

Attendance Allowance

EXTRA MONEY
TO HELP YOU



Who we are

Age Scotland is the national charity for older people. We work to improve the lives of everyone over the age of 50 and promote their rights and interests.

Our vision is a Scotland which is the best place in the world to grow older.

Our mission is to inspire, involve and empower older people in Scotland, and influence others, so that people enjoy better later lives.

We have three strategic aims:



We help older people to be as well as they can be



We promote a positive view of ageing and later life



We tackle loneliness and isolation

How we can help

We know that growing older doesn't come with a manual. Later life can bring changes and opportunities to your life and you may need to know about rights, organisations and services which are unfamiliar to you.

That's why we provide free information and advice to help you on a range of topics including benefits and entitlements, social care, legal issues such as Power of Attorney, housing and much more. All of our guides are available to download for free from our website, or you can contact our helpline team to have copies posted to you for free.

Our **helpline** is a free, confidential phone service for older people, their carers and families in Scotland looking for information and advice.

Later life can bring times when you just need someone to talk to. Our **friendship line** is part of our wider helpline and older people can call us for a chat. We're here to listen, provide friendship and offer support.



Call us free on: 0800 12 44 222
(Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm)



Visit [agescotland.org.uk](https://www.agescotland.org.uk)
to find out more.



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Introduction

Although many people continue to enjoy good health well into later life, some people find that they need help with some of their day-to-day tasks. Claiming Attendance Allowance can assist with the extra costs that living with a health condition can bring.

This guide explains how to apply for Attendance Allowance, and how to increase your chances of making a successful claim.

What is Attendance Allowance

Attendance Allowance is extra money from the government to help with the cost of your care needs if you have reached State Pension age (currently age 66 for both men and women), have an illness or disability and don't already receive Adult Disability Payment, Personal Independence Payment or Disability Living Allowance.

There are two rates:

- a lower rate of £72.65 per week if you have care needs during the day or during the night
- a higher rate of £108.55 per week if you have care needs during the day and during the night

You do not have to be getting help from a carer to qualify as Attendance Allowance is based on the help you need, not the help you actually receive, and you don't have to spend the money on paying for care. You won't be asked about how you spend the money or asked to provide any evidence.

Attendance Allowance is tax free, not means-tested and it doesn't matter how much you have in savings. It can increase other means-tested benefit entitlements or give you an entitlement to a benefit you didn't have before, so have a benefit check if you start receiving it.



When to claim

You must have needed help for at least six months to qualify, unless you are claiming under the **Special Rules** because you have a terminal illness. However, you don't have to have received a diagnosis of a particular illness or disability, as Attendance Allowance is based on your needs, not the condition you have.

Special Rules

If you are living with a terminal illness and are likely to have less than 12 months to live, you can claim for Attendance Allowance under the Special Rules, which allow you to get financial help more quickly.

Your doctor or specialist can provide you with a form called an SR1, which you should include with your Attendance Allowance application form.

There is no qualifying period when claiming under the Special Rules, so you can apply straight away. You should receive a decision letter within 2 weeks, and the award will be at the higher rate for three years.

If you are making a claim on behalf of someone else, who isn't aware that they are not expected to live for more than 12 months, you can ask their medical professional for an SR1 form without their knowledge. They will still need to be aware that they are making a claim for Attendance Allowance, as any letters about the claim will be addressed to them, but the letters won't mention terminal illness or Special Rules.

How to claim

To apply, call the **Attendance Allowance helpline** on **0800 731 0122** to request a form.

The form will have a return date on it, giving you 6 weeks to complete and return it. If you get the application back to them within this 6-week period, any award will be backdated to the date you made the call. If you get the application form back to them after this date, any award will only be backdated to the day your form was received.

You can also download an application form from the gov.uk website at **www.gov.uk/government/publications/attendance-allowance-claim-form** and post it to them at **Freepost DWP Attendance Allowance** (you don't need to add a postcode or a stamp). If you apply this way, any award of Attendance Allowance will be backdated to the date the DWP receive your form.

Preparing for your claim

Before starting to complete the Attendance Allowance claim form, it can be useful to keep a diary for a few days, noting each time you had difficulty with an activity and why.

