

## Benefits for Carers - Carers Allowance

Carers Allowance is the main benefit for carers. It is currently worth £46.95 a week and is taxable. Carers Allowance is paid to someone 16 years or older, who looks after another person for at least 35 hours per week. The cared-for person must qualify for Attendance Allowance or the middle/high rate of Disability Living Allowance care component. A carer who works can claim Carers Allowance but must not earn above £ per week to be entitled.

If you receive or apply for Income Support, income-based Job Seekers Allowance, Council Tax Benefit and/or Housing Benefit, a carer premium of £26.35 will be included in your benefit. A carer who claims Pension Credit will also receive an additional amount of £26.35, even though Carers Allowance may not be paid due to the 'overlapping rules' (see below).

You cannot be paid Carers Allowance if you receive the same amount or more than the following benefits (the rules affecting this are called 'overlapping rules') these include: State Pension, Incapacity Benefit, Job Seekers Allowance (contribution-based).

Even if you can't be paid Carers Allowance because you already receive another benefit (such as Incapacity Benefit or State Pension) there are other advantages in claiming which include:

- A Carers Premium/additional amount can be added to your Income Support, income-based Job Seekers Allowance, Housing and Council Tax Benefit, Pension Credit or NHS benefits
- You can receive National Insurance contribution credits – these count towards State Pension, Incapacity Benefit, and other contributory benefits

Receipt of Carers Allowance can affect benefits received by the cared-for person. The cared-for person would not be able to claim the severe disability premium of Income Support.

Carers Allowance can be paid for up to 8 weeks after the cared-for dies.

For further advice on entitlement to benefits please contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau or other local advice agency. Claim forms are available from the Jobcentre Plus office or by telephoning the Benefit Enquiry Line 0800 882200. Forms can also be downloaded from [www.dwp.gov.uk](http://www.dwp.gov.uk)

### **(Benefit rates and earnings limits correct to April 2007)**

Carer's Allowance (CA) is paid to people who are regularly caring for a severely disabled person who is at home. Before April 2003, this benefit was called Invalid Care Allowance.

Payment of CA does not depend on the level of your savings or on whether you have paid any National Insurance (NI) contributions. However, if you are paid CA you will normally be credited with NI contributions and you may build up an additional pension

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through State Second Pension for every complete tax year from 6 April 2002 that you are entitled to CA. CA counts as taxable income.

### Eligibility

Whether you get CA depends on **your age, where you live and work**, and whether you **care** for a severely disabled person getting the highest or middle rate of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) care component, Attendance Allowance (AA) or Constant Attendance Allowance (CAA). You do not have to be related to the disabled person or live at the same address.

The following paragraphs give details on the **age, where you live and work**, and **care** conditions for claiming CA.

### Your age

You must be 16 or over on the date you begin to qualify for CA.

### Where you live

You must normally live in Great Britain (GB) and when you make your claim, you must:

- be in GB, and
- have been in the United Kingdom (UK) or the Isle of Man, Jersey or Guernsey for at least 26 weeks out of the last 12 months.

Time spent living in another EEA country, may in some cases be treated as a period in GB for the purposes of the 26-week rule.

In certain other circumstances, you may be treated as living in GB even though you are not there. This applies to:

- members of HM Armed Forces serving abroad (including their spouse, civil partner, children, parents or parents-in-law, if they are with them)
- mariners and airmen working abroad
- people working on the UK sector of the continental shelf (for example on an oil rig)
- people abroad for up to 4 weeks
- people temporarily abroad to care for a severely disabled person, for as long as that person can continue to receive the highest or middle rate DLA care component, AA or CAA.

You will not be entitled to CA if your right to stay in the UK is subject to immigration control.

You may be entitled if you are:

- an EEA national, or a member of the family of an EEA national,
- a national of Algeria, Morocco, San Marino, Tunisia or Turkey and lawfully working in GB or a member of the family of one of these nationals and living with them
- given refugee status
- given exceptional leave to enter or remain in the UK
- given humanitarian protection or discretionary leave to remain in the UK
- given indefinite leave to remain in the UK and subject to a formal undertaking.

### Care

You must spend at least 35 hours a week caring for a severely disabled person who is getting either:

- the highest or middle rate of DLA care component
- **or** Attendance Allowance
- **or** Constant Attendance Allowance at, or above, the normal maximum rate with an industrial injuries disablement benefit, or basic (full day) rate with a war disablement pension.