



Disability Living Allowance

A guide to DLA for Children

What is Disability Living Allowance?

Disability Living Allowance (DLA) is a benefit paid towards the additional costs of bringing up a disabled child who needs more looking after than a child of the same age who doesn't have a disability, and who has difficulty getting about.

Who can claim DLA?

You can only make a new claim for DLA if you are claiming for a child under 16. Anyone who is of working age (i.e. between the ages of 16 and 64 inclusive) who has mobility problems or care needs should consider claiming Personal Independence Payment (PIP). Anyone who is aged 65 or over and has care needs should consider claiming Attendance Allowance.

► See Arthritis Care's separate factsheets 'Personal Independence Payment' and 'Attendance Allowance' for more information.

Does my child qualify for DLA?

A child can qualify for DLA if he or she:

- passes at least one of the disability tests (see page 2); and
- passes the disability test(s) for three months before the claim, and is likely to pass them for at least six months after the claim (unless the child is terminally ill); and
- is under 16 and, usually, over three months of age; and
- passes the residence and presence tests (for example, normally lives in the UK and has been living here for at least 104 out of the last 156 weeks, although the last 'past presence' test does not apply to refugees and their families)
- is not subject to immigration control.

How is DLA made up?

The rate the child may receive depends on the level of looking after that they need. DLA has two parts:

- A mobility component, for help with walking, which is paid at two different rates.
- A care component, for children needing extra care, supervision or watching over, which is paid at three different rates.

The disability tests

The mobility component

To qualify for the higher rate, the child must be over the age of three. The child's physical condition as a whole must be such that:

- they are unable to walk; or
- they are virtually unable to walk; or
- the exertion required to walk would constitute a danger to their life or would likely lead to a serious deterioration in their health; or
- they have no feet or legs from birth or amputation; or
- they are entitled to the highest rate care component, have severe learning disabilities, and dangerous and disruptive behaviour.

To qualify for the lower rate, the child must be over five years old. It doesn't matter if they are able to walk, but they must be so severely disabled physically or mentally that they need guidance or supervision from another person most of the time when following unfamiliar routes out of doors. This guidance or supervision must be substantially more than that required by a child without a disabling condition.

The care component

To qualify for the care component, the child must be so severely disabled, physically or mentally, that they need:

During the day:

- frequent attention throughout the day in connection with their bodily functions; or
- continual supervision throughout the day to avoid substantial danger to themselves or others; or

During the night:

- prolonged or repeated attention in connection with their bodily functions; or
- to avoid substantial danger to themselves or others, they need someone to be awake for a prolonged period or at frequent intervals to watch over them; or

Part-time day care:

- the child needs attention for a significant portion of the day in connection with their bodily functions.

The care component has three rates. The child will receive the highest rate if the child satisfies:

- either (or both) No.1 or No.2 day-time conditions; and
- either (or both) No.3 or No.4 night-time conditions.

Their care or supervision needs are spread throughout both the day and the night. The child will receive the middle rate if the child satisfies:

- either (or both) No.1 or No.2 day-time conditions; or
- either (or both) No.3 or No.4 night-time conditions.

Their care or supervision needs are spread throughout just the day or just the night.

The child will receive the lowest rate if they satisfy the part-time day care condition.

The care or supervision needs must be substantially more than that required by a child without a disabling condition.

How much can my child get?

The weekly amount that you will receive is as follows:

Care component		Mobility component	
Highest	£83.10	Higher	£58.00
Middle	£55.65		
Lowest	£22.00	Lower	£22.00

(These rates are valid as of April 2017.)

For further help:

For further help or to request a DLA claim form, phone the DLA helpline (tel: 03457 123456; textphone: 03457 224433), or you can download a form from their website (gov.uk/disability-living-allowance-children/how-to-claim).

How do I claim?

To claim DLA you will need to complete and submit claim form DLA1A.

You can that a form be sent to you by post, or you can download one to print and complete. You also have the option to fill in the form on screen, save it and then print the completed form. However you fill it in, you will need to submit your completed form by post to the Disability Benefit Centre. Emailed forms will not be accepted.

This information sheet provides brief advice on how to fill in the claim form, but you may consider asking a local advice agency for more help.

Completing the claim form

Most of the DLA claim form consists of a series of questions relating to the child's mobility, care and supervision needs. The questions have a tick box format and you are asked to put a tick next to the statement which best describes how the child manages. Read the notes that come with the claim form before answering the questions.

Below, we take you through some of the questions in the claim form in more detail.

Claim form questions

Mobility questions

Questions 26 to 31

- **Does the child have physical difficulties walking?**

This relates to the higher rate of the mobility component for children aged three and over. You are asked to tick whichever box best describes how far the child can walk without severe discomfort. If you are not sure which to tick, you can do a test of the child's walking ability outdoors. Ensure the surface is reasonably flat. Focus on the distance the child can walk, their speed, the time it takes them and the manner of their walking. Ask them to walk until they feel they can no longer continue (if it is safe for them to do so). Record how far and how long the child can walk and include pain, dizziness, coughing, breathlessness etc. Also note the recovery time.

Questions 32 to 34

- **Does the child need guidance or supervision most of the time when they walk outdoors?**

This relates to the lower rate of the mobility component for children aged five and over. You must be able to show that the help the child needs is additional to what other children of the same age need. You are also asked if the child falls due to their disability. If they do, it may help to keep a diary over a few days, highlighting any falls that they have had, and attaching a copy of that to the claim form.

