

Nottinghamshire
County Council

Attendance Allowance (A.A.)

A Benefit for People
over 65 with Disabilities
April 2009



Miss Walker is aged 73 and lives alone. She has arthritis and needs a lot of help with washing and dressing. Her friends come in to help her out. She gets the lower rate of Attendance Allowance. She now gets more Pension Credit because she is entitled to the Severe Disability addition.

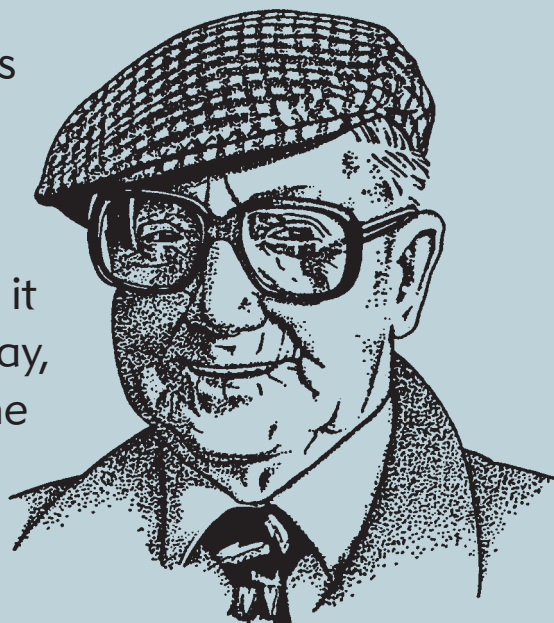


Mr Lewis has a bad heart and recently suffered a mild stroke. He is unsteady on his feet and often falls. His neighbours call in to check he is alright and help him get dressed and go to the toilet. He gets the lower rate of Attendance Allowance and as a result gets extra help with his rent and Council Tax.

What is Attendance Allowance?

Attendance Allowance is a non taxable weekly benefit paid to people over the age of 65 who need a lot of looking after because they have an illness or disability.

Mr Grant is 80 years old and needs someone with him during the day and night because he has a tendency to wander off and cannot find his way home. His daughter and brother take it in turns to stay with him during the day, and to stay awake at night to ensure he is safe. He qualifies for the higher rate of Attendance Allowance.



Important Points About Attendance Allowance

- It is not affected by your income or savings or those of your partner.
- It does **not** reduce other Social Security benefits. In fact getting Attendance Allowance may entitle you and your carer, if you have one, to extra Pension Credit, Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit, or means you qualify for them for the first time. If you have someone who regularly looks after you they may also be able to claim Carer's Allowance. **Get Advice on this if you qualify for Attendance Allowance.**
- If you go into hospital or a residential care home your Attendance Allowance may stop, but it should be reinstated if you return home even if it is only for a weekend.
- It doesn't matter if you live alone you can still get the allowance.
- Attendance Allowance is paid to the person who needs the care, and can be spent in any way you choose.
- It doesn't matter how much care you receive, the important thing is how much care you **need**.

How to Qualify for Attendance Allowance

To qualify for the Attendance Allowance you must be 65 or over and have needed help for at least six months.

It is paid at two rates depending on how much care you need;

Lower Rate – £47.10 per week

To qualify for the lower rate you must need help frequently during the day **or** night with things such as:

- getting in and out of bed
- going to the toilet/commode
- washing
- shaving or doing your hair
- dressing or undressing
- moving around indoors
- help from another person with communicating which would allow you to, for example, go to social events, or to visit the doctor/dentist
- having a bath/shower
- eating or drinking
- taking medicines
- climbing stairs
- turning over in bed
- changing soiled sheets or bed clothes during the night
- reading correspondence or a newspaper for you because you have difficulty seeing

If you just need someone to do your shopping and household cleaning for you this will not count towards qualifying for the allowance.

AND/OR

You may also qualify if you need someone with you because:

- you are unsteady on your feet and liable to fall;
- you suffer from fits or black outs and may injure yourself;
- you cannot see or hear very well;
- you are very forgetful and find it difficult to make decisions so need someone to keep an eye on you. This can include things such as forgetting to turn the gas rings off or not locking the door;
- you don't really understand when something is dangerous, for example not being aware of traffic when crossing the road.



Ann had to give up full time work. She now works part-time and cares for her elderly mother who is terminally ill and needs a lot of looking after. Her mother gets the higher rate of Attendance Allowance and Ann gets Carer's Allowance for herself and earns £95 per week from her part-time job.

Higher Rate – £70.35 per week

To qualify for the higher rate you must need the kind of care described above during the day **and** night. This means someone to help with things like taking tablets, using the toilet and turning over in bed, or for someone to be with you day **and** night to avoid you harming yourself or someone else. If you need someone to be watching over you at night, to get the Allowance they have to be awake for periods or getting up at least three times a night to check how you are.

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 special rules means you automatically get the £70.35 per week higher rate of Attendance Allowance whether or not you need any help, plus you do not need to have required help for the last 6 months. Claims are also dealt with more quickly. There is a special section in the claim pack to apply under these special rules.

How To Apply

You can phone the Department for Work and Pension's Benefit Enquiry Line free on 0800 882200 (Textphone 0800 243355) between 8.30 to 6.30 p.m. Monday to Friday, 9.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. Saturdays to order the claim pack AA1A. Forms are also available by telephoning the Pension Service on 0845 6060265 (Textphone 0845 6060285) or from your local Citizens Advice Bureau.

The form is rather long and complicated and it is best to get help with filling it in from your local welfare rights adviser, or Citizen's Advice Bureau. Many people are refused the allowance just because they do not put enough information on their claim form.

Telephone Nottinghamshire Welfare Rights Service on 0115 977 4018 Minicom 01623 520247 or visit our website at: www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/benefitsadvice to find out where your nearest advice agency is located. You can also ring the Department for Work and Pension's Benefit Enquiry Line for people with disabilities and their carers free on 0800 882200 (text phone 0800 243355) if you need help filling in the form.

If you are refused Attendance Allowance

If you are refused Attendance Allowance or are only awarded the lower rate and think you should get the higher 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. Up to 50% of people are successful when they ask for the decision to be looked at again.

Don't be put off if you are turned down at first, ask for advice to help you challenge the decision. (See above for how to find out where your local advice agency is.)



Mrs Lal is aged 66 and is blind. Her friend comes in every day to read her mail, guide her when she goes out of doors, help with washing and dressing and preparing her meals. Mrs Lal gets the lower rate of Attendance Allowance.

If You Get The Allowance

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

When people qualify for Attendance Allowance they often get extra 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 the previous page to find out where you can get further advice about this.

If you are under 65 and need help you may be able to claim Disability Living Allowance.



Mrs Jones lives with her daughter. She is very forgetful and confused and sometimes leaves the gas rings on and forgets to get dressed. She cannot be left safely in the house on her own. She gets the lower rate of Attendance Allowance.

IF IN DOUBT – CLAIM NOW

The Illustrations in this leaflet were drawn from models.



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