It will also save you some time if you get together any paperwork you will need, for example:

- your bank details
- your National Insurance number
- a prescription list
- hospital letters and reports
- a copy of your care or support plan from your local council, if you have one
- names and addresses of any medical professionals you see.



Completing the form for someone else

There are a number of reasons that you might complete the form for someone else. For example, you may be a family member or friend who is helping out, an adviser who completes forms professionally, or someone with a legal responsibility to act on the claimant's behalf.

If you are completing the form for someone who can understand and sign it themselves, answer the questions in the first person, as if you are them:

‘I struggle with’

If you are completing and signing the form on behalf of someone, for example you are their **appointee** or because you have **Power of Attorney**, answer in third person:

‘They struggle with’

Free benefit workshops

Age Scotland provide a number of free online benefit workshops, including **Attendance Allowance: completing the form**. This workshop aims to help anyone who intends to complete an Attendance Allowance form, for themselves or for someone else. It includes information, strategies and tips to make the process quicker and less daunting.

Visit our website at www.age.scot/benefitsworkshop for more information and to register.

Appointees and Powers of Attorney

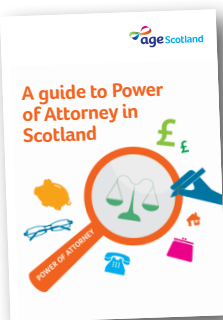
An **appointee** is someone authorised by the Department for Work and Pensions to deal with your benefits on your behalf, if you struggle to do so yourself. This includes making applications for benefits and keeping your claims up-to-date, and could involve answering letters and phone calls, reporting any changes that will affect the amount of benefit you are entitled to, signing forms and spending income from your benefits in your best interests.

If you want to apply to become someone's appointee for benefit purposes, you can tick the box to request this on the Attendance Allowance form. The DWP will contact you separately about this.

Alternatively, you can apply by contacting the **Attendance Allowance helpline** on **0800 731 0122**.

A **Power of Attorney** is a legal document you can use to allow someone to make decisions on your behalf if you become unable to do so yourself, or support you to make financial decisions.

There are two types of powers, continuing (financial) and welfare. If you have granted continuing Powers of Attorney to someone, powers could include making benefit applications and maintaining benefit claims on your behalf.



For a copy of our free **Guide to Power of Attorney in Scotland**, call the **Age Scotland helpline** on **0800 12 44 222**, or visit our website at www.ageuk.org.uk/scotland/information-advice/legal-and-family-issues/power-of-attorney.

Aids and adaptations

The Attendance Allowance form asks you to list the aids and adaptations you use to help you in your daily life. Make sure you list them all no matter how big or small they are, from a dosette (calendar) box for organising your medications, to widened doors and lowered worktops for wheelchair accessibility.

Say why you need them and what the consequences of not having them would be, even if it seems obvious. Explain any problems you have using them, or despite having them. For example:

Aids and adaptations	How does this help you?	What difficulty do you have using this aid or adaptation?
Walking stick	It helps to keep me steady when I walk.	Walking is still painful and slow, and I struggle to grip it so am still at risk of falls.
Long-handled shoe helper	It helps me to put my shoes on, as I can't bend down far enough to do it myself.	I am exhausted after getting my shoes on and have to rest for 20 minutes afterwards.
Dosette (calendar) box	It keeps my medications organised and makes sure I take the right tablets at the right times.	I need someone to fill it for me because of my visual impairment.

Daytime care needs

The questions about daytime care needs cover:

- getting in and out of bed
- toilet needs
- washing and bathing
- dressing or undressing
- moving around indoors
- falling or stumbling
- cutting up food, eating and drinking
- taking medications/managing treatments
- communication

Difficulties with tasks such as general housework, shopping and gardening are not taken into consideration for Attendance Allowance. However, if you receive an award, you can use the money to pay for help with these things if you wish to.

The decision maker will want to know:

- does your condition mean that you need help during the day?
- what sort of help do you need?
- do you need **help at least 3 times** during the day?
- do you need **constant supervision** throughout the day, for example, to stop you falling, or because you have fits or blackouts that can happen at any time?

For Attendance Allowance purposes, constant supervision means:

‘Supervision all the time, subject only to brief interruptions’

A brief interruption could be the carer going to the bathroom, but not the carer leaving the house for a couple of hours.

If you have, for example, epileptic fits or blackouts that happen without warning, and you can't be left on your own, then you should describe your need for supervision as constant.