Care questions

These questions relate to the care component and are for children of all ages. The first questions relate to different areas of day-to-day life. Each question has a box, where you can give more detail. If the child's condition is variable, describe the difficulties they face on an average day. Then go on to explain the difficulties they face on the worst days and how frequently these occur. You must be able to show that the help the child needs is additional to what other children of the same age need.

Questions 44 and 45

- **Does the child have difficulty seeing/hearing?**

Two questions relate to seeing and hearing difficulties. If you have a certificate of visual impairment or an audiology report, attach a copy to the claim.

Question 46

- **Does the child have difficulty speaking?**

The child may have limited speech. You can provide more details of how their speech problems affect their ability to communicate in the next question.

Question 47

- **Do they have difficulty and need help communicating?**

If the child has difficulty understanding others because of, for example, a hearing problem or learning disability, try to give a description of how much longer it takes the child to understand something compared to other children. Does the child need the information breaking down into shorter sentences or instructions given one at a time?

Explain any difficulties the child has being understood and how it affects them. Does the child show little inclination to communicate? Does the child lack the skills or confidence to communicate with others? If so, write down what help you need to give them to communicate.

Question 48

- **Do they have fits, blackouts, seizures or something similar?**

Keep a diary for a period of time to show when the child had blackouts or fits, and what happens when they occur. Attach a copy of the diary to the claim form.

Question 49

- **Do they need to be supervised during the day to keep safe?**

This question asks about the level of supervision that the child requires – what is relevant is the additional supervision that they need as a result of their disability. If they are prone to falls or fits, you can refer to what you have written earlier in the form about these.

Question 50

- **Do they need extra help with their development?**

This question is about how the child relates to the world, including physical or sensory skills. List here any difficulty they have in standing or walking, co-ordination, holding cutlery and picking things up. Write down if they need help to develop these skills, how long this takes and how often it is needed.

Question 53

- **Does the child wake and need help at night? Do they need someone to be awake and watch over them?**

Explain what help the child needs during the night - for example, if they need help going to the toilet or they need to be checked from time to time.

Keeping a diary

If the child is claiming the care component of DLA, writing a short diary of their care and supervision needs can greatly improve their chance of success. It can also be important when trying to explain symptoms that fluctuate either during a single day or over a longer period.

The simplest type of diary is an account of the child's care and supervision needs over a typical day. Start from the time the child gets up in the morning, through a 24-hour period. Record the time and help they need, why they need help and the length of time this takes. If their needs vary from day to day, you could keep the diary over a few days, to get a clearer picture of their care needs. Make several copies of the diary. On each page, write the child's name and reference number. Attach a copy of the diary to the claim form and give copies to anyone that you have mentioned on the form.

After submitting your claim

The claim can take a few weeks to process. Sometimes the person making the decision on whether to award the child DLA may need further information. If this is the case, the DWP may contact one of the health professionals the child sees regularly. If they need still more information, they can arrange for a doctor to visit the child to carry out a medical examination.

If the claim is unsuccessful, you can challenge the decision.

Other benefits

Bear in mind that receiving DLA does not affect the child's eligibility for other benefits. It may actually entitle you to extra money, such as the disability premiums on means-tested benefits, in recognition of the extra costs of disability.

► **Contact Arthritis Care for more information on other available benefits.**

What to do if your claim is unsuccessful

If your claim is unsuccessful, you have the right to challenge the decision and there are a number of options available to you – from requesting a reconsideration to submitting a formal appeal.

► **For more information, see Arthritis Care's factsheet, 'If you are unhappy with your benefit decision'.**

Further help

For further advice and support, contact a local advice centre, such as Citizens Advice, Age UK (call 0800 678 1174), DIAL (call Scope on 0808 800 3333 for details) or local authority welfare rights service (call your local council for details).

Sources of information

- Arthritis Care factsheets — arthritiscare.org.uk
- Citizens Advice — citizensadvice.org.uk
- GOV.UK (England, Wales and Scotland) — gov.uk
- Disability Rights UK factsheets — disabilityrightsuk.org/how-we-can-help
- nidirect (Northern Ireland) — nidirect.gov.uk

Disclaimer: This factsheet is only a guide and does not cover every circumstance. We have done our best to make sure the factsheet is correct as per the date below. Some of the information may be oversimplified or may become inaccurate over time - for example, because of changes to the law. We recommend that you get independent advice before making financial decisions based on this factsheet.



ARTHRITIS CARE

How Arthritis Care can help you

Want to talk to someone about your arthritis?
Or read more about the condition?

Call our free, confidential Helpline on 0808 800 4050 for information and support. We're open weekdays from 09:30 to 17:00 – we'd really like to hear from you.

We have over 40 free booklets and factsheets on various aspects of arthritis, from diet and surgery, to managing pain and fatigue. These can be sent to you in the post – just ask our Helpline staff for details.

Go online

You can download all our booklets and factsheets as PDFs from arthritiscare.org.uk/information

We also have an Online Community, where you can chat to others with arthritis, and can be reached at arthritiscareforum.org.uk



Arthritis Care and Arthritis Research UK have joined together to help more people live well with arthritis. Read how at arthritisresearchuk.org/merger. All donations will now go to Arthritis Research UK and be used to help people with arthritis live full and active lives in communities across England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.

Thank you

Contact us

Our Helpline:

0808 800 4050

Our website:

arthritiscare.org.uk

Our offices:

England:

020 7380 6540

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028 9078 2940

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Social media:



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Please check our website for up-to-date information and reference sources or call 020 7380 6577.



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