

Department for Work & Pensions

Changes to Carer's Allowance

What people told us



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About this report



We asked people in the UK some questions about **Carer's Allowance benefit**.



Carer's Allowance benefit is money from the Government.

It helps people who care for a family member, partner or friend.



We want to make support for carers better and fairer.



This Easy Read tells you about some of the things people said.



We want to say thank you to everyone who helped us.

People who answered our questions



3 thousand people answered our questions.



9 out of 10 people who answered the questions are carers.



Some of these carers get Carer's Allowance.

Some do not.



More than 8 out of 10 people who answered the questions are women.



55 **organisations** answered the questions.

Organisations are places and groups who work with carers.

Rules about paid work



The rules about how much you can work are not easy to understand.



The rules stop people working or getting a better job.



When you get money from a job, it can affect your Carer's Allowance.



Sometimes people get paid too much Carer's Allowance and have to pay it back.

Earnings



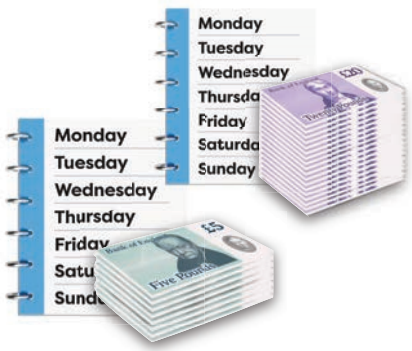
Earnings means the money you get from working.



When you get Carer's Allowance, you cannot earn more than £204 each week.



If you earn more, your Carer's Allowance stops.



But, many people's earnings go up and down every week.

They might earn more than £204 one week. Then less the next week.



One idea is to look at how much someone is paid over a few weeks.



This will help to see if they really are earning more than £204 every week.



Working it out this way is called **average earnings**.



Many carers think this is a good idea.



Some people said we should add up how much some earns over 16 weeks.



Some carers said that Carer's Allowance should not be affected by what you earn.

Earnings taper



A **taper** is a way for carers to keep some of their Carer's Allowance and get paid more from work.



When you start to earn more than £204, how much you get in Carer's Allowance could go down.



We would need to decide:

- How much people can earn before their Carer's Allowance starts to go down.



- When Carer's Allowance would stop.



4 in 10 carers said that they should be able to earn more than £204 before their Carer's Allowance goes down.



All the rules about how much carers can earn must be easy to understand.

Universal Credit



Many carers get a benefit called **Universal Credit** as well as Carer's Allowance.



It can be hard to understand the rules if you get more than 1 benefit.



Carers need clear information about how the 2 benefits affect each other.

Getting paid Carer's Allowance



We asked people about getting paid 4 weeks **in arrears**.

Arrears means getting paid after you have done something.



Carers would care for the person for 4 weeks.



Then they would get paid.

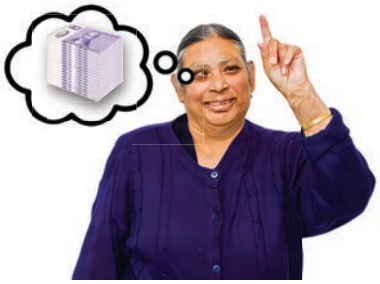


Carers told us that there are good things and bad things about this idea.



Good things

Carers who work will get the right amount of carers allowance.



Carers will know how much money they are going to get.



They can plan their money better.

Bad things



Some carers will find it hard to wait 4 weeks for the money.

They need it to buy things like food and petrol.

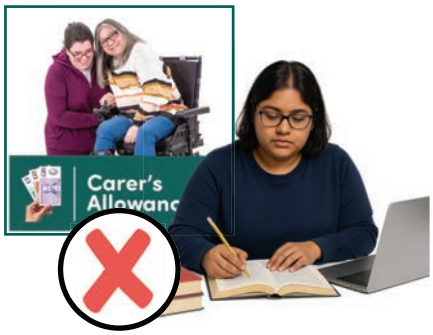


Many carers do not have much in savings.
They would need extra help.

Learning and training



Learning and training is important. It helps people to get good jobs.



Carers aged 16 to 24 cannot get Carer's Allowance if they **study** more than 21 hours per week.



Study means doing a course at school, college or doing some training.



Carers told us they they should be able to study, without losing Carer's Allowance.

Other things people told us



Carers lives are all very different. Things can change quickly.



The government cannot tell how their rules will affect all carers.



Carer's Allowance helps carers to feel that people see the care they give as important.



Some carers said that the money they get from Carer's Allowance is not enough.



Many people said that caring for a person is very hard.



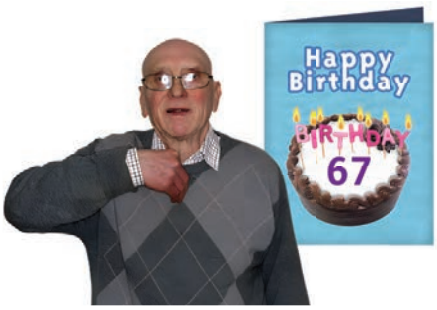
Some carers care for more than 1 person.

But they get the same amount of money as someone who cares for 1 person.



State Pension

A **State Pension** is money from the government.



Some people can get state pension when they are 67 or older.



Carers who get a State Pension sometimes cannot get Carer's Allowance too.



This happens when state pension give them more than £204 a week.



Carers told us:

- This does not feel fair.



- They do not feel people see how much caring they do.



- You do not stop being a carer when you get to state pension age.



- Sometimes you have to spend money you wanted to save up for your own care.

Putting benefits online



Online means doing things on a computer or on a smart phone.



Things like paying bills and filling in forms

Many carers are not online.

This might be because they:



- Do not have a computer or smartphone.



- Find it hard to understand and do things online.



- Do not have support to use online information.

What we will do now



The Department for Work and Pensions will look at all the things people have said.



We will look at other information about Carer's Allowance too.



We will think about the best ways to change Carer's Allowance.