



**Independent
Age**

Trusted
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Creator



Patient Information Forum

Attendance Allowance

**Extra money if you have
a disability or health condition**



Thank you

We would like to thank those who shared their experiences as this guide was being developed, and those who reviewed it for us.

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Our publications

In this guide you'll find references to our other free publications. To order them, call **0800 319 6789** or visit **independentage.org/publications**.

If you would like this information in a different format (such as large print or audio CD), call us on **0800 319 6789** or email **operations@independentage.org**.

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The sources used to create this publication are available on request.

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We spoke to older people about their experiences. Their quotes appear throughout. We have changed the names of some of the interviewees who wished to be anonymous. Some of the images seen throughout this guide are posed by friends of Independent Age.

The PIF TICK is the UK-wide Quality Mark for Health Information.

1. What is Attendance Allowance?

Attendance Allowance is extra, tax-free money you can get if you have a long-term disability or health condition.

You may be able to claim if you need help with personal care, or supervision to keep you safe.

Personal care includes getting dressed, washing, eating, going to the toilet, getting in and out of bed, and taking medication.

Supervision means you need someone to watch over you because you could cause harm to yourself or others around you. For example, it could be that you forget to take your medication or have seizures or falls.

It doesn't matter whether you actually receive this help or supervision – it's the need for help that matters.



Attendance Allowance is for people over State Pension age. You can check this at **[gov.uk/state-pension-age](https://www.gov.uk/state-pension-age)**. If you're under State Pension age, you may be able to claim Personal Independence Payment instead – see **page 12**.

It isn't just for people with a physical disability or illness. Mental health issues, cognitive impairments such as dementia, and sensory conditions such as sight or hearing loss are also included.

Attendance Allowance isn't means-tested, so your income and savings aren't considered. Anyone can apply, regardless of their financial situation.



2. How much could I get?

The amount of Attendance Allowance you get depends on how much help you need.

There are two weekly rates:

- £61.85 if you need help either in the day or at night
- £92.40 if you need help both during the day and night, or if you're terminally ill.

These rates apply from April 2022 to April 2023.

If you're awarded Attendance Allowance, you may qualify for means-tested benefits you couldn't claim before, such as Pension Credit, Housing Benefit or Council Tax Support. If you already receive these benefits, the amount you get may increase.



Read our guides **Pension Credit** and **Council Tax** to find out more.

Getting Attendance Allowance entitles you to a Disabled Person's Railcard that gives money off train fares for you and a friend. It can also make it easier to get other support, such as a Blue Badge to help with parking.

You don't have to spend your Attendance Allowance on a care worker – you can spend it however you want. Lots of people spend it on things that make life easier, like taxis, fuel bills or a cleaner.



3. How do I claim?

You need to fill out a claim form to get Attendance Allowance.

You can get one by calling the free Attendance Allowance helpline on **0800 731 0122**.

You can also download a form from **[gov.uk/attendance-allowance/how-to-claim](https://www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance/how-to-claim)**.

It comes with notes explaining how to fill it in. The form can look daunting, but don't panic: there is help available to complete it. See **page 8** for places that can help.

If you request a form over the phone, your claim will start from the date of your call, rather than the date you return the completed form. This could be a difference of a few weeks' worth of benefits, so call up for the form if you can.

Your claim is usually just based on the information you provide on the form, so give as much detail about your difficulties as possible. See **page 10** and **page 11** for more tips on completing the form.

4. Myth buster

My income and savings must be too high

Attendance Allowance is based on your care or supervision needs. It doesn't matter what your income or savings are.

I don't have anyone helping me

You don't need to have someone caring for you to qualify. Your claim is based on the help you need, not what you're actually getting.

I don't want a carer coming in

That's fine, you don't have to spend your extra money on one. You can spend Attendance Allowance however you want.

I don't have a diagnosis

You don't need one to apply. For example, you might still be having tests to find out what's wrong. As long as you've needed help or supervision for at least six months, you can make a claim.

I'll only be turned down

Most claims are accepted first time, so you stand a good chance of being awarded Attendance Allowance if you meet the eligibility criteria.

5. Tips for filling in the form

Attendance Allowance is based on your needs, so include as much detail as you can about how your condition affects your life.

Don't downplay your difficulties or how much help you need.

The form might seem daunting at first, but don't let it put you off. You can make an appointment at your nearest Citizens Advice or Age UK for help.



Citizens Advice, [citizensadvice.org.uk](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

- England **0800 144 8848**
- Wales **0800 702 2020**
- Scotland **0800 028 1456**



Age UK, [ageuk.org.uk](https://www.ageuk.org.uk)

- England **0800 169 6565**
- Wales **0300 303 4498**
- Scotland **0800 124 4222**

You can also call the Attendance Allowance helpline on **0800 731 0122**.

In some circumstances, they can arrange for someone to come to your home to help you fill in the form.



If you're filling in the form yourself

- Give lots of detail about your personal care needs, even if you think it seems trivial or embarrassing.
- It might be helpful to keep a diary of your needs over the course of a week. You might find you forget about difficulties with tasks you don't do every day. Mention how frequently you need help. Attendance Allowance looks at how often you need help, as well as how much help you need.
- Include how long it takes you to carry out specific tasks and how much help you need with them, even if there isn't anyone to help you.



- Include any severe discomfort, pain, fatigue or breathlessness you experience.
- Describe any times you've fallen or hurt yourself.
- Think about everything you can't do, or have difficulty with, because of your condition.
- It's okay to repeat yourself if the information is relevant to more than one question.
- If you have good days and bad days, give details of the help you need on an average day, ie most of the time. You can use the boxes at the end of the questions to explain how your needs change and how bad it can be.

There's an optional section that can be completed by someone who knows you. Ask your GP, consultant, friend or relative to fill this in if you can.

Don't assume that the decision maker knows how your condition affects you: you know your situation best.



Our factsheet **Disability benefits: Attendance Allowance** has more tips on how to fill in the form.

6. What if I'm under State Pension age?

If you're thinking of waiting and applying for Attendance Allowance when you reach State Pension age, you might be better off claiming Personal Independence Payment (PIP) now instead.

You might be able to get more money, as PIP looks at your mobility needs as well as your care needs.

You must start claiming PIP before you reach State Pension age, but you can continue to receive it after that.



Read our factsheet **Disability benefits: Personal Independence Payment and Disability Living Allowance** to find out more.



David's story

David, 72, was successfully treated for prostate cancer, but left with problems controlling his bladder. He often found himself caught short, and had to wear incontinence pads and change and wash his clothes more often.

When David contacted us to see if he could get any help with paying for extra costs relating to his health condition, our adviser Kevin explained he could claim Attendance Allowance.

David applied and was awarded the lower rate. This meant that he also became eligible for Pension Credit, as claiming Attendance Allowance increased the amount of money that the government expected him to live on. Although his Pension Credit was a small amount, it meant he now qualified for full Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support too. Overall, David's income went up by over £200 a week.

About Independent Age

At Independent Age, we want more people in the UK to live a happy, connected and purposeful later life. That's why we support people aged over 65 to get involved in things they enjoy. We also campaign and give advice on the issues that matter most: health and care, money and housing.

For information or advice – we can arrange a free, impartial chat with an adviser – call us on freephone **0800 319 6789** (Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 6.30pm) or email us at **advice@independentage.org**.

You can also support this work by volunteering with us, joining our campaigns to improve life for older people experiencing hardship, donating to us or remembering us in your will.

For more information, visit **[independentage.org](https://www.independentage.org)** or call us on **0800 319 6789**.



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