

Attendance Allowance

EXTRA MONEY
TO HELP YOU



Who we are

Age Scotland is the national charity for older people. We work to improve the lives of everyone over the age of 50 so that they can love later life.

Our vision is for Scotland to be the best place in the world to grow older.

Our mission is to inspire, involve and empower older people in Scotland, and influence others, so that people can make the most of later life.

Our three strategic aims are to:



Help older people to be as well as they can be



Promote a positive view of ageing and later life



Tackle loneliness and isolation

How we can help

We know that growing older doesn't come with a manual. Later life can bring changes and opportunities to your life and you may need to know about rights, organisations and services which are unfamiliar to you.

That's why we provide free information and advice to help you on a range of topics including benefits and entitlements, social care, legal issues such as Power of Attorney, housing and much more. All of our guides are available to download for free from our website, or you can contact our helpline team to have copies posted to you for free.

The Age Scotland **helpline** is a free, confidential phone service for older people, their carers and families in Scotland looking for information and advice.

Later life can bring times when you just need someone to talk to. Our **friendship line** is part of our wider helpline and older people can call us for a chat. We're here to listen, provide friendship and offer support.

For information, advice and friendship



Call us free on: 0800 12 44 222
(Monday – Friday, 9am - 5pm)



Visit [agescotland.org.uk](https://www.agescotland.org.uk)
to find out more.



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Introduction

Although many people continue to enjoy good health well into later life, some people find that they need help with some of their day-to-day tasks. Claiming Attendance Allowance can assist with some of the extra costs that living with a health condition can bring.

This guide explains how to apply for Attendance Allowance, and how to increase your chances of making a successful claim.





What is Attendance Allowance

Attendance Allowance is extra money from the government, to help with the cost of your care needs if you have reached State Pension age (currently age 66 for both men and women), have an illness or disability and don't already receive Adult Disability Payment, Personal Independence Payment or Disability Living Allowance.

There are two rates:

- a lower rate of £61.85 per week if you have care needs during the day or during the night
- a higher rate of £92.40 per week if you have care needs during the day and during the night

You do not have to be getting help from a carer to qualify, as Attendance Allowance is based on the help you need, not the help you actually receive, and you don't have to spend the money on paying for care. You won't be asked about how you spend the money, or asked to provide any evidence.

Attendance Allowance is tax free, not means-tested and it doesn't matter how much you have in savings. It can increase other means-tested benefit entitlements or give you an entitlement to a benefit you didn't have before, so have a benefit check if you start receiving it.

When to claim

You must have needed help for at least six months to qualify, unless you are claiming under the **Special Rules** because you have a terminal illness. However, you don't have to have received a diagnosis of a particular illness or disability, as Attendance Allowance is based on your needs, not the condition you have.

Special Rules

If you are living with a terminal illness and are likely to have less than 6 months to live, you can claim for Attendance Allowance under the Special Rules, which allow you to get financial help more quickly.

Your doctor or specialist can provide you with a form called a DS1500, which you should include with your Attendance Allowance application form.

There is no qualifying period when claiming under the Special Rules, so you can apply straight away. You should receive a decision letter within 2 weeks, and the award will be at the higher rate for three years.

If you are making a claim on behalf of someone else, who isn't aware that they are not expected to live for more than 6 months, you can ask their medical professional for a DS1500 form without their knowledge. They will still need to be aware that they are making a claim for Attendance Allowance, as any letters about the claim will be addressed to them, but the letters won't mention terminal illness or Special Rules.

How to claim

To apply, call the **Attendance Allowance helpline** on **0800 731 0122** to request a form.

During busy periods, a recorded message may say that you should download the form from the website. However, if you wait until the end of the message, it will give you the option to request a form by telephone.

The form will have a return date on it, giving you 6 weeks to complete and return it. If you get the application back to them within this 6-week period, any award will be backdated to the date you made the call. If you get the application form back to them after this date, any award will only be backdated to the day your form was received.

You can also download an application form from the gov.uk website at **www.gov.uk/government/publications/attendance-allowance-claim-form** and post it to them at **Freepost DWP Attendance Allowance** (you don't need to add a postcode or a stamp). If you apply this way, any award of Attendance Allowance will be backdated to the date they receive your form.

Preparing for your claim

Before starting to complete the Attendance Allowance claim form, it can be useful to keep a diary for a couple of days, noting each time you had difficulty with an activity and why.

