LEAVING HOSPITAL AND RECOVERY

Benefits during a hospital stay: the 28-day rules explained

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IN BRIEF

Attendance Allowance, PIP and Disability Living Allowance carry on for the first 28 days of an NHS hospital stay and are then suspended until the person comes home. Separate stays 28 days or less apart are added together. Carer's Allowance usually stops when the cared-for person's disability benefit stops, while the State Pension is not affected. Telling DWP about both the admission and the discharge date avoids overpayments and gets payments restarted quickly.



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When someone goes into hospital, money is rarely the first worry. But some benefits change after a few weeks, and telling the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) at the right moments avoids overpayments that have to be paid back. This guide covers England; in Scotland, most disability and carer benefits are now paid by Social Security Scotland under its own rules.

At a glance

Benefit	During an NHS hospital stay	Who to tell
Attendance Allowance	Paid for the first 28 days, then suspended until discharge	Attendance Allowance helpline
PIP (both parts)	Paid for the first 28 days, then suspended until discharge	PIP enquiry line
Disability Living Allowance (adults)	Care and mobility both paid for 28 days, then suspended	DLA helpline
Carer's Allowance	Usually stops when the cared-for person's benefit stops	Carer's Allowance Unit
State Pension	Not affected	No need, unless Pension Credit is paid too
Pension Credit	Continues; extra amounts linked to other benefits can change	Pension Service
Housing Benefit	Usually continues for up to 52 weeks if the person means to return home	The council

How the 28 days are counted

- **The day of admission and the day of discharge do not count.** The count starts the day after the person goes in.
- **Stays 28 days or less apart are added together.** If someone comes home and goes back in within 28 days, the days from both stays count towards the same 28.

- **Some care home days count too** (see the questions below on respite). For PIP, a publicly funded care home stops only the daily living part after 28 days; a hospital stay stops both parts.
- **Payment restarts from the day the person comes home.** If they come home for part of a day, or for weekend leave during a long stay, tell DWP: benefit can be paid for days at home.

Example: Margaret goes into hospital on 1 March and comes home on 20 March: 18 days count (2 to 19 March). She goes back in on 5 April, less than four weeks later, so the stays link. Her Attendance Allowance continues for the first 10 days of the second stay (6 to 15 April), making 28 in total, and is suspended from 16 April until the day she comes home.

Exceptions

- **Independent hospices:** if someone is terminally ill and staying in a hospice that is not an NHS hospital, their Attendance Allowance, PIP or DLA can continue once DWP has been told they are terminally ill.
- **Private patients:** the rule applies to people treated free of charge by the NHS, so someone paying privately for their hospital stay is not normally affected. Tell DWP how the stay is being paid for.
- **Children:** for PIP and DLA, the 28-day rule does not apply if the person was under 18 when the stay began.

Carer's Allowance when the person cared for is in hospital



Carer's Allowance depends on the person cared for still receiving their own disability benefit. So when their Attendance Allowance, PIP or DLA is suspended after 28 days in hospital (or sooner, if earlier stays link), the carer's Carer's

Allowance usually stops too. When the person comes home and their benefit restarts, contact the Carer's Allowance Unit to get Carer's Allowance going again.

GOV.UK says you must tell DWP if you temporarily stop caring and either of you will be in hospital, a nursing home or respite care for more than 12 weeks, or if you stop caring for more than 28 days for any other reason. Carers UK advises letting the Carer's Allowance Unit know about planned hospital stays and keeping a record of the dates.

If Carer's Allowance stops, a carer who gets the carer addition in Pension Credit keeps it for a further eight weeks.

Pension Credit, State Pension and housing help

- **State Pension** is not reduced by a hospital stay.
- **Pension Credit** usually continues, but the severe disability addition depends on the person getting Attendance Allowance, PIP daily living or a similar benefit. When that benefit is suspended, the addition can stop too (couples who both qualify have some protection). Report the stay to the Pension Service.
- **Housing Benefit** for people over State Pension age can continue for up to 52 weeks in hospital if the person intends to return home, the home is not let, and the stay is unlikely to last longer than that. Tell the council's benefits team, which also deals with Council Tax Reduction.
- **Cold Weather Payments:** GOV.UK asks people to tell the Pension Service or Jobcentre Plus about a hospital stay, as it could affect payments. Universal Credit claimants should add a note to their online journal.

How to tell DWP

Who to call	Number	Hours
Attendance Allowance helpline	0800 731 0122	Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm
PIP enquiry line	0800 121 4433	Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm
DLA helpline (born after 8 April 1948)	0800 121 4600	Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

Who to call	Number	Hours
DLA helpline (born on or before 8 April 1948)	0800 731 0122	Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm
Carer's Allowance Unit	0800 731 0297	Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm
Pension Service	0800 731 0469	Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

Calls are free. For Relay UK, dial 18001 before the number. Someone else can call on the person's behalf if the person is with them, or as their appointee or attorney.

Have ready: the person's National Insurance number, the hospital's name and address, the admission date, any earlier stays in the last few months, and (later) the discharge date.

What to say: "I'm calling to report that my mother, [name], National Insurance number [number], was admitted to [hospital] on [date]. She was also in hospital from [date] to [date]. Please note the dates on her Attendance Allowance claim, and tell me when payments will be suspended. I'll call again with her discharge date."

