Coming Home

COMING HOME GUIDE

Attendance Allowance: a family guide to claiming

For families in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, with a section for Scotland's Pension Age Disability Payment

Version 1.1 • October 2026. Next review: March 2027

About this guide

This guide is correct at October 2026, version 1.1. We've written it in good faith as general guidance to help carers and families. It isn't legal, financial or medical advice. Rules and rates change, so before you act, please make sure you have the latest version of this guide and look at the official sources: GOV.UK, Social Security Scotland, nidirect and your local council. To the extent the law allows, we can't accept liability for any errors or omissions, or for decisions made on the strength of this guide. In a medical emergency call 999. For urgent advice, contact NHS 111.

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How to use this guide

Version 1.1. October 2026. Next review: March 2027. Rules and rates read on 3 October 2026, for the 2026/27 tax year (rates from 6 April 2026).

Who this guide is for: families and friends helping someone who has reached State Pension age and needs help with personal care, or someone to keep an eye on them, by day or night. It covers England, Wales and Northern Ireland, with a section for Scotland, where Pension Age Disability Payment has replaced Attendance Allowance.

How to use it: read sections 1 to 3 to see whether it fits, then use sections 4 to 8 when you're ready to claim. Every figure has a source and a date, and the full list is in "Sources" at the back. Amounts marked "estimate" are our own sums.

Guidance, not advice. This guide can't take everything into account, and DWP, Social Security Scotland or the Department for Communities makes every decision. For advice on your situation, contact Citizens Advice, Age UK, Carers UK or GOV.UK (see "Where to get help").

If you're worried about their health, contact their GP or NHS 111. In an emergency call 999.

01

What Attendance Allowance is

Attendance Allowance is weekly money for people over State Pension age who need help looking after themselves because of a disability or health condition. It's there to help with the extra costs that brings (GOV.UK, Attendance Allowance, read 3 Oct 2026).

Two rates in 2026/27 (DWP, Benefit and pension rates 2026 to 2027, updated 16 Feb 2026):

Rate	Weekly	About a year (estimate, weekly × 52)	When it applies
Lower rate	£76.70	about £3,988	Frequent help or constant supervision during the day, or supervision at night
Higher rate	£114.60	about £5,959	Help or supervision both day and night, or if a medical professional has said they're nearing the end of life

Things families are often surprised by (GOV.UK, Attendance Allowance, read 3 Oct 2026):

- It isn't means-tested. Their income and savings don't affect it.
- They don't need to have a carer to claim, and they can live alone.
- It's paid for the help they need, even if nobody gives that help yet.
- It doesn't cover getting around outside. That's a different benefit for people under State Pension age (PIP).
- Getting it can mean more Pension Credit, Housing Benefit or Council Tax Reduction (section 9).

02

Who can get it

They might be able to get Attendance Allowance if all of these apply (GOV.UK, Eligibility, read 3 Oct 2026):

- They've reached State Pension age. It's rising from 66 to 67 between April 2026 and April 2028, so the exact age depends on date of birth. Anyone born on or after 6 March 1961 reaches it at 67 (GOV.UK, State Pension age review, 5 Apr 2023). You can look up anyone's date at GOV.UK, State Pension age.
- They have a physical disability (including sight or hearing loss), a mental disability (including learning disabilities) or a health condition.
- Because of it, they need help with personal care, or someone to supervise them for their own or someone else's safety.
- They've needed that help for at least 6 months. Someone nearing the end of life doesn't have to wait (section 6).
- They live in England or Wales and meet the residence rules, such as being in Great Britain for at least 2 of the last 3 years. Northern Ireland has the same benefit through nidirect (section 11). Scotland has Pension Age Disability Payment instead (section 10).

They can't get it at the same time as Disability Living Allowance, PIP, Adult Disability Payment, Scottish Adult Disability Living Allowance or Armed Forces Independence Payment (GOV.UK, Eligibility). Someone already on PIP stays on PIP after State Pension age.

