

Carer's Allowance

For Carers of Blind and Partially Sighted People

2009/2010

This fact sheet explains how to claim Carer's Allowance. It is useful for severely sight impaired (blind) and sight impaired (partially sighted) people and those individuals and organisations which support them.

What is Carer's Allowance?

Carer's Allowance is a benefit paid to people who care for a disabled person. You do not have to be related to, or living with the person you are caring for in order to qualify. Carer's Allowance is non-means-tested so it will not be affected by any savings that you may have.

How much is Carer's Allowance worth?

- £53.10 per week for you, the carer
- £31.70 for an adult dependant (the adult dependant addition is not paid if your partner has certain benefits or earns more than £31.70 per week).

Please note if you were receiving Carer's Allowance prior to April 2003, you may have received additional amounts for your child/children. Since this date, the amount for dependant children is included in Child Tax Credit. For further information about Child Tax Credit, contact the Tax Credit Helpline on 0845 300 3900.



Action for blind people

You are eligible if you:

- are aged 16 or over and not in full-time education; **and**
- are earning less than £95 per week; **and**
- spend at least 35 hours a week caring for a person who receives either Disability Living Allowance (DLA) care component middle or higher rate or Attendance Allowance at either rate; **and**
- pass the UK presence and residence test and are not subject to immigration control.

What can affect my claim?

As a result of the 'overlapping benefits' rule, you cannot be paid Carer's Allowance if you are receiving the same amount or more from any of the following benefits:

- Incapacity Benefit
- Contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Contribution-based Employment and Support Allowance
- State Retirement Pension
- Widow's and Bereavement Benefits
- Maternity Allowance
- Unemployability Supplement when paid with Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit, War Pension or War Widows Pension.

However, it is still worth claiming Carer's Allowance if you get, or could get, any of the benefits listed below, as you will qualify for something called a 'carer premium'.

Carer premium

If you claim Carer's Allowance, but are turned down because of the 'overlapping benefits' rule, you will have an entitlement to the carer premium which is worth £29.50 per week. The carer premium can be included with the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Pension Credit
- Housing Benefit
- Council Tax Benefit.

Caution

If the person you care for receives any of the above benefits, you may make them worse off by claiming Carer's Allowance. You should therefore seek advice from a Welfare Rights Adviser before claiming.

Example of how to qualify for a carer premium

Mr Greene is aged 70 and spends at least 35 hours a week looking after his wife. She gets the lower rate of Attendance Allowance and a State Retirement Pension of £57.05 per week. Mr Greene receives £95.25 State Retirement Pension and a Work Pension of £110 per week.

As Mr Greene is receiving State Retirement Pension, the 'overlapping benefits' rule stops him from getting Carer's Allowance. However, by claiming Carer's Allowance, he would gain an 'underlying entitlement' which would make him eligible for the carer premium.

Mr and Mrs Greene were not previously entitled to Pension Credit. However, by gaining an underlying entitlement to Carer's Allowance, they would now be entitled to £13.29 per week Pension Credit.

How do I claim Carer's Allowance?

- Call the Benefit Enquiry line on 0800 88 22 00 or the Carer's Allowance unit on 01253 856 123
- Write to: Carers Allowance Unit, Palatine House, Lancaster Road, Preston, PR1 1HB
- Or visit **www.direct.gov.uk** and search for 'Carers Allowance'.

You should claim Carer's Allowance at the same time, or as soon as possible after the DLA or Attendance Allowance claim, as the rules for backdating benefits are restrictive.

Further Information

To find out more contact Carers UK on 0808 808 7777, your local advice centre or the Citizens Advice Bureau.

Action for Blind People's Welfare Rights Service can also provide advice:

Action for Blind People
Welfare Rights Service
14 - 16 Verney Road
London SE16 3DZ

National Freephone Helpline: 0800 915 4666

Email: benefit.check@actionforblindpeople.org.uk

You can find all of Action's fact sheets, briefings and checklists on our website at:
www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk/welfare-rights

This is only a brief guide about how blind and partially sighted people and their carers can benefit from Carer's Allowance. It is not a complete or exhaustive statement of law.

April 2009

April 2009

**14 - 16 Verney Road
London SE16 3DZ**

National Freephone Helpline: 0800 915 4666

Website: www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk

Email: benefit.check@actionforblindpeople.org.uk

Registered Charity no: 205913 (England and Wales)
SC040050 (Scotland)



Action for blind people