It will also save you some time if you get together any paperwork you will need, for example:

- your bank details
- your National Insurance number
- a prescription list
- hospital letters and reports
- a copy of your care or support plan from your local council, if you have one
- names and addresses of any medical professionals you see.





Completing the form for someone else

There are a number of reasons that you might complete the form for someone else. For example, you may be a family member or friend who is helping out, an adviser who completes forms professionally, or someone with a legal responsibility to act on the claimant's behalf.

If you are completing the form for someone who can understand and sign it themselves, answer the questions in the first person, as if you are them:

‘I struggle with’

If you are completing and signing the form on behalf of someone, for example you are their **appointee** or because you have **Power of Attorney**, answer in third person:

‘They struggle with’

Appointees and Powers of Attorney

An **appointee** is someone authorised by the Department for Work and Pensions to deal with your benefits on your behalf, if you struggle to do so yourself.

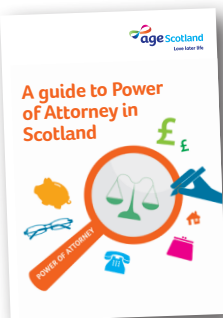
This includes making applications for benefits and keeping your claims up-to-date, which could involve answering letters and phone calls, reporting any changes which will affect the amount of benefit you are entitled to, signing forms and spending income from your benefits in your best interests.

If you want to apply to become someone's appointee for benefit purposes, you can tick the box to request this on the Attendance Allowance form. The DWP will contact you separately about this.

Alternatively, you can contact the **Attendance Allowance helpline** on **0800 731 0122**.

A **Power of Attorney** is a legal document you can use to allow someone to make decisions on your behalf if you become unable to do so yourself, or to support you to make financial decisions.

There are two types of powers, continuing (financial) and welfare. If you have granted continuing Powers of Attorney to someone, this could include making benefit applications and maintaining benefit claims on your behalf.



For a copy of our free **Guide to Power of Attorney in Scotland**, call the **Age Scotland helpline** on **0800 12 44 222**, or visit our website at **www.ageuk.org.uk/scotland/information-advice/legal-and-family-issues/power-of-attorney**.



Aids and adaptations

The Attendance Allowance form asks you to list the aids and adaptations you use to help you in your daily life. Make sure you list them all no matter how big or small they are, from a dosette (calendar) box for organising your medications, to widened doors and lowered worktops for wheelchair accessibility.

Say why you need them and what the consequences of not having them would be, even if it seems obvious. Explain any problems you have using them, or despite having them. For example:

Aids and adaptations	How does this help you?	What difficulty do you have using this aid or adaptation?
Walking stick	It helps to keep me steady when I walk.	Walking is still painful and slow, and I struggle to grip it so am still at risk of falls.
Long-handled shoe helper	It helps me to put my shoes on, as I can't bend down far enough to do it myself.	I am exhausted after getting my shoes on and have to rest for 20 minutes afterwards.
Dosette (calendar) box	It keeps my medications organised and makes sure I take the right tablets at the right times.	I need someone to fill it for me because of my visual impairment.

Daytime care needs

The questions about daytime care needs cover:

- getting in and out of bed
- toilet needs
- washing and bathing
- dressing or undressing
- moving around indoors
- falling or stumbling
- cutting up food, eating and drinking
- taking medications/managing treatments
- communication

Difficulties with tasks such as general housework, shopping and gardening are not taken into consideration for Attendance Allowance. However, if you receive an award, you can use the money to pay for help with these things if you wish to.

The decision maker will want to know:

- does your condition mean that you need help during the day?
- what sort of help do you need?
- do you need **help at least 3 times** during the day?
- do you need **constant supervision** throughout the day, for example, to stop you falling, or because you have fits or blackouts that can happen at any time?

For Attendance Allowance purposes, constant supervision means:

‘Supervision all the time, subject only to brief interruptions’

A brief interruption could be the carer going to the bathroom, but not the carer leaving the house for a couple of hours.

If you have, for example, epileptic fits or blackouts that happen without warning, and you can't be left on your own, then you should describe your need for supervision as constant.



Describing your care needs

The Attendance Allowance form asks about the difficulties you have with various daily living activities. An effective answer does not have to be long, but there are certain things it is helpful to include.