Care homes: they usually can't get it if the council pays for their care home place. They can still claim if they pay all the care home costs themselves (GOV.UK, Eligibility).

03

What counts as help

The form asks about the help they need, not the help they get. Families often leave things out because they've got used to doing them. Think about a typical week, including bad days.

Personal care by day (nidirect lists these examples, nidirect, Attendance Allowance, read 3 Oct 2026):

- washing, bathing, and getting in or out of the bath or shower
- dressing and undressing
- eating and drinking, including cutting up food
- getting to and using the toilet
- taking medicines at the right time
- communicating their needs, for example on the phone or with a hearing loss

Supervision: someone keeping an eye on them so they stay safe, for example because they get confused, forget the cooker or wander, or because of their diet or a health condition (nidirect).

At night: help to turn over, use the toilet or take medicines, or someone needing to be awake to keep them safe.

Help they need but don't get counts too. It also counts if they manage only very slowly, with pain, or with an aid such as a raised toilet seat.

If you're worried about their health, contact their GP or NHS 111. In an emergency call 999.

04

Before you start

The claim, step by step

1. **Keep a diary for a week**
   Note each time they need help, by day and by night.
2. **Gather their details**
   National Insurance number, GP, medicines, bank details and any letters.
3. **Start the claim**
   Online, print the form, or call 0800 731 0122 for one.
4. **Fill in the form**
   Their worst days and good days, with examples from the diary.
5. **Send it**
   Freepost DWP Attendance Allowance. You don't need a stamp.
6. **A text or letter within 3 weeks**
   It says when to expect a decision.
7. **The decision letter**
   It says how much and when payments start.
8. **Report changes straight away**
   Call the helpline on 0800 731 0122.

Keep a diary for a week. Note each time they need help, by day and by night: what it was, how long it took, and what happens if nobody helps. A week of notes makes the form much easier to fill in, and it gives real examples in place of "sometimes".

Gather these (GOV.UK, How to claim, read 3 Oct 2026):

- their National Insurance number
- their address and contact details
- details of their disability or health condition
- their GP surgery or medical centre
- details of any care home, hospital or hospice they're staying in
- a list of their medicines (a repeat prescription list is fine)
- copies of any letters from the hospital, GP practice or other services
- their bank, building society or credit union details

Who fills it in: you can help them fill it in, or fill it in for them if they agree. If they can't make their own decisions, you need to be their appointee or attorney. The form has space for a statement from someone who knows them well, such as a family member, friend or professional.

Start the date early. If you phone the helpline for a paper form, the claim can start from the date of the call, as long as the form goes back within 6 weeks (GOV.UK, How to claim).

05

Filling in the form

You can claim online on GOV.UK or on the paper form, which comes with notes (GOV.UK, How to claim, read 3 Oct 2026). There are four ways to start:

- **Online:** start at www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance/how-to-claim. The claim starts on the day you send it.
- **Print the form:** download it from GOV.UK. The claim starts on the day DWP receives it.
- **Ask for a form:** call the Attendance Allowance helpline on 0800 731 0122 (Relay UK: 18001 then 0800 731 0122), Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm. The claim starts on the day of the call.
- **Send it to:** Freepost DWP Attendance Allowance. Write nothing else on the envelope. You don't need a stamp.

Tips that help the person reading it:

- **Answer for their worst days as well as their good days.** Say how many days a week are like that.
- **Give examples from your diary,** for example: "Most nights she needs help to the toilet 2 or 3 times, about 10 minutes each time."
- **Say what happens without help.** For example: "Without help he doesn't wash, and has missed his tablets twice this month."
- **Count the help they need,** not only what they get now.

- **Don't leave a box blank** if it applies. If a question doesn't fit, say so and explain.
- **Keep a copy** of everything you send, with the date.

Assessments: most people aren't asked to go to one. DWP only asks for an assessment if it's unclear how their condition affects them, and the letter says why and where (GOV.UK, Eligibility).

