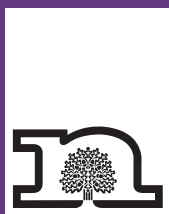


Disability Living Allowance (D.L.A)

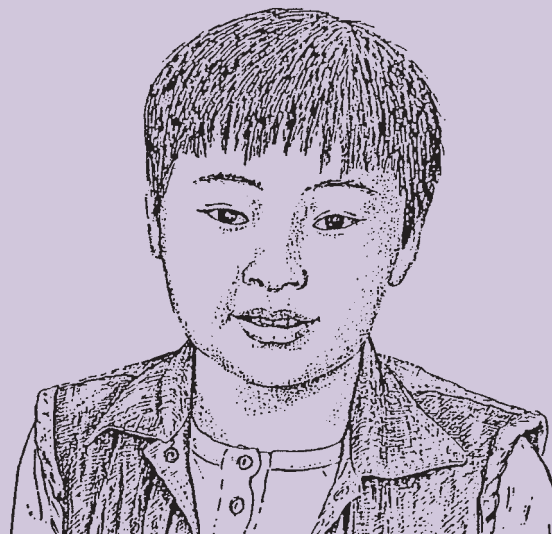
A Benefit for People with Disabilities
April 2009



Nottinghamshire
County Council



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.



Ong is 8 years old, he has a learning disability and goes to a special residential school. He gets DLA care payment when he is at home as he needs someone with him to prevent him hurting himself. He also gets the mobility payment as it is difficult to get him to walk on his own.

What is a Disability Living Allowance?

Disability Living Allowance is a tax free benefit payable to people aged up to 65 who need help looking after themselves and/or find it difficult to walk or get around because of an illness or disability.



Jack and Ivy Blake are both getting Incapacity Benefit. Ivy Blake has severe arthritis in her hands making them stiff and painful. She cannot prepare herself a cooked meal because she is not able to chop vegetables or lift heavy pans. She qualifies for the lower rate of DLA for her care needs. Jack's condition has deteriorated since he had a stroke. He needs help with washing, taking medicines and dressing. He gets the middle rate for his care needs.

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 to extra Income Support or Pension Credit, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit or mean you qualify for them for the first time.
- If you have a person caring for you they may be able to claim Carer's Allowance.

Get advice on this if you qualify for DLA.

- If you go into hospital or a home your DLA payment for care or mobility may stop or be reduced but it should be reinstated if you return home even if it is only for a weekend.
- People over the age of 65 who need care should claim Attendance Allowance.
- It is paid to the person with the disability or illness and can be spent in any way they choose.

Disability Living Allowance (DLA) is paid in two parts – the mobility component and the care component, **EITHER OR BOTH OF THESE PAYMENTS CAN BE CLAIMED.**

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

It is paid at two rates:

Higher Rate – £49.10 per week – from age 3-65.

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

- Your walking is slow, difficult or painful – due to something such as arthritis, or severe back problems.
- The effort of walking could be a serious risk to your health – if you have for example a serious heart complaint and can only walk short distances out of doors.
- Walking makes you breathless or very tired after only a short distance – if you have severe asthma or emphysema for example, or have had a stroke which can make walking very tiring.
- You are deaf and blind – you should qualify automatically.
- You are unable to walk at all – 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 mobility if you are severely mentally impaired with behavioural problems and get the highest rate of DLA for your care needs.

The Lower Rate – £18.65 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 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 to find your way around or to keep you safe from traffic or falling over. People with impaired sight, a learning disability or severe mental health problems, for example may qualify.



Joe often has epileptic fits 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 payment and the lower mobility payment because he needs someone there so that he does not hurt himself.

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 – £70.35 per week

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

- getting in and out of bed
- going to the toilet
- washing
- shaving or doing your hair
- dressing or undressing
- help with communicating from another person which would allow you to, for example, go to social events, or visit the doctor, or friends etc.
- having a bath/shower
- eating or drinking
- taking medicines
- climbing stairs
- 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 very 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 the gas rings off or not locking the door.

Middle Rate – £47.10 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.

Lower Rate – £18.65 per week

- If you do not need as much help as described above but need help (for about 1 hour a day) from someone with for example, washing, dressing etc. but don't need someone around all day you may qualify for the lower rate.
- If you are over 16 and cannot prepare a cooked meal for yourself if you have the necessary ingredients. This could be due to, for example, not being able to lift heavy pans or turn taps, or because you could not remember the way to cook a meal.

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 highest care component whether or not you need any help, plus you do not need to have required help for the last three months. Claims are also dealt with more quickly.



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

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. If you are still refused and disagree with the decision you can appeal to an independent tribunal. Over 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 over for where to get help).



Parminder is blind. Her sister helps her to bathe, get dressed, prepare food and look after her child. She also helps her to go shopping and to go swimming every day. Parminder gets the middle rate care component and the lower mobility component.

How to Claim DLA

You can obtain DLA claim form DLA1A and DLA1CH Child by telephoning Free on 0800 882200 (text phone 0800 243355) between 8.30 am and 6.30 pm Monday to Friday, 9.00 am - 1.00 pm Saturdays. Forms are also available from your local Jobcentre Plus or by returning the freepost card included in The Department for Work and Pensions leaflet DLA A5 D.C.S.

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. Telephone Nottinghamshire Welfare Rights Service on 0115 977 4018, Minicom 01623 520247 or email us at welfare.rights@nottscc.gov.uk to find out where your nearest advice agency is located.



Robert suffers from a severe mental illness which causes him to be very depressed and withdrawn. He neglects himself and needs encouragement to get up, eat properly, wash and dress adequately. He is also vulnerable to exploitation if he goes out alone.

Robert gets the middle rate care and lower rate mobility components of Disability Living Allowance.

When you have made your claim if you have a query you can ring the Benefits Enquiry line on 0845 7123456, textphone 0845 7224433 from 7.30 am to 6.30 pm Monday to Friday.

The illustrations in this leaflet were drawn from models.



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