

Attendance Allowance

If you have Parkinson's, you may have some concerns about how you'll manage financially – if you can't work, or if you need help with your day-to-day needs, this can lead to extra costs. But there is some financial support available, so it's important to find out what benefits you're entitled to.

This sheet explains what Attendance Allowance is, who qualifies, how to claim and what information you need to supply.

What is Attendance Allowance?

If you're aged 65 or over, have an illness or disability and need help with personal care, or you need someone to watch over you to make sure you are safe, you may be able to claim Attendance Allowance.

This benefit is for you, not for a carer (if you have one) and you don't need to have someone looking after you to qualify.

Attendance Allowance is based on what help you need – not on the help you currently get. It doesn't matter whether you live alone or with other people, or if you get a lot of help or a little.

The Attendance Allowance claim form is quite long, and can be difficult to complete, because it deals with personal care issues. But it is worth taking the time to do it, because getting Attendance Allowance can significantly increase your weekly income.

Do I qualify for Attendance Allowance?

You are eligible for Attendance Allowance if:

- you are aged 65 or over, and
- you have had care or supervision needs for the last six months, and

- you have been living in the UK for six of the last 12 months and your immigration status doesn't prevent you claiming, and
- you can satisfy one of the disability tests

What are the disability tests?

To get Attendance Allowance, you must show that you are so severely disabled physically or mentally (or both) that you require from another person:

- “frequent attention throughout the day in connection with your bodily functions”. This means help several times (not once or twice) with things like getting in and out of bed, getting dressed and undressed, getting washed and other personal hygiene needs, going to the toilet, taking medication, eating, drinking, cutting up food and communicating with other people, or
- “continual supervision throughout the day in order to avoid substantial danger to yourself or others”. This means someone watching over or checking you frequently or regularly (but not non-stop) to ensure that you are safe and/or not a danger to other people, or
- “prolonged or repeated attention in connection with your bodily functions” during the night, or “in order to avoid substantial danger to yourself or others you require another person to be awake for a prolonged period or at frequent intervals for the purpose of watching over you”.

How much will I receive from Attendance Allowance?

Attendance Allowance is payable at one of two rates, depending on the amount of help you need with personal care or supervision.

- The lower rate is £49.30 and applies if you need care or supervision throughout the day or the night.
- The higher rate is £73.60 and applies if you need care or supervision throughout the day and the night.

If you are terminally ill, you can get the higher rate under ‘special rules’. If this is the case, your doctor will need to confirm that you have a terminal illness

and you are unlikely to live more than six months (for terminal illness, there is no six-month waiting period). Under the special rules, someone else can apply on your behalf. Special rules claims are reviewed every three years.

If I apply for Attendance Allowance, will this affect any other benefits I receive?

Attendance Allowance may increase the amount of any means-tested benefits (such as Pension Credit) you receive. It can be paid in addition to any other social security benefits.

Attendance Allowance is not taxable. It is not based on National Insurance contributions and any income or savings you may have do not affect it.

Can I claim Attendance Allowance alongside Disability Living Allowance?

No. If you already get a Disability Living Allowance before you reach the age of 65, you will continue to receive that benefit and you won't be able to claim Attendance Allowance.

How will my Attendance Allowance be paid to me?

Attendance Allowance is normally paid every four weeks directly into a bank, building society or Post Office card account.

Find out more: if you don't have a bank account, have a look at our information sheet *General information about benefits*. This explains how to get a bank account.

What if I go into hospital?

If you go into hospital, your Attendance Allowance will stop after four weeks. It can restart when you return home.

What if I go into a care home?

If you pay your own fees for the care home without help from the local authority or health service, your Attendance Allowance can continue to be paid. If the local authority helps with the fees, or a nursing home is paid for by the health service, your Attendance Allowance will stop after four weeks. It can restart when you return home.

How long is Attendance Allowance awarded for?

Attendance Allowance may be awarded to you for an indefinite period or for a fixed period of time. If it is for a fixed amount of time, then you will normally be contacted four months before your existing claim runs out.

