

INFORMATION AND RESOURCES



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Supporting you to find the answers

Disability Living Allowance (DLA)

DLA is the main benefit in the UK for children with disabilities, and can be claimed for a child (up to 16 years old) with or without a diagnosis. It is not means tested so your current earnings or savings won't be taken into account when your child is assessed. In fact, if your child is awarded DLA it may mean that you are eligible for an increase in other benefits.

You will need to provide evidence that your child needs substantially more care, attention or supervision than other children of the same age without a disability or health condition.

There are two components: the CARE component and the MOBILITY component. The care component covers the need for extra care and attention, and is awarded at one of three levels: lowest, middle or higher care. The mobility component covers difficulties with walking, or difficulties getting around in unfamiliar areas and is awarded at the lower or higher level. **You can claim for the care element from when your child is 3 months old, and the mobility element from when they are 3 years old (if they have a physical disability which prevents them from walking – eg cerebral palsy) or from aged 5 if they have a condition which means they are a danger to themselves or others when they are outdoors.** The application form for DLA (DLA1A) can be downloaded from the government website www.gov.uk, or you can call the **DLA new claims helpline on 0800 121 4600**. This is the suggested option as the helpline office will date-stamp the form on sending it out, which means the payments will be back-dated to this date if the application is successful.

There is a helpful guide produced by Contact a Family available from their website, and they have also produced an information guide called "Disability Living Allowance claiming the higher rate mobility component for children with learning disabilities and autism spectrum disorders" which is extremely helpful in explaining how to claim the higher rate if your child can physically walk but can't be allowed out unsupervised because of the effects of autism or a similar condition.

The DLA form is notoriously difficult to complete – take your time and read the questions carefully. Don't try to finish it all in one go! Include as much information as you can and ask for help if you feel you need it.

If your child is awarded the higher rate mobility allowance, they are automatically entitled to a 'blue badge' to help with parking, and access to the Motability scheme to help with car leasing. You may also get help with or exemption from road tax.

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Appointee Status

A parent can apply for Appointee Status for their child on DLA. This means that they can speak on behalf of their child, complete forms, etc. This may seem unnecessary, especially when their child is young, but it has advantages with their child reaches the age of 16 and has to apply for PIP in their own right. To apply for Appointee Status, you need to contact the DLA number 0800 121 4600, or the PIP new claims number 0800 917 2222.

The process is that you will be seen by a DWP Visiting Officer who will complete Form BF57 with you and your child. If your child is 16, then they have to agree that you can become their Appointee. You also have to explain why your child is not mentally capable of managing their own affairs. This does not mean that they will not receive any PIP monies, it just means that you will be able to complete and sign the PIP form for them, speak to the DWP about their claim and you will receive any letters regarding their PIP claim. You will also be able to speak on their behalf at a PIP assessment and at a Tribunal if you are challenging a decision about their claim.

Personal Independence Payments (PIP)

This benefit replaces the Disability Living Allowance for people aged 16 to 64. When your child reaches 16, they will be invited by the DLA to apply for PIP; by phoning the **PIP new claim line – 0800 917 2222**. The information that needs to be provided is **NAME, ADDRESS, DATE OF BIRTH, NATIONAL INSURANCE NUMBER, DETAILS OF GP AND BANK ACCOUNT DETAILS**. If your child does not apply for PIP (their DLA payments will be stopped). During the process, DLA will continue to be paid until a decision is made.

If you have not already done so, it is advisable, therefore, to apply for Appointee Status to act on behalf of your child with regard to the DWP (see above).

The PIP application process is different to the DLA process, as it is based on a points system. There are 2 components: daily living activities and mobility. Both are independently awarded at either standard rate (8 points) or enhanced rate (12 points), and a person can be awarded either or both parts. **PIP is based on a person's inability to complete tasks/activities, not what disability a person has. Just because you have received DLA for your child, they may not necessarily be successful in their PIP claim.**

You should collect all necessary evidence such as reports from specialists, medication lists, educational learning plans, any psychiatric input, etc. It is also useful to keep a diary of your child's behaviour over a period of a month to show why they need this extra support.

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Mobility Component

Mobility is split into two aspects: *'planning and following journeys'* and *'moving around'* the points from assessment of the two aspects are combined in deciding if a mobility allowance will be given, and at what rate. People with neurological conditions may be entitled to points under the "Planning and Following a Journey", but the "Moving Around" section is for people who physically cannot walk, because of arthritis, MS, motor-neuron disease, etc.

It is advised that you do not attempt to complete the PIP form yourself. Get expert advice and help from an Advice Agency.

Citizens Advice Bureau and other organisations are available to give advice and support. Personal Independence Payment (PIP) – table of activities, descriptors and points:

https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/Global/Migrated_Documents/adviceguide/PIP-9-table-of-activities-descriptors-and-points.pdf

Contact a Family have an excellent *'Guide to Personal Independence Payment and other Benefits at 16'* available to download at www.cafamily.org.uk - helpline is 0808 808 3555.

If your claim is unsuccessful you can apply for a Mandatory Reconsideration. You will need to contact the DWP within one month, with the reasons that you disagree. If your child has had to attend a PIP assessment, then contact the DWP and ask for a copy of the Assessor's Report to be sent to you. Go through the report and make a note of anything that you do not agree with. Use this report as the basis of your request for a Mandatory Reconsideration. Once again, getting specialist advice and help should ensure a better outcome.

It should be noted that the result of a Mandatory Reconsideration can change an award to your child's detriment. For example, they were in receipt of standard daily living and mobility, you put in a request for a Mandatory Reconsideration as you feel they should receive the higher rate, the DWP looks at the whole award and may decide that the claimant is not entitled to any mobility, and takes this part off them.

If the decision is not changed as a result of your Mandatory Reconsideration request, you have an opportunity to appeal to the Tribunal Service. If you apply late for either of these, you will need to show good reason or your application won't be considered.

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Carer's Allowance

This is the main benefit in the UK for carers. You may be eligible for this if your child receives the Middle or High rate of DLA or standard/enhanced rate of Daily Living of PIP, and you care for them for at least 35 hours a week. If you care for them for less time than this, you may be able to claim Carer's Credit.

The allowance is not dependent on any savings, but it does depend on the earnings of the person applying for it – i.e., a person cannot earn more than £128 a week net (as of 2020/21). You can only have one Carer's Allowance benefit paid, even if you are caring for more than one person.

For a comprehensive fact sheet see [Carers-Allowance-factsheet.pdf \(contact.org.uk\)](#)

This can all seem bewildering, and it often helps to talk this through with other people who have been through the process. Our community Network Groups are available in term time, and we regularly have experts in to advise on any concerns or questions you may have. Call us on the numbers below or check out our website for details.

The Family Fund

The Family Fund provide grants for a wide range of items, such as washing machines, sensory toys, family breaks, bedding, tablets, furniture, outdoor play equipment, clothing and computers. They aim to support families across the UK who are raising a disabled or seriously ill child or young person aged 17 or under and their criteria for awarding a grant is based on a social model rather than just a diagnosis. All the information about who is eligible for a grant and how to apply on their website: www.familyfund.org.uk or you can call them on 01904 621115.

Useful Contacts

Liverpool Community Advice (for support and advice across the Liverpool City Region): enquiries@liverpoolcommunityadvice.org.uk , Phone: 0151 237 2677/ 0151 662 0059

Cerebra: 01267 244 200 – info@cerebra.org.uk

Contact a family: 0808 808 3555 – info@cafamily.org.uk

Family Fund: 01904 621115 - <http://www.familyfund.org.uk/>

Government publications: www.gov.uk/government/publications/

Citizens Advice Bureau: - 08448 269 694

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