

Money Matters and Benefits

This Section Contains Information on:-

State Benefits For The Carer
State Benefits For The Person Who Needs Care
Benefits For The Household
Other Information



Money Matters and Benefits

Introduction

This section outlines some of the main benefits you, or the person you care for, may qualify for. Sometimes finding out and applying for benefits can take a lot of time and appear quite complicated.

Remember - these benefits are to help you so you should not feel uncomfortable about claiming them.

Practical Tips:

- gather as much information as you can and read it;
- if you don't understand or are confused, don't worry. There are places that can offer you advice and help (see end of this section and contact sheets);
- don't be put off because it seems complicated.

State Benefits for the Carer

The Leaflets called 'Caring for Someone' and 'Important Information for Carers' details the money and other kinds of help carers can get.

Carers Allowance (CA)

[Previously Invalid Care Allowance (ICA)]

Is paid to someone aged OVER 16 caring for another person who receives either the:

- Attendance Allowance
- Care Component of Disability Living Allowance(middle or higher rate)
- Constant Attendance Allowance

The caring must take up at least 35 hours a week.

Carers getting CA can earn up to £82 from April 2005 a week from employment, after deductions. Allowable deductions may include paying for suitable care, childcare and other expenses you have to pay because they are a necessary part of the job.

CA overlaps with some other benefits such as Incapacity Benefit and State Retirement Pension, which means, you cannot get the full rate of both. If you are in receipt of CA, your National Insurance record is credited with a contribution towards future claims for Retirement Pension and Incapacity Benefit.

However, you can get CA and Income Support and for people who do, there is a special Carers Premium on top of ordinary income support. The Carer's Premium is also paid if you are eligible for Housing, Council Tax Benefit or Pension Credit (for over 60's) Carers receiving CA also get a Christmas Bonus, if it is not already received with another benefit. For a CA claim pack and information leaflet on CA, contact LEAFLETLINE 0800 328 555 or the Pension Service for over 60s.

Pension Credit (PC) is similar to Income Support but has higher allowances and is for those aged 60 or over. There is no savings limit and for those 65 or over with modest savings or a small second pension, a weekly cash 'top-up' can be payable. This replaced Minimum Income Guarantee from October 2003. Contact the Pension Service on 0845 6060265

Please note that in certain circumstances, if you receive CA for someone who is getting Income Support, the amount of *their* Income Support could reduce. If you have claimed and are awarded CA, but do not receive it because of an overlapping benefit the Income Support paid to the person you care for is not affected.

Going into Hospital

What happens if you already receive CA and you go into hospital?

Your CA may stop if you, or someone you get extra money for, goes into hospital. In certain circumstances, however, it may continue for twelve weeks.

You must tell the Carers Allowance Unit (their address and contact details will be on your award notice) as soon as you go into or come out of hospital.

You must also tell them if the person you care for goes into hospital. If their DLA/ AA ceases then so too will your CA. It can be reclaimed once you resume caring for the person again, as long as their DLA/AA is reinstated.

Income Support

Income support is a “means tested” benefit but if you have a low income and savings under £8,000, it is worth applying for. Phone LEAFLETLINE 08000 328 555 for a form.

For the Person who Needs the Care

Savings or income does not affect the following: -

Disability Living Allowance

Is for people who claim before reaching 65 years of age. This allowance is in two parts and it is possible to get either or both of them:

- **Care Component** - for people who need help with personal daily living including attention at night, cooking meals (for those 16 or over), OR who need supervision to ensure their safety - whether or not there is anyone actually helping them at the time of the application. There are 3 levels.
- **Mobility Component** - (two levels) - for people who have difficulty walking or getting out without support.

There is a self-assessment form to complete and people with mental health difficulties may also be eligible. This allowance is payable when the person has needed this help for 3 months (although a claim for terminal illness should be made immediately).

You can obtain a leaflet from the LEAFLETLINE 08000328 555 for more information.

Attendance Allowance

Is for people who claim after reaching 65 years of age who need help to dress, wash, go to the toilet, feed themselves and generally look after themselves OR who need supervision to ensure their safety - including attention at night. It does not matter who is doing the caring, whether or not they live in the same house or if there is anyone actually caring at the time of application. There are two levels of payment depending on the level of help needed.

The allowance is payable when the person has needed this help for six months or more. The six months rule does not apply to people with terminal illness as you can apply immediately.

Remember - if any of these applications are refused, an appeal can be lodged. Please contact the local Citizens Advice Bureau for advice on how to do this. For further information there is a leaflet available from the Pensions Service or Disability and Carers Service.

Working Tax Credit

Is paid with wages, to the self-employed, or to eligible disabled people aged 16 or over who work over 16 hours a week. Further information is available from the Social Security Office, Jobcentre or Inland Revenue.

Incapacity Benefit

Is for people aged 16 or over who cannot work due to illness or disability. This benefit was introduced in April 1995, replacing Invalidity Benefit or Sickness Benefit. There are three rates:

- Short term lower rate for the first 28 weeks;
- Short term higher rate for weeks 29-52;
- Long term rate from week 53 onwards.

