

Notes

for the Carer's Allowance claim pack

**You may be able to get
Carer's Allowance if the person
you look after gets:**

- **Attendance Allowance, or**
 - **Constant Attendance Allowance, or**
 - **Disability Living Allowance.**
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Can you get Carer's Allowance?

Use this quick checklist before you fill in the form.

If you can tick all four statements, you may be able to get Carer's Allowance.

I get State Pension.

If you cannot tick this box, do not use this claim form. Ask us for the DS700 Carer's Allowance claim pack, which is for people who do not get State Pension. You will find information about getting Carer's Allowance while putting off claiming State Pension in the Notes in the DS700 claim pack.

If your State Pension is more than the amount of Carer's Allowance you can get, we will not pay you any Carer's Allowance. But claim Carer's Allowance anyway as you may qualify for extra payments from other benefits.

I am looking after a disabled person for at least 35 hours a week.

The person I am looking after is getting one of these benefits:

- Attendance Allowance
- Constant Attendance Allowance at or above
 - the normal maximum rate, as an addition to Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit, or
 - the basic, full-day rate as an addition to a War Disablement Pension
- the care component of Disability Living Allowance at the middle or highest rate.
The mobility component is not a qualifying benefit for Carer's Allowance.

I normally live in Northern Ireland.

You should also tick if you are part of a family living overseas with HM forces.

If you have ticked all four of the statements above, claim Carer's Allowance straight away.

If you live outside Northern Ireland, but in the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland,

If you have ticked the first three statements above, fill in the claim form because you may still be able to get Carer's Allowance. Some of the information in these notes may not apply to you. If we need any more details we will contact you. For more information phone us on **028 9090 6186**.

What is Carer's Allowance?

Carer's Allowance is a benefit to help people who look after someone who gets:

- Attendance Allowance, or
- Constant Attendance Allowance at or above
 - the normal maximum rate with Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit, or
 - the basic full-day rate with a War Disablement Pension, or
- Disability Living Allowance at the **middle** or **highest** rate of the **care component**.

If the person you look after is getting one of these benefits, they will have a letter telling them what rate they are getting.

Carer's Allowance is paid to the person who does the caring – not the person being cared for.

You may have to pay tax on your Carer's Allowance.

The current weekly rate of Carer's Allowance is £53.90.

Carer's Allowance does not depend on:

- the level of your savings, or
- if you have paid any National Insurance (NI) contributions.

The person you are looking after may be getting extra money with their benefit if they are severely disabled and getting any of the following benefits:

- Pension Credit
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income Support
- Employment and Support Allowance (Income Related)
- Housing Benefit
- Rate Relief

This extra money is called *severe disability premium* or the *addition for severe disability*.

If you get less than the full rate of State Pension, and this means that you start getting Carer's Allowance for the person you are looking after, their benefit or entitlement **may go down**. For example, the person you are looking after cannot get severe disability premium if you are getting Carer's Allowance. See **page 13** of these notes for where to get advice about this.

If your State Pension is more than Carer's Allowance, we will not pay you any Carer's Allowance, although you will still have entitlement to it. If this is the case, the severe disability premium paid to the person you look after will not be affected. Please see **page 11** of these notes for information on how State Pension and other benefits affect payment of Carer's Allowance.

If you can get Carer's Allowance, we will contact you for details of how you want to be paid.

Who cannot get Carer's Allowance?

You cannot get Carer's Allowance if:

- you earn more than £100 a week after we have taken some expenses into account. There is more information about this below
- you are on a course of full-time education
- you are on holiday from a course of full-time education
- you are subject to immigration control. But there are some exceptions to this. To find out more please contact us on **028 9090 6186**.

Earnings

Money you get from private or occupational pensions is not counted as earnings.

If you have a part-time job, you must not earn more than £100 a week.

Working out your weekly earnings

When we work out your weekly earnings we only look at what you have earned after you have paid:

- National Insurance (NI) contributions
- income tax
- half of any money you pay towards personal and occupational pension schemes.

We also allow up to half of the rest of your earnings for paying someone from outside your family to look after children, or the person you look after, when you are at work.

Expenses

We may be able to take into account some other expenses, such as expenses you have to pay to do your job.

