

This pack is available in
large print or braille.
Please phone **0800 220 674**

Notes

If you want help filling in the claim form,
phone the Benefit Enquiry Line (BEL).

The person you speak to will arrange for someone to phone you back
and go through the form with you. If you cannot use the phone, we
may be able to send someone to visit you.

We can also arrange interpreters if you phone or visit us.

Phone **0800 220 674**

If you have speech or hearing difficulties, you can contact BEL by
textphone on **0800 243 787**. You can also use Type Talk.

Our **textphone** service does not receive messages from mobile phones.

Or you can contact an organisation like Citizens Advice.

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Things to get together before you fill in the claim form

Before you fill in the claim form, it will be useful to have ready some of the things listed below. Do not worry if you do not have all of them.

- Your National Insurance number. You can find this on your National Insurance number card, letters from the Department for Social Development, or payslips.
- The name of your GP and the address of your GP's surgery.
- Details of your medication or an up-to-date printed prescription list if you have one.
- Details of anyone you have seen about your illnesses or disabilities in the last 12 months, apart from your GP.
- Your hospital record number (if you know it). You can find this on your appointment card or letter.
- If you have been in a hospital, a care home or similar place - the dates you went in and came out, and the name and address of the place you stayed.

You may also find it helpful to keep a record – write down a list of things you have needed help with or found difficult over one or two days. If you have good days and bad days, or your disability varies over time, you may want to keep a record of your needs over a good day and over a bad day. Start from the time you get up in the morning, through 24 hours, to the time you get up the following morning. You can send in the record with your form if you want to.

You do not have to fill in the form in one go. Take your time so that you can describe all the help you need.

How to fill in the claim form

Please use black ink to fill in the form. Do not worry if you are not sure how to spell something or you make a mistake. If you want to correct a mistake, please cross it out with a pen – do not use correction fluid.

Please tick the box to show your answer. For example:

Yes

No

What is Attendance Allowance and can I get it?

Attendance Allowance is to help with extra costs if you have a disability severe enough that you need someone to help look after you and you are aged 65 or older when you claim.

You may get Attendance Allowance if:

- you are 65 or over when you make your claim
- you are not entitled to Disability Living Allowance
- your disability means that you need help with your personal care (see page 5) or you need someone to supervise you for your own or someone else's safety (see page 5), and
- you have needed that help for at least six months.

You may not think of yourself as disabled, but if you have a health condition or illness that means you need the sort of help we tell you about in these notes, you may be able to get Attendance Allowance.

Your disability may be physical, or you may have mental-health problems, learning difficulties, sight, hearing or speech difficulties.

- Attendance Allowance is not usually affected by your income or savings (but, if you get Constant Attendance Allowance with another benefit, this will be paid instead, or reduce the amount of your Attendance Allowance).
- Attendance Allowance is not taken off other benefits and tax credits you may receive.
- You can claim Attendance Allowance even if you have not paid any National Insurance contributions.
- You do not have to pay tax on the Attendance Allowance you receive.
- If you get Attendance Allowance, you may get extra money with other benefits (see page 11).

Even if you are not actually getting the help you need, you can still get Attendance Allowance.

If you are under 65, you may be able to get Disability Living Allowance instead. Contact the Benefit Enquiry Line if you want to ask us about Disability Living Allowance (see **Help and advice about other benefits** on page 11).

You can find out more about Attendance Allowance and Disability Living Allowance by visiting the nidirect website www.nidirect.gov.uk or by phoning BEL - see page 1.

What do ‘help with personal care’ and ‘supervise’ mean?

‘Help with personal care’ means day-to-day help with things like:

- washing (or getting into or out of a bath or shower)
- dressing
- eating
- going to or using the toilet, or
- telling people what you need or making yourself understood (if you have a problem, such as learning difficulties, that makes this hard).

‘Supervise’ means that you need someone to watch over you to help you avoid substantial danger to yourself or other people.

This could mean:

- when you take medicines or have treatment
- keeping you away from danger that you may not know is there
- avoiding danger you could face because you cannot control the way you behave, and
- stopping you from hurting yourself or other people.

You may need help with personal care or supervision because you:

- find it hard to move your arms or legs or have no control over them
- get breathless easily or are in pain, or
- have behaviour difficulties, mental-health problems, or you get confused.

