

## Section 16

# Maximising Your Income

Many forms of financial support exist. Some are based on savings and income, these are called 'income-related' (or sometimes 'means-tested') and others are not.

This section gives details about a few of the benefits which may be of interest to you or to the person you care for. All the rates given are weekly and apply from **April 2011** and are likely to rise each year.

For further information about where to go for general benefit and allowance advice, please see the final page of this section.

### For care and mobility needs

#### Disability Living Allowance (DLA)

DLA is a tax-free benefit for children and adults who need help with personal care or have walking difficulties because they are physically or mentally disabled.

You may get DLA if:

- you have a physical and/or mental disability;
- your disability is severe enough for you to need help caring for yourself and/or you have walking difficulties;
- you are under 65 when the claim is made. (If aged 65 or over, please see Attendance Allowance.)

You can get DLA whether or not you work and it isn't usually affected by any savings or income you have.

If you have a progressive disease and you are not expected to live for more than another six months there are special rules for claiming to make sure you get your benefit more quickly and easily.

DLA has two parts called 'components':

- a **care** component – if you need help looking after yourself or supervision to keep you safe;
- a **mobility** component – if you can't walk or need help getting around.

Some people will be entitled to receive just one component; others may get both. Care and mobility components are paid at different rates depending on how your disability affects you.

#### **Care Component**

**Higher Rate** for people who need help throughout the day **and** night **£73.60 pw**

**Middle Rate** for people who need help throughout the day **or** night **£49.30 pw**

**Lower Rate Care Component** for people who need more than an hours help a day or unable to cook a main meal. **£19.55 pw**

#### **Mobility Component**

**Higher rate** **£51.40 pw**

**Lower rate** **£19.55pw**

If you start to get DLA it might increase the amount of other benefits or credits you're entitled to, such as Income Support, Pension Credit, Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit, Working Tax and Child Tax Credit. DLA is usually ignored as income for working out income-related benefits and credits.

**Claim straight away** - a delay may lose you benefit.

For more information, including help to fill out the form, contact Benefit Enquiry Line:

Telephone: **0800 88 22 00**

Textphone: **0800 24 33 55**

Visit: [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)

**NB:** If you qualify for the higher rate of DLA you can apply for exemption of your car tax

## **Attendance Allowance (AA)**

AA is a tax-free benefit for people aged 65 or over who need help with personal care because they are physically or mentally disabled. AA isn't usually affected by any savings or income you may have.

You may get AA if:

- you have a physical and/or mental disability;
- your disability is severe enough for you to need help caring for yourself;
- you are aged 65 or over when you claim.

If you have a progressive disease and you are not expected to live for more than another six months there are special rules for claiming to make sure you get your benefit more quickly and easily.

The amount you get depends on how much your disability affects you.

There are two rates of AA:

**Higher rate** for help throughout the day **and** night; **£73.60 pw**

**Lower rate** for help throughout the day **or** night. **£49.30 pw**

If you start to get AA it might increase the amount of other benefits or credits you're entitled to, such as Income Support, Pension Credit, Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit, Working Tax and Child Tax Credit. AA is normally ignored as income for working out income-related benefits and credits.

**Claim straight away** - a delay may lose you benefit. For more information, including help to fill out the form, contact Benefit Enquiry Line:

Telephone: **0800 88 22 00**  
Textphone: **0800 24 33 55**  
Visit: [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)

## **Illness and Injury Benefits**

### **Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)**

This is paid by an employer, at the weekly rate of **£81.60**, for up to the first 28 weeks that an employee is unable to work due to sickness. Medical certificates must be submitted.

### **Incapacity Benefit (IB)**

This benefit was replaced by the Employment and Support Allowance in October 2008. Anyone already receiving IB will continue to get it as long as they are eligible.

### **Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)**

This allowance replaced Incapacity Benefit for new applicants from October 2008. You may be able to get ESA if you have an illness or disability that affects your ability to work.

