

Derbyshire Welfare Rights Service

Attendance Allowance Tips on completing the form

Attendance Allowance (AA) is a tax-free benefit for people aged 65 and over (claims for people born on or before 5/12/1953) or who are at state retirement pension age (people born 6/12/1953 or later) who are physically or mentally disabled and need help with personal care or supervision to remain safe.

- You do not have to be actually receiving help – it is the help you need that matters, not the help you get.
- You can get AA if you live alone.
- You do not need to have a carer.

It does not matter how much money you have, as Attendance Allowance is not means-tested; you also do not have to have paid national insurance contributions and AA is paid in addition to other income. In some circumstances, an award can increase the amount of your:

- Pension Credit and/or
- Housing Benefit and /or
- Council Tax Reduction

or help you to qualify for these for the first time.

To give you the best chance for a successful claim answer all the questions on the claim form as fully as you can. A number of them only require simple factual information. Others are more confusing and less clear about the information that is wanted.

The following pages give you tips about these.

The advice is based upon the Attendance Allowance (AA1) form dated December 2018. Please read this leaflet alongside our leaflet 'Attendance Allowance – a short guide'.

If you have a terminal illness, read pages 8 of the notes which come with the claim pack – if you get a DS1500 report from a doctor you do not need to answer all the questions on the claim form and AA can be paid without needing to satisfy the six- month qualifying period – if this is the case make sure you complete up to question 18 of the claim pack, and then go straight to question 45.

Make sure you tick the box at question 12 if you are claiming under the special rules

Page 5 – Question 14

Try to list all health problems and give as much detail as you can. Include a repeat prescription list with the claim pack (make sure it covers all the medication you take). Don't forget to mention any medical equipment you may use, for example, tens machine, nebuliser etc.

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Pages 6 & 7 – Questions 15 – 17

Provide the name and address of your GP and any other health professionals (for example, consultant or a physiotherapist) you have seen within the last year or so. In the case of health professionals, it is helpful if they are fully familiar with your difficulties should they be contacted for information by the Department of Work & Pensions when they are assessing your claim.

Page 8 – Questions 18 and 19

Tick, sign and date to give consent for your contacts to be approached for information.

Pages 9 & 10 – Questions 20 – 25

Straightforward factual information that you need to complete as fully as possible.

Pages 11 - 22 - Questions 26 to 39– care needs during the day

Use the notes which come with the claim pack – the most important part is that it is help you need and how you describe it that will give the best chance of getting Attendance Allowance. This help you need must involve some personal contact with you – this can be physical contact or talking or writing.

Things such as cooking, shopping or cleaning do not usually count as they would not normally need to be carried out with you there. However if you have a disability (such as sight impairment) which means that you can only cook or shop when someone is there to help you to see what you are doing, this may count. Seek further advice.

It is important to put a tick against any relevant examples and briefly detail how long and how often you need help for each example ticked in the box below – remember that one criterion for award of AA is “frequent attention throughout the day with bodily functions”.

Question 26 – Page 11 – when your care needs started

Unless you have a terminal illness, you must have been in need of care for at least six months before AA can be put into payment. If this is the case, then put the most accurate date you feel reflects the date since you needed your current level of care. If you have not reached the six month period yet, you can still submit your claim for AA but bear in mind that you will have to wait for the actual payment of it to be put in place.

If in any doubt ring the Benefits Helpline on 01629 531535 for advice.

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Pages 23 - 24 (Questions 40 – 43) – care needs during the night

This section asks for details of problems you may have during the night. There is no fixed time for the start of the night. During the night, to qualify the help you need must be either “prolonged” (normally around 20 minutes) or “repeated” (needed twice or more). As with daytime it’s a good idea to tick the examples in the lists on the page and briefly detail the help you need in the box below.

Page 25 – Question 44

This page allows you to add any details you have not been able to put in to the other pages or anything else you think is relevant; there is also extra room to add information at question 50, on page 29. You may also add extra sheets if you need more room, but make sure you mark each one with your name and National Insurance Number.

Page 26 – 27 Questions 45 - 48

This requires you to give details of any current or recent time in hospital, and asks for bank details so that AA may pay you if your claim is successful.

Page 28 – Question 49– Statement from someone who knows you.

Although the claim pack says that this part does not have to be filled in, it can be helpful for someone this who knows you well to complete and can explain how your illness or disability affects you and what care needs you have.

Page 29 – Question 50

You can use this page to add anything that may give extra information about your situation, or you can explain in more detail if you did not have enough room on the previous pages.

Page 30 – Question 51

Don’t forget to sign and date the form and to list any documents you are sending with along with it.

If you have received your form from the Disability and Carers Service, return it to them as soon as possible as it is not possible to backdate a claim for DLA. It also possible to claim online – see gov.uk. If you have received your form via Derbyshire Welfare Rights Service: when you have completed your form and signed the authorisation letter, please return it to our office in the prepaid envelope provided. When we get it, a Welfare Rights Officer will check through your form. If it seems there is enough information on it for your claim to be successful it will be posted (by recorded delivery) to the Attendance Allowance Unit on your behalf. If, after checking your form, the Welfare Rights Officer thinks more information is needed they will contact you.

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Even though we make these checks, the Attendance Allowance Unit may contact you by telephone to clarify details you have given on your form. It may be helpful for you to take a copy of your claim to refer to in such circumstances.

If the claim is refused by the Attendance Allowance Unit, we can assist with a challenge to the decision by way of request for a Mandatory Reconsideration or an appeal.

Additional information can be found on our website, visit www.derbyshire.gov.uk/welfarebenefits

To keep up-to-date with benefit changes in Derbyshire go to
www.derbyshire.gov.uk/benefitnews

Benefits Helpline – 01629 531535 or email
welfarebenefits@derbyshire.gov.uk

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
11.00am – 4.00pm