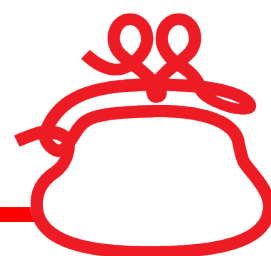


Disability Living Allowance



If you're looking after a child who is under 16 with a health condition or disability, they may qualify for Disability Living Allowance.

This information covers England, Wales and Northern Ireland. In Scotland, see our factsheet to consider applying for [Child Disability Payment](#) instead.

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What is Disability Living Allowance (DLA)?

If you are looking after a child with a health condition or disability who is under 16, they may be entitled to DLA. This can help towards the extra costs of bringing up a disabled child. DLA is not means-tested which means that your financial circumstances will not be taken into account, and it is a tax-free benefit.

DLA does not reduce other benefits. In fact, it may even increase another benefit you receive or help you to qualify for other benefits (such as Carer's Allowance) and/or tax credits. If your child is aged 16 or over and is not currently receiving DLA, they would need to claim Personal Independence Payment (PIP) instead.

▶▶ **Note:** In Scotland, Child Disability Payment (CDP) has replaced DLA for children. It has very similar qualifying criteria and will be paid until your child reaches 18.

If your child is currently receiving DLA for children, this will continue. All young people currently receiving DLA for children are being transferred to the new benefit. You will be contacted when this happens and won't have to do anything unless your circumstances change. If they change before, you will need to contact the Department of Work and Pensions.

Social Security Scotland will use information from your DLA for children award to pay you the same rate: mygov.scot/disability-living-allowance-for-children-is-moving

Who can claim DLA?

For a child under 16 to qualify for DLA, they must meet all of the following criteria:

- ▶ They must need care, attention or supervision because of a physical or mental disability or health condition (they do not need to have an actual diagnosis).

- They must have needed this care, attention or supervision for at least three months, and be likely to need this for a further six months (you can make the claim before the three months have passed, but you will not receive any payment until they have).
- They must need substantially more care, attention or supervision than other children of the same age who do not have a disability or health condition.
- They must not have any immigration conditions attached to their stay in the UK, subject to some exceptions. (If they have immigration restrictions on their stay in the UK, claiming benefits may affect their future right to remain in the UK.) Seek specialist immigration advice before claiming – you can search for immigration specialists at find-legal-advice.justice.gov.uk or lawsoc-ni.org/solicitors (in Northern Ireland).
- They meet the residence and presence conditions.

▶▶ **Note:** If your child is terminally ill, there are simpler rules which make it easier to apply – see page 8 for details.

How much is DLA worth?

There are two components of DLA paid at different levels as follows:

	Lower	Middle	Higher
Care component	£26.90	£68.10	£101.75
Mobility component	£26.90		£71.00

The care component

The care component of DLA can be paid to a child who needs a lot of extra help with personal care, supervision or being watched over. The help they need must be substantially more than the help needed by a child of the same age without a disability or health condition.

Lower rate component	For children who need help in connection with their personal care for a significant proportion of the day. (This generally means at least an hour a day – although this does not necessarily have to be all at once.)
Middle rate component	For children that have either daytime or night-time needs (see below). Special rules apply for some children undergoing renal dialysis at least twice a week.
Higher rate component	For children who have both daytime and night-time needs (see below). Your child will automatically get the higher rate if they are terminally ill.

Daytime test

To satisfy the daytime test, your child must need one of the following:

- frequent help with personal care (ie about three times a day or more) throughout the day
- someone to check on them continually (ie frequently or regularly) throughout the day to make sure they are safe.

Night-time test

To satisfy the night-time test, your child must need one of the following:

- help with personal care at least twice a night, or once a night for at least 20 minutes
- someone to check on them at least twice a night, or once a night for at least 20 minutes to make sure they are safe.

Explanation

Help with personal care includes activities such as:

- dressing and undressing
- bathing and washing
- using the toilet
- getting in and out of a chair
- getting in and out of bed and sleeping
- communicating^[SEP]
- help with medication and treatment
- eating and drinking
- seeing (ie they need someone to see for them)
- breathing.