When the person comes home

1. **Call DWP with the discharge date,** so suspended benefits restart from that day.
2. **Report a change in needs.** If the person now needs more help, particularly at night, they may qualify for a higher rate of Attendance Allowance or PIP.
3. **Tell the Carer's Allowance Unit** that caring has restarted.
4. **Plan the support at home** before discharge. See leaving hospital: what to expect and questions to ask before hospital discharge.

Attendance Allowance and PIP continue as normal for someone cared for at home, including with live-in care after a hospital stay, and can be spent towards the cost of care.

Your hospital benefits checklist

- [ ] Admission date written down, and any stays in the last 28 days
- [ ] DWP told about the admission (each benefit separately)
- [ ] Carer's Allowance Unit told, if someone gets Carer's Allowance
- [ ] Pension Service and council told, if Pension Credit or Housing Benefit is paid
- [ ] Discharge date reported, so payments restart
- [ ] Change in care needs reported after discharge

What to do next

1. Make a note of the admission date today.
2. Call each helpline that pays the person a benefit.
3. Plan the discharge early, including care at home.
4. Report the discharge date as soon as it is confirmed.

How we can help

Day and Nightcare is a CQC-registered home care provider, rated Good. Since 2014 we have provided Discharge to Assess care, and for several years we ran Oxfordshire's Urgent Response service, so we know how much a well-planned discharge matters. Our fully managed live-in care is available anywhere in England from £1,550 a week, and we offer home care visits and waking nights across Oxfordshire, and 24-hour care with carers working in shifts anywhere in England. For a free initial assessment, call 01865 715780.

Common questions

Mum went into hospital before her Attendance Allowance claim was decided. Should we carry on?

Yes. You can claim while someone is in hospital, and give the hospital's details on the form. If the award starts while she is still an inpatient, it is usually not paid until she comes home, but having the decision in place means payment can begin from the day she leaves. If she is terminally ill and in an independent hospice, payment can continue there once DWP has been told. Ask a doctor about the SR1 form for faster claims at the end of life.

I am the carer and I need an operation. What happens to my Carer's Allowance?
It can usually continue for up to 12 weeks while you are in hospital, provided you had been caring for at least 35 hours a week in at least 14 of the last 26 weeks, and as long as the person you care for keeps getting their own disability benefit. Tell the Carer's Allowance Unit on 0800 731 0297. Arrange cover for the person you care for before you go in: their council can assess them for replacement care.

Do we have to report a short stay of only a few days?
Yes, it is safest to report every hospital admission. GOV.UK lists going into hospital as a change that must be reported for Attendance Allowance, PIP and Pension Credit, and for Disability Living Allowance any stay of more than two days. A short stay will not stop payments, but DWP needs the dates in case the person goes back in within 28 days, when the stays are added together. Keep a note of each admission and discharge date.

What happens if we forget to tell DWP about a long stay?
The benefit will probably have been overpaid, and DWP can ask for it back, for example by taking deductions from future benefit payments. GOV.UK also warns that people who do not report a change can face a penalty or be taken to court. Phone the helpline as soon as you realise, give the exact dates, and keep a note of who you spoke to and when. If a repayment is requested, ask for a plan you can afford.

Does Attendance Allowance stop if Dad goes to a care home for respite after hospital?
It depends on who pays. Days in a care home funded by the council or the NHS count towards the same 28 days as hospital days, and the two are added together if the gap between them is 28 days or less. If the family pays the full care home fee privately, Attendance Allowance continues as normal. It also continues for anyone cared for at home, including with live-in care, however the home care is funded.

Sources and further information

- legislation.gov.uk: Social Security (Attendance Allowance) Regulations 1991, regulations 6 and 8
- legislation.gov.uk: Social Security (Personal Independence Payment) Regulations 2013, Part 7
- GOV.UK: Attendance Allowance, report a change in circumstances

- GOV.UK: Carer's Allowance, if you temporarily stop providing care
- Carers UK: Carer's Allowance and breaks in care
- Citizens Advice: Attendance Allowance, change of circumstances
- GOV.UK: Disability benefits helplines
- legislation.gov.uk: Housing Benefit (State Pension Credit) Regulations 2006, regulation 7

Read next

PAYING FOR CARE AND REDUCING THE COST

Attendance Allowance: rates, who qualifies and how to claim

Attendance Allowance pays £76.70 or £114.60 a week in 2026/27 to people over State Pension age who need help with personal care or supervision. Who qualifies, how to claim step by step, example wording for the form, end-of-life claims and a letter to challenge a decision.

Read the guide →

PAYING FOR CARE AND REDUCING THE COST

Personal Independence Payment (PIP): a guide for families

PIP helps people aged 16 to State Pension age with the extra costs of a long-term condition or disability. The 2026/27 rates, how the points work, how to claim step by step, example wording for the form, end-of-life rules and PIP at State Pension age.

Read the guide →

PAYING FOR CARE AND REDUCING THE COST

Carer's Allowance: who can claim and how it affects other benefits

Carer's Allowance pays £86.45 a week in 2026/27 to people who care for someone at least 35 hours a week and earn £204 a week or less. Who qualifies, the effect on the cared-for person's benefits, Carer's Credit, underlying entitlement and how to claim step by step.

Read the guide →

All guides in the information centre Check what help you could get

Talk to our care team: 01865 715780
enquiries@dayandnightcare.co.uk · Out of hours: 07775 686272
Day and Nightcare Live In Limited, 9 Hollow Way, Cowley, Oxford OX4 2NA
CQC overall rating: Good (report published 20 April 2018)

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This PDF was made on 1 November 2026.
Information, not advice: please check anything important with the organisation named.