

Attendance Allowance



Attendance Allowance is a weekly benefit for older people who have a long-term physical or mental disability and need someone to help look after them. This often includes people with dementia. It is paid directly to the person with the disability.

Who can claim Attendance Allowance?

To qualify for Attendance Allowance, the person must be of State Pension age. This varies depending on their date of birth – you can calculate their State Pension age at gov.uk/state-pension-age

In addition:

- The person must have a physical disability (including sensory disabilities, for example blindness/hearing impairment), a mental disability (including learning difficulties), or both
- Their disability must be severe enough that they need help with personal care, or supervision for their own or someone else's safety, or both
- They must have needed that help for at least six months

The person does not have to be receiving help to manage their health or care needs already.

‘Help with personal care’ means the person needs day-to-day assistance with things like:

- washing
- dressing
- eating and drinking
- using the toilet
- communicating



‘Supervision’ means the person needs someone to watch over them to prevent them putting themselves or other people in danger. For example, they may need help with:

- taking medication or having medical treatment
- keeping away from danger that they may not be aware of
- avoiding danger caused by difficulties controlling the way they behave
- stopping them from hurting themselves or other people

How much might the person get?

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

- The lower rate is £72.65 per week and is for people who need frequent help **or** constant supervision during the day, or supervision at night

- The higher rate is £108.55 a week and is for people who need help or supervision throughout the day **and** night; or for people who have been told by a medical professional that they may have under 12 months to live (please see ‘special rules’ on p9)

How to apply: England, Scotland and Wales

To apply for Attendance Allowance in England, Scotland or Wales, you will need to fill in the Attendance Allowance application form at

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

The form needs to be posted to the Department of Work and Pensions – you cannot submit your application online. You should send it to:

Freepost DWP Attendance Allowance

You do not need a stamp or postcode.

If you cannot print the form yourself, you can contact the Attendance Allowance helpline on **0800 731 0122** to ask for a hard copy by post, as well as alternative formats, such as braille, large print or audio CD.

For accessible contact details for the Attendance Allowance department, please see **Sources of support on p14**.

How to apply: Northern Ireland

If you live in Northern Ireland, you can download an Attendance Allowance application form at ➤ nidirect.gov.uk/publications/attendance-allowance-claim-form-and-guidance-notes

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

Filling in the Attendance Allowance form

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 have been helping them for a while and it has become the norm; or if their needs vary from day to day.

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. Our dementia specialist Admiral Nurses can also offer advice and guidance, or you can contact Age UK or Citizens Advice for help: please see **Sources of support on p13-15**.

A relative, carer or friend can fill in the form on behalf of the person with dementia if they are unable to do it themselves, but the person who needs care must sign it.

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 watch our video at [▶ dementiauk.org/attendance-allowance-video](https://dementiauk.org/attendance-allowance-video)

There are different sections relating to the 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
- needing supervision during the day
- 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 is a box for you to add any other information that you think is relevant. It is important that you include as much detail as you can about the person's difficulties 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 the application is the section on eating, drinking or cutting up food. This is a key section that the assessors will focus on when deciding whether the person you care for is awarded Attendance Allowance.



You will 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. Consider whether they put themselves at risk, for example by eating raw or out-of-date food, or non-food items. Think about whether they are able to maintain hydration without support – not drinking enough can lead to problems like urinary tract infections (UTIs), delirium and falls.

Tips for filling out the Attendance Allowance form

- 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/1186132/aa1-notes.pdf
- When asked to include how often the person needs help or has difficulty with a certain task, base your answer on a bad day – do not underestimate their needs

- The person reading your application may not know anything about dementia and the impact it has on a person's life. Therefore, it is 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, prescriptions or other similar documents
- Speak to other people who are involved with the person with dementia about what they perceive their needs to be – they may have noticed things that you have not
- Do not rush the application. Once you have written your answers, take a few days to reflect on whether there are any details about the person's difficulties and care needs that you have not yet included
- When you have filled out all the sections, read back through the form carefully before you send it in

Signing the form

The person applying for Attendance Allowance must sign their own form, even if someone else has filled it out for them. If they do not have the mental capacity to do so, a person with lasting power of attorney can sign instead.

Lasting power of attorney is a legal process that appoints someone to make decisions about the person's health and welfare and/or property and financial affairs on their behalf, in their best interests, if they cannot do so themselves. Please see **Sources of support on p13** for information on lasting power of attorney.

If the person with dementia does not have lasting power of attorney in place and does not have the mental capacity to make their own decisions, you can apply to make them on their behalf by becoming their ‘deputy’. For more information, please visit [▶ gov.uk/become-deputy](https://www.gov.uk/become-deputy). There is a fee of £371 for this.

Alternatively, you can become their ‘appointee’ by contacting the Disability Living Service at [▶ gov.uk/disability-benefits-helpline](https://www.gov.uk/disability-benefits-helpline). This gives you rights to manage their Attendance Allowance only – if you wish to manage their other benefits, you will need to make a separate application for each.

Special rules for people with a terminal illness

People who have been told by a medical professional that they are not expected to live for more than 12 months can apply for Attendance Allowance using ‘special rules’. It does not matter how long they have had their illness, or how long they have needed help.

Special rules can speed up the application process 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 SR1. You can get this form from the GP surgery, a nurse or a social worker. They will either fill the form out for you or give it to you to fill out.

If you have not received the SR1 form by the time you have filled out the Attendance Allowance application form, you should send in your application anyway. You can post the SR1 form later, or ask the doctor or other healthcare professional to send it directly to the Department for Work and Pensions.

