



**Independent
Age**

Trusted
Information
Creator



Patient Information Forum

Attendance Allowance

**Extra money if you have
a disability or health condition**



Thank you

We would like to thank those who shared their experiences as this guide was being developed, and those who reviewed it for us.

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We welcome your feedback on our publications. We use your comments to plan future changes.

If you'd like to help us develop our information products, you can join our Readers' Panel. To find out more, call **020 7050 6560** or visit **independentage.org/readers-panel**.

Our publications

In this guide you'll find references to our other free publications. To order them, call **0800 319 6789** or visit **independentage.org/publications**.

If you would like this information in a different format – such as large print or audio CD – call us on **0800 319 6789** or email **helpline@independentage.org**.

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The sources used to create this publication are available on request.

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We spoke to older people about their experiences. Their quotes appear throughout. We have changed the names of some of the interviewees who wished to be anonymous. Some of the images seen throughout this guide are posed by friends of Independent Age.

The PIF TICK is the UK-wide Quality Mark for Health Information.

1. What is Attendance Allowance?



Pension Age Disability Payment will eventually replace Attendance Allowance in Scotland.

Contact Social Security Scotland
(0800 182 2222) for more information.

Attendance Allowance is extra, tax-free money you can get if you are over State Pension age and have a long-term disability or health condition. You do not need a diagnosis to qualify.

You may be able to claim if you need help with personal care, or supervision to keep you safe.

You must have had support needs for at least six months. This could include needing help with:

- getting dressed
- washing
- eating
- going to the toilet

- getting in and out of bed
- taking medication.

Supervision means you need someone to support you because you could harm yourself or others around you. For example, it could be that you forget to take your medication or have seizures or falls.

It doesn't matter whether you actually receive this help or supervision – it's the need for help that matters.

Attendance Allowance isn't just for people with a physical disability or illness. It also includes people with:

- mental health issues
- cognitive impairments such as dementia
- sensory conditions such as sight or hearing loss.

Attendance Allowance isn't means-tested, so your income and savings aren't considered. Anyone with care or supervision needs can apply, regardless of their financial situation.



If you're under State Pension age, you may be able to claim Personal Independence Payment (PIP) or Adult Disability Payment (ADP) if you live in Scotland– see **page 14**.

If you're over State Pension age and are receiving PIP, ADP or Disability Living Allowance, get advice before applying for Attendance Allowance – you can contact our Helpline to book an appointment with an adviser at **0800 319 6789** or **helpline@independentage.org**.

You can check whether you're under or over State Pension age at **gov.uk/state-pension-age**.

“ Everything's gone up... The Attendance Allowance, all being well, will definitely help.

2. How much could I get?

The amount of Attendance Allowance you get depends on how much help or supervision you need.

There are two weekly rates:

- £72.65 if you need help either during the day or at night
- £108.55 if you need help both during the day and at night, or if you're terminally ill.

These rates apply from April 2024 to 2025.

If you're awarded Attendance Allowance, you may qualify for means-tested benefits you couldn't claim before, such as:

- Pension Credit
- Housing Benefit
- Council Tax Reduction/Support.

If you already receive these benefits, the amount you get may increase.



Read our guides **Pension Credit**, **Help with housing costs** and **Council Tax** to find out more.

Getting Attendance Allowance entitles you to a Disabled Person's Railcard that gives money off train fares for you and a friend (**disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk**). It can also make it easier to get other support, such as a Blue Badge to help with parking.

You don't have to spend your Attendance Allowance on a care worker – you can spend it however you want. Lots of people spend it on things that make life easier, like taxis, fuel bills or a cleaner.



3. How do I claim?

You need to fill out a claim form to get Attendance Allowance.

You can get one sent to you by calling the free Attendance Allowance helpline on **0800 731 0122**.

You can also download a form from **gov.uk/attendance-allowance/how-to-claim**.

It comes with notes explaining how to fill it in. The form can look daunting, but don't panic: there is help available to complete it. See **page 10** for places that can help, or contact our Helpline (**0800 319 6789**, **advice@independentage.org**).



Good to know

If you ask for a form over the phone, your claim will start from the date of your call, rather than the date you return the completed form. This could be a difference of a few weeks' worth of benefits, so call up for the form if you can.

It's important to include as much detail as possible on the form about your difficulties. See **chapter 5** for more tips on completing the form.

Your application can be fast-tracked if you are nearing the end of life. If you are likely to have 12 months or less to live, you should ask a medical professional for form SR1. They will fill out the form and either return it to you to send in with your application, or send it directly to the Department for Work and Pensions.

“ I’ve never claimed anything in my life – I didn’t know about Attendance Allowance!