ESA offers you personal support and financial help, to do appropriate work, if you are able to. It also gives you access to a specially trained personal adviser and a wide range of further services and support, to help you manage and cope with your illness or disability at work.

ESA involves a new medical assessment called the Work Capability Assessment. This assesses what you can do, rather than what you cannot, and identifies the health-related support you might need. Most people claiming ESA will be expected to take steps to prepare for work.

Under ESA, if you have an illness or disability that severely affects your ability to work, you will get increased financial support and will not be expected to prepare for a return to work, but you can volunteer to do so at any point if you want to.

### **How it works**

ESA consists of two phases:

- the **assessment phase** rate is paid the first 13 weeks of your claim while a decision is made on your capability for work (the Work Capability Assessment)
- the **main phase** starts from week 14 of your claim, if the Work Capability Assessment shows that your illness or disability does limit your ability to work.

There are two groups within the main phase:

#### **Work Related Activity Group**

If you are placed in this group, you will be expected to take part in work focused interviews with your personal adviser. You will get support to help you prepare for suitable work. In return, you will receive a work related activity component in addition to your basic rate.

### **Support Group**

If you are placed in the Support Group because your illness or disability has a severe effect on your ability to work, you will not be expected to take part in any work. You can do so on a voluntary basis if you want to. You will receive a support component in addition to your basic rate.

### **Helping you into work**

If you are in the Work Related Activity Group, you will regularly see your personal adviser to discuss your work prospects. They will give you help and advice with:

- your job goals;
- your skills, strengths and abilities;
- steps you can take to help find suitable work;
- your ideas, problems & any other work related issues

If you refuse to go, or to take part fully in the work focused interviews, it may affect your entitlement.

If you're in the Support Group you don't have to go to interviews, but you can still talk to a personal adviser.

### **Weekly rate during the assessment phase**

A single person aged under 25 years	up to £53.45
A single person aged 25yrs and over	up to £67.50

### **Weekly rate during the main phase**

A single person in the Work Related Activity Group	up to £94.25
A single person in the Support Group	up to £99.85

For further information ring:  
or visit:

**0800 055 6688**  
[www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)

## **Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit**

If you are disabled as a result of an accident at work or disabled as a result of a disease or deafness caused by work, you may be entitled to receive this benefit.

For further information ring: **01843 873000**  
or visit: [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)

## **War Disablement Pension**

You may be able to claim War Disablement Pension if you've been injured or disabled during a time of war or as a result of service in Her Majesty's Armed Forces.

For further information contact the Veterans Agency on  
Telephone: **0800 169 22 77**  
or visit: [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)

**NB:** If you qualify for the mobility supplement you can apply for exemption of your car tax

## **Constant Attendance Allowance (CAA)**

If you need daily care and attention because of a disability and you claim Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit / War Disablement Pension you can claim CAA.

To find out if you're eligible to claim CAA, you can contact the Veterans Agency helpline between 8.15am to 5.15pm Mon to Thurs, and 8.15am to 4.30pm on Fri:  
Telephone: **0800 169 22 77**  
or visit: [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)

## **Direct payments**

If you and / or the person you care for have been assessed by Social Services as needing care and support services, you may want to choose direct

payments so you can buy in and arrange help yourself, instead of receiving it directly from Social Services.

For further information ring

Customer Services on  
or KCIL

**020 8547 6008**  
**020 8255 2448**

## **Other disability benefits and allowances**

### **Equipment for independent living**

You may be entitled to help towards the cost of equipment to enable you to live independently in your own home, or towards the cost of getting standard home equipment adapted so that you can use it. For more information, please see Back Care and Equipment, Section 18.

### **Health equipment, prescriptions and hospital travel**

You may be entitled to help towards health costs such as NHS prescriptions, dental care, hospital travel costs, plus equipment such as wheelchairs and hearing aids.

For information telephone the  
NHS Patient Services helpline:

**0845 850 1166**

### **Value Added Tax (VAT) relief on equipment and services**

Some goods may qualify for VAT 'relief' if the item has been designed or adapted, solely for a disabled person's use, such as some medical appliances, adjustable beds and hoists and some adapted vehicles.