How do I claim Attendance Allowance?

You will need the claim form AA1. To request a form, you can contact the Benefit Enquiry Line on freephone **0800 882200**, or download one from www.direct.gov.uk/disability-aa. You can also claim online from this website.

If the Benefit Enquiry Line sends you the claim form, it will be stamped with the date you asked for it. If Attendance Allowance is awarded to you, it will be paid from this date as long as you return the claim form within six weeks.

Once you have sent off the claim form, the Disability and Carer's Service may contact your GP, specialist or Parkinson's nurse (if you have one) for further information, or it may send one of its doctors to your home to assess you before they approve your claim.

When can I make a claim?

You must have been in need of care for six months before you can start getting Attendance Allowance. You can make your claim during this six-month waiting period, but benefit will not be paid until it has ended. If you apply under the special rules for terminal illness, there is no six-month waiting period.

Tips for making a claim

- Use an up-to-date claim form.
- Make a photocopy of the claim form once you have completed it. Keep this safe.
- You normally have six weeks, so take your time filling in the claim form – try to get help if you need it.
- Don't be afraid to write too much and add extra pages if necessary – just remember to write your name and National Insurance number on them.
- Don't underestimate your needs. If you have a carer, think about what it would be like without them. If you manage on your own, don't be afraid to make it clear how difficult it is for you.
- If a doctor visits you, try not to feel uncomfortable or rushed into making hasty comments, such as, "I'm quite well". Keep in mind why you are applying for this benefit.
- Remember that Attendance Allowance is a benefit for people who need help with their personal care, need supervision or need someone to watch over them because of their disability or illness. All the information you give must be concentrated on these matters.
- Your condition may change throughout the day. It is important that you record this information when you complete the claim form.
- Take some time to think about how Parkinson's affects you. It may be helpful to ask yourself the following questions:
 - Is dressing a problem?
 - Is bathing or showering difficult?
 - Do you need help cutting toe or fingernails?
 - How do you get out of bed?
 - Do you find it difficult to start moving?
 - Do you fall or stumble sometimes? If so, is it difficult to get up again?
 - Do you need someone with you when you go outside?

- Does your condition change throughout the day?
- Do you have times during the day when you go 'off'?
- What is your handwriting like?
- What is your speech like now? Do people find it difficult to hear you when you speak?

It may help to keep a daily diary.

Find out more: see our [information sheet](#)
Keeping a diary: people with Parkinson's.

Any changes you've had to make to your routine because of your condition should be recorded as evidence. For example, you may have difficulty putting on make-up, wearing jewellery or tying a tie. If a woman wears lipstick and has problems applying it, she may give up wearing it. But why should she if that is part of her appearance? This is all part of the evidence.

A man may want to wear a tie every day because he does not feel properly dressed without one. The problem is doing up the tie. He may need help. He may struggle to do it himself. This needs to be recorded.

You may now wear a different style of clothing. This may be because you find it easier to cope with. If this is the case, always say so in the claim form and explain why you now wear a particular garment. For example, you may wear a sweatshirt without buttons, because it is easier to manage.

What if I am refused Attendance Allowance?

If you feel that you have wrongly been refused Attendance Allowance, it is worth asking the Disability and Carer's Service to revise its decision. You have one month from the date of the decision to do this and you can ask for a revision over the phone.

It would help if you were to get a letter from your GP, specialist or Parkinson's nurse, pointing out what your care needs are. The letter may simply state that they have read your diary of your care needs and they agree that your condition creates those needs.

If you have asked for a revision and the Disability and Carer's Service doesn't change its decision, you have another month to lodge an appeal to an independent tribunal. To do this, fill in form GL24, available from the Disability and Carer's Service.

Try to get help with your appeal. There are some organisations that can offer help and advice (some for free) with your appeal, such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, local welfare rights groups or local solicitors.

What if there is a change in my condition?

If you have a lower rate Attendance Allowance and your condition progresses, so you now need help during both the day and the night (or you have a terminal illness), you can ask the Disability and Carer's Service to look at your claim again and consider the higher rate.