If you earn more than £100 a week

If you earn more than £100 a week, after we have taken money off for expenses, we will not be able to pay your Carer's Allowance. How long your Carer's Allowance stops for depends on how often you are paid. For example, if you are paid monthly you will not be entitled to Carer's Allowance for the month after you are paid. If you are paid weekly, you will not be entitled to it for the week after you are paid.

Full-time education

By full-time education we mean 21 hours or more of supervised study each week at a school, college, university or similar educational establishment. This includes time spent on exercises, experiments, projects or examinations that form part of your course, whether or not a tutor is present.

Other help available

Whether you can get Carer's Allowance or not, you and the person you care for may be able to get other help. To find out more, see **page 13**.

When to claim Carer's Allowance

Claim now, if the person you look after is getting:

- Attendance Allowance, or
- Constant Attendance Allowance at or above
 - **the normal maximum rate with Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit,**
 - **the basic full-day rate with a War Disablement Pension,**or
- Disability Living Allowance at the **middle** or **highest rate** of the **care component**.

Do not delay or you could lose benefit.

Claim later, if the person you look after:

- has not yet claimed one of the benefits shown above, or
- has claimed but is waiting for a decision.

The person you look after must claim Attendance Allowance, Constant Attendance Allowance or Disability Living Allowance straight away.

If they already get one of these benefits, you must claim Carer's Allowance straight away. Do not delay. If you do not claim within three months of the decision to pay Attendance Allowance, Constant Attendance Allowance or Disability Living Allowance, you will lose benefit.

Getting Carer's Allowance may mean you can get:

- Pension Credit
- Housing Benefit, or
- Rate Relief.

You can claim these benefits or entitlements at the same time you claim Carer's Allowance. For more information see **page 10**.

How to claim Carer's Allowance

Just fill in the claim form. There are notes at the end of this booklet to help you to do this.

If your answer to a question is **No**, you must tick the **No** box. Please do not just leave it blank. This will help us deal with your claim more quickly.

If you have problems filling in the claim form, someone can do it for you. Ask a friend, an advice centre, your local Social Security or Jobs and Benefits office or the Benefit Enquiry Line. You can call the Benefit Enquiry Line on **0800 220 674**.

You must sign the declaration on the claim form after checking that what you have told us on the form is complete and correct.

How to contact Disability and Carers Service

Our phone number is **028 9090 6186**.

If you have speech or hearing difficulties, you can contact us using a textphone on freephone **0800 243 787**.

These lines are open from 9.00am to 5.00pm Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, and from 10.00am to 5.00pm on Thursdays.

You can get more information about Carer's Allowance and related services from our website. The address is **www.nidirect.gov.uk**

If you want to write to us, our address is:

**Disability and Carer's Service
Castle Court
Royal Avenue
Belfast
BT1 1HR**

Please let us know if:

- you want us to use braille, audio cassette, CD or large print, or
- English is not your first language and you would like to use our interpreter service.

What happens after we get your claim?

Wherever we can, we will phone you if we need more information. We will write and tell you if you can get Carer's Allowance. We normally pay Carer's Allowance on Mondays.

We will try to deal with your claim within five weeks. We normally tell you when we get your claim form. Please wait at least five weeks before asking about your claim.

While you are getting Carer's Allowance, you can have a work-focused interview with a personal adviser at your local Social Security or Jobs and Benefits office. You do not have to have an interview, but the adviser can talk to you about part-time employment or training. You can arrange an interview at any time if your caring responsibilities change.

Contact your local Social Security or Jobs and Benefits office if you would like to:

- talk about whether a work-focused interview may be right for you, or
- arrange an interview.

The phone number and addresses are in the Guide to Public Services section in the phone book. Look for the maroon edged pages (between the Classified Directory and the Business listings).

If you want to contact us about our service

If you would like to make a comment about our service, or if you have a complaint about our service, contact us by phone using the contact details on **page 7**.

We aim to reply to your complaint within ten working days of getting it. If we cannot reply to your complaint within this time, we will tell you why. We will also tell you when you will get a full reply.

What else can you claim?

