Nottinghamshire County Council

Disability Living Allowance (DLA)

What is Disability Living Allowance?

Disability Living Allowance is a tax free benefit payable to those who make their first claim under the age of 65 and who need help looking after themselves and/or find it difficult to walk or get around because of an illness or disability.

Important points about DLA

- It is not affected by your income or savings or those of your partner.
- It does not matter if you live alone, you can still get the allowance.
- It does **not** reduce other Social Security benefits. In fact getting DLA may entitle you and your carer, if you have one to extra Income Support, Income-Related Employment Support Allowance or Pension Credit, Housing Benefit, and Council Tax Benefit or may mean you qualify for them for the first time.
- **Get advice if you qualify for DLA and have someone who regularly looks after you.** They may be able to claim Carer's Allowance. See our Carer's Allowance fact sheet for further information.
- If you go into hospital or a residential care home your DLA payment for care or mobility may stop or be reduced. These payments should be reinstated if you return home.
- People over the age of 65 who are claiming for the first time and need care should claim Attendance Allowance.
- DLA is paid to the person with the disability or illness and can be spent in any way they choose.

How to qualify for Disability Living Allowance

Disability can be claimed for the first time by anyone under the age of 65. You must have needed help for at least 3 months.

Disability Living Allowance is paid in two parts. These are called the Mobility and Care component. You can claim and be awarded both components or just one of them.

The Mobility Component

The Mobility Component can be claimed between the ages of 3 and 65 if you have had difficulty in walking for at least three months.

There is **no** mobility payment for people making a first claim over the age of 65. Therefore it is important to claim in good time to avoid losing out all together.

The Mobility component is paid at two rates:

Higher Rate - £54.05 per week
From age 3-65

This is payable if you have problems with walking such as:

- Your walking is slow, difficult or painful.
- The effort of walking could be a serious risk to your health.
- Walking makes you breathless or very tired after only a short distance.
- You are deaf and blind. Here you should automatically qualify.

- You are unable to walk at all. For example if you use a wheelchair, or are confined to bed you can qualify if you can show you will be able to go out, even if it is only once a year.
- You are also entitled to the higher rate of mobility if you are severely mentally impaired with behavioural problems and get the highest rate of DLA for your care needs.
- If you are registered blind **and** your visual acuity or field of vision are below certain levels you will qualify for the higher rate.

Mrs Bushell is 64 years old. She has heart trouble and when she walks out of doors just a short distance she gets pains in her chest and becomes very breathless. She gets DLA higher mobility component.

The Lower Rate - £20.55 per week
From age 5 – 65

If you do not fit any of the conditions described above you may still qualify for the lower rate.

- This applies if due to a mental or physical illness or disability you are unable to walk outside without help from another person for most of the time. This may be to help you find your way around or to keep you safe from traffic or falling over.
- For example people with impaired sight, a learning disability or severe mental health problems may qualify.

The Care Component

The care component is paid at three rates depending on the level and type of care you need. You must have needed the help for at least three months to qualify.

Highest Rate - £77.45 per week

To qualify for the higher rate you must need help during the day **and** night with things such as:

- Getting in/out of bed and settling in bed
- Going to the toilet/commode
- Bathing, showering and looking after your appearance.
- Dressing or undressing
- Moving around indoors
- Help from another with communicating. For example, going to social events, dealing with correspondence.
- Assistance with any of these tasks due to difficulty you have seeing.
- Eating or drinking, cooking a meal.
- Taking medicines
- Turning over in bed

AND/OR

- You need someone with you because you may have an accident or are likely to fall.
- You suffer from fits or blackouts and may injure yourself when these occur.
- You may be forgetful and unable to make decisions so need someone around to keep an eye on you. This could include things such as forgetting to turn gas rings off or not locking the door.

Middle Rate - £51.85 per week

You will qualify for the middle rate if you require the kind of care described above during the day or night but not both.

- This means help with personal care such as washing, dressing and/or need someone to keep an eye on you so that you avoid hurting yourself or someone else.

Joe often has epileptic seizures so needs supervision. He lives with his wife and she listens out in case he needs help when he has a fit. He gets the middle care component and the lower mobility component because he needs someone there so that he does not hurt himself.

Lower Rate - £20.55 per week

If you do not need as much help as described above but need help (for about 1 hour a day) but don't need someone around all day you may be entitled to the lower rate of the care

component. You may need help with things such as:

- Washing, dressing, bathing or showering, getting to the toilet etc.

If you are over 16 and cannot prepare a cooked meal for yourself if you have the necessary ingredients, you may also be entitled to the lower rate of the Care component. This could be due to, for example:

- not being able to lift heavy pans
- not being able to turn taps
- not being able to remember the way to cook a meal.

Steven uses a wheelchair due to being paralysed. He works full time. He receives the lower care component and the higher mobility component which he has put towards buying an adapted car through the Motability scheme.

People who are terminally ill

There are special rules that apply to people who may not have longer than 6 months to live because of an illness. Getting paid under these rules means you automatically get the higher rate of the care component. You do not need to have required help for the last three months. Claims are also dealt with more quickly.

How to apply

You can obtain an application form by telephoning free on 0800 882200 (text phone 0800 243355) between 8.30am and 6.30pm Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 1.00pm Saturdays. Forms are also available from local Jobcentre plus offices.

If you are refused DLA

If you are refused DLA or are only awarded a lower rate you can ask them to look at their decision again. This is called a reconsideration.

If you are still refused and disagree with the decision you can appeal to an independent tribunal. Many decisions are changed on appeal.

Please see our challenging decisions web page and Social Security and Tax Credits Tribunals factsheet for further information and advice about challenging a decision.

If you get the Allowance

Don't forget to ask if you or your carer, are entitled to any other Social Security benefits.

When people qualify for Disability Living Allowance they often get extra Income Support, Income-Related Employment Support Allowance, Pension Credit, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit, or qualify for them for the first time.

If you have a person caring for you they may also be able to claim Carer's Allowance. See our Carer's Allowance Fact Sheet for further advice and information on this.

If you are 65 or over and claiming for the first time and need help you may be able to claim Attendance Allowance.

IF IN DOUBT – CLAIM NOW

If you need further advice on claiming Disability Living Allowance you can find out where your nearest advice centre is located by contacting Nottinghamshire County Council on the contact details provided below or visit our benefit advice pages at www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/benefitsadvice

Contact information:

Phone: 0300 500 80 80
Monday to Friday: 8am to 8pm
Saturday: 8am to 12 noon

Email: enquiries@nottscc.gov.uk
Website: www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk
Minicom: 01623 434993

Phone 0300 500 80 80 if you need the information in a different language or format.