Services that may qualify for relief include installation of equipment, adaptation of equipment and certain building alterations.

## **Independent Living Fund (ILF)**

Payments awarded from the ILF help to support severely disabled people to enable them to live independently rather than in a care home. The money goes towards personal and domestic care.

For further information ring:

Customer Services

**020 8547 6008**

or KCIL

**020 8255 2448**

## **Blind person's tax allowance**

The blind person's allowance allows you to receive an amount of income without having to pay tax. It is added to your personal tax allowance.

## **Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG)**

A DFG is a local council grant to help towards the cost of essential adaptations to your home to enable you to continue to live there.

For information contact

Environmental Health on

**020 8547 5536**

## **Energy Saving Trust**

There are many ways to reduce your energy bills. For hints and tips and advice on home energy improvement grants, contact

**0800 512 012**

## **Television license discount or exemption**

If you are registered blind with your local council, you can get a 50% discount on the cost of a TV license. People over 75 are entitled to a free TV license.

For information about both contact:

**0870 241 6468**

## **Vehicle excise duty (car tax) exemption**

You can apply for exemption from paying vehicle tax if you receive the higher rate of the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance or the War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement.

## **Disabled Students' Allowances**

Disabled Students' Allowances provide help for students in higher education who, because of their disability, have additional costs, such as specialist equipment plus non-medical personal assistance.

## **Council Tax reductions**

You may be entitled to a reduction in your Council Tax bill if your home has certain features that are essential to you living there - for example, if you have an extension for a downstairs bedroom. If it puts your property into a higher valuation banding, there may be a one-band reduction in your bill.

Contact the Council Tax office: **020 8547 5196**

## **General and income related benefits**

### **Housing Benefit & Council Tax Benefit**

These are both for people on low incomes. Housing Benefit helps with rent payments incomes and Council Tax Benefit helps with council tax bills, even if they own their own home. From April 2008 a Local Housing Allowance has been introduced for people who live in privately rented accommodation.

Contact the Housing Benefit Office: **020 8547 5198**

## **Council Tax Discounts & Exemptions**

There are a number of status discounts, reductions or exemptions from Council Tax bills (not to be confused with income-related Council Tax Benefit), for example, discounts for being a student or a single occupier, or exemptions for people who are disabled or have mental health needs.

Contact the Council Tax Office: **020 8547 5196**

## **Income Support (IS)**

If aged between 16 and 60, on a low income, not working or working on average less than 16 hours a week, you may be able to claim IS. Income Support is affected by savings.

If you have children you may be able to get Child Tax Credit. If you are sick and are not getting Statutory Sick Pay, you should ask about Employment and Support Allowance as well as IS.

If you are entitled to IS, you will automatically qualify for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit and may receive help towards health costs such as prescriptions.

For further information contact: **0800 055 6688**  
Visit: [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)

## **Working Tax Credit (WTC)**

If you are in work but on low pay, you can apply for WTC to top-up your earnings. You may get extra if someone in your household is disabled

**and / or**

## **Child Tax Credit (CTC)**

CTC is an allowance for parents and carers of children or young people who are still in full-time education. You may get extra if you care for a disabled child.

For both Working and Child Tax Credits, contact the

Tax Credit Helpline:

**0845 300 3900**

or visit:

[www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)

## **Child Benefit (CB)**

CB is paid to the person responsible for a child, regardless of income, National Insurance Contributions or savings. CB is paid for each child under age 16 and may be paid for children between 16 and 19 continuing in full-time further education. However, CB can **not** be paid where the child is in higher education, for example studying for a degree.

CB for the eldest child is £20.00 a week and £13.20 for any other children.

For advice and information on how to claim, contact:

Telephone helpline:

**0845 302 1444**

or visit:

[www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)

## **Carers' Allowance (CA)**

If you are caring for someone who is disabled, you may be able to receive CA. You do not have to be related to, or live with, the person you care for.