A child is considered to need **someone to check on them** if they need to be checked on regularly during the day to avoid 'substantial danger' to themselves or others.

The mobility component

If your child needs help getting around, they may qualify for the mobility component. You need to show that your child is unable or virtually unable to walk and/or needs substantially more guidance and supervision than a child of the same age without a disability or health condition.

Lower rate mobility component	This can be paid to a child from the age of five years. It is for children who can walk but who need extra guidance or supervision on unfamiliar routes outdoors.
Higher rate mobility component	This can be paid to a child from the age of three years. It is for children who are unable or virtually unable to walk, or where the exertion required to walk would constitute a danger to their life or would be likely to lead to a serious deterioration in their health. Children can also qualify if they have a severe visual impairment, are both deaf and blind, or are severely mentally impaired.

Summary: Your child must be under the age of 16. For the lower rate

mobility component they must be aged over five and for the higher rate, they must be aged over three.

To qualify for the higher rate mobility component because of severe mental impairment, the child has to meet all the following criteria:

- be entitled to the higher rate care component of DLA
- suffer from a state of arrested development or incomplete physical development of the brain which results in severe mental impairment of intelligence or social functioning
- exhibit 'disruptive behaviour' which is extreme and 'regularly requires another person to intervene and physically restrain them to prevent them from causing injury to themselves or to another, or to damage property'
- be so unpredictable that they require another person to watch over them whenever they are awake.

How to claim DLA

England and Wales

- Call the Disability Living Allowance Helpline on **0800 121 4600** (textphone 0800 121 4523).
- Visit gov.uk/disability-living-allowance-children to download a claim form.

Scotland

- For new claims, you will need to claim Child Disability Payment instead. Call Social Security Scotland on **0800 182 2222** or apply online: www.mygov.scot/child-disability-payment/how-to-apply
- If you're a British Sign Language user, you can download an app to contact Social Security Scotland by video relay: <https://contactscotland-bsl.org>

Northern Ireland

- Call the Disability and Carers Service on **0800 587 0912** (textphone: 0800 012 1574).
- Visit nidirect.gov.uk/dla to download a claim form.

If you ask for a claim form by phone, it should be stamped with the date of issue. This is the date from which the benefit will be paid if the claim is successful, providing you return the form within six weeks. If you're not able to complete the form by this date, please let them know and seek advice.

If you download the claim form or get one from a local advice agency, the claim will start from the date the completed form is received. Read the form and the notes that go with it before you start to complete the form. You can attach pages to the application form if you think there is not enough space to explain the help that your child needs. Remember to add your child's name and date of birth to the extra pages.

Tips for completing the claim form

- The form is long and detailed so take your time to complete it, and remember that you don't have to complete it all in one go.
- List all of the help your child needs before completing the claim form.
- If you are not sure about how much help your child needs, or how long things take, keep a diary for a week or so to give you an idea.
- Say how often your child needs help, rather than how often they get help.
- This can be hard to do, but try to concentrate on the difficulties your child has and the extra support they need compared to other children of the same age.
- Try to use examples to describe your child's needs where possible – don't just rely on the tick boxes.
- Remember that the person who is looking at the form will not know your child and may not know anything about the condition.
- There is a page on the claim form called 'Statement from someone who knows the child' and if there is a professional (ie a school teacher, GP, therapist etc) who could write knowledgeably about your child, put their details on this page (if not you can fill it in yourself).

- If you put down the details of a professional, make sure the person is relevant. For example, if your child's needs are mainly night-time needs, there may be little point asking the school for details of their condition.
- If you give details of more than one professional on the form, make it clear which one knows your child the best.
- The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) or Department for Communities (Northern Ireland) may write to one of the professionals you list on the form, so make sure you inform the professionals that you are putting their details down.
- You could ask for help to complete the claim form from a local advice agency - see 'Further help' section.

If your child has a terminal illness

Special rules allow children who are terminally ill to get help quickly. A child is considered to be terminally ill if they have a progressive illness that is likely to limit their life expectancy to twelve months or less. It is impossible to say exactly how long someone will live and some children who receive DLA under these rules live longer than twelve months.

