Help and advice about other benefits

If you want general advice about any other benefits you may be able to claim

- Ring the Benefit Enquiry Line (BEL) for people with disabilities on 0800 88 22 00.
- People with speech or hearing problems using a textphone can dial 0800 24 33 55. If you do not have your own textphone system, they are available in some libraries and some Citizens Advice Bureaus.
- Get in touch with Jobcentre Plus. You can find the phone number and address in the business numbers section of the phone book. Look under Jobcentre Plus.
- Get in touch with an advice centre like a Citizens Advice Bureau.

If you want more information about Carer’s Allowance

If you are claiming the personal care part of Disability Living Allowance and someone looks after you for 35 hours or more a week, they may be able to get Carer’s Allowance. The enclosed information sheet has important information about Carer’s Allowance and tells you and your carer:

- how your benefit could be affected if your carer is paid Carer’s Allowance
- how to get help and advice about Carer’s Allowance
- how to make a claim
- when to make a claim to avoid losing benefit, and
- where to get a claim form or how to claim online.

If you want more information about Child Tax Credit or Working Tax Credit

- Ring the helpline on 0845 300 3900.
- People with speech or hearing problems using a textphone can dial 0845 300 3909.
- People who need a form or help in Welsh can dial 0845 302 1489.
- You can visit the website at www.hmrc.gov.uk

For more information about Pension Credit

- You can get the leaflet PC1L Pension Credit
- Ring the Pension Service on 0800 99 1234.
- People with speech or hearing problems using a textphone can dial 0800 169 0133.
- You can visit the website at www.thepensionservice.gov.uk
About Disability Living Allowance

Disability Living Allowance is a tax-free social security benefit for people with an illness or disability who need help with:

- getting around
- personal care, or
- both of these.

You can claim Disability Living Allowance even if you:

- do not actually get the help you need
- live alone, or
- are working.

Disability Living Allowance is:

- not affected by savings
- not usually affected by any other money you have coming in, and
- not usually counted as income when working out Income Support and Jobseeker’s Allowance.

If you get Disability Living Allowance, it may increase other benefits you get, for example, Income Support, Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit.

Normally, you can only get Disability Living Allowance if you have needed help for three months, and you must be likely to need help for at least six months after you claim.

When to claim

Claim straightaway. If you claim now, we can make sure that you get Disability Living Allowance as soon as you are entitled to it.

Filling in the claim form

Before you fill in the claim form, it will be useful to have ready some of the things listed below. Do not worry if you do not have all of them.

- Your National Insurance number
  
  You can find this on your National Insurance number card, letters from the Department for Work and Pensions or payslips. If you do not have a National Insurance number, or you do not know it, get in touch with Jobcentre Plus. They will help you apply for or trace your number.

- Details of your medication, or an up-to-date, printed prescription list if you have one.
Filling in the claim form (continued)

- Details of anyone you have seen about your illnesses or disabilities in the last 12 months, apart from your GP.
- Your hospital record number (if you know it). You can find this on your appointment card or letter.
- The name of your GP and the address of your GP’s surgery.
- You may find it helpful to keep a record of your needs. Try to list all the times when you need help from someone else or when you have difficulty doing something because there is nobody around to help you. If your condition varies, you may want to keep a record of your needs over a good day and over a bad day. Start from the time you get up in the morning, through 24 hours, to the time you get up the following morning. You could send this record in with your claim form.
- If you have been in hospital, a care home or somewhere like this, the dates you went in and out, and the name, address and contact details of the place you stayed.
- Details of the account that your Disability Living Allowance will be paid into, if you have one. You can find these on the chequebook, statement, or passbook.

You do not have to fill in the form in one go. Take your time so that you can describe all the help you need.

If you want help filling in the claim form or any part of it

- Ring the Benefit Enquiry Line for people with disabilities and carers. The number is 0800 88 22 00. The textphone number is 0800 24 33 55. Lines open from 8.30am to 6.30pm Monday to Friday, and from 9am to 1pm on Saturdays.

The person you speak to may need to arrange for someone to phone you back. The person who calls you back is specially trained to help you fill in this form. They will have a copy of the claim form and they will go through it with you over the phone. Or they can fill in a claim form for you. If they fill in the claim form for you, they will send it to you. You can then check, sign and send it back. They can send you a filled-in claim form in Braille or in large print. They will send you an envelope. It will not need a stamp. We can provide an interpreter if you need one, or you may want to arrange for a friend or family member to interpret for you.

- If you cannot use the phone, we may be able to send someone to visit you. Write to us at the address on the envelope that came with this claim form. If you have a visit, it may take us longer to deal with your claim.
- You may be able to get help from an organisation that specialises in helping people with your illness or disability. Phone them and ask if they can help you.
About medical examinations
If we cannot get a clear picture of how your illnesses or disabilities affect you, we may ask a health-care professional to examine you.

Medical Services arrange medical examinations for us.

Medical Services will contact you to arrange an appointment. They can arrange for an interpreter or a health-care professional of the same sex, if this is possible.

After your medical examination, Medical Services will send us a copy of the report. We will use this report when we make a decision on your claim.

If you want to see the report, ask the office dealing with your claim for a copy.

About the questions in the form
Do you normally live in Great Britain?
You must normally live in Great Britain and have lived here for 26 weeks in the last 52 weeks to get Disability Living Allowance.

Time spent in a country that is part of the European Economic Area (EEA), or Switzerland, may also be treated as being present in Great Britain, for the purpose of the 26-week rule.

The 26-week rule does not apply where people who are terminally ill qualify under special rules, and is reduced to 13 weeks for babies under six months old.

