

Attendance Allowance

If you have Parkinson's, you may have some concerns about how you'll manage financially. 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 information explains what Attendance Allowance is, who qualifies, how to claim and what information you need to supply when you claim.

What is Attendance Allowance?

If you've reached the qualifying age, have an illness or disability and you need help with personal care or someone to watch over you to make sure you are safe, you may be able to claim Attendance Allowance.

If you are claiming before 6 December 2018, the qualifying age for Attendance Allowance is 65. If you are claiming on or after 6 December 2018, the qualifying age is your State Pension age. You can check your State Pension age using the online calculator at www.gov.uk/state-pension-age

This benefit is for you, not for a carer, and you don't need to have someone looking after you to qualify. If you have a carer, they may be able to claim Carer's Allowance or National Insurance contribution credits.

Find out more: see our information on [Carer's Allowance](#).

Attendance Allowance is based on the 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. If you need help filling out the form, you can call our free confidential helpline on **0808 800 0303** to be put in touch with your Parkinson's local adviser.

Do I qualify for Attendance Allowance?

You are eligible for Attendance Allowance if:

- you are aged 65 or over (from December 2018 the age at which you can claim Attendance Allowance will rise in line with the State Pension age)
- you have had care or supervision needs for the last six months (the 'qualifying period')
- you have been living in the UK for two of the last three years and your immigration status doesn't prevent you claiming
- you are 'habitually resident' in the UK, **and**
- you satisfy one of the disability tests

What are the disability tests?

To get Attendance Allowance, you must be so severely disabled physically or mentally (or both) that you need:

- care from another person several times throughout the day to help you with your 'bodily functions'. This can include getting in and out of bed, getting dressed and undressed, washing and other personal hygiene needs, going to the toilet, taking medication, eating, cutting up food, drinking and communicating with other people
- continual supervision (ie to be checked on or watched regularly – but not non-stop) throughout the day to ensure that you are safe and/or not a danger to other people
- care from another person at least twice each night, or for 20 minutes or more, to help you with your bodily functions (as described above), **or**
- another person to be awake and watch over you to make sure that you are safe or not a danger to other people, at least three times each night, or for 20 minutes or more each night

How much will I get from Attendance Allowance?

Attendance Allowance is paid at one of two weekly rates, depending on the amount of help you need:

- The lower rate is £57.30 and applies if you need the above care or supervision throughout the day or the night.
- The higher rate is £85.60 and applies if you need care or supervision throughout the day and the night.

Special rules

If you are terminally ill and are unlikely to live more than 6 months, you can get the higher rate under 'special rules'. In this case, your doctor will need to confirm that you have a terminal illness (they can do this using a DS1500 form, which they should keep at the surgery). There is no six-month qualifying period for terminal illness. Under the special rules, someone else can apply on your behalf. Special rules claims are reviewed every three years.

Does Attendance Allowance affect other benefits?

Attendance Allowance is not means-tested. It 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. However, although it is often ignored, your local authority may take Attendance Allowance into account when considering whether you need to contribute towards the cost of any care and support services you get from them.

Attendance Allowance is not taxable. It is not based on National Insurance contributions. 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 Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment, you will continue to get that benefit and you won't be able to claim Attendance Allowance.

How is Attendance Allowance paid?

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, see our [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 when you have been there for a total of four weeks (either in one stay, or several stays, where the gaps between stays are no more than four weeks each time). 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 a total of four weeks (either in one stay, or several stays, where the gaps between stays are no more than four weeks each time). It can restart when or if you are able to 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 period of time, then you will normally be sent a renewal claim form four months before your existing claim runs out.

How do I claim Attendance Allowance?

You will need the claim form AA1. If you live in England, Scotland or Wales, you can request the form by calling the Attendance Allowance helpline on **0800 731 0122** (Textphone **0800 731 0317**) or by downloading one from www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance/how-to-claim

In Northern Ireland call **0800 587 0912** (Textphone **028 9031 1092**) or visit www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/attendance-allowance

