

## Attendance Allowance

### What you'll get

Attendance Allowance is paid weekly at 2 different rates - the one you get depends on the level of help you need.

### Attendance Allowance rates

Rate	Level of help you need
Lower rate - £55.10	Frequent help or constant supervision during the day, or supervision at night
Higher rate - £82.30	Help or supervision throughout both day and night, or you're terminally ill

You could get extra Pension Credit, Housing Benefit or Council Tax Reduction if you get Attendance Allowance - check with the helpline or office dealing with your benefit.

### Attendance Allowance helpline

Telephone: 0345 605 6055  
Text phone: 0345 604 5312  
Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm

### Pension Credit

Pension Credit is an income-related benefit made up of 2 parts - Guarantee Credit and Savings Credit.

Guarantee Credit tops up your weekly income if it's below £151.20 (for single people) or £230.85 (for couples).

Savings Credit is an extra payment for people who saved some money towards their retirement, e.g. a pension.

You may not be eligible for savings credit if you reach State Pension age on or after 6 April 2016.

You don't pay tax on Pension Credit.

### Pension Service helpline

Telephone: 0345 606 0265  
Text phone: 0800 169 0133  
Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

## Council tax benefits

Some people, including those classed as severely mentally impaired, can be completely disregarded for council tax purposes. This means they do not have to pay council tax, or they may pay a reduced rate. This applies to anyone who meets all of the following criteria:

- has a severe impairment of intelligence and social functioning which appears to be permanent
- has a certificate confirming this impairment from a registered medical practitioner, usually the person's GP or consultant
- is entitled to certain disability benefits - the most common qualifying benefits are Attendance allowance (lower or higher rate), Disability living allowance (higher or middle rate care components) and the new Personal independence payment (lower or higher rate of the daily living component).

Many people with dementia meet all three criteria, so are disregarded under the severe mental impairment rules.

### **Living alone or with others who have dementia**

If all the adults living at a property meet these three severe mental impairment criteria, that property is exempt. This means that no council tax needs to be paid on it.

- **Example** - Nancy had been claiming the single person's discount on her council tax bill because she lived alone. After her diagnosis of vascular dementia she successfully claimed Attendance allowance. Her GP then signed her form under the *severe* mental impairment rules and her house is now exempt. She pays no council tax.

However, if other people who are not severely mentally impaired also live at the property, payment is required. The amount depends on their circumstances.

- **Example** - Tony and Gwen are married. Tony meets the 'severely mentally impaired' criteria as set out above, and is therefore disregarded. That means Gwen is treated as living alone, *even* though she isn't. They will get the 25% 'living alone' discount.

### **Living with a carer**

A spouse or partner cannot be classed as a carer for council tax purposes. Consequently, if someone lives with and cares for a partner who meets the severe mental impairment criteria (and no one else lives in the property), the spouse or partner will be charged council tax as if they lived alone - as in the example of Tony and Gwen shown *above*. (This is because the person with severe mental impairment is disregarded for council tax purposes.) The spouse or partner will receive a 25 per cent reduction under the single person's discount.

Carers can be disregarded for council tax purposes if they fall into one of two groups. The first group of carers who are disregarded for council tax purposes must meet all the following criteria:

- care for at least 35 hours a week
- live in the same property as the person they care for
- not be the partner of the person they care for
- not be the parent of the person they care for, if the person cared for is aged under 18.

In addition, the person being cared for must be entitled to one of the following benefits: Disability living allowance (highest rate of the care component), Personal independence payment (either rate of the daily living component), Attendance allowance (higher rate) or Constant attendance allowance. The person being cared for may fulfill all of the severe mental impairment criteria, but this is not essential for the carer to claim.

The second group of carers who are disregarded for council tax purposes must meet all the following criteria:

- provide care or support on behalf of a local authority, government department or charity
- provide care through an introduction by a charity, where the person being cared for is the carer's employer
- employed to care for the person for at least 24 hours a week
- paid no more than £44 per week
- resident where the care is given.

Someone who falls into either of these carer groups is disregarded for council tax purposes. They will pay a reduced council tax bill (it is not the case that they don't pay at all, such as in the previous section).

- **Example** - Peter has Alzheimer's disease and is disregarded for council tax purposes under the severe mental impairment rules. He lives in a house with Jo, his daughter. Jo is also disregarded for council tax purposes because she is recognised by the local authority as his carer and meets the criteria (first group of carers described above). Therefore, because both Peter and Jo are disregarded, but Jo is a carer (not mentally impaired) they are eligible for a reduced council tax bill. This property is being treated as empty (see below) under council tax rules.