Hearing back about the claim

You should receive a text or letter around three weeks after submitting the Attendance Allowance form telling you how long it will take to reach a decision. Once the decision has been made, you will receive a letter explaining the outcome.

If the claim is successful, the letter will tell you how much the person will receive and when they will receive the first payment. The benefit will be paid from the date when the Department for Work and Pensions received the form, or if you requested a copy of the form by phoning the helpline, from the date of your call, as long as you submitted the form within six weeks.

Once the money comes through, it does not have to be spent on care – it is up to you and the person with dementia to decide how to spend it to best support their needs.

Challenging the decision

If the Attendance Allowance application is turned down, the letter will explain why. If you are 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 request a mandatory reconsideration by contacting the benefits office whose contact details are on the decision letter by phone or post, or by completing the mandatory reconsideration request form at [gov.uk/mandatory-reconsideration/how-to-ask-for-mandatory-reconsideration](https://www.gov.uk/mandatory-reconsideration/how-to-ask-for-mandatory-reconsideration)

If the person lives in Northern Ireland, you can find out about appealing the decision at nidirect.gov.uk/articles/appeal-benefits-decision#toc-0

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

If you do not submit your request within one month you can still ask for a mandatory reconsideration, but it must be for a good reason, for example if you have had a bereavement or been in hospital. In the first instance, you should call the number on the decision letter.

If you are unhappy with the outcome of the mandatory reconsideration, you can appeal to a tribunal. This means that a judge will look at your case and decide if the decision is fair. For more information, visit gov.uk/appeal-benefit-decision

If the person's circumstances change

If the person with dementia is receiving Attendance Allowance and something changes, you must let the Department for Work and

Pensions 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 Department for Work and Pensions again when they leave 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 is not affected by the person's income, savings, or any other benefits they receive. Getting Attendance Allowance could actually mean they are entitled to further benefits or an increase in some benefits, including Pension Credit, Housing Benefit and Council Tax reductions.

If you are a carer for the person receiving Attendance Allowance, you may be entitled to Carer's Allowance – please see **Sources of support on p13** for information.

People under State Pension age

If the person with dementia is under State Pension age, they will not be able to claim Attendance Allowance. However, they may be entitled to a different benefit called Personal Independence Payment (PIP). This can help with extra living costs for people with a long-term physical or mental health condition that causes them difficulty with certain everyday living activities. Please visit

➤ gov.uk/pip for more information

Sources of support

To speak to a dementia specialist Admiral Nurse about Attendance Allowance or any other aspect of dementia, please call our Helpline on **0800 888 6678** (Monday to Friday 9am–9pm, Saturday and Sunday 9am–5pm) or email [▶ helpline@dementiauk.org](mailto:helpline@dementiauk.org)

To book a phone or video call appointment with an Admiral Nurse, please visit [▶ dementiauk.org/book](https://dementiauk.org/book)

Dementia UK resources

The carer's assessment

[▶ dementiauk.org/the-carers-assessment](https://dementiauk.org/the-carers-assessment)

Council Tax reduction

[▶ dementiauk.org/council-tax-discount](https://dementiauk.org/council-tax-discount)

Financial and legal sources of support

[▶ dementiauk.org/financial-and-legal-sources-of-support](https://dementiauk.org/financial-and-legal-sources-of-support)

Lasting power of attorney

[▶ dementiauk.org/lasting-power-of-attorney](https://dementiauk.org/lasting-power-of-attorney)

Mental capacity and decision-making

[▶ dementiauk.org/mental-capacity-and-decision-making](https://dementiauk.org/mental-capacity-and-decision-making)

Attendance Allowance contact details

England, Scotland and Wales

Website: gov.uk/attendance-allowance

Call: 0800 731 0122

Textphone: 0800 731 0317

Relay: dial 18001 then 0800 731 0122 (find out more about the Relay system for people who cannot hear or speak on the phone at relayuk.bt.com)

British Sign Language video relay service:

connect.interpreterslive.co.uk/vrs?ilc=DWP

Technical support with the Attendance Allowance form:

email dwponline.helpdesk@dwp.gov.uk

or phone 0800 169 0154

Northern Ireland

Website: nidirect.gov.uk/articles/attendance-allowance

Call: 0800 587 0912

Textphone: 0800 012 1574

British/Irish Sign Language video relay service:

connect.interpreterslive.co.uk/vrs?ilc=DfCNI-DWP

Email: dcx.post@dfcni.gov.uk

Other resources

Age UK

ageuk.org.uk

Benefits calculator

gov.uk/benefits-calculators



Benefits and financial support if you are disabled or have a health condition

➤ gov.uk/browse/benefits/disability

Citizen's Advice England, Scotland and Wales

➤ citizensadvice.org.uk

Call: 0800 144 8848 (England)

Call: 0800 028 1456 (Scotland)

Call: 0800 702 2020 (Wales)

Citizens Advice Northern Ireland

➤ citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/northern-ireland/

Independent Age: money advice for older people

Call: 0800 319 6789

➤ independentage.org

**To speak to a dementia specialist Admiral Nurse
about any aspect of dementia:**

Contact our Helpline:
0800 888 6678 or helpline@dementiauk.org

Book a virtual appointment:
dementiauk.org/book

**Our charity relies entirely on donations to fund our
life-changing work. If you would like to donate to help us
support more families:**

- Call **0300 365 5500**
- Visit **dementiauk.org/donate**
- Scan the QR code

Thank you.



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