

Disability Living 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 Disability Living Allowance is, who qualifies, how to claim and what information you need to supply.

What is Disability Living Allowance?

If you are under 65 years old and need help looking after yourself or find it difficult to walk or get around, you may be able to claim Disability Living Allowance.

You don't need to have someone looking after you to qualify and you can still claim if you are in employment. Disability Living Allowance is paid to the person who needs care or supervision and if you receive this benefit, it is entirely up to you how you use it.

Disability Living Allowance has two parts, called components. You can get both components or just one, depending on your condition.

The care component will suit you if you need help looking after yourself or if you need someone to make sure you're safe. There are three rates to this component and the rate you are awarded depends on the amount of care or supervision you need.

It's important to realise that the care component is based on what help you need – not on the help you actually get. It doesn't matter whether you live alone or with other people, or if you receive a lot of help or a little.

The mobility component is paid to people who have problems walking around outside the home. It has two rates and your rate depends on the nature of your walking difficulties.

The claim form is long and can be complicated. However, it is worth sticking with it because getting Disability Living Allowance can significantly increase your weekly income.

Do I qualify for Disability Living Allowance?

To qualify for this benefit you must:

- claim before your 65th birthday, and
- have been living in the UK for at least six of the last 12 months before claiming and have no restrictions on your right to stay in the UK, and
- have had the care needs or mobility problems for at least three months and expect them to last at least six months in the future, and
- pass one of the disability tests

What are the disability tests?

Care component

To get the Disability Living Allowance care component you must show that you are so severely disabled physically or mentally that:

- you cannot prepare a cooked main meal for yourself, even if you have everything you need, or
- you need attention from another person in connection with your 'bodily functions' for a significant portion of the day (ie at least an hour). 'Bodily functions' means things like getting in and out of bed, getting dressed and undressed, getting washed and other personal hygiene, going to the toilet, taking medication, eating, drinking, cutting up food and communicating with other people. The attention can be for one period of about an hour a day or several periods that add up to about an hour, or
- you need 'frequent attention throughout the day in connection with your bodily functions' This means help several times a day (not once or twice), or
- you need 'continual supervision throughout the day in order to avoid substantial danger to yourself or others'. This means someone watching over you or checking you to ensure that you are safe and/or not a danger to other people, or
- at night you need either 'prolonged or repeated attention in connection with your bodily functions'

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'

If there are three rates to the care component, which rate will I get?

The rate you get depends on which of the above conditions you satisfy. You get the lowest rate if you cannot cook a meal or need help for about an hour a day. The middle rate is paid if you need care or supervision throughout the day or the night. The highest rate is paid if you need care or supervision throughout the day and the night.

If you are terminally ill, you can get highest rate care component under the 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. Under the special rules someone else can apply on your behalf.

Mobility component

The mobility component is paid at one of two rates. You can get the higher rate if, due to a physical disability:

- you are unable to walk, or
- you are virtually unable to walk, or
- the exertion needed for you to walk would be a danger to your life or would be likely to lead to a serious deterioration in your health, or
- you have a severe visual impairment

The lower rate is paid if you are able to walk around outside but because of a physical or mental disability you need someone with you on unfamiliar routes either to help you reach your destination or make sure that you are safe.

When can I make a claim?

You must have had the care needs or mobility problems for three months before your Allowance can begin. You can make your claim during this three-month waiting period, but your benefit will not be paid until it has ended.

You must expect your disability to last at least six months from the date of claim.

If you apply under the special rules for terminal illness, the three and six-month time limits do not apply.

Are there any age limits?

You can claim the care component from birth (it will be paid from three months if awarded). You can only claim the higher rate of the mobility component from the age of three and the lower rate from the age of five.

You cannot make a new claim for Disability Living Allowance after your 65th birthday. If you have care or supervision needs, you should consider claiming Attendance Allowance instead.

If you already get Disability Living Allowance by your 65th birthday, you can continue to receive it after that date. However, there are restrictions if you want your award to be reviewed. The lowest rate of the care component and both rates of the mobility component cannot be awarded for the first time if you are aged 65 or over.

How much can I get with a Disability Living Allowance?

You can get one of three rates of the care component and one of two rates of the mobility component. All the rates are weekly. The figures are adjusted each year in line with other benefits:

Care component	Mobility component
Highest rate: £73.60	Higher rate: £51.40
Middle rate: £49.30	Lower rate: £19.55
Lowest rate: £19.55	

Will my Disability Living Allowance affect any other benefits?