When can I claim Attendance Allowance?

You can normally only get Attendance Allowance when you have needed help for six months (unless you claim under the special rules – see page 8). If you claim straight away, we will deal with your claim as soon as possible.

How is Attendance Allowance worked out?

There are two rates of Attendance Allowance:

- lower rate, and
- higher rate.

The rate you get is based on how much help you need.

Lower rate of Attendance Allowance

You may get the lower rate of Attendance Allowance if you need:

- help with personal care frequently throughout the day
- help with personal care during the night
- someone to supervise you continually throughout the day to help you avoid substantial danger
- someone to watch over you at night to help you avoid substantial danger, or
- someone with you when you are on dialysis.

Higher rate of Attendance Allowance

You may get the higher rate if you need:

- help with personal care or someone to supervise you throughout the day and also during the night.

You may also be able to get this rate if you claim under the special rules (see page 8).

There are fixed amounts of money for Attendance Allowance. You can find the current rates on the website at www.nidirect.gov.uk

About how your disabilities affect you

You may not think of yourself as disabled, but if you have a health condition or illness that means you need the sort of help we tell you about in these notes, you may be able to get Attendance Allowance.

We know that disabilities can affect people more on one day than another – they have good days and bad days. We know that your disability may vary over a period of time. Please try to tell us as much as you can about how your disability varies.

We also know that help needed during the day and help needed during the night can be different. There are separate questions for you to tell us about the different sort of help you might need.

Do you have any reports about your illnesses or disabilities

If you can send us a copy of any reports you may hold it may help us to deal with your claim. If possible, please send us a copy of the reports with this claim form. If you don't have a copy of any reports by the time you fill in the claim form, send us the claim form straight away. Please send us a copy of any reports you hold as soon as you can.

About medical examinations

If we cannot get a clear picture of how your illnesses or disabilities affect you, we may ask a health care professional to examine you. Medical Services, who arrange medical examinations for us will contact you if an examination is required.

These notes give you more help and advice with some of the questions in the claim form

8 Do you normally live in Northern Ireland?

Generally, you must be ordinarily resident and present in Northern Ireland, not be subject to immigration control and have lived here or in Northern Ireland, for 26 weeks in the last 52 weeks.

The 26-week rule does not apply if you are terminally ill and qualify under special rules.

If you have come to Northern Ireland from a country that is part of the European Economic Area (EEA), or Switzerland, then depending on your circumstances you may not have to wait 26 weeks before you can get Attendance Allowance.

If you live in a country that is part of the EEA, or in Switzerland, then you may be able to get AA if the UK is responsible for paying you sickness benefits.

You can find more information about claiming Attendance Allowance when you live in a country that is part of the EEA, or in Switzerland on our website www.nidirect.gov.uk

17 Special rules

We have special rules for people who are terminally ill (this means people who have a progressive disease and are not expected to live longer than another six months).

So that we can deal with your claim as quickly as possible, it is important that you send a DS1500 report with your claim. The notes below tell you how to get a DS1500 report.

If you don't have the DS1500 report by the time you have filled in the claim form, send us the claim form straight away. Please send the DS1500 when you can.

Getting Attendance Allowance under the special rules means:

- getting the higher rate of Attendance Allowance
- getting paid straight away (this means you do not have to wait until you have needed help for six months – but changes like those on page 9, question 43 of these notes may still affect how much money you get), and
- we deal with your claim more quickly.

Claiming under the special rules for someone else

You can claim under the special rules for someone else. You do not have to tell them you are claiming for them. Tell us about them on the claim form. We will normally write to them about whether they can get Attendance Allowance, but we will not tell them anything about the special rules.

If you are filling in this form as part of your job, you do not need to tell us your National Insurance number or date of birth at question 11.

How to claim under the special rules

Please fill in the claim form. Tick the box at question 17 of the claim form to show you are claiming under the special rules.

If you do not tick this box, we cannot normally pay you under the special rules.

How to get a DS1500 report

Ask your doctor or specialist for a DS1500 report.

This is a report about your medical condition. You won't have to pay for it. You can ask the doctor's receptionist, a nurse or a social worker to arrange this for you. You do not have to see the doctor. Most doctors' practices provide DS1500 reports very quickly. Ask for the report in a sealed envelope if you do not want anyone to see it.