Describing your care needs

The Attendance Allowance form asks about the difficulties you have with various daily living activities. An effective answer does not have to be long, but there are certain things it is helpful to include.

1. Say what help you need to be able to do the activity **safely, repeatedly and in a reasonable amount of time**. It doesn't matter if you don't have this help at the moment.
 - **safely** means that you are not putting yourself or anyone else in danger by doing it
 - **repeatedly** means that you can do it every time you need to, without needing to rest or recover
 - **in a reasonable amount of time** means that it doesn't take you significantly longer than it would if you didn't have your condition or disability
2. Describe the consequences of not having help:
 - does it cause you pain?
 - does it take longer than it would without your condition?
 - do you need time to recover after doing it?
 - does it put you or someone else in danger?
3. For each activity, say how often you have difficulty with it and which of your conditions causes the difficulty.
4. Explain which parts of it are difficult, for example:
 - gripping
 - lifting
 - twisting
 - reaching
 - bending
 - walking
 - motivation
 - concentrating
 - understanding
 - remembering
 - communicating

Here are some examples of ways you might talk about daytime care needs:

“

“My hands tremble due to Parkinson’s, which makes it difficult to eat and drink. I need someone there to cut up my food, pick up and put down my cup for me and help me to keep a grip on my cutlery. Without this help I don’t manage to finish meals - I put myself in danger because I knock things over and drop them, often hot drinks that burn my skin.”

“

“My arthritis means I need help to shave my face and wash myself. Without help these activities are slow and painful, taking over an hour each morning. It is very difficult for me to stand up for so long, lift my arms high enough and grip the razor safely. I am exhausted and in pain afterwards and need to rest for a long period of time to recover.”

“

“I have depression and I can’t motivate myself to get up, have a wash and get dressed. My wife has to encourage me every day, and stay nearby to prompt me to keep going until I am ready. If she didn’t do this, I would stay in the same clothes each day and not wash or bathe. I wouldn’t be able to face seeing anyone or leaving the house, so would feel isolated and even more depressed.”



Night-time care needs

To be considered to have night-time care needs, you must **need help**:

- two or more times during the night, or
- once if the help is for 20 minutes or more

or **need supervision**:

- three or more times during the night, or
- once if it is for 20 minutes or more

Here are some examples of ways you might describe night-time needs:



“I have epileptic fits during the night most nights. I need someone to be with me to put me on my side so I can breathe safely and make sure I don’t injure myself on the furniture or by falling out of bed. I feel confused and disorientated afterwards and need to be supervised for half an hour before I can safely be left to sleep again.”



“I have high blood pressure and take medication that makes me need the toilet more often than usual. My mobility problems mean I can’t get up on my own during the night to go to the bathroom. I need someone to help me to get out of bed and walk me there at least twice during the night. I often don’t make it on time, so then need help to wash myself and change my clothing.”

Statement from someone who knows you

The Attendance Allowance application form has a space for a statement from someone who knows you. This is an opportunity for another person to say something about how your condition affects you. This could be a health or care professional, for example a doctor, consultant, social worker or Macmillan nurse, or you could ask a friend, relative or carer. Even if someone sees you regularly, they may not be fully aware of all of your needs, so it can be useful to talk to them first about the difficulties you have with day-to-day tasks.

Don't delay sending in the application if you can't find anyone to complete this section, as it can be left blank if necessary.

What to include with the form

Once you have completed the form, send it back as soon as possible, even if you are still waiting for test results or other evidence. You can add a note to the form saying you will be sending further information once received.

Include with your application form copies of any documents that give details of your medical conditions or care and support needs, for example:

- medical reports
- test results
- letters from your doctor or other medical professional
- a care or support plan from your council if you have one.

Final steps

Before posting the form, check that you have answered all the relevant questions on the form, and signed the consent section (question 18) and the declaration section (question 62). Write your name and National Insurance Number at the top of any supporting documents or additional pages. Keep a copy of the form and anything else you have sent.

Send the completed form to Freepost DWP Attendance Allowance (no postcode or stamp required), or use the prepaid envelope if provided.

The length of time it takes to receive a decision varies, but contact the Attendance Allowance helpline on **0800 731 0122** if you haven't heard back from them after 8 weeks.

