

Applying for Carer's Allowance for the first time? We share our tips



Saving the UK an estimated £132 billion per year, unpaid carers make an immense contribution to society. However, many people don't realise that they could receive financial support in the form of Carer's Allowance.

If you are looking after someone for 35 hours a week or more, you may be eligible to receive a weekly allowance of £67.25 per week. For more details on the eligibility criteria and claims process, download our factsheet [here](#).

In light of COVID-19, the eligibility criteria have been temporarily expanded to include carers providing emotional support over the phone or online. For more details on these recent changes, visit our website [here](#).



Here are some of the key tips we share with carers through our Helpline, who are applying for Carer's Allowance for the first time.

TIP 1: Get a benefits check

Having a benefits check is a useful way to find out if you are getting all the help that you are entitled to. You may find that you are entitled to more financial support than you thought, and it may save you time by preventing you from applying for the wrong benefits.

Before you arrange one, it is a good idea to have information to hand about your existing income, such as benefits, savings, earnings, pension and childcare payments (and any partner's). You can contact [your local Citizens Advice](#) to arrange one, or contact the benefits charity, [Turn2us](#). They also have a benefit calculator [here](#).

If you are unsure if you are eligible for Carer's Allowance, ask for some advice before you start so that you're absolutely clear of the information you need to provide in your application.

TIP 2: Claim online; it's faster and simpler

You have the option of downloading the form online, printing it off, filling it in by hand and sending it off via post. However, a more convenient and faster way might be to complete the form online.

Before filling in the personal details of the form, you will be asked a series of questions to find out if you meet the basic eligibility criteria, which can ultimately save you time: <https://www.gov.uk/carers-allowance/how-to-claim>

TIP 3: Have your personal information handy

1. Before filling in your form, be ready to reference your: full contact details, National Insurance number (you may need any partner's too), bank or building society details, employment details and the latest payslip if you are working, P45 if you have recently finished work, and course details if you are studying.
2. You will also need the date of birth and address of the person you care for, their National Insurance number if they are 16 or over, or their Disability Living Allowance reference number if they are under 16.

3. If you need to send any supporting information with your application (ie, payslips or accounts), try to do this at the same time as you submit your application, or as soon as possible.
4. If it's not possible to send these, try to explain why and include as much information as possible in the 'More Information' section of the application. This can include self-employed gross income, expenses and dates.

TIP 4: Keep a copy of your form and any supporting documents.

- If you are applying online, at one stage in the process, you can select the option to receive an email confirmation of your application being received. This will be useful as a point of reference if you need to get in touch at a later date.
- If you are sending a paper application form, we recommend that you keep a copy of it in case you need to refer to details at a later date. Should the original get lost in the post, you can also send it out again without having to fill in another form.
- If you are sending a payslip, P45 or accounts with your application, make sure you have copies of these too.

TIP 5: Check if your claim can be backdated.

If you have been providing care for three months prior to submitting your claim, you can get your claim backdated by up to three months (provided you met the eligibility criteria in this period). The person you care for will need to have been receiving a qualifying disability benefit during this period too.

TIP 6: Stuck? Call the Carer's Allowance Unit.

- If you encounter any problems with the application itself and have any technical difficulties, or you would prefer to apply using an alternative format, including over the phone, you could call the Carer's Allowance Unit on **0800 731 0297**, Monday to Friday, 10am to 2pm.

- Our understanding is that their phone lines are currently very busy, so you may need to persevere. If it's not possible to call this number, you can contact them by textphone: 0800 731 0317 or [Relay UK](#) (if you cannot hear or speak on the phone): 18001 then 0800 731 0297.
- It may help to make a note of the date and time you called the Carer's Allowance Unit, in case you need it at a later date and especially if you make a claim by this route.

TIP 7: Remember when you need to provide updates.

If you are awarded Carer's Allowance, you should be given information of when you need to report a change in your circumstances to the Carer's Allowance Unit.

Examples of this can be if your earnings change, your pattern of work changes or if you take a break in caring. If your circumstances (including earnings) do change, you must notify the Carer's Allowance Unit directly as soon as possible (even if you have informed another benefits department). This is to avoid a situation where you could be overpaid a benefit or experience administrative problems.

▶▶ Note: For more information and guidance relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, see our online [coronavirus pages](#) or contact our Helpline Team by emailing advice@carersuk.org if you have any questions or concerns about Carer's Allowance.

Please note

We're often confused with the Carer's Allowance Unit of the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), who administer and pay Carer's Allowance. We can help answer questions about Carer's Allowance. However, because we are not linked to the DWP, we cannot update any details/circumstances that relate to your personal Carer's Allowance claim or access your benefit claim file to see if your benefit has been paid.



This information is designed to provide helpful guidance. It is not an authoritative statement of the law. We work to ensure that our information is accurate and up to date, but this guidance is subject to change over time. We would recommend contacting the Carers UK Helpline or visiting our website for the latest information.

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