



Nottinghamshire
County Council

Nottinghamshire Welfare Rights Service

Carer's Allowance Factsheet

April 2009

Carer's Allowance is a weekly benefit for people who look after family, partners or friends because they are ill, frail or have a disability. You don't have to be related to, or live with, the person you look after to get the Allowance. It is also not affected by any savings you may have.

You can claim Carer's Allowance if:

- You are aged over 16.
- You spend at least 35 hours a week caring for a person who gets Attendance Allowance (any rate) or Disability Living Allowance care component (middle or higher rate); or constant Attendance Allowance paid with a War Pension, or Industrial Disablement Pension **AND**
- You do not earn more than £95.00 a week (after certain expenses are deducted).
- You live in Great Britain.
- You are NOT studying on a full-time course.

Some people, especially older people over pension age, cannot actually be *paid* any Carer's Allowance because it will overlap with their Retirement Pension or another benefit that they receive, such as Incapacity Benefit. Carer's Allowance is currently £53.10 per week. Other benefits, such as Retirement Pension, are likely to be more than this and you can only receive the higher of the two benefits.

However, it is still worth claiming, as you will have an **underlying entitlement** to Carer's Allowance, which will then entitle you to an additional carers premium on other benefits. This carer's premium is worth £29.50 a week and in some cases this could mean you are entitled to Pension Credit, Income Support, Housing Benefit or Council Tax benefit for the first time, or extra money on these benefits if you already get them.

For example:

Rosie is sixty six and cares for her sister Molly who lives with her. Molly is in receipt of Attendance Allowance so Rosie can claim Carer's Allowance, as long as she fulfils all the usual conditions (caring 35 hours plus a week etc.). Rosie gets £95.25 a week Retirement Pension, which is more than the £53.10 Carer's Allowance she would receive, and so she can't actually be paid the Allowance.

She gets a letter telling her this, which she can use as proof of her 'underlying entitlement'.

She is already getting Pension Credit but once she shows the Pension Service her letter about Carer's Allowance she gets an extra £29.50 a week added to her Pension Credit.

Or

Robert is a lone parent, who cares for his disabled son Sam who has muscular dystrophy. Sam is getting the middle rate care component of Disability Living Allowance. Robert works part-time and earns £20 per week. He claims Income Support of £64.30, Child Tax Credit and Child Benefit. When he claims Carer's Allowance this is taken in to account when his Income Support is worked out but his overall income still increases by £29.50 because he qualifies for the carer's premium on his Income Support.

In some cases it is possible for both members of a couple to get the severe disability additional amount and the carer's premium (also known as carers additional amount).

Example:

John and Mavis are a couple in their seventies, both disabled and both in receipt of Attendance Allowance. They each apply for Carer's Allowance for caring for each other. They have more income from their state Retirement Pension than they would get from Carer's Allowance so they are not actually paid the Carer's Allowance. They keep their letters telling them that they can't actually be paid any benefit as proof of their 'underlying entitlement'. As they both receive Attendance Allowance, John and Mavis both get the additional amount for severe disability on their Pension Credit. They will also get the Carer's additional amount because they have an *underlying entitlement* to Carer's Allowance and are not actually *paid* it. This means they get an additional 2 X £52.85 because they are disabled, and 2 carers additional amounts of £29.50 = £164.70 **extra** Pension Credit per week.

Sometimes the person being looked after will be getting the severe disability amount included in their own benefits. In these cases it's extremely important to get advice as any claim you make for Carer's Allowance **COULD** reduce the amount the benefits of the person you care for. If you are not sure if this applies – **GET ADVICE**. See below for where to go for further help.

HOW TO MAKE A CLAIM FOR CARER'S ALLOWANCE

Claim forms can be obtained by telephoning the Department of Work and Pensions Benefit Enquiry Line for People with Disabilities and Carers on 0800 882200 or online at: www.dwp.gov.uk/carersallowance

You will need to make a claim for Carer's Allowance on Form DS700 (DS700 (SP) if you are over pension age) even though in some cases you may not actually be paid it. You will then get a letter telling you that you have qualified and will be paid the Allowance or that you have an entitlement but you cannot be paid it as you are in receipt of another benefit, such as Retirement Pension. In this situation you need to keep this letter as proof of your '*underlying entitlement*' which if shown when other benefits are worked out may then entitle you to the extra carer's premium (or additional amount). See examples on page 2 for how this works).

If your claim for Carers Allowance is made within three months of the date the disabled person you care for was awarded Disability Living Allowance or Attendance Allowance, your Carers Allowance will be backdated to that date as well, as long as you can meet the qualifying criteria throughout that time.

WHERE TO GET FURTHER ADVICE AND INFORMATION

These rules can be difficult to understand and its important to get independent advice. People living in Nottinghamshire can contact the County Council Welfare Rights Advice line on **0845 601 5943** between 11.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m. Your call will be returned the same afternoon.

Alternatively you can visit one of our advice sessions. Telephone: Nottinghamshire Welfare Rights Service on (0115) 977 4018 to find out where your nearest advice centre is located; or visit our website at:–

www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/benefitsadvice

You can also telephone:

- **Carers UK** on 0808 8087777, Wednesday and Thursday 10.00 a.m. – 12.00 p.m. and 2.00 – 4.00 p.m.
- **Department of Work and Pensions Benefit Enquiry Line for People with Disabilities and Carers** on 0800 882200, 8.30 a.m. – 6.30 p.m. Monday-Friday, 9.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m. Saturday, text phone: 0800 243333;
- **Age Concern, Bradbury House**, 12 Shakespeare Street, Nottingham, NG1 4FQ. Tel: (0115) 844 0011 (Community Care related enquiries only).

Thousands of carers are missing out on this extra money due to them – Find out if you are one of them – GET ADVICE NOW.

Community
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Contacting us

email welfare.rights@nottsccl.gov.uk

phone **0115 977 4018**

fax **0115 977 4597**

post **Nottinghamshire Welfare Rights Service,
County Hall, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 7QP**

internet www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/benefitsadvice