Pension Credit

If you want to apply for Pension Credit, or if you want general advice and information, please contact the office that deals with your benefit or entitlement, or a Citizens Advice Bureau.

For more about Pension Credit, ask for leaflets on Pension Credit from your local Social Security or Jobs and Benefits office or The Pension Service. Or visit The Pension Service website at www.thepensionservice.gov.uk

Child Tax Credit

You may be able to claim Child Tax Credit. This is a payment to support families with children. You can claim it if you are responsible for children or young people.

To find out more about Child Tax Credit visit the HM Revenue & Customs website. The address is www.hmrc.gov.uk

You can claim online too.

You can also call the HM Revenue & Customs helpline on:

- **0845 300 3900** if you live in England, Scotland or Wales, or
- **0845 603 2000** if you live in Northern Ireland.

If you have speech or hearing difficulties you can contact HM Revenue & Customs using a textphone on:

- **0845 300 3909** if you live in England, Scotland or Wales, or
- **0845 607 6078** if you live in Northern Ireland.

All lines are open 8am to 8pm, seven days a week. Lines are closed Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Year's Day and Easter Sunday.

Will Carer's Allowance affect other benefits you get?

Even if you or your partner get other benefits or entitlements, you should claim Carer's Allowance.

If you get Carer's Allowance or have underlying entitlement to Carer's Allowance, we add an extra amount when we work out:

- Pension Credit – called the extra amount for caring
- income-based - Jobseeker's Allowance - called Carer Premium
- Income Support – called Carer Premium, and
- Employment and Support Allowance (Income Related), called Carer Premium.

The current weekly rate of Carer Premium is **£30.05**.

Underlying entitlement means you are entitled to Carer's Allowance but it is not paid because you get another benefit or entitlement, such as State Pension, that is as much as or more than Carer's Allowance.

There is a list of benefits or entitlements on **page 11**.

We will tell the office that pays your Pension Credit that you are getting Carer's Allowance or that you have underlying entitlement.

If you are getting Housing Benefit or Rate Relief on its own or with any of the benefits or entitlements in the list on **page 11**, you should tell the paying office you are getting Carer's Allowance.

- If you are a home owner then contact the Land and Property Services Rating Service Office
- If you are a tenant then contact the Northern Ireland Housing Executive

They will then include an extra amount for the Carers Premium when they work out how much Housing Benefit or Rate Relief you can get.

If someone is getting extra money for you with their benefit, this extra money will stop or reduce if you are paid Carers Allowance.

Carer's Allowance and other benefits

If you get any of the benefits shown below we may not be able to pay you Carer's Allowance:

- State Pension
- Incapacity Benefit
- Severe Disablement Allowance
- a training allowance
- Unemployability Supplement – paid with Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit or War Pension
- Widow's Pension or Bereavement Allowance
- Widowed Mother's Allowance or Widowed Parent's Allowance
- War Widow's or Widower's Pension
- Maternity Allowance
- Industrial Death Benefit
- contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- contribution-based Employment and Support Allowance.

If we do not pay you Carer's Allowance because you are getting one of these benefits, you may still be able to get extra money. The extra money may be added to your or your partner's Pension Credit, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support, Employment and Support Allowance (Income Related), Housing Benefit or Rate Relief. See **page 10** for details.

If the amount of benefit you get is less than the amount of Carer's Allowance you could get, we will pay you the difference.

If someone is getting any of the benefits shown above, and these include extra money for you, we will arrange for the extra money to stop or reduce. We will then pay the Carer's Allowance to you.

If someone else is also looking after the same person

If someone else is also looking after the same person as you are, only one of you can get Carer's Allowance.

You must decide between you who is going to claim it.

See **page 13** for where to get help and advice.

If you look after more than one person

You can only be entitled to Carer's Allowance for looking after one person. If you care for more than one person, you must tell us on the form which person you want to claim Carer's Allowance for looking after.

The time you spend looking after someone

If you stop looking after the person for a short time, you may still get Carer's Allowance.

For example, you may be able to get Carer's Allowance if you, or the person you look after, go into hospital or a similar place.

But you must tell us straight away about any week when you look after someone for less than 35 hours.