Getting Disability Living Allowance may increase the amount of any means-tested benefits you receive, such as Housing Benefit or Working Tax Credit. It can be paid in addition to any other social security benefits.

Disability Living Allowance is not taxable. It is not based upon National Insurance contributions and any income or savings you may have does not affect it.

How is Disability Living Allowance paid?

Disability Living Allowance is normally paid every four weeks 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, both the care component and the mobility component 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 Disability Living Allowance can continue to be paid. If the local authority helps with the fees, the care component will stop after four weeks. The mobility component is not currently affected even if the local authority helps with the fees (however, this is under review, and from March 2013 you may not get the mobility component if you are in a care home and do not pay your own fees).

If a nursing home is paid for by the health service, both the care and mobility components will usually stop after four weeks and can restart when you return home.

How long is Disability Living Allowance awarded for?

Disability Living Allowance may be awarded for an indefinite period or for a fixed period of time. If it is the latter, then you will normally be contacted four months before your current claim runs out.

How do I claim Disability Living Allowance?

You will need the claim form DLA1. To request a form, contact the Benefit Enquiry Line on **0800 882200** or download one from www.direct.gov.uk/disability-dla. You can also claim online from the website.

If the Benefit Enquiry Line sends you the claim form, it will be stamped with the date you asked for it.

If Disability Living 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. They may also send one of their doctors to your home to assess you before they approve your claim.

Tips for claiming

- 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 try and take your time filling in the claim form. Try to get help if you need it.
- Do not be afraid to write too much and add extra pages if necessary (just remember to write your name and National Insurance number on them).
- Do not 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.
- Your condition may change throughout the day. It may change frequently. It is important that you record this information when you complete the claim form.
- If a doctor visits you, try not to feel uncomfortable or rushed into making hasty comments like "I'm quite well". Keep in mind why you are applying for this benefit.
- 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 finger nails?
 - 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 out?
 - Does your condition change throughout the day?

- Do you have times during the day when you feel worse?
- 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 written down as evidence. For example, you may have difficulty putting on make up, wearing jewellery or tying a tie.

You may be wearing a different style of clothing because you find it easier to put on. For example, you may start to wear clothes without buttons because you have problems doing them up. If this is the case, always say so in the claim form and explain why you now wear particular clothes.

You may have walking difficulties or your balance may be affected because of Parkinson's. This may mean that crossing a main road can be a problem, walking may become tiring and you may need to rest a lot. That is all part of the evidence of how life has changed because of the effects of Parkinson's and you should write it down in the claim form.

What if I am refused Disability Living Allowance?

If you feel that you've been wrongly refused either Disability Living Allowance component, it is worth asking the Disability and Carer's Service to revise their 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 can help to get a letter from your GP, specialist or Parkinson's nurse, which points out what your care needs or mobility problems are. The letter may simply state that they have read your diary of your care needs and they agree that your condition would create those needs.

If you have asked for a revision and the Disability and Carer's Service doesn't change the 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, such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, local welfare rights groups or solicitors.

What if my condition gets worse?

If you have only one component of Disability Living Allowance or a lower rate of one component and your condition gets worse, 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 get information that shows that your care needs have reduced, then your Disability Living Allowance may be withdrawn. So, it's really important that you provide an accurate record of your needs, whether they are to do with personal care or help with getting around.

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 Disability Living 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 or mobility problems 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.

It is important to get the medical support before you ask for a review. When you ask for a review, contact:

Disability Living Allowance Unit

0845 712 3456

You will normally be sent a review form to complete.

Future changes

The government intends to replace Disability Living Allowance with a new benefit, the 'Personal

Independence Payment', for people between the ages of 16–64.

This will have many similarities with Disability Living Allowance. In particular it will have two components: a daily living component (which has similarities to the current care component) and a mobility component.

Since the Government intend to save money introducing the new benefit, the tests that you must satisfy to get it are likely to be stricter. The Personal Independence Payment will not be introduced before April 2013. At some stage, existing claimants of Disability Living Allowance between the ages of 16 –64 will be tested under the new benefit and moved onto it if they pass the conditions.

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.

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.



Disability Living 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.

References for this information sheet can be found in the Microsoft Word version at **parkinsons.org.uk/publications**

Last updated June 2011. Next update available June 2012.
WB03

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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