1. Say what help you need, to be able to do the activity **safely, repeatedly and in a reasonable amount of time**. It doesn't matter if you don't have this help at the moment.
 - **safely** means that you are not putting yourself or anyone else in danger by doing it
 - **repeatedly** means that you can do it every time you need to, without needing to rest or recover
 - **in a reasonable amount of time** means that it doesn't take you significantly longer than it would if you didn't have your condition or disability
2. Describe the consequences of not having help:
 - does it cause you pain?
 - does it take longer than it would without your condition?
 - do you need time to recover after doing it?
 - does it put you or someone else in danger?
3. For each activity, say how often you have difficulty with it and which of your conditions causes the difficulty.
4. Explain which parts of it are difficult, for example:
 - gripping
 - lifting
 - twisting
 - reaching
 - bending
 - walking
 - motivation
 - concentrating
 - understanding
 - remembering
 - communicating

Here are some examples of ways you might talk about daytime care needs:

“

“My hands tremble due to Parkinson’s, which makes it difficult to eat and drink. I need someone there to cut up my food, pick up and put down my cup for me and help me to keep a grip on my cutlery. Without this help I don’t manage to finish meals - I put myself in danger because I knock things over and drop them, often hot drinks that burn my skin.”

“

“My arthritis means I need help to shave my face and wash myself. Without help these activities are slow and painful, taking over an hour each morning. It is very difficult for me to stand up for so long, lift my arms high enough and grip the razor safely. I am exhausted and in pain afterwards and need to rest for a long period of time to recover.”

“

“I have depression and I can’t motivate myself to get up, have a wash and get dressed. My wife has to encourage me every day, and stay nearby to prompt me to keep going until I am ready. If she didn’t do this, I would stay in the same clothes each day and not wash or bathe. I wouldn’t be able to face seeing anyone or leaving the house, so would feel isolated and even more depressed.”



Night-time care needs

To be considered to have night-time care needs, you must **need help**:

- two or more times during the night, or
- once if the help is for 20 minutes or more

or **need supervision**:

- three or more times during the night, or
- once if it is for 20 minutes or more

Here are some examples of ways you might describe night-time needs:



“I have epileptic fits during the night most nights. I need someone to be with me to put me on my side so I can breathe safely and make sure I don’t injure myself on the furniture or by falling out of bed. I feel confused and disorientated afterwards and need to be supervised for half an hour before I can safely be left to sleep again.”



“I have high blood pressure and take medication that makes me need the toilet more often than usual. My mobility problems mean I can’t get up on my own during the night to go to the bathroom. I need someone to help me to get out of bed and walk me there at least twice during the night. I often don’t make it on time, so then need help to wash myself and change my clothing.”

Challenging the decision

Mandatory Reconsideration

If your application for Attendance Allowance is turned down or you don't think you have been awarded the correct rate, you can ask for a **Mandatory Reconsideration**.

When you make a mandatory reconsideration request, someone who was not involved in the original decision will review your application. They may call you to ask for further information or evidence, or they may decide based on the information you have already submitted.

Your benefit award can increase, decrease, stop or stay the same as a result of the reconsideration.

You can ask for a Mandatory Reconsideration by calling the **Attendance Allowance helpline** on **0800 731 0122**, or by writing to them at the address on the decision letter. Do this quickly as you only have one month to challenge the decision from the date it was sent to you.

If you are not able to request a Mandatory Reconsideration in time, it may still be accepted if you had good reason for making a late request, for example you were ill or in hospital.

Appeal

If you are still unhappy with the decision after the Mandatory Reconsideration, you can appeal.

You can submit your appeal online at **www.gov.uk/appeal-benefit-decision/submit-appeal**, or complete a paper form (called an SSCS1 form) available at **www.gov.uk/government/publications/appeal-a-social-security-benefits-decision-form-sscs1**.

If you don't have access to the internet, or don't feel confident using it, you can call their **Digital Support helpline** on **03300 160 051**.

You have one month from the date of the Mandatory Reconsideration letter to submit your appeal. You may be able to appeal later than this, up to 13 months after the original benefit decision, if you had good reason, for example you were ill or in hospital.

When you appeal a benefit decision, an independent panel will review all the facts and evidence, and will make a new decision about your application.

You can attend the appeal hearing, or the panel can make their decision based solely on the information you have sent. It can be beneficial to attend the hearing in person, if possible, as you will be there to answer any questions the panel have, which can improve your chances of a successful outcome.