By *week* we mean from the start of a Sunday to the end of the next Saturday.

Where to get help and advice

- If you want information about Pension Credit, you can phone The Pension Service. The number is **0845 601 8821**. Or visit **www.thepensionservice.gov.uk**
- If you want general advice and information about benefits or entitlements, get it touch with your local Social Security or Jobs and Benefits office. The phone number and addresses are in the Guide to Public Services section in the phone book. Look for the maroon edged pages (between the Classified Directory and the business listings). You can find more information at **www.nidirect.gov.uk**
- If you want to know about benefits or entitlements for people with disabilities, phone the Benefit Enquiry Line. The number is freephone **0800 220 674**. The person you speak to will not have your records so they can only give you general advice. If you have speech or hearing difficulties you can contact us using a textphone on **freephone 0800 243 787**.
- You can get help at an advice centre like the Citizens Advice Bureau.
- You can get in touch with
Carers NI
3rd Floor 58 Howard Street
Belfast
BT1 9PJ
They can offer advice on a range of issues about carers. Their helpline number is **028 9043 9843**. The lines are open from 10.00am to 12.00 noon and from 2.00pm to 3.00pm on Monday to Fridays.
DO NOT send your claim form to this address. Send it to the address on **page 7**.
Or you can visit Carers NI website at **www.carersni.org**
- You can get in touch with
MENCAP Northern Ireland Information Service
4 Annadale Avenue.
Belfast
BT7 3JH
Their number is **08457 636 227** calls to this number are charged at Local Rate.
Menacap provide this service to people with learning disabilities, their carers and family.
DO NOT send your claim form to this address, send it to the address on **page 7**.

- You can get in touch with
Belfast Carers Centre
58 Howard Street
Belfast
BT1 6PJ

Their number is 028 9043 4700.
Their fax number is 028 9024 9999.
Their email address is info@carerscentre.org

DO NOT send your claim form to this address, send it to the address on page 7.

- You can get in touch with
Contact a Family-NI Office
50 Railway Street
Lisburn
BT28 1XP

Providing advice, support and information to families and carers of children and young people with any type of disability **028 9262 7552**
nireland.office@cafamily.org.uk
www.cafamily.org.uk
National helpline **0800 808 3555**

DO NOT send your claim form to this address, send it to the address on page 7.

If you want help filling in this form

If you want help filling in this form, phone **0800 220 674**. We will phone you back. The person who phones you back is specially trained to help you fill in this form and will go through it with you on the phone. Or they can fill in the form for you.

If they fill in the form for you, they will send it to you. Then you can check the form, sign it and send it back. They can send the completed form in large print. They will send you an envelope. It will not need a stamp. Please send us the documents we ask you for with the form.

These notes are to help you fill in the claim form.

About you – the carer

All other surnames or family names you have used or have been known by

Please include maiden name, all former married names and all changes of family name.

National Insurance (NI) number

You can get this from your NI number card, letters about benefits, payslips or form P60. If you do not have an NI number, or have one which starts with TN or ZZ, please contact your local Social Security or Jobs and Benefit office. If you do not tell us your NI number, this could delay any benefit you may be entitled to.

Address

Include your postcode. This will help us to deal with your claim more quickly.

Daytime phone number

Where we can contact you or leave a message.

Please include the dialling code. This will help us deal with your claim more quickly. We will not give your phone number to anyone else.

When do you want your claim to Carer's Allowance to start?

If you do not give us an exact date your claim may be delayed.

Example of an exact date

16/08/2008

We may be able to pay you Carer's Allowance for up to three months before the date we receive your claim.

If the person you look after is awarded:

- Attendance Allowance
- a qualifying rate of Constant Attendance Allowance, or
- the care component of Disability Living Allowance at the middle or highest rate

we may be able to pay you Carer's Allowance from the date when their benefit payments start. But you must claim within three months of the date a decision is made on their benefit.

About the care you provide

Please tell us about the person you look after

You can get most of this information from letters about:

- their Attendance Allowance, or
- their Constant Attendance Allowance, or
- their Disability Living Allowance.

Please write their personal details in BLOCK CAPITALS.