06

Nearing the end of life

If a doctor or other medical professional has said they might have 12 months or less to live, there's a faster route. Families sometimes call it "special rules" (GOV.UK, Claiming if you're nearing the end of life, read 3 Oct 2026):

- They get the higher rate, £114.60 a week, without waiting 6 months.
- Ask the doctor, nurse or other medical professional for form SR1. They give it to you or send it to DWP.
- Then claim online or by post as in section 5. There's no face-to-face assessment.
- Someone else can claim for them, and doesn't need their permission.
- The award letter doesn't mention the special rules.
- If they already get Attendance Allowance, call the helpline straight away to move to the higher rate.

It can be hard to know how long someone might live. If no medical professional has talked to you about it, you can still ask them to support a claim (GOV.UK).

If you're worried about their health, contact their GP or NHS 111. In an emergency call 999.

07

After you claim

What DWP says happens next (GOV.UK, How to claim, read 3 Oct 2026):

- DWP sends a text or letter within 3 weeks saying when to expect a decision.
- A decision letter follows. If they're awarded Attendance Allowance, it says how much and when payments start.
- Payments go into their bank, building society or credit union account.

Report changes straight away to the helpline on 0800 731 0122 (GOV.UK, Report a change, read 3 Oct 2026). For example, if:

- the help they need changes
- they go into hospital or a care home
- a medical professional says they might have 12 months or less to live
- they plan to go abroad for more than 4 weeks
- their address, bank details or GP changes

Hospital stays: Attendance Allowance usually ends after 28 days in hospital, and so does the severe disability addition in Pension Credit (DWP, Pension Credit and help for disabled people, updated 6 Apr 2026). Tell the helpline about the stay and when they come home.

If they're paid too much because a change wasn't reported, DWP can ask for the money back (GOV.UK, Report a change).

08

If you disagree with the decision

Step 1: ask for a mandatory reconsideration. This means asking DWP to look at the decision again (GOV.UK, Challenge a benefit decision, updated 13 Jan 2025):

- Usually within one month of the date on the decision letter. It can be later with a good reason, such as a hospital stay or a bereavement.
- There's no charge.
- DWP looks at the whole claim again, so the award can go up, down or stay the same.
- Say which parts you disagree with and why, and send any new evidence. Your diary from section 4 helps here.

Step 2: appeal to a tribunal. If you still disagree, appeal to the Social Security and Child Support Tribunal within one month of the mandatory reconsideration decision. There's no charge, and the tribunal is independent of DWP (GOV.UK, Appeal a benefit decision, updated 8 Nov 2024).

Citizens Advice and Age UK can help with both steps (see "Where to get help").

Northern Ireland and Scotland have their own steps (sections 10 and 11).

09

What it can open up

An Attendance Allowance award can unlock other help. Claim it first, then look at these.

More Pension Credit (GOV.UK, Pension Credit amounts, read 3 Oct 2026; DWP rates 2026 to 2027):

- Attendance Allowance doesn't count as income for Pension Credit.
- Pension Credit tops weekly income up to £238.00 for a single person, or £363.25 for a couple.
- With Attendance Allowance, they might be able to get a severe disability addition of £86.05 a week (about £4,475 a year, estimate). This applies if no other adult lives with them and nobody is paid Carer's Allowance for looking after them (DWP, Decision Makers' Guide chapter 78, 16 Apr 2026).

Carer's Allowance for the person who looks after them:

- Someone caring for 35 hours a week or more might be able to get Carer's Allowance of £86.45 a week, if they earn £204 a week or less after allowable expenses (GOV.UK, Carer's Allowance eligibility, read 3 Oct 2026).
- A Carer's Allowance claim can be backdated by up to 3 months (GOV.UK, Carer's Allowance: make a claim, read 3 Oct 2026). The carer should claim within 3 months of the Attendance Allowance decision, or they could lose some of it (nidirect, Attendance Allowance).

- **Talk to an adviser first if they live alone and get Pension Credit.** Being paid Carer's Allowance for them usually ends their £86.05 severe disability addition. A carer who is entitled to Carer's Allowance but not paid it, for example because of their State Pension, doesn't affect it (DWP, Decision Makers' Guide chapter 78).