23 **About the aids and adaptations you use**

We want to know if you use any aids or adaptations to help you do things. For example:

- a hoist, monkey pole or bed-raiser may help you get out of bed
- a commode, raised toilet seat or rails may help you with your toilet needs
- bath rails, a shower seat or a hoist may help you bath or shower
- a long-handled shoehorn, button hook, zip pull or sock aid may help you dress
- a stairlift, raised chair, wheelchair or rails may help you move about indoors
- a walking stick, walking frame, crutches or artificial limbs may help you get around
- special cutlery or a feeding cup may help you eat and drink, or
- a hearing aid, textphone, magnifier or braille terminal may help you communicate.

We also want you to tell us if you need help to use the aids or adaptations, and if you do, what help you get from another person.

43 **About being in hospital, a care home or a similar place**

By care home, we mean a home such as a residential care home, nursing home, hospice or similar place.

We need to know if:

- you are in a hospital, a care home or similar place when you make your claim, and
- the Health and Social Care Trust or a government department pay anything towards the cost of your stay.

If you are awarded Attendance Allowance when you are in hospital, a care home or a similar place, we cannot pay you until you come out. But if you are a private patient or resident, paying for your stay without help from public funds, we will be able to pay you.

We may still be able to pay you if you are claiming under the special rules and you are in a hospice.

How we pay you

If we are able to pay you Attendance Allowance, we will pay the benefit in the same way as your State Pension or Pension Credit.

If we pay you too much money

We have the right to take back any money we pay that you are not entitled to. This may be because of the way the system works for payments into an account.

For example, you may give us some information, which means you are entitled to less money. Sometimes we may not be able to change the amount we have already paid you. This means we will have paid you money that you are not entitled to. **We will contact you before we take back any money.**

How we collect and use information

We, the Department for Social Development (DSD), collect information to deal with Social Security, Child Support, employment and training, housing and community development and urban regeneration (redeveloping towns, cities and villages). The information we collect about you depends on the type of your business with us, but we may use the information for any of these purposes.

We may check information about you with other organisations we may have. We may get information about you from other people and certain other organisations.

We may give information to certain other organisations, as allowed by the law, to:

- check that the information is accurate
- prevent or detect crime
- protect public funds in other ways
- use in research or statistics

These other organisations include other government departments, authorities who deal with Housing Benefit, and private-sector bodies (such as banks) that may lend you money. We will not give information about you to anyone outside our department unless the law allows us to.

The Department for Social Development is the Data Controller for the purposes of the Data Protection Act.

If you want to know more about what information we may have about you, or the way we use your information. Please contact us. You can contact any of our offices and ask for leaflet '**Data Protection Act 1998 - It affects you**'. Or you can find a copy of the leaflet on our website at www.dsdni.gov.uk

Help and advice about other benefits

If you want general advice about any other benefits you may be able to claim, you can do the following.

- Phone the Benefit Enquiry Line for people with disabilities and carers:
Phone: **0800 220 674**
Textphone: **0800 243 787**
- Visit the nidirect website at **www.nidirect.gov.uk**
- Contact your local Jobs & Benefits office/Social Security office. The phone numbers and addresses are in the NI Direct Government Services, contacting government section in the phone book. Look for the blue edged pages at the beginning of the book.
- Contact an advice service like Citizens Advice.

To find out about Child Tax Credit or Working Tax Credit

- Contact the Tax Credit Helpline:
Phone: **0845 300 3900**
Textphone: **0845 300 3909**, or
- visit the website at **www.hmrc.gov.uk**

To find out about Pension Credit

- you can get a leaflet about Pension Credit
- contact The Pension Service:
Phone: **0845 601 8821**
Textphone: **0808 100 2198**, or
- visit the website at **www.nidirect.gov.uk**

Carer's Allowance and Carer's Credit

If you are claiming Attendance Allowance and someone cares for you, read the information sheet about Carer's Allowance and Carer's Credit we have sent with this claim pack.

This booklet gives you general information only and is not a complete statement of the law.

What happens next

Fill in the form and post it back to us.

Write in this box the date you post your form to us.

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We will write to tell you that we have received your form.

If you do not get this letter within two weeks of sending your form to us, please phone us on **028 9090 6178**.

If you have speech or hearing difficulties, you can contact us using a textphone on **0800 243 787**.