

Carer's Allowance

If you have Parkinson's or care for someone who does, you may have some concerns about how you will manage financially. If you can't work, or if you need help with your day-to-day needs, this can lead to extra costs. But there is some financial support available, so it's important to find out what benefits you're entitled to.

This sheet explains what Carer's Allowance is, who qualifies, how to claim and what information you need to supply.

What is Carer's Allowance?

Carer's Allowance is a benefit for people who regularly spend at least 35 hours a week caring for a severely disabled person. You don't have to be related to that person or be living with them.

The person you're caring for must be receiving Attendance Allowance, or the Disability Living Allowance care component at the middle or highest rate, or either rate of the daily living component of Personal Independence Payment.

Find out more: see our information sheets *Attendance Allowance*, *Disability Living Allowance* and *Personal Independence Payment*.

You can still qualify for Carer's Allowance even if you have never been in paid employment or paid National Insurance contributions. Carer's Allowance is not means tested, which means it isn't affected by your income or savings, but it is taxable.

You can get Carer's Allowance even if you, the carer, are getting Attendance Allowance or Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment yourself.

If you claim Carer's Allowance, it can sometimes reduce the amount of means-tested benefits that the person you look after can claim.

To find out more, contact a Citizens Advice Bureau or another agency that gives benefits advice, such as your local Welfare Rights Group. You can find these organisations listed in your local telephone directory, or you can speak to the dedicated benefits and employment adviser on our helpline on **0808 800 0303**. You may also find the factsheet Getting Advice produced by Disability Rights UK useful. Visit their website at www.disabilityrightsuk.org or call **020 7250 8181**.

Carer's Allowance is not supposed to be a wage for caring, or a payment for the services of caring.

Do I qualify?

You must be spending 35 hours or more a week caring for someone who receives Attendance Allowance or the middle or highest rate of the care component of Disability Living Allowance.

You must also:

- be 16 or over at the time of your claim
- live in the UK
- have no restrictions on your right to stay in the UK
- not be in full-time education (ie on an educational course of 21 hours or more supervised study a week)
- not earn more than £102 a week, if you are in paid employment

If you're caring for someone with Parkinson's and you meet these requirements, you should think about applying for Carer's Allowance.

How much is Carer's Allowance?

The weekly rate is £61.35.

Do other benefits affect Carer's Allowance?

Yes. You can't be paid Carer's Allowance if you are receiving the same amount or more from the following benefits:

- Contributory Employment and Support Allowance
- Severe Disablement Allowance
- Incapacity Benefit
- Maternity Allowance
- State Pension
- State Training Allowances
- Unemployability Supplement
- Widow's Benefits or Bereavement Benefits
- contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance

You can't get Carer's Allowance if you get the same amount or more from a State Pension. If your State Pension is less than Carer's Allowance, your pension can be topped up with Carer's Allowance to the standard rate for Carer's Allowance (£61.35 a week).

How is Carer's Allowance paid?

Carer's Allowance is either paid in advance on a weekly basis or in arrears every four weeks (for the past four weeks).

Carer's Allowance can be backdated for up to three months from the date that the person you care for started to get their payments for Disability Living Allowance and Carer's Allowance.

You must also have met the other conditions of entitlement for the whole back-payment period.

Your money will be paid into your bank account.

Find out more: if you don't have a bank account, have a look at our information sheet *General information about benefits*. This explains how to get one.

Why should I claim Carer's Allowance?

Claiming Carer's Allowance may allow you to claim extra funds as part of other benefits you receive.

For example, if you qualify for Carer's Allowance, you can receive a £34.20-a-week carer premium included in the assessment for any income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support, Pension Credit or Housing Benefit you may receive.

Find out more: see our information sheets *Employment and Support Allowance*, *Income Support*, *Pension Credit* and *Housing Benefit*.

You may also qualify for a carer premium if you are entitled to Carer's Allowance, but cannot be paid it because you receive another benefit instead which overlaps with Carer's Allowance (such as Incapacity Benefit or State Pension).

If you receive Carer's Allowance or if you qualify for it but can't be paid it because you receive another benefit that prevents you from doing so, you are entitled to the £148.61 carer's element of Universal Credit.

Find out more: see our information sheet *Universal Credit*.

For each week that you receive Carer's Allowance, you get a Class 1 National Insurance credit. This will help towards your entitlement to a State Pension.

If you receive Carer's Allowance, you may also get the Christmas bonus of £10.

Can a carer get Carer's Allowance after the person they care for has died?

If the person you are caring for dies, you will receive Carer's Allowance payments for up to eight weeks afterwards. This is to give carers who have recently been bereaved time to adjust and make plans for their own future. The carer premium also has this eight-week run on. So if, as a carer, you are on income-related benefits, you will still be able to get this.

