

Carer's Allowance

If you have Parkinson's, you may have some concerns about how you will 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 Carer's Allowance is, who qualifies, how to claim and what information you need to supply.

What is Carer's Allowance?

Carer's Allowance is a benefit for people who regularly spend at least 35 hours a week caring for a severely disabled person. You don't have to be related to that person or be living with them. The person you're caring for must be receiving either Attendance Allowance or the Disability Living Allowance care component at the middle or highest rate.

You can still qualify for Carer's Allowance even if you have never been in paid employment or paid National Insurance contributions. Carer's Allowance is not means tested, which means it isn't affected by your income or savings, but it is taxable.

You can get Carer's Allowance even if you, the carer, are getting Attendance Allowance or Disability Living Allowance yourself.

If you claim Carer's Allowance, it can sometimes reduce the amount of means-tested benefits that the person you look after can claim.

To find out more, contact a Citizens Advice Bureau or another agency that gives benefits advice, such as your local Welfare Rights Group. You can find these organisations listed in your local telephone directory, or you can speak to the dedicated benefits and employment adviser on our helpline.

Carer's Allowance is not supposed to be a wage for caring, or a payment for the services of caring.

Do I qualify?

You must be spending 35 hours or more a week caring for someone who receives Attendance Allowance or the middle or highest rate of the care component of Disability Living Allowance.

You must also:

- be 16 or over at the time of your claim
- live in the United Kingdom
- have no restrictions on your right to stay in the United Kingdom
- not be in full-time education (ie on an educational course of 21 hours or more supervised study a week)
- not earn more than £100 a week, if you are in paid employment

If you're caring for someone with Parkinson's and you meet these requirements, you should think about applying for Carer's Allowance.

How much is Carer's Allowance?

The weekly rate is £55.55.

Do other benefits affect Carer's Allowance?

Yes. You can't be paid Carer's Allowance if you are receiving the same amount or more from the following benefits:

- Contributory Employment and Support Allowance
- Severe Disablement Allowance
- Incapacity Benefit
- Maternity Allowance
- State Pension
- State training allowances
- Unemployability Supplement
- Widow's Benefits or bereavement benefits
- Contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance

You can't get Carer's Allowance if you get the same amount or more from a State Pension. If your State Pension is less than Carer's Allowance, your pension

can be topped up with Carer's Allowance to the standard rate for Carer's Allowance (£55.55 a week).

How is Carer's Allowance paid?

Carer's Allowance is either paid weekly in advance or every four weeks in arrears (for the past four weeks).

Carer's Allowance can be backdated for up to three months. If you've been waiting for the person who you are caring for to be awarded the appropriate rate of Disabled Living Allowance or Attendance Allowance, Carer's Allowance can be backdated to the first day of their award.

For this to happen, you must request it within three months of the date that they started to get their payments. You must also have met the other conditions of entitlement for the whole back-payment period.

Your money will be paid into your bank 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 one

Why should I claim Carer's Allowance?

If you qualify for Carer's Allowance, £31 a week carer premium is included in the assessment for any income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support, Pension Credit, Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit you may receive.

You may also qualify for a carer premium if you are entitled to Carer's Allowance, but cannot be paid it because you receive another benefit instead which overlaps with Carer's Allowance (such as Employment and Support Allowance).

Each week that you receive Carer's Allowance, you get a Class 1 National Insurance credit. This will help towards your entitlement to a State Pension.

If you receive Carer's Allowance, you may also get the Christmas bonus of £10.

Can a carer get Carer's Allowance after the person they care for has died?

When the disabled person being cared for dies, the carer getting Carer's Allowance will receive payments for up to eight weeks afterwards. This is to give ex-carers who have recently been bereaved time to adjust and make plans for their own future. The carer premium also has this eight-week run on, so a carer on income-related benefits will still be able to get this.

Other Carer's Allowance rules continue to apply within the eight-week period, apart from the need to care, such as the rules about working and full-time study. Other benefits (listed on the previous page) will still affect the payment of Carer's Allowance.

How do I claim Carer's Allowance?

Use the form DS700, or fill in DS700(SP) if you claim State Pension. You can get the claim form from your local Jobcentre Plus office, the Pension Service or by contacting the Benefit Enquiry Line on **0800 882200** or textphone **0800 243355**. The claim form comes with a free return envelope. Or you can make a claim online at www.direct.gov.uk/carers-ca

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.



Carer's 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](mailto:publications@parkinsons.org.uk). 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?

- GP, specialist or Parkinson's nurse
- Parkinson's UK local group or event
- Our website
- Information and support worker
- Ordered from us directly
- 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