

Notes

about Carer's Credit

- Carer's Credit is a National Insurance credit for people caring for one or more disabled people, for a total of 20 hours or more a week.
- Carer's Credit can help you to build a better basic or additional State Pension. Carer's Credit can also help if your spouse or civil partner ever needs to claim bereavement benefits.

Please keep these notes for information.

The notes give you general information only and are not a complete statement of the law.

Can I get Carer's Credit?

You can get Carer's Credit if you look after one or more people, for a total of 20 hours or more a week, who get:

- Disability Living Allowance care component at the middle rate or the highest rate, or
- Attendance Allowance, or
- Constant Attendance Allowance.

If the people you look after are getting any of these benefits, they will have a letter telling them what rate they are getting.

You can also get Carer's Credit if you send us completed **Care Certificates**. To find out more, see **page 4** of these notes.

There is no limit to the number of people you can look after.

You must be aged 16 or over, and under State Pension age to get Carer's Credit.

You will already be getting credits if you get:

- Carer's Allowance, or
- Child Benefit for a child under the age of 12.

So you don't need to fill in the application form.

If you are a foster carer and will get National Insurance Credits from HM Revenue & Customs, you don't need to fill in the application form.

We will not pay you money if you are entitled to Carer's Credit. We will give you National Insurance credits.

Income, savings or investments do not affect Carer's Credit.

If someone else also looks after the people you look after

You may still get Carer's Credit. But the number of hours you look after these people must total 20 hours or more a week.

If you have a break in caring

You can still get Carer's Credit for any breaks of up to 12 weeks in a row.

For example, you will still get Carer's Credit for 12 weeks if:

- you take a short holiday
- someone you look after goes into hospital
- you go into hospital.

You must tell us straight away if you have a break in caring of more than 12 weeks in a row.

Can I get Carer's Credit? continued

To find out if you might get Carer's Credit, answer the questions below.

Do you normally live in Northern Ireland?
Tick **Yes** if you are part of a family living overseas with HM forces.

No

Yes

Are you aged 16 or over?

No

Yes

Are you under the age you can get State Pension?
To find out the age you can get State Pension visit www.thepensionservice.gov.uk

No

Yes

Are you looking after one or more people for a total of 20 hours or more a week?

No

Yes

Did you answer **Yes to all the questions above?**

No You will not be able to get Carer's Credit.

Yes Please go to the next question.

Do all the people you look after get:

- **Disability Living Allowance care component at the middle rate or the highest rate, or**
- **Attendance Allowance, or**
- **Constant Attendance Allowance?**

No Fill in the application form. Send it to us with a completed **Care Certificate** for each person you look after who does not get one of these benefits. You can find out more about **Care Certificates** on **page 4** of these notes.

Yes Fill in the application form and send it to us.

Care Certificates

Send us a **Care Certificate** for each person you look after who does not get:

- Disability Living Allowance care component at the middle rate or the highest rate, or
- Attendance Allowance, or
- Constant Attendance Allowance.

A health or social care professional must sign each completed certificate.

It is up to you to find a health or social care professional to sign the certificate. By *health or social care professional* we mean a person who knows the care needs of the person you look after. This might be a:

- district nurse
- occupational therapist
- social worker
- MIND case worker, or
- community psychiatric nurse.

If you look after more than one person, then the number of hours you do so must add up to a total of 20 or more a week.

Either:

- the people you look after must get one of the benefits listed above, or
- you must send us a **Care Certificate** for each person.

If you need more than one **Care Certificate**, you can photocopy the one in this application pack.

You can also print a copy at www.dsdni.gov.uk

Or phone us on **028 9090 6186**.

When to apply

Apply now if you look after one or more people, for a total of 20 hours or more a week, who get:

- Disability Living Allowance care component at the middle rate or the highest rate, or
- Attendance Allowance, or
- Constant Attendance Allowance.

If you look after anyone who has claimed one of the benefits above but they are waiting for a decision about it, please wait until they get the decision before you apply.

If they are not awarded the benefit, you must send us a **Care Certificate** for them.

Apply now if you can send us completed **Care Certificates** for the people you look after.

How to apply

Just fill in the application form and any **Care Certificates** you need to support your application.

Please contact us if English is not your first language and you would like to know about our phone interpreter service.

You can also get this application pack in **large print** or **Braille**. To find out more, please phone us on **028 9090 6186**.

If you have any difficulty filling in the application form someone can do it for you. You can ask a friend or an advice centre or the Benefit Enquiry Line. You can call the Benefit Enquiry Line on **0800 220 674**.

Please read **page 8** of these notes to find out more about the help you can get.

What happens after we get your application?

