

Attendance Allowance

Note about call charges: the cost of calling a phone number depends on the digits it starts with, the phone provider and whether a landline or mobile is used to make the call. Some providers offer free calls to certain numbers as part of a call package, but customers are best advised to check with their phone provider. 0800 and 0808 numbers are free to call from both mobile phones and landlines. Many national organisations use 03 numbers for their main phone lines which generally reduces call costs for customers dialling from a mobile phone. Visit [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) for more information about call charges.

Introduction

Many people do not realise that they can claim Attendance Allowance (AA). The Government estimate that at least 40% of people, and perhaps as many as 60%, who should be getting AA do not claim it. This factsheet covers:

1. [What is Attendance Allowance?](#)
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1. What is Attendance Allowance?

Attendance Allowance (AA) is a weekly benefit for people who have reached state pension age and need regular care or attention because of physical or mental illness or disability. AA does not include help for mobility needs.

Note: You don't need to have a recognised or diagnosed medical condition to claim AA. You can get AA even if you live alone and no one is providing the help you need. You don't have to be paying a carer and it's up to you how you spend the money if your claim is successful. You can claim even if you receive help from the council or health service (such as home care).

AA is not taxable and can be paid on top of any other benefits or pensions you already have. You can get AA even if you're in work. It does not matter what other money you have coming in, or what savings you have.

2. Who can claim?

To qualify for AA, you must:

- have reached [state pension age](#) ([see page 2 – 'The Age Rules'](#));
- satisfy the [disability conditions](#) ([page 2](#));
- have needed help for at least six months (but you can claim before the six months is up if you will continue to need help). However, *people who are terminally ill can be paid straight away and automatically get the higher rate of AA.*

- satisfy the residence conditions and be 'habitually resident' in the UK';
- have been present in Great Britain for at least two of the past three years.

There are some exceptions to the residence and presence conditions. For example, the presence conditions don't apply to people who are terminally ill. Special rules also allow claims from some people without the need for them to have previously lived in Great Britain. Examples include:

- people who were living in **Ukraine** before 1 January 2022 and left due to the Russian invasion who have leave or right of abode in the UK;
- people who have come to the UK from **Afghanistan** since 15 August 2021 through specified schemes (conditions apply).

This isn't a complete list – there are also other exceptions including for some EU national residents who applied to the EU Settlement Scheme by 30 June 2021 but have not yet received a decision. Citizens Advice website includes more information: citizensadvice.org.uk/benefits/sick-or-disabled-people-and-carers/attendance-allowance The rules are complicated, so please call us for advice before you apply if you're unsure about your position (020 8921 6375, Monday, Wednesday and Thursday 10am to 1pm).

Age rules

To claim Attendance Allowance, you must have reached state pension age - this was previously 65, but state pension age is changing for both men and women and is currently 66 and will continue to gradually increase to 68. Use GOV.UK's Pension Age Calculator to find out when you will reach state pension age (www.gov.uk/state-pension-age)

If you are approaching pension age, it may be better to claim Personal Independence Payment (PIP) if you can rather than AA since PIP also has a mobility component. However, it may also be worth claiming AA after you reach pension age if your PIP claim is refused – [get advice](#) if this applies to you.

Disability conditions

You can get Attendance Allowance if:

- you need regular help looking after yourself – with things like washing, dressing and undressing, eating, bathing, getting in or out of bed, sleeping, going to the toilet; or
- you need help communicating with other people (including because you cannot see or hear), or
- you need supervision to keep you safe. For example, you may need someone to keep an eye on you to make sure you do not have an accident or because you are forgetful.

You may still get Attendance Allowance if you can manage without help, but perhaps must limit what you do or can only do things slowly or with discomfort.

An example: Albert is 75 years old and lives alone. He has bad arthritis and finds a lot of things painful, and does them slowly. It takes him a long time to get washed and dressed, and on some days he does not get dressed fully. When Albert claims Attendance Allowance he must remember to explain all the difficulties he has with washing and dressing and should not just tick boxes to say that he can manage.

3. How much?

Attendance Allowance is paid at two weekly rates:

- £68.10* for people who only need help during the day or night and
- £101.75* for people who need help during the day and night.

If you already receive benefits, a successful Attendance Allowance claim may mean that your other benefits increase. For example, if you're on Pension Credit Guarantee and live alone, your Pension Credit might increase by £76.40* a week. Getting Attendance Allowance will never mean that your other benefits go down.

**April 2023-2024 rates*

4. Claiming and completing the form

How to claim

Ring the Attendance Allowance helpline for a claim form on 0800 731 0122 (or 0800 731 0317 for textphone users). Lines are open Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm.

The DWP will send you a date stamped form which you will need to return within six weeks to enable your claim to be dated from the day you telephoned the helpline. Keep a record of the date you asked for the form in case you need it.

It's best to request a form from the helpline to ensure that you don't miss out. If your claim is issued by an advice agency or downloaded from the internet, it won't be date stamped and will only be dated from the date it is received by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Send the completed form to:

Freepost DWP Attendance Allowance.

