

A RISKY BUSINESS!!



THE DANGERS INVOLVED IN TRYING TO INCREASE YOUR ATTENDANCE ALLOWANCE

This leaflet is for people who claim Attendance Allowance. If you receive DLA and are aged over pension age, please see our leaflet *Pb29.65+*.

INCREASING ATTENDANCE ALLOWANCE

This leaflet provides guidance for people who are considering asking the DWP for a higher level of Attendance Allowance because they think their care needs have increased.

If you are one of these people, you should read all of this leaflet carefully before you contact the DWP.

CAN MY EXISTING ATTENDANCE ALLOWANCE AWARD BE INCREASED?

If you already receive Attendance Allowance but think that your condition has got worse since it was awarded, you can ask for your award to be increased (unless, of course, you already get the highest rate).

The lower rate is usually for people who have care needs during the day; the higher rate is for both day and night, so you must show that you have substantial care needs overnight to get the higher rate.

To ask for a review you can telephone or write to the Disability & Carers Service of the DWP and you will then be sent a new form to complete.

IS THERE ANY RISK INVOLVED?

Once you have asked for your benefit to be reconsidered, the DWP have the right to change the current rate, which means it can be taken away as well as increased.

WHAT IF MY PRESENT AWARD IS FOR LIFE?

You may feel that you are quite safe because you were given the benefit “for life” but this is not true – it was only given for life on the basis that your needs would remain the same.

If the DWP thinks there has been a relevant change, the benefit can still be removed altogether.

Even if you think your condition has not improved, the DWP may take a different view.

HOW MUCH COULD I LOSE?

This depends on your personal circumstances. Some people risk losing a great deal. This is because other benefits may depend on entitlement to Attendance Allowance, so if that is lost you could have less Pension Credit and / or less help with your rent or Council Tax, as well as no Attendance Allowance.

For example, income-related benefits such as Pension Credit and Housing Benefit are increased for some claimants by adding on “additions” (also known as ‘premiums’). These are often triggered by Attendance Allowance:-

Disabled Person:

Any level of Attendance Allowance triggers off a Severe Disability Addition (for some claimants) on their *Pension Credit, Housing Benefit, or Council Tax Reduction*.

Carer:

Carers Allowance can be claimed if looking after someone on Attendance Allowance, as can a Carers Addition on the carer’s own income-related benefits.

A
Cautionary
Tale:

Violet gets Attendance Allowance at the lower rate. Her daughter, Georgina, gets Carer's Allowance and Income Support.

Violet applies for the higher rate – possible gain is £27.20 per week [at 2016/17 rates].

Result: Violet loses her current rate of Attendance Allowance.

This then means Georgina can no longer get Carers Allowance or Income Support as a carer. She will have to look for a job, in the meantime she signs on to claim Jobseekers Allowance.

Their income will be reduced by over £80 per week.

Violet has to appeal the Attendance Allowance decision.

Housing Benefit can also be affected in other ways if you lose Attendance Allowance. For example if you have adult sons or daughters living at home you often get more rent rebate (Housing Benefit) or Council Tax Rebate if you also get Attendance Allowance. If you then lose your Attendance Allowance you might then have to pay more rent/Council Tax.

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

If you think your care needs have increased since you were last awarded Attendance Allowance, TAKE ADVICE BEFORE YOU DO ANYTHING. Go to your local advice agency (see page 5) first and make sure you understand exactly what is at risk for you.

Check the rules to see if you really may be entitled to an increase of Attendance Allowance – the fact that your condition is worse doesn't necessarily mean that you can get more benefit.

Talk to your doctor. The DWP may ask her/him for a report so you need to be sure you will have medical evidence to support your claim – not only the increase but what you are getting now.

If you do ask for the higher rate of Attendance Allowance, make sure you fill in the new claim form with full details of all your care needs, not just the extra help you think you need.

Ask your advice agency for help with the forms.

WHAT IF MY BENEFIT IS REDUCED?

Ask your local advice agency (see overleaf) about how to appeal against the decision. You only have one month from the date on the decision letter so don't delay!

AND FINALLY...

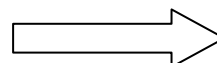
The purpose of this factsheet is not to prevent people from getting more benefit.

On the contrary, we believe you should be able to claim all the allowances you are entitled to.

So we are not saying, don't try at all.

What we are saying is:

GET ADVICE FIRST!



For further information contact any of the following agencies:

CITIZENS ADVICE

Rugby

[CAB]

1st Floor, Chestnut House

North Street

Rugby, CV21 2AQ

North Warwickshire

The Parish Rooms

Welcome Street

Atherstone, CV9 1DU

Bedworth & District

(Covers Nuneaton & Bedworth)

Old Market Tavern

25 Congreve Walk

Bedworth, CV12 8LX

(To book appt in Nuneaton

call 024 7635 1049)

Warwick District

10 Hamilton Terrace

Leamington Spa, CV32 4LY

Stratford-upon-Avon

25 Meer Street

Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 6QB

Switchboard number for ALL CAs: 0344 855 2322

For Carers Advice, Information and Support

Warwickshire Carer Wellbeing Service

9 Lawford Road, Rugby, CV21 2DZ

Tel: (024) 7610 1040

e-mail: carerssupport@carerstrusthofs.org.uk

Website: www.carerstrusthofs.org.uk

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