

Carer's Allowance (Pensionable Age)

This factsheet contains information about benefit entitlement if you are caring for someone who receives Attendance Allowance, the middle/higher rate of the care component of Disability Living Allowance, the 'daily living' element of the new Personal Independence Payment or Armed Forces Independence Payment. It is specifically concerned with claimants receiving Retirement Pension.

Amount

From April 2015 Carer's Allowance itself is worth £62.10 per week. However, if you receive a State Pension you are unlikely to receive Carer's Allowance but, by claiming it, you may gain increases in other benefits you receive.

Basic Rules

The qualifying rules are:

- You must be over 16 years old. There is no upper age limit.
- You must be caring for someone who receives Attendance Allowance, the middle/higher rate of the care component of Disability Living Allowance, the 'daily living' component of Personal independence Payment or the Armed Forces Independence Payment. Someone receiving Constant Attendance Allowance (part of the Industrial Injuries or War Pensions schemes) also counts.
- You must spend at least 35 hours a week looking after the person. This might be made up of a variety of activities such as: personal care, shopping, talking to them, keeping an eye on them in case of accidents, helping them with tasks around the home. It does not have to be 35 hours of hands-on personal help.
- If you are working, you must be earning less than £110 net per week (i.e. after deducting income tax, national insurance, 50% of any personal/occupational pension contributions and certain care costs).
- You must not be in full-time education – i.e. 21 hours or more hours a week of supervised study – this normally includes any time spent in directed study or set work as a necessary part of the course.
- You must be present and ordinarily resident in the UK.

Even if you care for more than one person, you can only get one payment of Carer's Allowance.

Effect on person you care for?

Sometimes, claiming Carer's Allowance can affect the benefits of the person you are caring for. This does not usually happen if the carer is over retirement age, but if you want to check please phone our Helpline (see back page) and a Welfare Rights Officer will be able to advise you.

Overlap with other benefits – underlying entitlement

If you receive a State Retirement Pension of more than the amount of Carer's Allowance, i.e. £62.10, you cannot receive Carer's Allowance as well. However, due to a rule which gives you 'underlying entitlement' to Carer's Allowance even when you don't actually receive it, by claiming it you may get an increase in other, means-tested benefits. The increase is paid even though you don't actually receive any Carer's Allowance as such. Many people benefit from this rule – you can check whether the rule applies to you by contacting our Helpline.

Increases to other benefits

If you claim Carer's Allowance and get underlying entitlement you will be entitled to have a carer's premium included in your assessment for Pension Credit, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit. This premium is worth up to £34.60 (£69.20 if both members of a couple are able to claim).

Breaks from caring

You remain entitled to Carer's Allowance and underlying entitlement during short breaks from caring – i.e. up to 4 weeks in any 6 months and longer if either you or the person you care for is in hospital.

Making a claim

You claim on a form DS700(SP) if you get a State Retirement Pension.

You can obtain a claim form from the following sources:

Our Benefits Helpline on 01629 531535

Carer's Allowance Unit on 0845 608 4321 (textphone 0845 604 5312)

Backdating

You should make your claim as soon as possible and you can have it backdated for up to 3 months during any period that you qualified for it. It can be backdated for longer if the person you care for has only recently received the decision awarding Attendance Allowance of the relevant level of Personal Independence Payment or Disability Living Allowance and the award starts more than 3 months ago – in this case it can go back to the date their claim begins as long as you claim within 3 months of the date of their decision.

Armed Forces Independence Payment

This is a new tax-free benefit payable to Armed Forces personnel who are injured in service. It is an alternative to Personal Independence Payment, but those who cannot claim AFIP may be able to get PIP instead.

Further advice is available from the Veterans Helpline 0800 169 2277.

Additional information can be found on our website, visit www.derbyshire.gov.uk/welfarebenefits

Benefits Helpline – 01629 531535
Monday to Friday – 11.00am – 4.30pm