It’s important to remember if you are thinking about claiming benefits, it is not the condition name that will allow you to qualify for the benefit, but rather how your condition affects you.

There are a few benefits that you can consider, all individually listed throughout this document.

Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page Number</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2-5</td>
<td>Personal Independence Payment (PIP) formally Disability Living Allowance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-7</td>
<td>Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) formally Incapacity Benefit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Carer’s Allowance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Useful Links</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
formally Disability Living Allowance (DLA)

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is being phased in to replace the Disability Living Allowance benefit. This started in April 2003.

The time scale that was set by the government was to transfer all existing claimants to PIP by 2018, however this time scale has had to be extended due to a number of issues including the change of assessing companies. Any new applicant over the age of 16 would have to apply for PIP; no applications for DLA will be accepted.

If you already claim Disability Living Allowance then you will be one of the last to be asked to claim for PIP.

The criterion for new claims of PIP is:

- Aged between 16 - 64yrs
- Permanent resident in the UK for at least 2 - 3yrs, Ireland, Isle of Man or the Channel Islands
- Be in Great Britain when the claim is made unless there is a special circumstance like you or your family are members of the Armed Forces
- Not be subject to immigration control unless you’re a sponsored immigrant
- Have a long term health condition or disability and have difficulties with activities relating to daily living and / or mobility

PIP helps with some of the extra costs that are caused by having a long term health condition or disability.

The rate depends on how your condition affects you and not the condition itself. The rates are between £21.55 and £138.05 per week tax free, you can claim whether you are in or out of work and its not means tested.

You will have to undergo an assessment to work out which level of help you are entitled too. The rate will be continually assessed to ensure you are receiving the correct amount. If your condition/s worsens or get better, you must inform DWP and may face reassessment.

Your long term health condition or disability

You must have a long term health condition or disability and have difficulties with everyday living and / or mobility activities.
You must have had these problems for at least 3 months and expect them to last longer than 9 months.
This benefit is made up of 2 parts these are daily living difficulties and / mobility difficulties examples of these are:

**Mobility difficulties**
- You need help to get around
- You need help to get out
- You need to use an aid to help you get around
- You have limited movement

**Daily living difficulties**
- Engaging with other people
- Managing money / budgeting
- Managing daily medications / treatments and appointments
- Reading, understanding and communication
- Getting dressed and undressed
- Preparing and eating food
- Getting washed / bathed
- Using the toilet

**The Assessments**

Your benefit claim will be assessed by an independent health professional (i.e. GP), they will work with the Department Working Pensions (DWP) to work out what level of help you need based on your answers. They are now also conducting face to face interviews with almost every claimant old and new. You will receive a letter which will explain where you need to go to get to the nearest assessment centre. If you cannot get to the assessment centre you can request a home visit but you will need a letter from your GP or Consultant to state that you require a home visit and the reason why. You will be advised to take any of the following to back up your claim:
- Letter supporting your claim written by your GP, Consultant or specialist
- Any hospital letters / discharge summaries if you have spent time in hospital.
- Any medical notes (if you have requested them from your Hospital)
WE ADVISE THAT YOU TAKE EVERYTHING YOU POSSIBLY HAVE TO SUPPORT YOUR CLAIM AND REMEMBER THAT THEY ARE ASSESSING YOU FROM THE MOMENT YOU WALK IN THE DOOR OF THE CENTRE. THEY WILL ALSO NOT MAKE IT OBVIOUS THAT THEY ARE ASSESSING CERTAIN THINGS, SO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS VERY CAREFULLY. WE ALSO STRONGLY ADVISE YOU TAKE AN ADVOCATE, CARER OR APPROPRIATE REPRESENTATIVE WITH YOU. YOU CAN ALSO RECORD THE INTERVIEW ON A DICTAPHONE OR SIMILAR DEVICE BUT YOU MUST MAKE IT CLEAR AT THE BEGINNING THAT IS WHAT YOU ARE DOING, AND ENSURE YOU HAVE CONTACTED THE CENTRE PRIOR TO THE ASSESSMENT TO STATE YOU WISH TO HAVE IT RECORDED. IF YOU NEED TO APPEAL YOU MAY USE THE RECORDING AS EVIDENCE. YOU MAY BE ASKED TO SIGN A DECLARATION TO SAY WHAT THE PURPOSE OF THE RECORDING IS AND THAT IT WILL BE USED APPROPRIATELY. THEY ALSO HAVE A RIGHT TO REQUEST A COPY OF THE RECORDING.

A decision will then be made as to whether you qualify for the benefit and at what rate you will be put on. Unfortunately, it's a common issue that new claimants find themselves being turned down on their first attempt, however we strongly advise that you do not give up and you appeal the decision.