Your benefit award can increase, decrease, stop or stay the same as a result of the appeal.

An advice agency such as your local **Citizens Advice Bureau** may be able to help you make your appeal, or represent you at the hearing. You can find your local branch at www.cas.org.uk/bureaux or by calling their national helpline on **0800 028 1456**.



For a copy of our free **Challenging Benefit Decisions** guide, contact the **Age Scotland helpline** on **0800 12 44 222**.

What to do if things go wrong

Most claims for Attendance Allowance go smoothly but sometimes problems can arise.

If you want to make a complaint about the process of applying for Attendance Allowance, for example if there has been an unacceptable delay, or you are unhappy with how you have been treated, you can make a complaint by telephone or in writing. You can't use the complaint process to complain about decisions about benefit awards or overpayments.

To make a complaint, contact them by telephone on **0800 731 0122**, or write to them at the address on any letters they have sent you about your claim.

You should tell them:

- your National Insurance number, name, address and contact number
- which benefit you are complaining about
- what happened, when it happened and how it affected you
- what you want them to do to put things right.

If you are unhappy with the response to your complaint, you can ask for it to be passed to a senior manager in the **DWP Complaints Team**, who will review the complaint and give you a final response.

If you are not satisfied with the final response, you can take your complaint to the **Independent Case Examiner** for investigation. You must do this within 6 months of receiving the final response.

Email: **ice@dwp.gov.uk**

Telephone **0800 414 8529**

Post: **PO Box 209, Bootle, L20 7WA**

If you still feel your complaint has not been resolved, you can ask your MP to submit your complaint to the **Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman**. You can find your MP by visiting <https://members.parliament.uk/members/commons>, or call the **Age Scotland helpline** on **0800 12 44 222** and we will look them up for you. If you would prefer not to speak to your own MP, you can ask any other MP to submit the complaint.

Other help and support

Care needs assessment

If you are applying for Attendance Allowance and haven't already had a care needs assessment from the council, now may be a good time to request one.

The council can assess your needs and identify any services and support they can provide. This could include help with personal care, and equipment to make your daily life easier or safer. Contact the social work department of your local council to request an assessment.

See our guides **Care and Support at Home – Assessment and Funding**, and **Care and Support at Home – Practical Help** for more information about the help that the council can provide.



Help for your carer

If you receive Attendance Allowance and have an unpaid carer, they may be entitled to **Carer's Allowance** from the Department for Work and Pensions. The rules can be complex, and if someone receives Carer's Allowance for looking after you, your entitlement to means-tested benefits may reduce in certain circumstances. Contact the **Age Scotland helpline** for a benefit check if you are considering making a claim.

Your carer is also entitled to an **Adult Carer Assessment** from your local council. If they qualify, any support they receive as part of an Adult Carer Plan should be free of charge, and may include training, respite services, and health and wellbeing support.

See our **Adult Carer** and **Carer's Allowance** guides for more information about support for carers.



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Please note that the inclusion of named agencies, websites, companies, products, services or publications in this information guide does not constitute a recommendation or endorsement by Age Scotland or any of its subsidiary companies or charities.

How you can help

Our vision is a Scotland where everyone can love later life.

All the information and advice we provide is free and completely impartial and in helping people access their rights and entitlements, it can be life changing.

We are an ageing population and more people than ever are coming to us for support. You can help us be there for those that need us most.



Make a donation

No matter how small or large, donations make a massive difference and help us continue our important work.

- ▶ Call **03330 15 14 60**
- ▶ Visit **age.scot/donate**
- ▶ Text **LATERLIFE** to **70085** to donate £5.*



Fundraise

Whether it is having a bake sale, running a marathon or knitting small hats for the Big Knit, there are so many ways to raise vital funds to support our work. To find out more, call **0333 323 2400** or visit **age.scot/fundraise**.



Leave us a gift in your Will

By choosing to leave us a gift in your Will, you can help Age Scotland to continue being there for vulnerable older people in the years to come. To find out more, call **0333 323 2400** or visit **age.scot/legacy**.

* Texts cost £5 plus one standard rate message

Let's keep in touch



Sign up to our newsletter

Our regular newsletters by email contain details of our campaigns, services and how you can support our work.

Sign up today by visiting **age.scot/roundup**



Follow us on social media

Our social media channels are a great way to keep up to date with our work and issues that affect older people.



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Email

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