If the Attendance Allowance helpline 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 Department for Work and Pensions (or the Disability and Carers Service in Northern Ireland) may contact your GP, specialist or Parkinson's nurse 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 or supervision for six months before you can start getting Attendance Allowance. You can make your claim during this six-month qualifying period, but you will not be paid until it has ended. If you apply under the special rules for terminal illness, there is no six-month qualifying 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 (see page 7 for details of how to contact your Parkinson's local adviser).
- Don't be afraid to write too much and add extra pages if you need to – just remember to write your name and National Insurance number on each of 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 be rushed into making hasty comments, such as, "I can manage by myself". Keep in mind why you are applying for this benefit. If you live by yourself, you may not have the choice but to manage by yourself – but if you had help you may be able to do things more effectively, or quicker, or without risk or pain. Let the doctor know if this is the case.
- Your condition may change through the day. It is important that you record this information when you complete the claim form.
- If your condition changes from day to day, explain what you are like on an average or typical day, but also include what you are like on both a good and bad day too. Write down how often both good and bad days occur (for instance, "I have bad days around four days each week").

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 toenails 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 through the day?
- Do you have times during the day when you go 'off'?
- What is your handwriting like?
- What is your speech like? Do people find it difficult to understand you?

It may also help to keep a daily diary of your care needs.

Find out more: see our information on [Monitoring your Parkinson's](#).

Write down in the claim form any changes you've had to make to your routine because of your condition. For example, you may have difficulty putting on make-up, wearing jewellery or tying a tie.

If you wear lipstick and have problems applying it, you may give up wearing it. But why should you if that is part of your appearance? This needs to be mentioned in the claim form.

You may want to wear a tie every day because you don't feel properly dressed without one. But you may need help because you struggle to do it yourself. This also needs to be mentioned.

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 rather than a cardigan 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 Department for Work and Pensions (the Disability and Carers Service in Northern Ireland) for a 'mandatory reconsideration' of its decision.

You have one month from the date of the decision to do this. You can ask for a mandatory reconsideration over the phone but it is best to confirm your request in writing.

It can help if you 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 mandatory reconsideration and the Department for Work and Pensions doesn't change its decision, you have another month to appeal to an independent tribunal. To do this, fill in form SSCS1, available at www.gov.uk/social-security-child-support-tribunal/appeal-tribunal. In Northern Ireland, use form NOA1(SS), available at www.nidirect.gov.uk/publications/appeals-form-noa1ss. If you can't download the online form, you can get a paper copy from Citizens Advice or another advice agency.

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

What if there is a change in my condition?

If you get the lower rate of Attendance Allowance and your condition progresses, you can ask the Department for Work and Pensions (the Disability and Carers Service in Northern Ireland) to look at your claim again and consider the higher rate. They may do this if, for example, you need help during both the day and the night or if you develop a terminal illness.

Before putting in your request, try to get some advice and information about the process. If the Department for Work and Pensions 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? Keeping a diary of your care needs 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 that 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 (for England, Scotland and Wales)

0800 731 0122

Textphone **0800 731 0317**

Disability and Carers Service – Attendance Allowance (for Northern Ireland)

0800 587 0912

Textphone **028 9031 1092**

You will normally be sent a review form to complete.

If your condition improves, you will also need to get in touch with the Attendance Allowance Unit or Disability and Carers Service (on one of the above numbers) as soon as you can. They will normally send you a review form to complete, so they can re-assess your award.

It is always important to provide full, accurate information to the the Attendance Allowance Unit or Disability and Carers Service, and to let them know if your circumstances change.

More information and support

Parkinson's nurses

Parkinson's nurses provide expert advice and support to people with Parkinson's and those who care for them. They can also make contact with other health and social care professionals to make sure your needs are met.

The role of the Parkinson's nurse varies. Each will offer different services, aiming to meet local needs. Some nurses are based in the community, whereas others are based in hospital settings.

Many Parkinson's nurses are independent prescribers. This means they can prescribe and make adjustments to medication, so someone with Parkinson's doesn't always need to see their specialist for changes to or queries about their Parkinson's drugs.

Parkinson's nurses may not be available in every area, but your GP or specialist can give you more details on local services.

You can find out more at parkinsons.org.uk/nurses

Information and support from Parkinson's UK

You can call our free confidential helpline for general support and information. Call **0808 800 0303** (calls are free from UK landlines and most mobile networks) or email hello@parkinsons.org.uk.

We run a peer support service if you'd like to talk on the phone with someone affected by Parkinson's who has faced similar issues to you. The service is free and confidential – ring the helpline to talk to someone about being matched with a volunteer.