Council Tax:

- If a doctor confirms they have significant difficulties with memory, understanding or judgement and they get a qualifying benefit such as Attendance Allowance, they might not be counted for Council Tax. That can mean a 25% discount, or no bill if they live alone (GOV.UK, Council Tax: discounts for disabled people, updated 5 Feb 2025). The council decides.
- Northern Ireland has rates instead (section 11).

Housing Benefit or Council Tax Reduction might also go up (GOV.UK, Attendance Allowance).

To see what else they and you might be able to get, use the Benefits finder: www.cominghomecare.app/benefits-check?ref=guide-attendance-allowance

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Scotland: Pension Age Disability Payment

In Scotland, Social Security Scotland pays **Pension Age Disability Payment** in place of Attendance Allowance, at the same rates: £76.70 and £114.60 a week (mygov.scot, Pension Age Disability Payment, updated 12 Jun 2026).

- **Already on Attendance Allowance?** Nothing to do. Social Security Scotland finished moving everyone across at the end of 2025 (Social Security Scotland, 29 Dec 2025).
- **Applying:** there are two parts. Apply online through mygov.scot myaccount (part 1 within 14 days, part 2 within 56 days, which is 8 weeks, with more time if you ask), or call 0800 182 2222 for a paper part 2 (mygov.scot, How to apply, updated 13 Jul 2026). You can also ask for help in person or at home from a local adviser on the same number (Social Security Scotland factsheet, March 2026).
- **Part 2** asks about help with 10 areas of daily life, by day and night, including staying safe (mygov.scot, What you need, updated 10 Mar 2026).

- **Supporting information:**
  - They're asked for one piece of supporting information from a professional, such as a prescription list, care plan or letter. It doesn't need to name a condition.
  - Family can add a statement of support, but not the person applying or their appointee.
  - Send it by upload or post (not email) within 28 days of part 2. Social Security Scotland can gather it for you if you ask (mygov.scot, What you need).
- **Terminal illness:**
  - Use a short form, plus a BASRiS form from a registered doctor or nurse. A DS1500 or SR1 is also accepted.
  - There's no fixed life expectancy rule. They get the higher rate, paid weekly in advance (mygov.scot, Special Rules for Terminal Illness, read 3 Oct 2026; mygov.scot, Payments, updated 6 Oct 2025).
- **Timings:** decisions took a median of 7 working days from launch to April 2026, and 2 for terminal illness (Social Security Scotland, statistics to 30 April 2026, published 16 Jun 2026). Payment is every 4 weeks.
- **If you disagree:**
  - Ask for a re-determination within 42 days, online, by phone or on the form.
  - Social Security Scotland has 56 days to decide.
  - You then have 31 days to appeal to the First-tier Tribunal for Scotland, or straight away if the 56 days run out (mygov.scot, How to challenge a decision, read 3 Oct 2026).
- **Moving between Scotland and England or Wales:** apply for the other nation's benefit as soon as you move. Attendance Allowance ends 13 weeks after a move to Scotland (GOV.UK, Attendance Allowance).

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Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland, Attendance Allowance has the same name and rates (£76.70 and £114.60 a week). It's run by the Department for Communities through its Disability and Carers Service (nidirect, Attendance Allowance, read 3 Oct 2026).

- **Applying:**
  - Online through nidirect.
  - Or email dcs.forms@dfcni.gov.uk, or call the Disability and Carers Service on 0800 587 0912 (Relay UK: 18001 then 0800 587 0912), Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm, for a claim pack (Department for Communities, Disability and Carers Service, read 3 Oct 2026).
  - Or collect a form from a Jobs and Benefits office.
- **Start date:** the date of your email, call or form request counts as the claim date, if the form goes back within 6 weeks.
- **Returning the form:** post it to the Disability and Carers Service, or hand it in at a Jobs and Benefits office.
- **End of life:** special rules apply for someone with a progressive illness who isn't reasonably expected to live more than another 12 months. They get the higher rate straight away, and someone can claim without their knowledge (nidirect).
- **Carers:** a carer can't claim Carer's Allowance until the Attendance Allowance is awarded. They must claim within 3 months of that decision (nidirect).