Challenging the decision

Mandatory Reconsideration

If your application for Attendance Allowance is turned down or you don't think you have been awarded the correct rate, you can ask for a **Mandatory Reconsideration**.

When you make a mandatory reconsideration request, someone who was not involved in the original decision will review your application. They may call you to ask for further information or evidence, or they may use the information you have already submitted.

Your benefit award can increase, decrease, stop or stay the same as a result of the reconsideration.

You can ask for a Mandatory Reconsideration by calling the **Attendance Allowance helpline** on **0800 731 0122**, or by writing to them at the address on the decision letter. Do this quickly as you only have one month to challenge the decision from the date it was sent to you.

If you are not able to request a Mandatory Reconsideration in time, it may still be accepted if you had good reason for making a late request, for example you were ill or in hospital.

Appeal

If you are still unhappy with the decision after the Mandatory Reconsideration, you can appeal.

You can submit your appeal online at **www.gov.uk/appeal-benefit-decision/submit-appeal**, or complete a paper form (called an SSCS1 form) available at **www.gov.uk/government/publications/appeal-a-social-security-benefits-decision-form-sscs1**.

If you don't have access to the internet, or don't feel confident using it, you can call the Department for Work and Pensions **Digital Support helpline** on **03300 160 051**.

You have one month from the date of the Mandatory Reconsideration letter to submit your appeal. You may be able to appeal later than this, up to 13 months after the original benefit decision, if you had good reason, for example you were ill or in hospital.

When you appeal a benefit decision, an independent panel will review all the facts and evidence, and will make a new decision about your application.

You can attend the appeal hearing, or the panel can make their decision based solely on the information you have sent. It can be beneficial to attend the hearing in person if possible, as you will be there to answer any questions the panel have, which can improve your chances of a successful outcome.

Your benefit award can increase, decrease, stop or stay the same as a result of the appeal.

An advice agency such as your local **Citizens Advice Bureau** may be able to help you make your appeal, or represent you at the hearing. You can find your local branch at **www.cas.org.uk/bureaux** or by calling their national helpline on **0800 028 1456**.



For a copy of our free **Challenging Benefit Decisions** guide, contact the **Age Scotland helpline** on **0800 12 44 222**.

What to do if things go wrong

Most claims for Attendance Allowance go smoothly but sometimes problems can arise.

If you want to make a complaint about the process of applying for Attendance Allowance, for example if there has been an unacceptable delay, or if you are unhappy with how you have been treated, you can make a complaint by telephone or in writing. You can't use the complaint process to complain about benefit award or overpayment decisions.

To make a complaint, contact the DWP by telephone on **0800 731 0122**, or write to them at the address on any letters they have sent you about your claim.

You should tell them:

- your National Insurance number, name, address and contact number
- which benefit you are complaining about
- what happened, when it happened and how it affected you
- what you want them to do to put things right.

If you are unhappy with the response to your complaint, you can ask for it to be passed to a senior manager in the **DWP Complaints Team**, who will review the complaint and give you a final response.

If you are not satisfied with the final response, you can take your complaint to the **Independent Case Examiner** for investigation. You must do this within 6 months of receiving the final response.

Email: **ice@dwp.gov.uk**

Telephone **0800 414 8529**

Post: **PO Box 209, Bootle, L20 7WA**



If you still feel your complaint has not been resolved, you can ask your MP to submit your complaint to the **Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman**. You can find your MP by visiting <https://members.parliament.uk/members/commons>, or call the **Age Scotland helpline** on **0800 12 44 222** and we will look them up for you. If you would prefer not to speak to your own MP, you can ask any other MP to submit the complaint.

Other help and support

Care needs assessment

If you are applying for Attendance Allowance and haven't already had a care needs assessment from the council, now may be a good time to request one.

The council can assess your needs and identify any services and support they can provide. This could include help with personal care, and equipment to make your daily life easier or safer. Contact the social work department of your local council to request an assessment.

See our guides **Care and Support at Home – Assessment and Funding**, and **Care and Support at Home – Practical Help** for more information about the help that the council can provide.



Help for your carer

If you receive Attendance Allowance and have an unpaid carer, they may be entitled to **Carer's Allowance** from the Department for Work and Pensions. The rules can be complex, and if someone receives Carer's Allowance for looking after you, your entitlement to means-tested benefits may reduce in certain circumstances. Contact the **Age Scotland helpline** for a benefit check if you are considering making a claim.