Our helpline can also put you in touch with one of our Parkinson's local advisers, who give one-to-one information and support to anyone affected by Parkinson's. They can also provide links to local groups and services.

We also have a self-management programme for people with Parkinson's, partners and carers. It is an opportunity to reflect on life with the condition, learn about self-management and think about the future. To find out if there is a group near you, visit parkinsons.org.uk/selfmanagement

Our website parkinsons.org.uk has a lot of information about Parkinson's and everyday life with the condition. You can also find details of your local support team and your nearest local group meeting at parkinsons.org.uk/localtoyou

Visit parkinsons.org.uk/forum to chat to other people with similar experiences on our online discussion forum.

Thank you

Thank you to Disability Rights UK for updating this information sheet. Disability Rights UK also have a wide range of online factsheets relating to disability-related issues including Access to Work, education, the Blue Badge scheme, independent living and disabled facilities grants.

Visit their website: www.disabilityrightsuk.org

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 **0800 138 6593** or visit our website at parkinsons.org.uk/donate. Thank you.

Our information

All of our most up-to-date information is available at parkinsons.org.uk/information-support. If you'd prefer to read one of our printed leaflets or booklets, find out how to place an order at parkinsons.org.uk/ordering-resources or by calling **0300 123 3689**.

We make every effort to ensure that our services provide current, unbiased and accurate information. We hope that this will add to any professional advice you receive and 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.

If you'd like to find out more about how we put our information together, including references and the sources of evidence we use, please contact us at publications@parkinsons.org.uk

Attendance Allowance (WB02/2018)

Do you have any feedback about this information? Your comments will help us ensure our resources are as useful and easy to understand as possible. Please return to [Information Content team, Parkinson's UK, 215 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 1EJ](#), or email publications@parkinsons.org.uk. Thank you!

1. Please choose the option that best fits you.

- I have Parkinson's and was diagnosed in I care for someone with Parkinson's
 I have a friend or family member with Parkinson's I'm a professional working with people with Parkinson's
 Other (please specify)
-

2. Where did you get this information from?

- GP Specialist Parkinson's nurse Parkinson's UK local group Parkinson's UK local adviser
 Ordered directly from us Call to the helpline
 Other (please specify)
-

3. Has it answered all your questions?

- Yes, completely Yes, mostly Not sure Partly Not at all

4. How easy was it to understand?

- Very easy Easy Not sure Quite difficult Very difficult

5. Has it helped you manage your condition better, or make choices that have improved your life in some way?

- It helped a lot It helped a little No change It didn't help It made things worse

6. What is your ethnic background?*

- Asian or Asian British Black or Black British Chinese Mixed White British White other
 Other (please specify)
-

*We ask about your ethnicity to ensure our information is reaching a broad range of people. However, this question is optional.

Want to hear more from us?

- I would like a response to my feedback I would like to be a member of Parkinson's UK
 I'm interested in joining the Information review group, to offer feedback on Parkinson's UK information

If you've answered yes to any of these options, please complete your details below.

Name

Address

Email

Telephone

How would you prefer us to contact you? Email Post Phone

We will not pass on your details to any other organisation or third party. To find out more, read our privacy policy at [parkinsons.org.uk/termsandconditions](https://www.parkinsons.org.uk/termsandconditions)

Every hour, two people in the UK are told they have Parkinson's – a brain condition that turns lives upside down, leaving a future full of uncertainty.

Parkinson's UK is here to make sure people have whatever they need to take back control – from information to inspiration.

We want everyone to get the best health and social care. So we bring professionals together to drive improvements that enable people to live life to the full.

Ultimately, we want to end Parkinson's. That's why we inspire and support the international research community to develop life-changing treatments, faster. And we won't stop until we find a cure.

Together we can bring forward the day when no one fears Parkinson's.

Parkinson's UK

Free confidential helpline **0808 800 0303**

Monday to Friday 9am–7pm, Saturday 10am–2pm. Interpreting available.

NGT Relay **18001 0808 800 0303** (for use with smart phones, tablets, PCs and other devices).

For more information see www.ngts.org.uk

hello@parkinsons.org.uk

parkinsons.org.uk

Last updated July 2018. Next update available July 2019

Please check our website for the most up-to-date versions of all our information.

WB02