Under these special rules, you do not have to satisfy the qualifying period (ie that they much have needed, care, attention or supervision for at least three months, and be likely to need this for a further six months). They also do not have to have been present in Great Britain for 104 out of the last 156 weeks before claiming – they only need to be present at the time of claiming.

If you are claiming DLA for a child under these rules, their claim should include a DS1500 form, which is available from your GP or consultant. You do not have to complete the main part of the claim form that asks about your child's personal care or supervision needs as they will automatically qualify for the higher rate care component. You will, however, have to complete the sections about any mobility problems your child has for them to be awarded the mobility component.

In Scotland, Social Security Scotland have provided some information to help you claim and receive support quickly. See:

www.socialsecurity.gov.scot/asset-storage/production/downloads/Child-Disability-Payment-Special-Rules-for-Terminal-Illness-leaflet-for-

[patients.pdf](#)

The decision

You will receive a written decision on your claim that tells you what rates of DLA your child has been awarded and from what date. DLA can be awarded for a fixed period or for an indefinite period. If you are awarded the benefit for a fixed period, the decision will tell you when the period ends. A new claim form will be sent to you well before your child's award ends. To find out more about what happens if your child is soon to turn 16 years old, see page 13.

Challenging the decision

If your child is refused DLA or is awarded it at a lower rate than you expected, you can ask the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) (England, Wales and Scotland) or the Department for Communities (DfC) (Northern Ireland) to look at the decision again. You must do this before you appeal. This is called a mandatory reconsideration. If your child is refused Child Disability Payment in Scotland, you can ask Social Security Scotland to look at this again.

If you still disagree once they have done this, you must lodge an appeal with the Tribunal Service (England, Wales and Scotland) or the Appeal Service (TAS) (Northern Ireland) and attach a copy of the mandatory reconsideration notice with the appeal. You have the right to appeal Social Security Scotland's re-determination decision about your application for Child Disability Payment.

It is important to challenge a decision or get advice as quickly as possible because there are time limits that generally mean you must take action within one month. If you fall outside of this time limit then it may still be possible to challenge the decision. For more information about appealing a benefit decision visit carersuk.org/appealsguide

What to do if your circumstances change

If your child already gets DLA but they now need more help, it may be possible to get their award increased. You can contact the DWP (or Disability and Carers Service in Northern Ireland) and ask for your child's award to be looked at again.

If you ask for a DLA award to be looked at again, there is always the risk that the award could be decreased rather than increased. Therefore, it is always best to get help from a local advice agency before you contact the DWP (or Disability and Carers Service in Northern Ireland).

If your child is 16 or over and you ask for a DLA award to be looked at again, it is likely to instead be treated as a new claim for PIP – see page 13 for more details.

Going into hospital or a care home

DLA can be affected by your child having overnight stays away from home. There are different rules for this depending on whether your child goes into hospital or a care home.

Stays in hospital

If your child is under 18 when they enter hospital, their DLA can continue to be paid for the whole time they are there.

Stays in a care home

If your child is in a care home (which usually includes residential schools), generally payment of the care component will stop after 28 days. However, they can be paid the care component for any day they stay in your home, including the day they come home and the day they return. The mobility component is not affected by stays in a care home.

The rules differ if your child's stay in a care home is funded by NHS continuing healthcare, or if you pay for the care home yourself. If this situation applies to your child, seek further advice – see 'Further help'. Stays your child has in a care home separated by 28 days or less are added together when working out when their DLA should stop. This is known as the 'linking rule'.

Other help you may qualify for

Means-tested benefits and tax credits

If your child has been awarded DLA, it is always a good idea to check if you are entitled to an increase in any means-tested benefits, tax credits or Universal Credit that you are already getting, or if you might be entitled to any means-tested benefits or tax credits that you are not currently getting.

If you're already receiving any means-tested benefits, tax credits or Universal Credit, you should notify all of the offices paying them that your child is now receiving DLA. Please note – you can still get the extra amounts below in Child Tax Credits and Universal Credit even if your child is not included in your claim due to the 'two child limit'.