4. Myth buster

My income and savings must be too high

Attendance Allowance is based on your care or supervision needs. It isn't means-tested, meaning it doesn't matter what your income or savings are.

I don't have anyone helping me

You don't need to have someone caring for you to qualify. Your claim is based on the help or supervision you need, not what you're actually getting.

I don't want a carer coming in

That's fine. You don't have to spend your extra money on one. You can spend Attendance Allowance however you want.

I don't have a diagnosis

You don't need one to apply. For example, you might still be having tests to find out what's wrong. As long as you've needed help or supervision for at least six months, you can make a claim.

I'll only be turned down

Some claims are turned down, but you can challenge the decision if you think you qualify. Contact our Helpline for advice (**0800 319 6789**, **advice@independentage.org**).

5. Tips for filling in the form

Attendance Allowance is based on your needs, so include as much detail as you can about your condition and how often it affects your life.

Don't downplay your difficulties or how much help or supervision you need.

The form might seem daunting at first, but don't let it put you off. Our Helpline team can help you fill in the form over the phone – book an appointment by calling **0800 319 6789** or emailing **advice@independentage.org**.



You can get support from your nearest Citizens Advice. They may also be able to arrange a face-to-face appointment with you (**citizensadvice.org.uk**):

- England **0800 144 8848**
- Wales **0800 702 2020**
- Scotland **0800 028 1456**.

You can also call the Attendance Allowance helpline on **0800 731 0122**.

If you're filling in the form yourself

- Give lots of detail about your personal care needs, even if you think it seems trivial or embarrassing.
- It might be helpful to keep a diary of your needs over the course of a week. You might find you forget about difficulties you have with tasks you don't do every day. Mention how frequently you need help. Attendance Allowance looks at how often you need help, as well as how much help you need.
- Include how long it takes you to carry out specific tasks and how much help you need with them, even if there isn't anyone to help you.



- Remember to include any aids you use or need help with.
- Include any severe discomfort, pain, fatigue or breathlessness you experience.
- Describe any times you've fallen or hurt yourself.
- Think about everything you can't do, or have difficulty with, because of your condition.
- It's okay to repeat yourself if the information is relevant to more than one question.
- If you have good days and bad days, give details of the help you need on an average day – that is, most of the time. You can use the boxes at the end of the questions to explain how your needs change and how bad your condition can be on a bad day.

There's an extra section that someone who knows you can complete. Ask your GP, consultant, friend or relative to fill this in if you can.

Don't assume that the decision maker knows how your condition affects you: you know your situation best.



If you're struggling to fill in the form, contact our Helpline (**0800 319 6789**, **advice@independentage.org**).

Our factsheet **Disability benefits: How to claim Attendance Allowance** has more tips on how to fill in the form.



6. What if I'm under State Pension age?

If you're thinking of waiting to apply for Attendance Allowance when you reach State Pension age, you might be better off claiming Personal Independence Payment (PIP) now instead. If you live in Scotland, you might want to claim Adult Disability Payment (ADP).

You might be able to get more money, because PIP and ADP look at your mobility needs as well as your care needs.

You must start claiming PIP or ADP before you reach State Pension age, but you can continue to receive it after that.

Contact our Helpline to book an appointment to speak to an adviser (**0800 319 6789**, **helpline@independentage.org**). They can assess whether you're better off claiming PIP or ADP now, or waiting to claim Attendance Allowance.



“ It’s like a breath of fresh air to get through to someone and get good advice.



Thabani's story

During the pandemic, we had so many problems – where to get food from, how to pay the bills. My osteoarthritis got worse, I developed shingles and my life savings dried up. It was a desperate time.

I didn't know what to expect when I phoned the Helpline, but the people were so lovely and helpful. They listened to me, didn't judge, and told me I was eligible for Pension Credit, Attendance Allowance and Council Tax Reduction. They also told me about equipment that my local council could provide for free, like a reclining chair and bed risers.

I found out I was entitled to an extra £600 per month. The Pension Credit and Attendance Allowance have really allowed us to keep our roof above our heads. It was a big relief.

“ I didn't know what to expect when I phoned the Helpline, but the people were so lovely and helpful. They listened to me, didn't judge, and told me I was eligible for Pension Credit, Attendance Allowance and Council Tax Reduction.

About Independent Age

No one should face financial hardship in later life.

Independent Age is a national charity providing support for older people facing financial hardship. We offer free impartial advice and information on what matters most: money, housing and care.

We financially support local community organisations across the UK through our grants programme. We campaign for change for older people struggling with their finances.

You can call us on freephone **0800 319 6789** (Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5.30pm) or email **helpline@independentage.org** to arrange to speak to one of our advisers.

To donate or help support our work, please visit **independentage.org/support-us**.



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