

# Disability Living Allowance for children

Benefit and  
support your child  
may get if they are  
ill or disabled



Department  
for Work &  
Pensions

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### Introduction

This leaflet:

- explains what Disability Living Allowance is
- asks some questions to help you decide if your child may be able to get it, and
- tells you how to claim it.

This leaflet is for the parent or guardian of a child under 16.

If your child is aged 16 or over, they will need to claim Personal Independence Payment instead. We have a separate leaflet about Personal Independence Payment for adults aged 16 to 64.

### What is Disability Living Allowance?

Disability Living Allowance is a tax-free benefit to help you with the extra costs you may have for a child because they are disabled. It is not 'means tested', so having savings or other income won't affect whether you can claim or the amount you might get. It will not usually affect any other benefits you may be getting.

Disability Living Allowance is paid to you while your child needs help looking after themselves or to move around. The amount they get is based on the help they need as a result of their disability or condition. They will get this money until the amount of help they need or their ability to move around changes.

A child can only get Disability Living Allowance if they need much more day-to-day help than other children of the same age who don't have a disability.

If you are the parent or guardian of a child who is approaching 16 and gets Disability Living Allowance, we will write to you. We will explain how and when your child needs to apply for Personal Independence Payment. We will also tell you what will happen to their Disability Living Allowance.

## How is Disability Living Allowance worked out?

There are 2 parts to Disability Living Allowance:

- Care, and
- Mobility.

A child can get money for one part or both of them. The amount they get is based on how much help they need.

### Care part

There are 3 care rates.

#### Lowest rate

A child may get the lowest care rate if they need help with personal care for some of the day.

#### Middle rate

A child may get the middle care rate if they need:

- help to care for themselves frequently throughout the day, or
- repeated help to care for themselves at night, or
- someone to supervise them at all times throughout the day so that they don't put themselves or other people in danger, or
- someone to watch over them frequently at night so that they don't put themselves or other people in danger, or
- someone with them when they're on dialysis.

#### Highest rate

A child may get the highest care rate if they:

- need repeated help to care for themselves, or frequent supervision, throughout the day and at night.

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Your child may also be able to get this rate if they are terminally ill.

Please see page 8 for examples of what we mean by help with care.

### Mobility part

There are 2 mobility rates.

#### Lower rate

A child may get the lower mobility rate if they:

- are aged 5 or over, and
- can walk, but they need a lot more help to get around outdoors, in places they don't know, than other children of the same age who do not have a disability.

This is to stop them putting themselves or other people in danger, perhaps because they:

- have problems with the way they behave, or
- have problems talking to others, or
- need someone to keep an eye on them.

#### Higher rate

A child may get the higher mobility rate if they are aged 3 or over and (even when they use an 'aid' like a stick or a false leg) they:

- cannot walk at all, or
- can only walk a short way without severe discomfort, or
- could become very ill if they try to walk.

They may also get the higher rate if they:

- are blind and deaf, and need someone with them when they go outdoors, or

- have a severe visual impairment, or
- have had both legs amputated, or
- were born without legs or feet, or
- get the highest care rate and have severe learning difficulties and behavioural problems.

Please see page 8 for examples of what we mean by walking difficulties.

## Who can claim Disability Living Allowance for a child?

You can claim if you:

- are the parent of a child who is living with you, and you are aged 16 or over, or
- look after a child as if you are their parent, and you are aged 18 or over (this includes step-parents, guardians, grandparents, foster parents and older brothers and sisters).

If your child is aged 16 or older, they need to claim Personal Independence Payment as an adult.

## When can I claim?

You can claim Disability Living Allowance if your child has needed help looking after themselves or had problems walking (or both) for at least 3 months. And they must be likely to need help, or have problems walking, for at least another 6 months.

However, we have special rules for children who are terminally ill. If your child is terminally ill and is not expected to live for more than 6 months, you can get the highest care rate and (if they meet the conditions) the mobility part straight away.

To claim under these special rules, you'll need to fill in the benefit claim form and get a separate form DS1500 from the child's doctor, specialist or consultant to send with it.

## Questions to help you decide if you should claim Disability Living Allowance for your child

### Does your child live in Great Britain?

To get Disability Living Allowance your child must normally live in Great Britain. In most cases, your child will need to have spent a minimum of at least 2 out of the last 3 years in Great Britain before you can claim Disability Living Allowance.

### Does your child live in an EEA country or Switzerland?

In some circumstances, if your child lives in another European Economic Area (EEA) country or Switzerland you may be able to claim the care part of Disability Living Allowance for them.

Please contact the Exportability Co-ordinator and tell them where your child is living and that you want to make a claim.

