



# Disability Living Allowance (DLA)

## What is DLA and can I make a new claim?

Disability Living Allowance (DLA) is a tax-free benefit which is paid weekly. It is paid to people who were previously awarded this benefit if their disability or health condition meant they needed help to look after themselves and/or have walking difficulties.

Anyone over 16 must now apply for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) instead of DLA, if claiming for the first time. Some may be entitled to reclaim DLA, see the GOV.UK website for details. **For most, you can only make a new claim for DLA if you're claiming for a child under 16.**

## Existing Claims

- If you were 65 or over on **8 April 2013** and had an award of **DLA** you can continue to be paid this if you continue to be eligible.
- PIP is gradually replacing DLA for all people who were aged 16 – 64 on **8 April 2013** and who were in receipt of DLA. This includes those who had an indefinite or lifetime award.
- Your DLA may not be affected until later in 2015 but there are exceptions to this. These exceptions include, if there is a change in how your condition affects you **or** if your DLA is due to end and you live in particular areas of the country (which includes postcodes within the East Midlands). At this point, you will be invited to claim PIP. To see whether this applies to you go to [www.gov.uk/pip-checker](http://www.gov.uk/pip-checker)

## Important points about DLA

- It is not affected by your income or savings or those of any partner you may have.
- If you live alone you can still get DLA.
- It **does not** reduce other Social Security benefits. DLA may entitle you to extra Income-Based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support, Income-Related Employment and Support Allowance or Pension Credit, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support 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 factsheet for further information on this.
- If you go into hospital or a residential care home your DLA payment may stop. You need to inform DLA of this change of circumstance. These payments should be reinstated if you return home.
- People over the age of 65 who are claiming for the first time and need help with personal care needs or supervision to remain safe should claim Attendance Allowance. See our Attendance Allowance fact sheet for further information and advice.
- DLA is paid to the person with the disability or illness and can be spent in any way they choose.

## The Mobility and Care Components

DLA is paid in two parts, the Mobility and Care Components.

The Mobility Component is paid at two rates:

### Higher Rate - £ 57.45

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 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 if you are:

- severely mentally impaired with behavioural problems and get the higher rate of DLA care component.
- registered blind and your visual acuity or field of vision are below certain levels you will qualify for the higher rate.
- deaf and blind you should **automatically** qualify for higher rate.

If you get the higher rate of the mobility component you can swap the money you receive for a motability car. For further information on this go to [www.motability.co.uk](http://www.motability.co.uk)

Mrs Bushell is 64-years-old. She has heart trouble and when she walks a short distance outdoors she gets pains in her chest and becomes very breathless. She gets DLA higher rate mobility component which she exchanges for a car through the Motability scheme.

### Lower Rate - £21.80

If you are not entitled to the higher rate you may be entitled to the lower rate 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.
- You are someone with impaired sight, or who has a learning disability or severe mental health problems.

If you were 65 or over on **8 April 2013** and were in receipt of DLA, you will remain on DLA if you continue to meet the criteria. You cannot however, be awarded the Mobility Component for the first time or an increase in the Mobility Component if you are 65 or over.

The Care Component is paid at three rates:

### Higher Rate - £82.30

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/or looking after your appearance
- Dressing and/or undressing
- Moving around indoors
- Help from another with communicating
- Assistance with any of these tasks due to difficulty you have seeing
- Eating or drinking and/or cooking a meal
- Taking medication.

### And/or need

- Someone keeping an eye on you e.g. because you may have an accident or are likely to fall. You may suffer from fits or blackouts and may injure yourself when these occur
- Someone to ensure you are safe. You may be forgetful and unable to make decisions, so need someone to keep an eye on you. This could include forgetting to turn the gas off or not locking doors.

## **Middle Rate - £55.10**

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

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

## **Lower Rate - £21.80**

If you do not need as much help as described above but need help for about one hour a day, you may be entitled to the lower rate of the care component. You may need help with things such as:

- Washing
- Dressing and undressing
- Getting to the toilet etc.

If you cannot prepare a cooked meal for yourself, if you had 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 rate care component and higher mobility component.

## **People who are terminally ill**

There are special rules that apply to people who may not have longer than six months to live. Being paid under these rules mean you automatically get the higher rate of the care component. You do not need to have required help for the past three months and claims are processed quicker under these rules. You will

need to be assessed for the mobility component.

## **How to request an increase in your DLA award if your needs have changed**

If there is a change in your care or mobility needs and you have an existing award of DLA, contact the Disability Benefits helpline on 0345 712 3456. If, due to the area of the country that you live in and your postcode, you need to make a claim for PIP you will be invited to do so. If not, you will be sent a claim form from DLA to complete and return.

## **If you are refused an increase in your DLA**

You can ask DLA to reconsider the decision they have made verbally, over the phone or in writing. This is called a 'mandatory reconsideration' and must be requested within one calendar month of receiving the decision notice. See our 'Challenging a benefits decision' factsheet for further information and advice on this.

## **If you get an increase in your DLA award**

Any increase in DLA, may entitle you and/or any carer you have to an increase in other benefits or may entitle you to them for the first time. You should seek advice on this subject.

If you need further advice on DLA, you can contact Nottinghamshire County Council for more information using the details provided below.

## Contact information:

Phone: 0300 500 80 80

Monday to Friday: 8am to 8pm

Saturday: 8am to 12 noon

(Calls cost 3p a minute from a BT landline.

Mobile costs may vary).

Email: [enquiries@nottscc.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@nottscc.gov.uk)

Website: [www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk](http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk)

Minicom: 01623 434993

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