/become-deputy/apply-deputy and paying a fee of £365. To become an appointee for someone claiming Attendance Allowance you should contact the Disability Living Service: you can find out more at gov.uk/disability-benefits-helpline

Filling out the Care Needs sections

The two most important sections in the form are the Care Needs sections – one for care needs during the day, and the other for care needs at night. For detailed guidance about what to include, you can refer to the video that accompanies this leaflet at: dementiauk.org/attendance-allowance-video

There are different sections relating to the different areas of a person's life that they may have difficulty and need help with. These are:

- getting into or out of bed
- toilet needs
- washing, bathing, showering or looking after their appearance



- dressing and undressing
- moving around indoors
- falls or stumbles
- eating, drinking or cutting up food
- taking medicine or medical treatments
- communication
- hobbies, interests, religious or social activities
- supervision
- needing help or supervision at night

You will need to answer questions about each of these different areas. At the end of most of these sections there's a box for you to add any other information that you

think is relevant. It's important that you include as much detail as you can about the difficulty the person has and the help they need in each aspect of their life. Focus on what help the person needs, not what they may already get.

One of the most important sections in your application is the section on eating, drinking or cutting up food. You'll need to make it clear if the person with dementia is unable to plan, purchase and prepare food and drink, especially if they are totally dependent on others for the whole process. This is one of the key

sections that the assessors will use to decide whether the person you care for is awarded Attendance Allowance.

Here are some things to remember when filling out these sections:

- Make sure you refer to the information booklet on applying for Attendance Allowance: assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/998879/aa1-notes.pdf
- When asked to include how often the person needs help or has difficulty with a certain task, base your answer on an average, bad day
- The person reading your application may not know anything about dementia and the impact it has on a person's life. Therefore, it's important to include as much detail as you can about their needs: why they have those needs, and what exactly they need help with, even if it feels obvious to you
- You can submit reports about the person's illnesses or

disabilities from people who treat them, eg a hospital doctor or Occupational Therapist. This could be an assessment report, a copy of their care plan, or other similar documents

- Don't rush the application. Once you have written your answers, take a few days to notice if there are any details about the person's difficulties and care needs that you haven't yet included. When you've filled out all the sections, read back through it carefully before you send it in

Hearing back about your claim

You should receive a decision letter from the DWP about 40 days (six weeks) after sending in your form. If you don't hear back after about eight weeks, call the Attendance Allowance helpline (details can be found on page 3.)

If your claim is successful, the letter will tell you how much you will receive and for how long. The payments can be backdated to the date you sent in your application – if you requested a

copy of the form by phoning the helpline, you must then submit it within six weeks if you want the benefit to be backdated.

Challenging the decision

If your application is turned down, the letter will explain why. If you're unhappy with the decision you have the right to question it. To do this, you will need to request a 'mandatory reconsideration' within one month of the date on the decision letter. You can do this by writing a letter and sending it to the address on the decision letter, or by completing a Mandatory Reconsideration Request Form: gov.uk/government/publications/challenge-a-decision-made-by-the-department-for-work-and-pensions-dwp

If the person lives in Northern Ireland, you can find out about appealing the decision at: nidirect.gov.uk/articles/appeal-benefits-decision#toc-o

Make a copy of your letter or form so that you can re-send it if it goes missing or refer to it later if you need to. It's better to contest the

decision by letter or form so there is a written record of the points you have raised.

If you don't get your mandatory reconsideration request in before the one-month deadline, you should still send a letter or form in, as long as it's within 13 months of the decision letter. You should explain why the request is late, especially if it's because of health issues or your caring responsibilities. The DWP doesn't have to reply, but you will then be able to take your appeal to a tribunal.

You can also appeal to a tribunal if they reject your mandatory reconsideration request. This means that a judge will look at your case and decide if the decision is fair. If you disagree with the judge's decision – called a 'provisional decision' – you can then ask for a hearing. Find details of your local tribunal here:

gov.uk/find-court-tribunal

If your circumstances change

If you are receiving Attendance Allowance and something changes, you must let the DWP know by calling the helpline. Here are some examples:

- the person's condition changes – ie gets better or worse
- the person's care needs increase or decrease
- the person goes into hospital for more than four weeks – you should then tell the DWP again when the person leaves hospital
- the person goes into a care home or hospice

- the person moves to another country
- the person goes to prison

Impact on other benefits

Attendance Allowance is not means-tested, which means it isn't affected by the person's income, savings, or any other benefits they receive. Getting Attendance Allowance could actually mean they're entitled to further benefits, or an increase in some benefits, including Pension Credit, Housing Benefit and council tax reductions.

Once the money comes through, it doesn't have to be spent on care – it's up to you how you spend it.

Our Admiral Nurses can help

If you have any questions or concerns about dementia, you can call the dementia specialist Admiral Nurses on our Helpline for free.

Call **0800 888 6678** or email helpline@dementiauk.org

Opening hours:

Monday-Friday, 9am-9pm

Saturday-Sunday, 9am-5pm

Sources of support

Admiral Nurse Dementia Helpline

0800 888 6678 (Monday to Friday, 9am-9pm;
Saturday and Sunday 9am-5pm)
helpline@dementiauk.org

Citizen's Advice

citizensadvice.org.uk
Adviceline (England): 0800 144 8848
Advicelink (Wales): 0800 702 2020

Which?

which.co.uk/attendance-allowance

Dementia UK leaflet on Lasting power of attorney

dementiauk.org/lasting-power

Age UK

ageuk.org.uk
Adviceline: 0800 678 1602

Attendance Allowance helpline

England, Wales and Scotland: 0800 678 1602
Open Monday-Friday, 8am-3.30pm

Northern Ireland (nidirect): 0800 232 1271
Open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, 9am-5pm
Thursday, 10am-5pm

The information in this booklet is written and reviewed by dementia specialist Admiral Nurses.

We are always looking to improve our resources, to provide the most relevant support for families living with dementia. If you have feedback about any of our leaflets, please email feedback@dementiauk.org

We receive no government funding and rely on voluntary donations, including gifts in Wills.

For more information on how to support Dementia UK, please visit dementiauk.org/donate or call **0300 365 5500**.

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If you're caring for someone with dementia or if you have any other concerns or questions, call or email our Admiral Nurses for specialist support and advice.

Call **0800 888 6678** or email helpline@dementiauk.org

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Saturday and Sunday, 9am–5pm



dementiauk.org • **info@dementiauk.org**

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Dementia UK is a registered charity in England and Wales (1039404) and Scotland (SC047429).