- **If you disagree:**
  - Ask for a mandatory reconsideration within one calendar month, by phone, in writing or on form MR2(NI) (nidirect, MR2(NI), read 3 Oct 2026).
  - Then appeal to the Appeals Service within one month of the Mandatory Reconsideration Notice, on form NOA1(SS), online or by letter (nidirect, Appeal a benefits decision, read 3 Oct 2026).
- **Rates, not Council Tax:**
  - NI has no rates discount that matches the Council Tax one in section 9.
  - If the person who pays the rates is 70 or over, Lone Pensioner Allowance might take 20% off. It's for people who live alone, and also for people who live with a carer, or with someone who has dementia or a similar condition (nidirect, Lone Pensioner Allowance, read 3 Oct 2026).
  - Disabled Persons Allowance gives 25% off for an adapted home (nidirect, Disabled Persons Allowance).

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How Coming Home can help

Coming Home: Family Care is an iPhone app for families looking after someone. It's coming soon. It helps you organise and draft. It isn't advice, and DWP, Social Security Scotland or the Department for Communities makes the decision.

The family care diary helps you note the help they need by day and night, so the examples in sections 3 and 4 are already written down when you need them.

The Attendance Allowance Pack (£9.99 one-off for one claim, or included with Care Plus) helps you:

- draft the answers from your family's care diary (20 drafting runs)
- keep a 7-day "a day in the life" diary
- gather an evidence list
- see what happens next and when
- use a template to ask DWP to look at a decision again

You read, edit and send everything yourself.

The Carer's Allowance Pack (£4.99 one-off, or included with Care Plus) walks the carer through who can get it and how it can affect other benefits, with a prompt to talk to a welfare rights adviser first.

Every plan includes the 8 quick questions on what you might be entitled to, and a lasting power of attorney to-do list.

In Scotland, the family diary helps you note the help they need, ready for the Social Security Scotland application. The Attendance Allowance Pack is written for the DWP claim, so we don't offer it for Pension Age Disability Payment yet.

To hear when Coming Home is ready, join the waitlist: www.cominghomecare.app/?ref=guide-attendance-allowance

Built by people who have run home care.

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Where to get help

This is guidance, not advice. It uses the 2026/27 rates and rules published on GOV.UK, mygov.scot and nidirect, read on 3 October 2026. It can't take everything into account, and DWP, Social Security Scotland or the Department for Communities decides every claim. Rates usually change each April.

For advice on your situation, at no cost:

- **Citizens Advice:** www.citizensadvice.org.uk/benefits/ (Scotland: www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/benefits/; Wales: www.citizensadvice.org.uk/wales/benefits/)
- **Age UK Advice Line:** 0800 678 1602, and its Attendance Allowance factsheet FS34, linked from ageuk.org.uk. Open 8am to 7pm, every day of the year (Age UK Advice Line). In Scotland, the Age Scotland helpline is 0800 12 44 222, Monday to Friday, 9am to 1pm (Age Scotland helpline)
- **Carers UK:** www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/
- **Advice NI:** www.adviceni.net/
- **GOV.UK benefits:** www.gov.uk/browse/benefits

If you're worried about their health, contact their GP or NHS 111. In an emergency call 999.

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Sources

All read on 3 October 2026. Where a page shows its own date, that date is given.