DLA and Child Tax Credits

Child Tax Credit is assessed more generously when a child receives DLA. This is because families will qualify for an extra disability element which will increase the amount of Child Tax Credits they are awarded. If your child is awarded the higher rate care component of DLA, a severe disability element will increase the amount of Child Tax Credit even more.

DLA and Income Support

If you still receive an amount for your child in your Income Support award, your child's award of DLA means you will qualify for a disabled child premium in your Income Support calculation. If your child is awarded the higher rate of the care component of DLA, an enhanced disability premium will increase the amount of Income Support even more.

DLA and Universal Credit

Universal Credit is assessed more generously when a child receives DLA. This is because families will qualify for an extra disabled child addition which will increase the amount of Universal Credit they are awarded. If your child is awarded the higher rate care component of DLA, a higher disabled child addition will increase the amount even more.

DLA and Housing Benefit

If you get Housing Benefit then getting DLA for your child may increase the amount of Housing Benefit you are awarded (if you are not already getting

your rent covered through Housing Benefit in full).

Getting a benefits check

You can find out about any benefits you might be entitled to and how much you should be paid by having an online benefits check (see following note).

►► **Note:** You can get a personalised benefits check online, for example at: carersuk.org/benefits-calculator. It will take about 20 minutes to complete.

These online tools are not suitable for everyone. Special rules apply to some groups of people, for example students, people under 18, people in permanent residential care, UK nationals who live abroad and people who are not British or Irish citizens.

Exemption from the benefit cap

If your child is receiving DLA, this will mean that you are exempt from the benefit cap.

DLA and Carer's Allowance

If your child is awarded the middle or higher rate of the care component of DLA, you may be able to claim Carer's Allowance for providing them with care. To find out more about Carer's Allowance, visit carersuk.org/carersallowance to download our factsheet.

Help with transport costs

Motability

If your child is awarded the higher rate mobility component of DLA, you may be able to apply to the Motability scheme. Through this scheme you can use your child's mobility component to lease or buy a car, wheelchair or scooter. If you're unable to drive and need help with paying for lessons, or require help in getting a deposit for a car through the scheme, you may qualify for a grant. To find out more or apply for the scheme, contact Motability – see page 16 for contact details.

Blue Badge Scheme

If your child is awarded the higher rate mobility component of DLA, you should qualify for a Blue Badge, which will give you parking concessions. You might also qualify for a Blue Badge if your child isn't awarded the higher rate mobility component of DLA but meets certain conditions. In England, Wales and Scotland, you can apply online: www.gov.uk/apply-blue-badge or contact your local council for further information. The council will want to see all pages of the award letter. In Northern Ireland, you can apply online: www.nidirect.gov.uk/services/apply-or-renew-blue-badge-online or call the Blue Badge Unit on 0300 200 7818.

Road tax

You may be exempt from paying Vehicle Excise Duty if your child gets the higher rate mobility component of DLA. You will usually be told about this in your child's DLA award letter. Contact the DLA helpline for more details.

Public transport concessions

All local councils operate schemes for disabled people to help with the cost of travel. Such help is not directly linked to whether or not your child receives DLA. In some areas, the disabled person and a named carer accompanying them are entitled to free travel. Such schemes vary from one council to another so get in contact with your local council for further information on what is available in your area. In Northern Ireland, all bus and rail transport is operated by Translink – you can contact them on 028 9066 6630.

What happens when your child turns 16?

About Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

PIP has replaced DLA for people who are aged 16 and over. (This is the case for everyone who was under 65 on 8 April 2013 in England, Wales and Scotland, or under 65 on 20 June 2016 in Northern Ireland.) Children who get DLA who are turning 16 will be invited to claim PIP shortly after their 16th birthday, even if they have an indefinite award of DLA.