Before putting in your request, try to get some advice and information on the process. If the Disability and Carer's Service receives information that shows your care needs have reduced, then your benefit may be withdrawn.

Before asking for a review, you should consider how your needs have increased on a daily basis. What extra support and help do you need now, that you did not need when you first claimed Attendance Allowance? Writing a diary of your care needs over 24 hours may help you with this.

It is important to get medical support before you ask for a review. A letter from your GP, specialist or Parkinson's nurse, which points out what your current care needs are, will help. The letter may simply say that they have read the diary of your care needs and they agree that your condition would create those needs.

When you ask for a review, you need to contact:

Attendance Allowance Unit

0845 712 3456

Textphone **08457 224 433**

You will normally be sent a review form to complete.

More information and support

We have information sheets on other benefits you may be entitled to. You can download these from our website at parkinsons.org.uk or see the back page of this sheet for details of how to order these for free.

Our helpline

For more help and information on rights and benefits, you can contact our dedicated employment and benefits adviser on the Parkinson's UK helpline on **0808 800 0303** (calls are free from UK landlines and most mobile networks) or email hello@parkinsons.org.uk

Information and support workers

Our UK-wide network of information and support workers can also provide details about benefits and help you with the application process. You can find your local information and support worker online at parkinsons.org.uk/isw or call our helpline for details.

Local groups

Speak to others about their experiences at your local Parkinson's UK group. Visit parkinsons.org.uk/localgroups or call our helpline for details of your nearest meeting.

Online forum

Speak to others in a similar situation through our online discussion forum at parkinsons.org.uk/forum.

Thank you

Thank you to Disability Alliance for updating this information sheet.



Attendance Allowance

If you have comments or suggestions about this information sheet, we'd love to hear from you. This will help us ensure that we are providing as good a service as possible.

We'd be very grateful if you could complete this form and return it to **Information Resources, Parkinson's UK, 215 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 1EJ**. Or you can email us at publications@parkinsons.org.uk. Thanks!

Please tick...

- I have Parkinson's. When were you diagnosed?
- I'm family/a friend/a carer of someone with Parkinson's
- I'm a professional working with people with Parkinson's

Where did you get this information sheet from?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> GP, specialist or Parkinson's nurse | <input type="checkbox"/> Information and support worker |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parkinson's UK local group or event | <input type="checkbox"/> Ordered from us directly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Our website | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

We're the Parkinson's support and research charity. Help us find a cure and improve life for everyone affected by Parkinson's.

Can you help?

At Parkinson's UK, we are totally dependent on donations from individuals and organisations to fund the work that we do. There are many ways that you can help us to support people with Parkinson's. If you would like to get involved, please contact our Supporter Services team on **020 7932 1303** or visit our website at **parkinsons.org.uk/support**. Thank you.

Parkinson's UK

Free* confidential helpline **0808 800 0303**

Monday to Friday 9am–8pm, Saturday 10am–2pm. Interpreting available.

Text Relay **18001 0808 800 0303**

(for textphone users only)

hello@parkinsons.org.uk

parkinsons.org.uk

*calls are free from UK landlines and most mobile networks.

How to order our resources

01473 212115

resources@parkinsons.org.uk

parkinsons.org.uk/publications

We make every effort to make sure that our services provide up-to-date, unbiased and accurate facts. We hope that these will add to any professional advice you receive and will help you to make any decisions you may face. Please do continue to talk to your health and social care team if you are worried about any aspect of living with Parkinson's.

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How useful have you found the information sheet? (1 is not useful, 4 is very useful) 1 2 3 4

Have you found the publication easy to read/use? Yes No

What aspects did you find most helpful?

Were you looking for any information that wasn't covered?

Do you have any other comments?

If you would like to become a member of Parkinson's UK, or are interested in joining our information review group, please complete the details below and we'll be in touch.

Membership Information review group (who give us feedback on new and updated resources)

Name

Address

Telephone Email