Rates

- DWP, Benefit and pension rates 2026 to 2027 (updated 16 Feb 2026): www.gov.uk/government/publications/benefit-and-pension-rates-2026-to-2027

Attendance Allowance (GOV.UK)

- Overview and rates (last updated 21 Oct 2024): www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance
- Eligibility: www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance/eligibility
- How to claim: www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance/how-to-claim
- Report a change in circumstances: www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance/report-a-change-in-circumstances
- Claiming if you're nearing the end of life: www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance/claiming-attendance-allowance-if-youre-nearing-the-end-of-life
- State Pension age: www.gov.uk/state-pension-age
- State Pension age review, Government Actuary's Department (5 Apr 2023): www.gov.uk/government/news/state-pension-age-review

Challenging a decision (GOV.UK)

- Challenge a benefit decision (mandatory reconsideration), updated 13 Jan 2025: www.gov.uk/mandatory-reconsideration
- Appeal a benefit decision, updated 8 Nov 2024: www.gov.uk/appeal-benefit-decision

Other help (GOV.UK and DWP)

- Pension Credit amounts: www.gov.uk/pension-credit/what-youll-get
- Pension Credit and help for disabled people (updated 6 Apr 2026): www.gov.uk/government/publications/pension-credit-toolkit/pension-credit-and-help-for-disabled-people
- Decision Makers' Guide chapter 78 (16 Apr 2026): assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/69e10327f5069cdc54868955/dmg-Ch-78.pdf
- Carer's Allowance eligibility: www.gov.uk/carers-allowance/eligibility
- Carer's Allowance, make a claim: www.gov.uk/carers-allowance/how-to-claim
- Council Tax: discounts for disabled people (updated 5 Feb 2025): www.gov.uk/council-tax/discounts-for-disabled-people

Scotland

- mygov.scot, Pension Age Disability Payment (updated 12 Jun 2026): www.mygov.scot/pension-age-disability-payment
- mygov.scot, How to apply (updated 13 Jul 2026): www.mygov.scot/pension-age-disability-payment/how-to-apply
- mygov.scot, What you need (updated 10 Mar 2026): www.mygov.scot/pension-age-disability-payment/what-you-need
- mygov.scot, Payments (updated 6 Oct 2025): www.mygov.scot/pension-age-disability-payment/payments
- mygov.scot, Special Rules for Terminal Illness: www.mygov.scot/terminal-illness/how-to-apply
- mygov.scot, How to challenge a decision: www.mygov.scot/disagree-decision/how-to-challenge-decision
- Social Security Scotland, Pension Age Disability Payment factsheet (March 2026), PDF on socialsecurity.gov.scot
- Social Security Scotland, transfers completed (29 Dec 2025): www.socialsecurity.gov.scot/news/2025/12/disability-and-carer-benefit-transfers-completed
- Social Security Scotland, statistics to 30 April 2026 (16 Jun 2026): www.socialsecurity.gov.scot/publications/2026/06/pension-age-disability-payment-statistics-to-30-april-2026

Northern Ireland (nidirect)

- Attendance Allowance: www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/attendance-allowance
- Mandatory reconsideration request form MR2(NI): www.nidirect.gov.uk/mandatory-reconsideration-request
- Appeal a benefits decision: www.nidirect.gov.uk/appeal-benefits-decision
- Lone Pensioner Allowance: www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/lone-pensioner-allowance

- Disabled Persons Allowance: www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/disabled-persons-allowance
- Department for Communities, Disability and Carers Service contacts: www.communities-ni.gov.uk/contacts/disability-and-carers-service

Advice services

- Age UK Advice Line (page updated 27 May 2025): www.ageuk.org.uk/services/age-uk-advice-line/
- Age Scotland helpline: www.agescotland.org.uk/how-we-help/helpline

Coming Home

- Pack names, prices and contents: Coming Home pricing, tiers and paywall, version 1.1 (2 Oct 2026)

Yearly figures are our estimates: the weekly rate × 52, rounded to the nearest pound.

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Changelog

Version	Date	What changed	Why
1.0	October 2026	First published	Rules and rates read on 3 October 2026, for 2026/27
1.1	October 2026	3 October 2026: uses the official name, severe disability addition. New cover illustration, and the iPhone trademark line on the disclaimer page	Uses the official DWP term. Each guide cover now shows a different family

The next review is due in March 2027, before the 2027/28 rates start on 6 April 2027. The latest version is always at www.cominghomecare.app/guides/attendance-allowance

Coming Home

Less to hold in your head.

www.cominghomecare.app

This edition

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