- We will tell you that we have got your application form.
- We aim to make a decision on your application within 14 days. You do not need to contact us in this time.
- Wherever we can, we will phone you if we need more information.
- We will write and tell you whether or not you can get Carer's Credit.

How to contact us

Our phone number is **028 9090 6186**. If you have speech or hearing difficulties, you can contact us using a textphone on **0800 243 787**. These lines are open from 9.00am to 5.00pm Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday and from 10.00am to 5.00pm on Thursday.

You can get more information about Carer's Credit at www.nidirect.gov.uk

If you want to write to us, our address is:

Disability and Carers Service
Castle Court
Royal Avenue
Belfast
BT1 1HR

If you want to make a complaint or comment

You can phone us on **028 9090 6186** or write to us at the address shown above.

We aim to reply to your complaint within 10 working days of getting it. If we cannot reply to your complaint within this time, we will tell you why. We will also tell you when you will get a full reply.

Will Carer's Credit affect other benefits I get?

Carer's Credit will not affect any other benefits or entitlements you may be getting.

Whatever other benefits or entitlements you have, you can apply for Carer's Credit if you look after one or more people for a total of 20 hours or more a week.

If you are already getting Carer's Allowance, or have an underlying entitlement to Carer's Allowance, you do not need to apply for Carer's Credit. This is because you get National Insurance credits already.

Carer's Allowance

Carer's Allowance is for people who look after someone for at least 35 hours a week. The person being looked after must get:

- Disability Living Allowance care component at the middle rate or highest rate, or
- Attendance Allowance, or
- Constant Attendance Allowance at
 - the normal maximum rate with Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit, or
 - the full day rate with a War Disablement Pension.

Other benefits and earnings can affect Carer's Allowance.

If you get Carer's Allowance, or have an underlying entitlement to Carer's Allowance, you will also automatically get Carer's Credit for up to:

- 12 weeks before your Carer's Allowance starts, and
- 12 weeks after your Carer's Allowance ends.

You will also get Carer's Credit automatically if you get Carer's Allowance and you have a break in looking after someone for up to 12 weeks in a row.

To find out more about Carer's Allowance:

- visit www.nidirect.gov.uk
- phone the Benefit Enquiry Line on **0800 220 674**, or
- phone the Disability and Carers Service on **028 9090 6186**.

If you have speech or hearing difficulties you can contact Carer's Allowance using a textphone on **0800 243 787**.

Where to go for help and advice

- If you want information about financial support, rights, employment, independent living and much more, visit www.nidirect.gov.uk
- If you want to know about benefits or entitlements for people with disabilities, phone the Benefit Enquiry Line. The number is **0800 220 674**. The person you speak to will not have your records so they can only give you general advice.
- If you have speech or hearing difficulties you can contact us using a textphone on **0800 243 787**.
- You can get help at an advice centre like the Citizens Advice Bureau.
- You can get in touch with:
Carers NI
3rd Floor
58 Howard Street
Belfast
BT1 9PJ
They can offer advice on a range of issues. Their helpline number is **028 9043 9843**. The lines are open from 10.00am to 12 noon and from 2.00pm to 3.00pm on Mondays to Fridays only.
Or you can visit Carers NI website at www.carersni.org
- You can get in touch with:
Contact a Family – NI Office
50 Railway Street
Lisburn
BT28 1XP
Their National helpline number is **0808 808 3555**.
You can find more information on their website at www.cafamily.org.uk

Where to get help and advice

- You can get in touch with:
MENCAP Northern Ireland Information Service
4 Annadale Avenue
Belfast
BT7 3JH

Their number is **08457 636 227** calls to this number are charged at Local Rate.

MENCAP provides this service to people with learning difficulties, their carers and family.

- You can get in touch with:
Belfast Carer's Centre
58 Howard Street
Belfast
BT1 6PJ

Their number is **028 9043 4700**

Their Fax number is **028 9024 9999**

Their email address is info@carerscentre.org

How we collect and use information

The information we collect about you and how we use it depends mainly on the reason for your business with us. But we may use it for any of the Department's purposes, which include:

- 1 social security benefits and allowances
- 1 child support
- 1 employment and training
- 1 private pensions policy, and
- 1 retirement planning.

We may get information from others to check the information you give to us and to improve our services. We may give information to other organisations as the law allows, for example, to protect against crime.

To find out more about how we use information, visit our website www.nidirect.gov.uk or contact any of our offices.

Alternative formats

This document is available in printed form and, on request in alternative formats such as braille, large print, disc, audio cassette and in minority languages to meet the needs of those who are not fluent in English, from Departmental headquarters through a request to -

The Office of the Permanent Secretary:

4th Floor

Lighthouse Building

1 Cormac Place

Gasworks Business Park

Ormeau Road

Belfast

BT7 2JB

Tel: 028 9082 9547