

Carer's Allowance after brain injury



This publication is part of Headway's *welfare benefits after brain injury* series. To browse through our publications on a range of issues relating to brain injury and download these free-of-charge, visit www.headway.org.uk/information-library.

Introduction

Carer's Allowance is a benefit for people who are carers.

A carer is anyone who looks after a family member, partner or friend who needs help because of an illness or disability, and is not paid for doing so.

After a brain injury, it is often spouses/partners and other family members who take on caring roles to help the brain injury survivor with activities such as washing or dressing themselves, staying safe, managing day-to-day activities and feeling emotionally supported.

This publication has been written to offer information and guidance on the welfare benefit Carer's Allowance (CA). For general guidance and support on caring after brain injury, see our publication [Caring for someone with a brain injury](#).

Rules for welfare benefits change regularly. You should always check the latest guidance at www.gov.uk/browse/benefits.

What is CA?

Carer's Allowance (CA) is a benefit for people who are providing care for at least 35 hours a week. 'Care' includes helping someone with activities of daily living such as washing and cooking, helping with tasks such as shopping, or supervising the person to stay safe.

The carer applying for CA does not need to be living with or related to the person they care for (i.e. the brain injury survivor).

CA can only be received by one carer per person. Therefore, if someone else is also caring for the same person, only one can claim CA.

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To be eligible, the carer should be 16 years old or over, not in full-time education or studying for more than 21 hours a week. Someone also cannot get CA if their earnings after some expenses are more than £128 a week - this is known as the 'earnings limit'.

The person receiving care (i.e. the brain injury survivor) should already be receiving either Personal Independence Payment, Disability Living Allowance (middle or highest care rate) or Attendance Allowance for the carer to be eligible for CA.

It is important to note that if you start receiving CA, certain elements of the survivor's benefits may be affected, so it is worth seeking specialist advice before making an application.

Find out more about the eligibility criteria for CA from the UK government website at www.gov.uk/carers-allowance/eligibility.

Applying for CA

You can apply for CA by completing a form online at www.gov.uk/carers-allowance/how-to-claim.

You can also request the form from the Carer's Allowance Unit and apply by post. Details for the Carer's Allowance Unit are available at the end of this publication.

You cannot make a claim for CA by phone. However, the Carer's Allowance Unit can help over the phone with making a claim.

Receiving CA

At the time of writing, CA is paid at a rate of £76.75 per week. It is usually paid every four weeks.

If the survivor goes into hospital for longer than four weeks, your payment of

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CA may stop depending on how their own benefits are affected.

If you yourself go into hospital, you will continue to receive CA for up to 12 weeks, providing you were still caring for the survivor for 35 hours, for at least 14 of the past 26 weeks.

You will continue to receive CA if you take a break from caring for up to four weeks every 26 weeks, providing you were still caring for the survivor for 35 hours, for 22 of the 26 weeks.

If it is decided that you are not eligible for CA and you disagree with this, you can ask for a mandatory reconsideration. Further guidance on this is available in our publication [Appealing a welfare benefits decision](#).

Useful contacts

- **Carers Allowance Unit**

Telephone: 0800 731 0297

Textphone: 0800 731 0317

Relay UK (if you cannot hear or speak on the phone): 18001 then 0800 731 0297 Address: Mail Handling Site A, Wolverhampton, WV98 2AB

www.gov.uk

- **Citizens Advice**

Adviceline (England): 0800 144 8848

Advicelink (Wales): 0800 702 2020 Relay UK - if you can't hear or speak on the phone, you can type what you want to say: 18001 then 0800 144 8884

www.citizensadvice.org.uk

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