You don't need a postcode or stamp.

Completing the form

Many people find these forms difficult to fill in – read the following section to help you.

- Try to answer all the questions and give as much information as you can – use extra pages if you need to. Describe any difficulties you have doing things for yourself and explain what you cannot do. If you can only do something slowly or with difficulty, or perhaps with pain, make sure you explain this fully. Remember to explain about your “bad” days if your health varies.
- Don't be put off if you are not sure how long something takes - try to estimate this, or just explain how much longer something takes you now. Explain how often you need help and not just how often you receive help.
- Do say if you need help at night. If you need help more than once, or for around 20 minutes or more, this will count towards your claim. You must need this level of help for more than half of the week.
- Do explain about places you might go to or the social activities you'd like to do if you had the help you needed.
- Do say if you need someone to read things out to you or help with things like sorting out your money.
- If you're not sure how much help you need, keep a diary (say for two weeks) and use this to help you complete the form.
- Do include details of all the medical professionals and other people who

know and understand how your condition affects you, and if possible, include supporting evidence from them.

Remember: you don't have to complete the form in one day.

Getting help with the form

If you need help with the form, ring our Public Advice Line (020 8921 6375) to check what sources of support may be available to you. Lines are open Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday, 10am to 1pm.

5. What happens next?

The DWP will write to you confirming that they have received your claim - you must then wait for a decision. Occasionally they may need further information from someone who knows you such as your doctor, and some people may be visited at home.

Do tell your doctor that you have applied for AA and that s/he may be contacted. Also, let them know of the problems you have with personal care and any falls you have had.

If your claim is refused or you get a lower rate than you expect

You can ask for the decision to be looked at again if your claim is refused or if you get a lower rate than you expect – this is called a mandatory reconsideration. It's important not to delay your request for a reconsideration as time limits apply. You must usually request it within one month of the date of the decision. However, the time limit can be extended in some circumstances.

It may be helpful to provide additional information or evidence in support of your claim. The DWP will look at your claim again and let you know whether they can change their previous decision. It is worth getting advice, as many people who challenge benefit decisions are successful – ring our [Public Advice Line](tel:02089216375) (020 8921 6375) on Monday, Wednesday, or Thursday 10am to 1pm.

You have the right to appeal to an independent tribunal if your mandatory reconsideration request is unsuccessful (including if it has been rejected because it was late). Remember that most claimants who appeal are successful. Do contact our Public Advice Line if you're not sure what to do (see above).

If your claim is successful

If you are awarded Attendance Allowance, you may now be able to claim other linked benefits. For example, extra Pension Credit (PC) is paid to Attendance Allowance claimants who live alone (or are treated as living alone) if no one is paid Carer's Allowance for looking after them. Ring our [Public Advice line](#) to check whether you can now get Pension Credit (or extra money if you already receive PC). You may qualify for extra Housing Benefit or Council Tax Support even if you can't get Pension Credit so make sure you tell [Royal Greenwich Revenues and Benefits Service](#) that you're now receiving Attendance Allowance.

If someone looks after you regularly they may be able to claim [Carer's Allowance](#). **But your benefits can be affected if you live alone and your carer claims Carer's Allowance – so it's important to get advice before they claim.**

6. For benefits advice or information

If you need benefits advice or would like to check if you are missing out on any entitlements, call Royal Greenwich's:

**Welfare Rights Service Public Advice Line
(for borough residents only) 020 8921 6375
Textphone 18001 020 8921 6375
Mon, Wed, Thurs: 10am -1pm**

Or visit the Royal Greenwich website
www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/welfarerights

- for more information, including details of other advice services in your area;
- to [download benefit factsheets](#) or
- contact us using an [online enquiry form](#).

7. Useful contacts

Attendance Allowance

Telephone: 0800 731 0122
Textphone: 0800 731 0317
Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm
gov.uk/attendance-allowance/how-to-claim

Greenwich Advice and Benefits Service

Greenwich Advice and Benefits Service
020 8921 4900 or 18001 020 8921 4900
for textphone users.

royalgreenwich.gov.uk/housingbenefit

Or visit:

The Woolwich Centre,
35 Wellington Street, SE18 6HQ; or

For Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support claims.

Pension Credit

Telephone claim line: 0800 99 1234
Textphone: 0800 169 0133
Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

gov.uk/pension-credit

For Pension Credit claims. You can also apply by post or online.

Age UK Bromley and Greenwich

Telephone: 020 8315 1850
Email: info@ageukbandg.org.uk
ageuk.rg.uk/bromleyandgreenwich

Information and advice for older people living in Royal Greenwich (including help with form filling).

This factsheet is correct as of April 2023



Welfare Rights Service
Woolwich Centre
35 Wellington Street
Woolwich SE18 6HQ
Telephone 020 8921 6375
Facsimile 020 8921 2016
www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk