Money Advice Hub Debtipedia®

Fact Sheet WB-029: Disability Living Allowance

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Overview

Disability Living Allowance (DLA) is a tax-free benefit for children may help with the extra costs of looking after a child who:

- is under 16
- has difficulties walking or needs much more looking after than a child of the same age who does not have a disability

You will need to meet all the eligibility requirements. There are 2 components: Mobility and Care, either or both can be awarded depending on an assessment.

Eligibility

Usually, to qualify for Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for children the child must:

- be under 16 - anyone over 16 must apply for Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
- need extra looking after, more than usually expected of a child of the same age, and/or have walking difficulties

- be in England, Wales, a European Economic Area (EEA) country or Switzerland when you claim - there are some exceptions, such as family members of the Armed Forces
- have lived in Great Britain for at least 6 of the last 12 months, if over 3 years old
- be habitually resident in the UK, Ireland, Isle of Man or the Channel Islands
- not be subject to immigration control

There are some exceptions to these conditions if the child is living in or coming from an EEA country or Switzerland.

You can claim DLA for children if you're in or out of work.

If you and your child are from the EU, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein, you will usually also need settled or pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme to claim DLA for your child.

Children under 3

A child under 6 months must have lived in Great Britain for at least 13 weeks.

A child aged between 6 months and 3 years must have lived in Great Britain for at least 26 of the last 156 weeks.

The rules on residence do not normally apply if a child is terminally ill.

How to claim

To claim DLA for a child you need to be their parent or look after them as if you're their parent. This includes step-parents, guardians, grandparents, foster-parents or older brothers or sisters.

If your child currently lives in England or Wales you can apply by either:

- printing off and filling in the DLA claim form
- phoning the Disability Living Allowance helpline and asking for a printed form

Disability Living Allowance helpline

Telephone: 0800 121 4600

Textphone: 0800 121 4523

Relay UK (if you cannot hear or speak on the phone): 18001 then 0800 121 4600

Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

DLA Rates

Disability Living Allowance care component

Highest £114.60
Middle £76.70
Lowest £30.30

Disability Living Allowance mobility component

Higher £80.00
Lower £30.30

Assessing a child's disability or health conditions

The child's disability or health condition must mean at least one of the following apply:

- they need much more looking after than a child of the same age who does not have a disability
- they have difficulty getting about

They must have had these difficulties for at least 3 months and expect them to last for at least 6 months. If they're terminally ill (that is, not expected to live more than 6 months), they do not need to have had these difficulties for 3 months.

Care component

The rate the child gets depends on the level of looking after they need, for example:

- lowest rate - help for some of the day
- middle rate - frequent help or constant supervision during the day, supervision at night or someone to help while they're on dialysis
- highest rate - help or supervision throughout both day and night, or they're terminally ill

Mobility component

The rate the child gets depends on the level of help they need getting about, for example:

- lowest rate - they can walk but need help and or supervision when outdoors
- highest rate - they cannot walk, can only walk a short distance without severe discomfort, could become very ill if they try to walk or they're blind or severely sight impaired

There are also age limits to receiving the mobility component:

- lowest rate - the child must be 5 years or over
- highest rate - the child must be 3 years or over

If your child is under these ages and you claim DLA for them, you should be sent a claim pack 6 months before they turn 3 and 6 months before they turn 5. You can then apply for the mobility component if you think they're eligible for it.

If you do not receive any claim packs and you think your child may be entitled to the mobility component, contact the Disability Service Centre.

Report a change of circumstances

Contact the Disability Service Centre as soon as the child's circumstances change. This can affect how much they get, for example if they permanently change address, their disability gets worse or they go abroad for medical treatment.

Their DLA will not usually be affected if they go:

- into a local authority care home for less than 28 days
- into a hospital
- abroad for less than 13 weeks
- abroad for less than 26 weeks to get medical treatment for a condition which began before they left