

Attendance Allowance

If you have Parkinson's, you might be worried 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 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 provide when you apply.

The information in this publication is correct as of June 2021, but is subject to change. Our most up-to-date information is on our website at parkinsons.org.uk/benefits. Our helpline can also give advice on benefits. Call **0808 800 0303** or email hello@parkinsons.org.uk

What is Attendance Allowance?

If you've reached pension age, have an illness or disability, and you also need help with your personal care or safety, you may be able to claim Attendance Allowance.

The qualifying age for Attendance Allowance is State Pension age. You can check your State Pension age at www.gov.uk/pension-credit-calculator

This benefit is for you, not for a carer, and you don't need to have someone supporting or caring for you to qualify. If you do 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 fill in because it deals with personal care issues. But it's worth taking the time to do it, because getting Attendance Allowance can 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're eligible for Attendance Allowance if:

- you are State Pension age. You can check if you are at www.gov.uk/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 are terminally ill, **or**
- you satisfy one of the disability tests

What are the disability tests?

To get Attendance Allowance, you must have a severe physical or mental disability (or both) that means you need:

- care from another person several times throughout the day to help with your 'bodily functions'. This can include help 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 (being checked on or watched regularly – but not non-stop) throughout the day to make sure you're safe and/or not a danger to yourself or others
- 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're safe or not a danger to others, at least three times each night, or for 20 minutes or more each night

How much will I get?

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

- The lower rate is £60 and applies if you need the above care **or** supervision throughout the day **or** the night.
- The higher rate is £89.60 and applies if you need care or supervision throughout the day and the night.

'Special rules' claims

If you're terminally ill and unlikely to live more than six months, you can get the higher rate under 'special rules'.

In this case, your doctor, consultant or specialist nurse 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 claims. Under the rules, someone else can apply on your behalf without your knowledge. Special rules claims are reviewed every three years.

If you're terminally ill and your GP, consultant or specialist nurse says that you are 'reasonably' expected to die within the next six months:

- You can get the highest rate of Attendance Allowance.
- You'll need a form called DS1500 completed by the doctor or nurse.
- You can have someone else apply on your behalf.

If you're terminally ill and live in Scotland, soon it will be possible to claim the highest rate of Attendance Allowance, even if you're expected to live more than six months. This change is expected in spring 2022 with the launch of the replacement for Attendance Allowance, to be called Pension Age Disability Payment.

Does Attendance Allowance affect other benefits?

Receiving Attendance Allowance can increase the amount of any means-tested benefits (such as

Pension Credit) you get. Attendance Allowance can be paid in addition to any other social security benefits.

However, your local authority might take Attendance Allowance into account when considering whether you need to contribute to the cost of any care and support services you receive from them.

Attendance Allowance is not taxable. It's not based on National Insurance contributions. Attendance Allowance is also not means-tested. In other words, any income or savings you have do not affect whether you're awarded it or how much you get.

Can I claim Attendance Allowance alongside Disability Living Allowance?

No. If you already get Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment, you'll continue to get that benefit and you won't be able to claim Attendance Allowance.

How is Attendance Allowance paid?

Attendance Allowance is usually 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, which has information about how to open one.

What if I go into hospital or a care home?

Your Attendance Allowance will stop after you've been in hospital 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).

You can't usually get Attendance Allowance if you live in a care home and your care is paid for by your local authority. You can still claim Attendance Allowance if you pay for all your care home costs yourself.

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's for a fixed period, you'll normally be sent a renewal claim form four months before your existing claim runs out.

How do I claim?

You'll need to download the Attendance Allowance claim form AA1 from www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance/how-to-claim

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**).

You can find out about Attendance Allowance eligibility in Northern Ireland by calling **0800 587 0912** (Textphone **028 9031 1092**).

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've 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 being paid Attendance Allowance. You can make your claim during this six-month qualifying period, but the benefit 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've completed it.
- You normally have six weeks, so take your time filling in the claim form – try to get help if you need it. You can call the Parkinson's helpline on **0808 800 0303**.
- Don't be afraid to write too much and add extra pages if needed – just remember to write your name and National Insurance number on each page.

- 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 an assessor 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're applying for this benefit. If you live by yourself, you might have to manage by yourself – but if you get 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 throughout the day. It's important that you write down this information when you complete the claim form.
- If your condition changes from day to day, explain what you're like on an average or typical day, but also include what you're like on both a good and bad day. Write down how often you have both good and bad days (for example, "I have bad days around four days each week").

Take some time to think about how Parkinson's affects you. It might 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 throughout the day?
- Do you have times during the day when you go 'off'?
- What's your handwriting like?
- What's your speech like?

For some of these points, it may also help to keep a daily diary of your care needs.

Find out more: [see our information on monitoring your Parkinsons.](#)

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's part of your appearance? This needs to be explained.

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

You might now wear a different style of clothes. This could be because you find them easier to put on. For example, you might wear a sweatshirt without buttons rather than a cardigan, or shoes without laces, because they're easier to manage. If this is the case, always say so in the claim form and explain why you now wear a particular piece of clothing.

What if I'm refused Attendance Allowance?

If you feel that you've been wrongly refused Attendance Allowance, it's 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's best to confirm 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 the diary you've kept of your care needs and they agree that those needs are due to your condition.

If you've asked for a mandatory reconsideration and the Department for Work and Pensions doesn't change its mind, you have another month to appeal to an independent tribunal.

To do this, fill in an Attendance Allowance appeal form at www.gov.uk/appeal-benefit-decision. In Northern Ireland, download form NOA1(SS) from www.nidirect.gov.uk/publications/appeal-form-noa1ss. You can get a paper copy from Citizens Advice.

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's 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 you need help to keep yourself safe, you need to be looked after both during 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 your care needs have decreased, 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 didn't need when you first claimed Attendance Allowance? Keeping a diary of your daily care needs might help you with this.

It's 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've read the diary of your care needs and 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) on **0800 731 0122** (textphone **0800 731 0317**)
- Disability and Carers Service – Attendance Allowance (for Northern Ireland) on **0800 587 0912** (textphone **028 9031 1092**)

You'll normally be sent a review form to complete. If your condition improves, you'll also need to get in touch with the Attendance Allowance Unit or Disability and Carers Service as soon as you can. They'll normally send you a review form to complete, so they can re-assess your award.

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

More information and support

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**.

Our helpline can 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.

Our website **parkinsons.org.uk** has a lot of information about Parkinson's and everyday life with the condition.

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

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**

Thank you

Thank you to benefits specialist Barbara Knight for helping to update this information.

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 healthcontent@parkinsons.org.uk



Attendance Allowance (INFOS0003/2021)

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](mailto:healthcontent@parkinsons.org.uk), or email healthcontent@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

We're the Parkinson's charity that drives better care, treatments and quality of life.

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

Parkinson's UK
215 Vauxhall Bridge Road
London SW1V 1EJ

Free confidential helpline **0808 800 0303**
(Monday to Friday 9am–7pm, Saturday 10am–2pm).
Interpreting available.

Relay UK **18001 0808 800 0303** (for use with smart phones, tablets, PCs and other devices). For more information see www.relayuk.bt.com

hello@parkinsons.org.uk
parkinsons.org.uk

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

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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