**Appeals**

To appeal the decision you can do the following:

- Discuss the decision with the DWP
- Make a formal written request to have the decision looked at again, this is known as 'mandatory reconsideration'

We however highly recommend that if you would like to appeal the decision that you make an appointment with your local Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB), they then can help you to write an appeal letter (they are very professional and have a high success rate). Find your local Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) here [http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/index/getadvice.htm](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/index/getadvice.htm) (scroll down to the very bottom of the page).
To make a new claim call the number below.
Please note that this is a free call service unless you call from a mobile, in which case you will need to check with your provider for costs.

**DWP - Personal Independence Payment claims**
Telephone: 0800 917 2222
Textphone: 0800 917 7777
Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

**Important notice: your call may be recorded**
**Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)**

**Formally known as Incapacity Benefit**

ESA stands for Employment and Support Allowance. It is for people who are either too ill / disabled to work or require personalised support to help getting and staying in employment. When you apply for ESA you will be placed in what is called the assessment phase. This means you will be sent a form called ESA50 limited capability to work questionnaire and following that you may also be called to attend a medical assessment. At the end of the assessment phase, providing you have filled the criteria and the assessors agree you are not fit for work at the present time you will be put into one of two groups:

- Work related activity group
- Support group

The work related activity group is a group for people who are considered not fit for work at the present time but the Department Work and Pensions (DWP) think that you could move into work with adequate support. Being in this group involves you attending work focused interviews, which include looking at how you could move into employment and what help and support you would need to progress into employment. An action plan will be created for you by a personal adviser at the Job Centre and you may be required to attend local courses to help the progression into employment. It is very important that you do attend these interviews otherwise your money will be stopped, unless it is due to illness or exceptional circumstances. If you need to attend a medical appointment on the day you are due for a meeting then your money may be reduced. You should try to book any medical appointments outside of the times of these sessions. If you are ill or absolutely need to attend an appointment on the same day as your session, you must inform DWP and send in evidence. In these circumstances DWP “MAY” decide not to reduce your benefit.

The support group is a group for people who are considered not able to work or even attend interviews due to their illness or disability. In this group you will not have to attend any meetings at the Job Centre.

The ESA50 form is a questionnaire to try and find out more about your illness or disability and how it affects you on a day to day basis. Each answer is worth points which will eventually be used by the DWP to see if you qualify for the benefit and to which group you will be put in.
The advice we would like to give is read the question carefully and think carefully about your answers before writing them. We also highly recommend that you send as much evidence with the questionnaire as you can include, hospital letters and medical notes etc the more evidence to help your case the better.
To apply please click this link https://www.gov.uk/employment-support-allowance/how-to-claim
**Carers Allowance**

Carers Allowance is a benefit for those who are having to care and look after somebody, for at least 35 hours per week, you also must be over 16. Carer's allowance is a taxable benefit and may affect any other benefits you are claiming.

You can apply for Carers Allowance if the person you are caring for receives at least one of the benefits listed below:

- Personal Independence Payment (PIP) daily living component
- Disability Living Allowance (DLA) the middle or high care rate
- Attendance Allowance
- Armed Forces Independence Payment (AFIP)
- Constant Attendance Allowance at or above the normal minimum rate with an Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit, or basic (full day) rate with a War Disablement Pension

To apply you can do it online, requesting a form to post or over the telephone. You will be asked to provide the following details:

- Your national insurance number
- The date of birth and address of the person you are caring for
- Your bank or building society details
- If you’re in education or studying a course you will be asked to provide details of where you are studying, course you are studying and start / finish dates
- If you are in employment you will be asked for your employment details including place name, how many hours you work, your pay rate and start date.

To apply online or request a form this is the website address

[https://www.gov.uk/carers-allowance/how-to-claim](https://www.gov.uk/carers-allowance/how-to-claim)

If you are in Northern Ireland then the website link is

[http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/carers-allowance-how-to-claim](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/carers-allowance-how-to-claim)
Useful links

Government website link to benefit information
https://www.gov.uk/browse/benefits

Disability rights
http://www.disabilityrightsuk.org /

Turn2us has lots of benefit information and other information about grants you may be able to claim
http://www.turn2us.org.uk/

Household Quotes Benefits Guide
http://householdquotes.co.uk/uk-benefits-guide/

Citizen’s Advice Bureau England
http://www.adviceguide.org.uk/england/benefits_e.htm

Citizen’s Advice Bureau Northern Ireland
http://www.adviceguide.org.uk/nireland/benefits_ni.htm

Citizen’s Advice Bureau Scotland
http://www.adviceguide.org.uk/scotland/benefits_s.htm

Citizen’s Advice Bureau Wales
http://www.adviceguide.org.uk/wales/benefits_w.htm

Advice now website has lots of information about claiming benefits, benefit appeals and discrimination laws
http://www.advicenow.org.uk/search.html?q=Sickness+and+disability+bene fits

Disability & Benefits Support - Don’t Go Alone. (Formerly Support & Escort) Facebook group
https://www.facebook.com/groups/dabsdga/

The ESA & DLA Survival Guide Facebook group
https://www.facebook.com/groups/ESAsurvivalguide/

Fightback is a Facebook support group for benefits advice and support