Their address is:

The Exportability Co-ordinator  
Room B201  
Blackpool Benefit Centre  
Warbreck Hill Road  
Blackpool  
FY2 0YE



Email: [exportability.team@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:exportability.team@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)



Phone: +44 1253 331044

*You can find up to date information on GOV.UK*

*This leaflet is no longer current.*

**Note:** The European Economic Area is made up of the 28 member states of the European Union (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Ireland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the UK), plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

### **Has your child been told by the Home Office or UK Border Agency that they cannot claim benefits because of their immigration status?**

You can find out by checking their passport or documents they may have received from the Home Office.

You will not usually be able to claim Disability Living Allowance for your child if they are subject to immigration controls, although there are a small number of exceptions. For more information contact the Disability Living Allowance Helpline.



Phone: 0345 712 3456

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### **Does your child need much more help or supervision than other children of the same age?**

To get Disability Living Allowance, your child must need much more day-to-day help or supervision than other children of the same age who do not have a disability.

By 'day-to-day help' we mean things like:

- getting in and out of, or settling in, bed
- getting washed or dressed
- using the toilet (or if they use nappies when they should be potty trained)
- moving around indoors – this includes using stairs, getting in or out of any type of chair or wheelchair
- eating or drinking
- taking medication or having therapy – this includes oxygen therapy, injections, inhalers and coping with side effects
- communicating (such as hearing and speech)
- developing social skills and learning – including through play, or
- being reassured if they worry or get upset.

### **Does your child ever have difficulty getting around outdoors?**

By this we mean things like they:

- cannot walk at all outdoors
- can only walk a short way on a reasonably flat surface, before they:
  - feel severe discomfort, or
  - become unsteady, or
  - get short of breath or dizzy, or
  - would put their health in danger if they continued walking



- need someone with them so that they do not:
  - put themselves or others in danger, or
  - wander off or get lost.

### **Is your child in a residential school or care home?**

If your child is in a residential school or care home (a place that provides accommodation together with nursing or personal care), we'll pay the mobility part of Disability Living Allowance.

We won't usually pay the care part of Disability Living Allowance if they are staying in a residential school or care home when you claim. However, we may pay it if you are meeting all the costs of their accommodation and personal care without help from your local council or from public money.

### **Is your child in hospital?**

If your child is in hospital when you claim, we won't usually pay Disability Living Allowance after the first 12 weeks, until they leave. However, we may pay it if they are a private patient and you're paying without help from the NHS.

### **Is your child in a hospice?**

We may pay Disability Living Allowance if you're claiming because your child is terminally ill and they are in a hospice.

### **How do I claim?**

If you live in the UK, you will need to fill in a form to claim Disability Living Allowance.

If you live abroad you will need to contact the Exportability Team, using the contact details mentioned earlier in this leaflet.

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You can get the form in 2 ways.

### Online



You can visit us at:

[www.gov.uk/browse/disabilities](http://www.gov.uk/browse/disabilities)

Through this website, you can:

- fill in a claim form on your computer to print out and post to us, or
- print out a blank claim form to fill in by hand and post to us

We'll treat the date we receive your claim form as the date of your claim.

### By phone

You can call to get a claim form, and to arrange help to fill it in.



Phone: **0345 712 3456**

Textphone: **0345 722 4433**

Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm.

If English is not your first language, you can use your own interpreter or we can provide one.

Tell us if you need the form in another format, such as large print or braille.

If you ask for a claim form, we'll treat the date of your phone call as the date you claimed, as long as you send the form back within 6 weeks.

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## Call charges

You can use the **0845** code to call any of our **0345** numbers. Check with your phone company which code is cheaper for you.

You can ask us to call you back if you're concerned about the cost of the call.

## Textphones

Our textphone numbers are for people who cannot speak or hear clearly. If you don't have a textphone you could check if your local library or citizens advice bureau has one. Our textphones don't receive text messages from mobile phones.

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## Important information about this leaflet

This leaflet is only a guide and does not cover every circumstance. We have done our best to make sure that the information in this leaflet is correct as of April 2014. It is possible that some of the information is oversimplified, or may become inaccurate over time, for example because of changes to the law.

You can find more information about benefits and pensions online.



For benefits information go to:  
[www.gov.uk/browse/benefits](http://www.gov.uk/browse/benefits)



For pensions information go to:  
[www.gov.uk/browse/working/state-pension](http://www.gov.uk/browse/working/state-pension)

We aim to provide a high quality of service to all our customers. You can find out more in our customer charter at [www.dwp.gov.uk/about-dwp](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/about-dwp)