## Contact council tax

### (Newcastle city council)

On 0191 278 7878 (Monday - Thursday 8am - 6pm and Friday 8am - 4.30pm)

## Carer's assessment

You are entitled to a carer's assessment from the council if you provide necessary unpaid care to someone aged 18 or over who lives in Newcastle. The assessment is an opportunity for you to explain what your caring role is and what impact this has on you. From April 2015, if we decide that your needs meet the eligibility threshold you will be entitled to support from the council.

If we assess the person you care for, we will usually assess your needs as a carer, as part of a combined assessment with the person you care for. You can also approach us and ask for a separate assessment - this is normally for circumstances where the person you care for does not want an assessment; in most cases though we have found that a combined assessment works well.

The Carer's Assessment focuses on your needs and covers a number of areas such as:

- the impact caring has on you
- whether you are able to do the things you want to or have to do in an average day
- what you would do in an emergency
- whether you feel you are able to continue in your continue role, and what support you might need to do so. There is no difference to the kinds or amount of support we offer to carers with eligible needs following a combined assessment or a separate assessment.

### Eligibility for Support

The carer's assessment will apply the national eligibility test set out by the government, as follows

- The carer's physical or mental health is, or is at risk of deteriorating;
- The carer is unable to achieve any of the following outcomes-
- To carry out some or all of the basic household activities in the carer's home; (whether or not this is also the home of the adult needing care). This would include household activities a carer carries out as a part of normal life such as preparing meals, and cleaning and maintenance of their home;
- To carry out any caring responsibilities the carer has for a child; To provide carer to other persons for whom the carer provides care;

- To maintain family or other significant personal relationships;
- To engage in work, training, education or volunteering;
- To make use of necessary facilities or services in the local community; or
- To engage in recreational activities
- To ask for a Carers Assessment, call the Community Health and Social Care Direct Team on 0191 2788377

You as a carer may be entitled to Carers support allocation, this is a non-means tested and not classed as income by DWP payment to support you in your role as a carer and to help you carry on looking after the person you care for and also improve your quality of life

Carers support Allocation direct payment can be used for many things which may improve your quality of life and allow you to continue looking after the person you care for.

The only things you are not allowed to use your direct payment for are:

- Buying personal care for the person you look after if they don't want it
- Buying things that health services should provide( like wheelchairs, medicines or pads for people who are incontinent)
- Buying thing that the council provides directly - like resource centre stays
- Paying for regular household expenses that everyone has (things like gas, electricity or food shopping)
- Giving cash to other people for doing things for you ( but its ok to buy things with cash as long as you keep the receipts and it has been agreed with the social worker)
- Buying alcohol cigarettes or using it for gambling
- Anything else that is against the law

Some of the things people have used payment for are:

- Driving lessons
- Gardening
- Domestic support for you
- Pieces of equipment ( new washing machine)
- Non health therapies that will enhance your well being
- Equipment to enable you to pursue an activity or hobby
- Payment for a short course
- Payment for an additional day at day centre (if the person you are looking after agrees to it)
- Payment for a week away for the cared for person to give you a total break ( what could be considered short breaks or respite)
- Part or full payment for you and the person you look after to go away for a day or longer.

Once a year your allocation will be reviewed. To ensure everything is working well and you are using allocation as agreed.

## Useful contacts

**Home Instead Senior Care Newcastle:** It can be overwhelming, wondering where to start when first considering care for a loved one. We are here to help; here to provide the support needed for loved ones to stay safe at home without losing any personal freedom - leaving family members happy and confident that their loved ones are enjoying the highest standards of care at all times, if you or a family member require help at home call us on

**0191 2135505** alternatively you can find further information at

<http://www.homeinstead.co.uk/newcastle>

- **Welfare rights** advice on benefits phone: 0191 2772627 - available Monday to Friday 9.30am -12 noon.
- **Welfare rights** advice on debt, phone: 0191 2771050 - available Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 9.30am - 11.30am.
- **Carers UK** gives carers expert advice, information and support. Phone: 0808 808 7777.
- **Carers Direct (NHS)** can provide advice if you need help with your caring role and want to talk to someone about what options are available to you. Phone: 0300 123 1053.
- **Social Care Direct Team** on 0191 2788377
- **Newcastle council tax dept.** On 0191 278 7878 (Monday - Thursday 8am - 6pm and Friday 8am - 4.30pm); your contact department for phoning us is "council: tax"
- **(Northumberland council)**
- 0345 600 6400 (Monday- Fri 9am-5pm)
- **Attendance Allowance helpline**  
Telephone: 0345 605 6055  
Text phone: 0345 604 5312  
Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm
- **Pension Service helpline**  
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