There is a qualifying test, which can be applied for after being on benefit for 28 weeks for those who work, or sooner for those without a job, called the Personal Capability Assessment for which there is a self-assessment form. The form goes before a decision maker who will decide finally if the test is satisfied. A medical examination may be required.

Incapacity Benefit for Young People

Incapacity Benefit has replaced severe Disablement Allowance (SDA) for Young People from 2001- existing recipients of SDA were not affected by this change.

The new Incapacity Benefit for Young People applies to those aged 16 - 19 but under 25 years for students and trainees who:

- have been incapacitated in early life;
- are unable to work because of illness or disability;
- have not paid enough National Insurance contributions to be able to get Incapacity Benefit under normal rules.

For general information about this benefit you can ring the Benefit Enquiry Line. Tel: 0800 88 22 00

Income Support or Pension Credit for over 60s

Check your benefits - Attendance Allowance or Disability Living Allowance at the middle or higher rate of the care component can trigger extra help with Income Support/Pension Credit if you already receive it or may help you qualify for it.

Contact your local Social Security Office/Pensions Service to tell them you have been awarded Attendance Allowance or Disability Living Allowance.

Leaflets and forms for the above can be obtained from the Jobcentre, Social Security Office/Pensions Service, and some post offices.

Help from the Jobcentreplus Social Fund

(Leaflet GL18 from LEAFLETLINE 08000 328 555 or for claim forms)

Community Care Grants

Is part of the fund, which is limited each year, and you can only get a grant if you are on or are going to receive, Income Support, Income-based Jobseekers Allowance or Guaranteed Pension Credit. They do not have to be repaid. Contact one of the advice organisations listed at the end.

Budgeting/Crisis Loan

Budgeting loans can be given to people who have been receiving Income Support, Income-based Jobseekers Allowance or Guaranteed Pension Credit for at least 26 weeks. They are to help with one off expenses and to meet short-term needs in an emergency. There are strict regulations and it is important to seek advice.

Crisis loans can be considered for anyone. There are no qualifying benefit rules, but awards are only made in exceptional circumstances. Claims for these loans can be made by telephoning 0800 0850 311.

A Social Fund Reviewing Officer can discuss decisions with applicants if the applicant is unhappy with the outcome.

For the Household**Carers with dependants**

Extra may be payable on CA if you have:-

- A spouse
- A partner or someone else who looks after your children

This is dependant on their income.

If you have children for whom you receive Child Benefit, you should claim Child Tax Credit from the Inland Revenue.

For details see their web site www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/taxcredits or telephone (0845) 300 3900

A portion of CA can be taken into account as taxable income but an extra amount is allowed for children who receive DLA, depending on the rate payable.

Carers with partners who work

Working Tax Credit may be payable depending on Taxable Income to those who are employed or self-employed and work over 16 hours per week and have children or a disability. Others may qualify if they are aged 25 or over and work at least 30 hours per week. Extra is payable for couples, lone parents, for those with a disability or for working longer hours.

Housing Benefit

To receive help with rent you may be able to get Housing Benefit. If savings are over £16,000 this is not available, but as there is a sliding scale it is worth exploring. Housing Benefit is available to people who pay rent to the Council, a housing association or a private landlord. Application forms are included in income-based benefit forms or are available from Pembrokeshire County Council.

Council Tax

Some properties are excluded altogether.

These include:

- those left empty because the resident is in hospital, residential care or a nursing home;
- those left empty where the person is living elsewhere to receive personal care;
- those left empty because a carer has gone to live with someone else to care for them;
- properties occupied only by people with severe mental impairment.

Some Carers can get a discount.

There is a 25% discount if there is only one person in the household and a 50% discount if no one lives in the household.

When counting how many people live in the house, the following people are discounted completely:-

- people who are severely mentally impaired e.g. people with dementia;
- children and full time students;
- live in workers provided by a charity, e.g. community service volunteers;
- carers, but only if they are living with and caring for a disabled person who is not their spouse, partner or child under 18. The disabled person must receive the higher rate of Attendance Allowance or Disability Living Allowance care component and the carer must be providing at least 35 hours of care a week, on average. The carer does not have to be on Carers Allowance.

To work out whether or not you qualify for a discount, write a list of all the people who live in your house. Then, cross out the name of anyone who falls in one of the groups mentioned previously. If you are left with two names you will not be able to claim a discount. If there is only one name left you should be able to claim a 25% discount. If there are no names left you should receive a 50% discount.

Some people can get a Disability Reduction

The Disability Reduction Scheme applies to homes in all bands including Band A. If you qualify your council tax bill will be based on the next band down. A reduction will be made if one of the rooms in a property is used mainly by a disabled resident, for example a downstairs room used as a disabled person's bedroom, or a treatment room or extra bathroom. If a disabled resident uses a wheelchair inside the property this may also qualify.