Other Carer's Allowance rules continue to apply within the eight-week period – apart from the need to care – such as the rules about working and full-time study. Other benefits (listed on the previous page) will still affect the payment of Carer's Allowance.

How do I claim Carer's Allowance?

You will need to fill in form DS700. If you claim a State Pension, you will need to fill in DS700(SP). You can get the claim-form from your local Jobcentre Plus office, the Pension Service or contact the Carer's Allowance Unit on 0345 608 4321. The claim form comes with a free envelope for returns. Or you can make a claim online at www.direct.gov.uk/carers-allowance-unit

If you live in Northern Ireland, call **0800 220 674** or claim online at www.nidirect.gov.uk by following the links to the 'Caring for someone' pages.

What if my circumstances change?

It is always important to provide full, accurate information to benefits offices, and to let them know if your circumstances change. If you don't do this your benefits may be stopped, you may receive demands for repayment, or you may face prosecution. The Department for Work and Pensions may also consider a civil penalty, eg for failure to disclose information, perhaps due to oversight at a stressful time. A civil penalty costs £50. The Department for Work and Pensions can require a person to pay a civil penalty as well as repaying an overpayment.

More information and support

You can call our free confidential helpline for general support and information. Call **0808 800 0303** (calls are free from UK landlines and most mobile networks) or email hello@parkinsons.org.uk. We run a peer support service if you'd like to talk on the phone with someone affected by Parkinson's who has faced similar issues to you. The service is free and confidential – ring the helpline to talk to someone about being matched with a volunteer.

Our helpline can also put you in touch with one of our local information and support workers, who give one-to-one information and support to anyone affected by Parkinson's. They can also provide links to local groups and services.

We also have a self-management programme for people with Parkinson's, partners and carers. It is an opportunity to reflect on life with the condition, learn about self-management and think about the future. To find out if there is a group near you visit parkinsons.org.uk/selfmanagement

Our website parkinsons.org.uk has a lot of information about Parkinson's and everyday life with the condition. You can also find details of your local support team and your nearest local group meeting at parkinsons.org.uk/localtoyou

You can also visit parkinsons.org.uk/forum to speak with other people in a similar situation on our online discussion forum.

Thank you

Thank you to Disability Rights UK for updating this information sheet. Disability Rights UK also have a wide range of online factsheets relating to disability related issues including Access to Work, education, the blue badge scheme, community care, residential care and disabled facilities grants.

Visit their website at www.disabilityrightsuk.org



Carer's Allowance (2014)

If you have comments or suggestions about this information sheet, we'd love to hear from you. This will help us ensure that we are providing as good a service as possible. We'd be very grateful if you could complete this form and return it to **Resources and Diversity, Parkinson's UK, 215 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 1EJ**. Or you can email us at **publications@parkinsons.org.uk**. Thanks!

Please tick...

- I have Parkinson's. When were you diagnosed?
- I'm family/a friend/a carer of someone with Parkinson's
- I'm a professional working with people with Parkinson's

Where did you get this information sheet from?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> GP, specialist or Parkinson's nurse | <input type="checkbox"/> Information and support worker |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parkinson's UK local group or event | <input type="checkbox"/> Ordered from us directly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Our website | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

How useful have you found the information sheet? (1 is not useful, 4 is very useful) 1 2 3 4

Have you found the publication easy to read/use? Yes No

What aspects did you find most helpful?

Were you looking for any information that wasn't covered?

Do you have any other comments?

If you would like to become a member of Parkinson's UK, or are interested in joining our information review group, please complete the details below and we'll be in touch.

- Membership
- Information review group (who give us feedback on new and updated resources)

Name

Address

Telephone Email

What is your ethnic background? Asian or Asian British Black or Black British Chinese Mixed
 White British White other Other (please specify)

We're the Parkinson's support and research charity. Help us find a cure and improve life for everyone affected by Parkinson's.

Can you help?

At Parkinson's UK, we are totally dependent on donations from individuals and organisations to fund the work that we do. There are many ways that you can help us to support people with Parkinson's. If you would like to get involved, please contact our Supporter Services team on **020 7932 1303** or visit our website at **parkinsons.org.uk/support**. Thank you.

Parkinson's UK

Free* confidential helpline **0808 800 0303**

Monday to Friday 9am–8pm, Saturday

10am–2pm. Interpreting available.

Text Relay **18001 0808 800 0303**

(for textphone users only)

hello@parkinsons.org.uk

parkinsons.org.uk

*calls are free from UK landlines and most mobile networks.

How to order our resources

0845 121 2354

resources@parkinsons.org.uk

Download them from our website

at **parkinsons.org.uk/publications**

We make every effort to make sure that our services provide up-to-date, unbiased and accurate information. We hope that this will add to any professional advice you receive and will help you to make any decisions you may face. Please do continue to talk to your health and social care team if you are worried about any aspect of living with Parkinson's.

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