You can claim CA if you are aged 16 or over and spend at least 35 hours a week caring for a person getting Attendance or Disability Living Allowance (middle or high rate for personal care), or Constant Attendance Allowance (at or over the normal maximum rate with Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit, or basic rate with a War Disablement Pension).

You can **not** claim CA if you are in full-time education with 21 hours or more a week of supervised study or earn more than £100 a week after certain deductions have been made (such as Income Tax).

The weekly rate is **£55.55**, but is reduced by the amount of certain other benefits, including State Pension, that you receive. If you receive certain other benefits at £55.55 or more a week, CA cannot be paid to you as well.

If you start to get CA, or if you have an underlying entitlement, it might increase the amount of other benefits you're entitled to, such as Income Support, Pension Credit, Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit, Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit.

**Important** – Claiming CA may impact on extra allowances the person being cared for may be entitled to. Take advice before you claim.

**If advised to, claim straight away - if you delay you may lose benefit.**

## **Underlying entitlement to Carers' Allowance**

Underlying entitlement means you are entitled to Carers' Allowance, but because of another benefit, we cannot actually pay you any money.

If you are paid benefits such as State Retirement Pension, Severe Disablement Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance, and many more, it could affect whether or not we are able to pay you Carers' Allowance. If you are being paid one of these benefits at an amount that is more than Carers' Allowance, then Carers Allowance cannot be paid.

However, although you cannot be paid Carers' Allowance, by being entitled to it, you may be able to receive a Carer Premium depending on which other benefits you are entitled to, or in the case of Pension Credit, your financial circumstances.

Contact Carers' Allowance Unit on:

Telephone:

**01253 85 61 23**

Or claim on line at :

[www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)

## **State Pension**

For people who have reached State Pension Age (currently 60 for women and 65 for men) and who meet the qualifying conditions.

Contact the Pension Service on:

**0845 60 60 265**

## **Pension Credit (PC)**

PC is an income related benefit for people aged 60 or over. There is no set limit to the amount of savings and investments you can have for PC.

PC contributes to a guaranteed income of at least **£137.35** a week if you are single or **£209.70** a week if you have a partner.

If you are over 65 and have a partner who could be under 60, and have modest savings, you may get extra money, even if your income is up to £188 a week or £277 if you have a partner.

Contact Pension Credit on: **0800 99 1234**

### **Housing Renovation, Repairs, and Adaptation Grants**

These grants are for private tenants and owner-occupiers to help with the cost of renovation and repairs of their home or to provide adaptations to the homes of people with disabilities.

Contact Environmental Health on: **020 8547 5536**

## **Other help and advice lines**

### **Help with health costs**

People on a low income may be able to get help with NHS costs such as travel to hospital, prescription charges, optical and dental costs, etc.

Contact NHS Direct for advice/a claim pack: **0845 4647**

### **Benefit Enquiry Line** **0800 88 22 00**

For information and advice over the phone about all benefits relating to disabilities and caring.

**Kingston Information Partnership**                      **0845 60 60 265**

For advice and information on all benefits and allowances for anyone aged 60 years or over, and people under 60 who are referred by social services.

The team can visit you in your own home at a time to suit you, or you can visit one of our information points around the borough. Contact them for more information or to arrange an appointment to assist you to fill in forms.

**Age Concern Kingston**                      **020 8942 8256**

For benefits advice for any older people who uses Age Concern Kingston services or who are frail or disabled.

**Citizens Advice Bureau**                      **0870 126 4019**

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

For general information about benefits and allowances.

Because the service provides advice and information on a range of subjects, the offices are very busy. We suggest you contact your local CAB office using this number and book an appointment.

**Money Made Clear** [www.moneymadeclear.fsa.gov.uk](http://www.moneymadeclear.fsa.gov.uk)

Money Made Clear from the Financial Service Authority cuts out the jargon and give you just the facts about financial products and services, helping you to make an informed decision. It includes advice and hints and tips about making the most of your money and keeping outgoings as low as possible.