Some people can get Council Tax Benefit.

There are two sorts of benefit:

Main Council Tax Benefit - if you are on a low income, you may be able to get a reduction in the Council Tax;

- people on Income Support/ Guaranteed PC will usually get 100% rebate;
- people who are not on Income Support may still get some help;

Alternative Council Tax Benefit (Second Adult Rebate) - this is only available to single people (or couples where one person is in one of the groups discounted for the purposes of a discount), who live with other people who are on a low income. Depending on the exact level of income, there can be a saving of 12.5% of the bill.

This means, for example, that a carer could get this help if a relative on low income was staying in their house.

If the person you care for dies the Executor of the Estate is liable for payment of Council Tax until the property is empty.

Further information is available from:

- There is a helpful leaflet, *Council Tax and Older People* available from Age Concern.
- Carers U.K. also publishes a leaflet and will also help Carers who call their Carersline to see if they can reduce their bill. Freephone 0808 808 7777 (Monday - Friday 10.00am - 12.00 and 2.00 - 4.00pm).
- Telephone LEAFLETLINE 08000 328 555 for leaflets about Housing Benefit [GL16] and Council Tax Benefit [GL17].

NHS Costs

Leaflet HC11 - Are you entitled to help with the costs? will give you more information - Phone LEAFLETLINE 08000 328 for a copy.

Some possible additional benefits include :-

- Free Prescriptions
- Dental treatment
- Vouchers towards the cost of spectacles
- NHS hospital travel costs

If you get Income-based Jobseekers Allowance, Income Support/Guaranteed Pension Credit these are free. You may not get these if you and your partner have capital. The rules are in the claim form HC1. If you are over 60 or under 16, on a low income or have disabilities or glaucoma you may get one or more free or at a reduced rate. Young people in Wales have prescriptions and dental checks free up to the age of 25.

Home Responsibilities Protection (HRP)

This is a special arrangement to help protect your right to basic retirement pension if you are unable to work because you are needed to care for someone. Phone LEAFLETLINE 08000 328 55 for a copy of the form CF411 or check the Inland Revenue website www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk for a download version.

Pensions

Most people automatically become eligible for the state pension on reaching retirement age. However, the pension is an 'overlapping' benefit, this means you cannot claim most other benefits as well as the retirement pension. If you are over 4 months away from your 60th birthday (women) or 65th birthday (men) phone LEAFLETLINE 08000 328 555, or ask the Pension Service for Form BR19 for a pension forecast or ring the helpline: 0845 3000 168

Before finally accepting your pension take advice on how much you would receive, with any Income Support/Pension Credit you may be eligible for, and compare this with any benefits you already receive and can continue to receive after retirement age.

State Second Pension

This replaced SERPS (State Earnings Related Pension) from April 2002. It is paid automatically to those already with SERPS, Carers who care for someone throughout a tax year who have claimed and have entitlement paid or not to Carers Allowance, those staying at home to look after a child under the age of 6 for who they get child benefit, qualify for HRP and some people on long term sickness benefit

Carers who have been caring before 2002 will not be credited for those years. Ring Carers Outreach on 01437 767762 for up-to-date information. Pensions can be complicated so seek advice from your local Citizens Advice Bureau or an independent financial advisor.

Credit Unions

Credit Unions are non-profit making, financial co-ops which offer savings and low interest loan services to their members, who own the credit union concerned. If you or anyone you are caring for needs a loan - for whatever purpose - then joining a Credit Union is your best and cheapest option. Your local Credit Union can be found in the telephone directory.

Advice and Information

The main leaflets for carers, and people with a disability are:

SD1 "Sick or Disabled"

SD4 "Caring For Someone?"

Please note that information from the Benefits Agency /Jobcentres, changes frequently so we advise you check with them for the most current information. They have LEAFLETLINE 08000 328 555, where you can telephone to ask for claim forms and leaflets. It is an answerphone service.

Section 8 - Contact details

Benefits Enquiry Line

☎ 0800 882200

Minicom 0800 243355

Carers Line

☎ 0808 8087777

Citizens Advice Bureaux

19 Cartlett
Haverfordwest

☎ 0845 1202939

10 Meyrick Street,
Pembroke Dock

☎ (01646) 683805

Independent Living Fund

These funds provide money for you to employ private personal assistance. For further information please contact:

Independent Living Funds

PO Box 7525

Nottingham

NG2 4ZT

☎ (0845) 601 8815

E-mail: funds@ilf.org.uk

Inland Revenue

www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk

☎ 0845 300 3900

Pembrokeshire Carers Outreach

The Princess Royal Trust Pembrokeshire Carers Centre

Meyler House

St Thomas Green

Haverfordwest

SA61 1QP

☎ (01437) 767762

E-mail: carers.pembs@virgin.net

Website: www.pembs-carers.org.uk

Pembrokeshire County Council

County Hall

Haverfordwest

SA61 1TP

☎ (01437) 764551

Website: www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk

Pension Service

☎ 0845 6060265