The DWP (Disability and Carers Service in Northern Ireland) will write to the appointee of children approaching 16 years old to explain PIP and to check whether the child will continue to need an appointee to act on their behalf. If so, they will begin the process of making the appointeeship. Alternatively, once the child turns 16 the DWP (Disability and Carers

Service in Northern Ireland) will write to them directly inviting them to claim PIP. In Scotland, there will be a choice for young people/families as to whether they continue to receive the Child Disability Payment (see page 2) until the age of 18 or apply for Adult Disability Payment. To download our factsheet, visit carersuk.org/adp

PIP decision

If a young person makes a claim for PIP, their DLA will continue to be paid until a decision is made on their PIP claim. When the decision on their claim is made, their DLA will end even if they currently have an indefinite award. If the young person is awarded PIP, it may be the same amount or more or less than their current DLA. This could affect other benefits that the young person, or others in their household, may receive.

Special rules for terminally ill people

Those who are being paid DLA under the special rules for terminally ill people will be invited to claim PIP at the end of their existing DLA award.

Residence and presence

To satisfy the residence and presence tests you must meet both the following conditions:

- You must have been present in Great Britain (which for this purpose also includes Northern Ireland) for 104 weeks out of the 156 weeks before claiming (two out of the last three years).
- You must be habitually resident.

‘Present’ means physically present in Great Britain, although some people may be treated as being in Great Britain while abroad. The past presence test does not apply to people recognised as refugees and their families, or those claiming DLA under the special rules for terminal illness.

The rules in this area can be complicated. You can get advice and support from your local Citizens Advice: citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/contact-us/contact-us/contact-us The AIRE Centre can also provide advice on individual rights in Europe and can be contacted on 020 7831 4276 or by email at info@airecentre.org

If the child is under six months old, a 13-week presence test applies until their first birthday. If they are aged 6-26 months, the test is 26 in the last 156 weeks. The habitual residence test is a test to see if your child normally lives in the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands, the Republic of Ireland or the Isle of Man. The test will be applied if you have been living abroad. There is no precise legal definition of ‘habitual residence’. The following should be considered:

- Where they normally live.
- Where they expect to live in future.
- Their reasons for coming to this country.
- The length of time spent abroad before they came here.
- Any ties they still have with the country where they have come from.

Further help

Our website contains a wealth of useful information on the financial and practical matters related to caring. Visit [carersuk.org](https://www.carersuk.org) and click on “Help and Advice” in the main menu. You can find details of your local carers’ organisation on our website at [carersuk.org/local-support](https://www.carersuk.org/local-support)

You can contact the Carers UK Helpline on 0808 808 7777 or email advice@carersuk.org. If you live in Northern Ireland you can contact Carers Northern Ireland on 028 9043 9843 or email advice@carersni.org

Other organisations

The Appeals Service Northern Ireland

The service that handles the appeals process for benefit decisions in Northern Ireland.

w: nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/contacts-az/appeals-service-benefits-appeals

Contact

A national charity that supports the families of children with additional needs (UK wide).

w: contact.org.uk | **t:** 0808 808 3555 **e:** helpline@contact.org.uk

Citizens Advice or Advice NI (for Northern Ireland)

Provides free, independent, confidential and impartial advice

w: citizensadvice.org.uk or adviceni.net/ (Northern Ireland)

HM Courts and Tribunals Service

To search for a court or tribunal in *England* or *Wales*, or a tribunal in *Scotland*. **w:** <https://courttribunalfinder.service.gov.uk/search/>

Independent Case Examiner

A free complaints review service for people who have made complaints about their claim for benefits (*UK wide*). **w:** ind-case-exam.org.uk

t: 0800 414 8529 (textphone: 18001 0800 414 8529)

Motability

Motability help people get mobile by exchanging their mobility allowance to lease a car, scooter or powered wheelchair (*UK wide*).

w: motability.co.uk | **t:** 0300 456 4566

NI Ombudsman

The government official responsible for dealing with complaints about state services. Northern Ireland

w: nipso.org.uk | **t:** 0800 343424 (textphone: 028 90897789)

Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman

The government official responsible for dealing with complaints about state services. England and Wales

w: ombudsman.org.uk | **t:** 0345 015 4033 (textphone: 0300 061 4298)

Benefit helplines

Northern Ireland has three helplines for different purposes:

Benefits Enquiry Line for general questions

t: 0800 220 674 (textphone: 028 9031 1092)

Welfare Changes Helpline for independent advice on benefits changes

t: 0808 802 0020

Make the Call to check you're not missing out on benefits

t: 0800 232 1271

In Northern Ireland there is one contact for Attendance Allowance, Carer's Allowance and Disability Living Allowance, the Northern Ireland Disability and Carers Service: t: 0800 587 0912 (textphone: 0800 012 1574)

Attendance Allowance

England, Wales and Scotland

t: 0800 731 0122 (textphone: 0800 731 0317)

Carer's Allowance Unit

England, Wales and Scotland

t: 0800 731 0297 (textphone: 0800 731 0317)

In Scotland: for Carer's Allowance Supplement/Young Carer Grant/Child Disability Payment/Child Winter Heating Assistance

Social Security Scotland

t: 0800 182 2222 (textphone: 0800 731 0317)

Disability Living Allowance

England, Wales and Scotland

- If you were born on or before 8 April 1948:

t: 0800 731 0122 (textphone: 0800 731 0317)

- If you were born after 8 April 1948:

t: 0800 121 4600 (textphone: 0800 121 4523)

For Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), Income Support and Employment and Support Allowance (ESA):

Jobcentre Plus (England, Wales & Scotland)

New claims t: 0800 055 6688 (textphone: 0800 023 4888)

Existing claims t: 0800 169 0310 (textphone: 0800 169 0314)

Social Security or Jobs & Benefits Office (Northern Ireland)

Details of local offices: w: nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/jobs-benefits-offices

New ESA claims t: 0800 085 6318 (textphone: 0800 328 3419)

Existing claims t: 0800 587 1377 (textphone: 0800 328 3419)

Pension Credit and Pension Service

(England, Wales and Scotland)

Pension Credit claim line: t: 0800 99 1234 (textphone: 0800 169 0133)

State Pension claim line: t: 0800 731 7898 (textphone: 0800 731 7339)
(Northern Ireland)

Pension Credit: t: 0808 100 6165 (textphone 0808 100 2198)

State Pension claim line: t: 0808 100 2658 (textphone: 0800 100 2198)

Personal Independence Payment

England, Wales and Scotland

New claims **t:** 0800 917 2222 (textphone: 0800 917 7777)

Enquiry line **t:** 0800 121 4433 (textphone: 0800 121 4493)

Northern Ireland

New claims **t:** 0800 012 1573 (textphone: 0800 587 0937)

Enquiry line **t:** 0800 587 0932 (textphone: 0800 587 0937)

Tax Credits

England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland

t: 0345 300 3900 (textphone: 18001 0345 300 3909)

Universal Credit Helpline/ New Style Employment and Support Allowance

England, Wales and Scotland

t: 0800 328 5644 (textphone: 0800 328 1344)

Northern Ireland


t: 0800 012 1331 (textphone: 0800 012 1441)

This factsheet is designed to provide helpful information and advice. It is not an authoritative statement of the law. We work to ensure that our factsheets are accurate and up to date, but information about benefits and community care is subject to change over time. We would recommend contacting the Carers UK Helpline or visiting our website for the latest information.

Please email us your feedback on this factsheet by sending your comments to info@carersuk.org
This factsheet was updated in April 2023. Next review due April 2024.

Carers UK Helpline

For information and guidance about caring

 0808 808 7777

 advice@carersuk.org

Carers UK

20 Great Dover Street
London SE1 4LX
020 7378 4999
info@carersuk.org

Carers Wales

029 2081 1370
info@carerswales.org

Carers Scotland

0141 378 1065
info@carerscotland.org

Carers Northern Ireland

advice@carersuk.org

However caring affects you, we're here

Caring will affect us all at some point in our lives.

With your help, we can be there for the 6,000 people who start looking after someone each day.

We're the UK's only national membership charity for carers: join us for free at carersuk.org/join

We're both a support network and a movement for change.

Visit us at our website to join us, help us or access more resources: carersuk.org

This information can be requested in large print or as a text file.