Their National Insurance (NI) number

This will help us deal with your claim more quickly. You can find this on their NI number card, letters about benefits, payslips or form P60.

Their daytime phone number

Please include the dialling code. This will help us deal with your claim more quickly. We will not give their phone number to anyone else.

What relation is this person to you?

If no relation, write NONE.

Has someone paid you to look after this person since the date you want to claim from?

If you ticked **Yes**, please tell us the name and address of the person who paid you, and the amount paid each week, on **page 10**.

Do you spend 35 hours or more each week caring for the person you look after?

Please read the notes on **page 12** of this booklet.

Have you had any breaks in looking after this person since the date you want to claim from?

By *break* we mean time when, for any reason, you spent less than 35 hours a week caring for the person you look after, for example, if:

- they were in respite care, in hospital or on holiday without you, or
- you were in hospital or on holiday without them.

If you ticked **Yes**, please tell us the reason for the breaks and where the breaks took place on **page 10**.

Other details continued

Has anyone else claimed Carer's Allowance for this person before?

If you ticked **Yes**, please tell us the name and address of the other person on **page 10**.

Two people cannot get Carer's Allowance at the same time for looking after the same person. Please read **page 12** of this booklet for more information.

If you cannot answer any of the questions in this section, please give us a reason on **page 10**.

About your partner

Please give us your partner's name, National Insurance (NI) number and date of birth.

By *partner* we mean

- a person you are married to or live with as if you are married, or
- a civil partner or a person you live with as if you are civil partners.

Other details

Have you been on a course of full-time education since the date you want to claim from?

Please tick **Yes** if you are in full-time education, on holiday from full-time education or on temporary leave from a course of full-time education.

If you ticked **Yes**, please tell us the name of your personal tutor and the address of the educational establishment on **page 10**.

By *full-time education* we mean 21 hours or more of supervised study each week, undertaken through a school, college, university or similar educational establishment. This includes time spent on exercises, experiments, projects or examinations that form part of your course, whether or not a tutor is present.

Other details continued

Do you work for an employer now?

If you ticked **Yes**, please tell us the name and address of the employer or employers on **page 10**.

Work could be:

- full-time
- part-time
- casual or temporary
- job sharing
- being included in a tax return as a worker
- being a company director, or
- being in the Territorial Army or other auxiliary armed services.

If you are off work because you are sick or on unpaid leave, please answer **Yes** to the questions on employment.

If you stopped working when you applied for Carer's Allowance, we will assess your final wages over the same pay period which your earnings would normally have covered.

Have you been employed at any time in the six months before the date you want to claim from?

If you ticked **Yes**, please tell us the name and address of the employer or employers on **page 10**.

Are you or have you been self-employed since the week before the date you want to claim from?

If you ticked **Yes**, please tell us the name and address of your accountant, if you have one, on **page 10**.

Self-employed work could be:

- working for yourself
- being a partner or sleeping partner in a business
- renting out property that you or your partner own, or
- letting out rooms or providing board and lodgings in a property that you or your partner own.

Have you or your partner claimed any other benefits since the date you want to claim from?

Please tick **Yes** if you or your partner are waiting to hear about the benefit, allowance, pension or entitlement.

Please write the details of all the benefits, allowances, pensions or entitlements in the boxes provided.

Please include details for your partner, even if you have separated since the date you want to claim from.

Other information

In this section please give us:

- any extra information we have asked for, and
- anything else you think we should know about your claim.

Consent

- **Do you agree to us getting information from any current or previous employer you have told us about on this form?**
- **Do you agree to us getting information from any other person or organisation you have told us about on this form?**

If you have answered **No** to either of these questions, please tell us why on **page 10**.

Note

If you do not give us these details, we will need to contact you and ask for your written consent to contact any current or previous employers, or other people or organisations you tell us about. This will delay your claim.

If you do not want to give us these details, please tell us the reason on **page 10**.

Remember

It is very important to send in this form at the right time.

The person you look after must be getting:

- Attendance Allowance, **or**
- Constant Attendance Allowance at the full-day rate or more, **or**
- Disability Living Allowance care component at the middle or highest rate.

Please keep these notes for your information

The notes give you general information only and are not a complete statement of the law.