Your doctor does not decide whether you can get this benefit
We may need to ask your doctor for more information about your condition. We will only ask your doctor to give details of the medical facts. They do not have to give an opinion on problems you may have with daily living activities or whether you are eligible for benefit.
Important notes about question 24 - Special rules

We have arrangements called special rules which help people who are terminally ill get their benefit as quickly as possible. The special rules are for people who have a progressive disease and are not reasonably expected to live for more than six months.

So that we can deal with your claim as quickly as possible, it is important that you send a DS1500 report with your claim. The notes below tell you how to get a DS1500 report.

If you have not got the DS1500 report by the time you have filled in the claim form, send us the claim form straight away. Please send the DS1500 when you can.

Getting Disability Living Allowance under the special rules means:

- getting the highest rate each week for help with personal care
- getting paid straight away (this means you do not have to wait until you have needed help for three months), and
- claims are dealt with more quickly.

Claiming under the special rules for someone else

You can claim under the special rules for someone else. You do not have to tell them you are claiming for them. Tell us about them on the claim form. We will normally write to them about whether they can get Disability Living Allowance, but we will not tell them anything about the special rules.

How to claim under the special rules

Please fill in the claim form or someone else can claim for you. Tick the box at page 11 of the claim form to show you are claiming under the special rules. If you do not tick this box, we cannot normally pay you under the special rules.

How to get a DS1500 report

Ask your doctor or specialist for a DS1500 report.

This is a report about your medical condition. You will not have to pay for it. You can ask the doctor’s receptionist, a nurse or a social worker to arrange this for you. You do not have to see the doctor. Most doctors’ practices provide DS1500 reports very quickly. Ask for the report in a sealed envelope if you do not want anyone to see it.
How far can you normally walk (including any short stops) before you feel severe discomfort?

We understand how difficult it can be to accurately work out the distance you can walk. There are several things that can help you.

- Ask someone to walk with you and pace the distance you walk. The average adult step is just under one metre, for example, if the person walking with you took 100 steps, you would have walked about 90 metres.
- A size 9 shoe is about a third of a metre.
- The average four-door car is about four metres long.
- The average double-decker bus is about 11 metres long.
- A full-size football pitch is about 100 metres long.

If you still find it difficult to work out the distance you can walk in metres, please tell us:

- the number of steps you can take, and how long, in minutes, it would take you to walk this distance, on question 27
- about your walking speed, on question 29, and
- the way that you walk, on question 30. For example, shuffling or small steps.
Additional notes for question 63

Making payments to you

We normally pay Disability Living Allowance directly into an account. This is the safest way to pay you and lets you choose how and when you get your money. You can use a bank, building society or other account provider. Most accounts allow you to make savings on some of your bills by paying them by direct debit. You may be able to use a cash machine, which will usually mean you can get your money at any time of the day or night. Most of these machines can be used for free, but some of them may charge you to take your money out. If so, you will be warned by a message on the screen. This will give you the opportunity to cancel your transaction without being charged. There are arrangements with some banks and building societies to let you collect cash from many of their accounts over the counter at post offices.

Payment directly into an account

• How you will be paid
  Your Disability Living Allowance will be paid into the account at the end of every four-week period.

• Finding out how much is paid into the account
  We will tell you when the first payment will be made and how much it is for. Each payment, after the first one, should be for the same amount unless there is a change in your circumstances. We will tell you whenever we know there is going to be a change in the amount we pay into your account.

  You can check your Disability Living Allowance payments on your account statements. Your statements will usually show your National Insurance (NI) number next to payments that are from us. If you think your payment is wrong, get in touch with the office that pays you.

• Getting someone to collect your Disability Living Allowance
  You may be able to get someone else to collect your Disability Living Allowance for you regularly if you wish. For help with this, please contact your bank, building society or other account provider such as the Post Office® or a credit union.

• If not enough money is paid into the account
  If we do not pay enough money into the account, we will make another payment or add the money we owe you onto your next payment. We will contact you to tell you what we are going to do.

• Sometimes we may pay too much money into the account and you may be overpaid.
  If this is because of the way the system works for payments directly into an account, we have the right to recover any money you are not entitled to. For example, you may give us information which means you are entitled to less money but we may not be able to change the amount already sent out. We will contact you first if we propose to recover any money.
Making payments to you continued

If you do not have a suitable account

• If you do not want to use your existing account
  If you have an account but you do not wish to use it, for example a joint account, any bank or building society will help you open an account that suits you better. Remember to ask whether their accounts allow you to get your money from the Post Office® if this is important to you.

• Basic bank account
  If you have had problems opening a current account, or if you are worried about being overdrawn, you could ask any bank or building society about opening a basic bank account. These are available from all major banks and offer free banking with no overdraft facility. You can use these accounts to pay money in, pay bills automatically, and get cash out. Many basic bank accounts also allow you to get cash from post offices.

• Other accounts
  Alternatively, you can be paid into some credit union accounts or a Post Office® card account. These accounts may have restrictions on the services provided.

Fill in the Disability Living Allowance claim form and send it to us. Do not wait until you have opened an account.

How we collect and use information

The information we collect about you and how we use it depends mainly on the reason for your business with us, but we may use it for any of the Department’s purposes, which include:

• social security benefits and allowances
• child support
• employment and training
• private pensions policy, and
• retirement planning.

We may obtain information from others to check the information you provide and to improve our services, and may give information to other organisations as the law allows, for example to safeguard against crime.

To find out more about how we use information, ask for leaflet GL33 DWP and Your Personal Information at any of our offices, or visit the website www.dwp.gov.uk/privacy.asp