Your carer is also entitled to an **Adult Carer Assessment** from your local council. If they qualify, any support they receive as part of an Adult Carer Plan should be free of charge, and may include training, respite services, and health and wellbeing support.

See our **Adult Carer** and **Carer's Allowance** guides for more information about support for carers.



This information guide has been prepared by Age Scotland and contains general advice only. It should not be relied upon as a basis for any decision or action, nor used as a substitute for professional advice. Neither Age Scotland nor any of its subsidiary companies or charities accepts any liability arising from its use and it is the reader's sole responsibility to ensure any information is up to date and accurate.

Please note that the inclusion of named agencies, websites, companies, products, services or publications in this information guide does not constitute a recommendation or endorsement by Age Scotland or any of its subsidiary companies or charities.

How you can help

Our vision is a Scotland which is the best place in the world to grow older.

All the information we provide is free and impartial. It helps older people access their rights and entitlements and can be life changing.

We are also a lifeline for older people who are feeling lonely and isolated. You can help us to support older people who need us most.

Together, we can make a difference.



Make a donation

No matter how small or large, donations make a massive difference and help us continue our important work.

- Call **03330 15 14 60**
- Visit **age.scot/donate**
- Text **AGESCOTGIVE** to **70085** to donate £5*
- Complete the **donation form** and return by Freepost



Fundraise

Whether it's having a bake sale or running a marathon, there are so many ways to raise vital funds to support our work. To find out more, call **0333 323 2400** or visit **age.scot/fundraise**.



Leave us a gift in your Will

By choosing to leave us a gift in your Will, you can help us to continue being there for older people in the years to come. To find out more, call **0333 323 2400** or visit **age.scot/legacy**.

*Texts cost £5 plus one standard rate message

Please donate today



Complete the form and return to RSBS-KEHC-GBBC, Age Scotland, Edinburgh, EH9 1PR

Your details

Title:	Forename:	Surname:
Address:		
	City:	
Postcode:	Date of birth:	

By providing us with your telephone number and email address you are consenting to us contacting you via phone, text and email.

Email:	
Home tel:	Mobile tel:

I WOULD LIKE TO DONATE

£75 £50 £25 Other (£)

I wish to pay by (please tick):

MasterCard Visa CAF

CharityCard Cheque (payable to Age Scotland)

Signature

Name on Card

Card No.

Expiry date Security code

Date

I prefer not to receive a thank you acknowledgement for this donation

I would like information about leaving a gift in my Will

I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE MY DONATION WORTH 25% MORE

I want Age Scotland** and its partner charities to treat all donations I have made for the four years prior to this year, and all donations I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise, as Gift Aid donations.

giftaid it

I am a UK tax payer and understand that if I pay less income tax and/or capital gains tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Yes, I want Age Scotland** to claim Gift Aid on my donations

I do not wish you to claim Gift Aid on my donations

Date

Keeping in touch

We will stay in contact by post unless you ask us not to. We will never sell your data and we promise to keep your details safe and secure. You can change your mind at any time by emailing us on contact@agescotland.org.uk or calling us on 0333 323 2400.

You can read Age Scotland's privacy policy at [age.scot/privacypolicy](https://www.agescot.org.uk/agescot/privacypolicy).

**Age Scotland, part of the Age Network, is an independent charity dedicated to improving the later lives of everyone on the ageing journey, within a charitable company limited by guarantee and registered in Scotland.
Registration Number: 153343. Charity Number: SC010100. Registered Office: Causewayside House, 160 Causewayside, Edinburgh EH9 1PR.

Age Scotland is the national charity for older people. We work to improve the lives of everyone over the age of 50 so that they can love later life.

Our vision is a Scotland which is the best place in the world to grow older.

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Let's keep in touch

Contact us:

Head office
0333 323 2400

Age Scotland helpline
0800 12 44 222

Email
info@agescotland.org.uk

Visit our website
www.agescotland.org.uk



Sign up to our newsletter

Our regular newsletters by email contain details of our campaigns, services and how you can support our work.

Sign up today at [agescot/roundup](https://www.agescotland.org.uk/agescot/roundup)



Follow us on social media

Our social media channels are a great way to keep up to date with our work and issues that affect older people.



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