

## What is Attendance Allowance?

Attendance Allowance is a benefit for older people who may need extra help to stay independent at home, due to an illness or disability. A little extra money can go a long way. You can use it in any way you like to meet your needs and stay independent in your own home. You don't have to spend Attendance Allowance on a carer or someone looking after you. Many older people spend it on **other types of help in the home, or equipment** to help them stay independent. You qualify based on the **help you need**, not the help you actually get.

There are some other upsides to Attendance Allowance too:

- Claiming Attendance Allowance won't reduce any other income you receive.
- It's tax-free.
- If you're awarded Attendance Allowance, you may become entitled to other benefits, such as Pension Credit, Housing Benefit or Council Tax Reduction, or an increase in these benefits if you're already receiving them –check with the helpline or office dealing with your benefit.
- Attendance Allowance isn't means-tested so it doesn't matter how much income and savings you have.

## Am I eligible to claim Attendance Allowance?

You can claim Attendance Allowance if you meet **all** the following criteria:

- You have reached state pension age (if you're under this age then you may be eligible for Personal Independence Payment instead).
- Could benefit from help with personal care, such as getting washed or dressed, or supervision to keep you safe during the day or night.
- You have a physical disability (including sensory disability, for example blindness), a mental disability (including learning difficulties or dementia).
- Your disability is severe enough for you to need help caring for yourself or someone to supervise you, for your own or someone else's safety.
- Have needed help for at least 6 months. (If you're terminally ill you can make a claim straight away).
- You do not have to have someone caring for you in order to claim.
- It does NOT cover mobility needs.

You can't usually get Attendance Allowance if you live in a care home & care is paid for you by your local authority. You can still claim Attendance Allowance if you pay for all your care home costs yourself.

You must also be in Great Britain when you claim - there are some exceptions, such as members and family members of the armed forces

- have been in Great Britain for at least 2 of the last 3 years (this does not apply if you're a refugee or have humanitarian protection status)
- be habitually resident in the UK, Ireland, Isle of Man or the Channel Islands
- not be subject to immigration control (unless you're a sponsored immigrant)

## How do I claim Attendance Allowance?

Use the [Attendance Allowance claim form](#) to apply by post. The form comes with notes telling you how to fill it in.

Send the completed form to:

Attendance Allowance Unit

Mail Handling Site A

Wolverhampton

WV98 2AD

Call the Attendance Allowance helpline to ask for:

- a copy of the form
- alternative formats, such as braille, large print or audio CD.

### Attendance Allowance helpline

Telephone: 0800 731 0122

Textphone: 0800 731 0317

[NGT text relay](#) (if you cannot hear or speak on the phone): 18001 then 0800 731 0122

Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

Attendance Allowance can be backdated to the date of your claim. This is usually the date your form is received or the date you call the enquiry line (if you then return the claim pack within 6 weeks).

The form is lengthy but you can ask your local Age UK Advice line **0800 678 1602 (8am -7pm)** or visit your nearest Age UK if you need any help filling in the form, so as to increase your chances of being awarded Attendance Allowance. They are very helpful on this subject.

## Information that you will need to fill in the form.

**You could be asked for identification so you can use a passport, birth certificates, full driving license or a life assurance policy.**

- Your national insurance number
- Name of GP and surgery address
- Details of medication
- Details of anyone you have seen about your illness or disabilities in the last 12 months, apart from your GP
- Hospital record number (if there is one)
- Name and address of stay in hospital, care home or similar place

**Fill in the form. Be really clear about how your illness or disability affects your life and don't underestimate your needs.**

## Tips to help with the Attendance Allowance claim form

Think about all the things you can't do, or have trouble with:

- Explain the effects of all your disabilities and health conditions, and how they interact with each other.
- List things that you struggle to do unaided, even if you've developed ways to cope: getting around indoors, navigating stairs, moving from room to room, getting in and out of bed.
- If an activity takes you much longer than it would somebody without a disability, or if it's difficult to do safely, i.e. need help eating or drinking – do you need special cutlery or feeding cup? Difficulty operating the oven or doing other things in the kitchen.
- Say if you need reminding or encouraging doing things, as this also counts as help.
- Focus on how frequently you need help. For example, if you need help **looking after your appearance, this could add up to six or seven times a day**, if you include **help to get dressed or undressed or to check your clothes are clean after a meal, help to find a coat and matching shoes, and so on**.
- Going to the toilet, need help during the day or night. If you suffer from incontinence or need help changing beds.
- If poor eyesight and need help reading the post or for those with hearing issues and need help communicating or hearing doorbell.
- Give plenty of information in your own words about your personal circumstances. Don't worry if you need to repeat yourself.
- Bear in mind that Attendance Allowance doesn't usually take into account problems with housework, cooking, shopping and gardening.
- Don't leave things out, even if you feel you can manage well enough.
- Describe any accidents or falls you've had. Do you need someone to watch over you in case of seizure or fall?
- Are you confused so likely to put yourself in danger if no one is there to monitor.

Before you send it in, don't forget to attach any supporting information, such as GP letters, your care plan, or prescription lists.

Send in the form to the address on the form or submit it online.

The Department for Work and Pensions may contact you to ask for more information or ask you to attend an assessment to check your eligibility. It's a good idea to prepare for that visit by writing things down that you would want the doctor to know about.

## How much could I get?

You could get:

- **£58.70** if you need help and constant supervision during the day, or supervised at night.
- **£87.65** if you need help or supervision throughout both day and night or you're terminally ill.

These rates apply from **April 2019 to April 2020**

You will get a letter with the decision on whether or not you'll get Attendance Allowance, how much, and from what date. If you're not happy with the outcome, you can appeal.

---