

— PAYING FOR CARE

Attendance Allowance Rates 2026/27: What Each Rate Means

£76.70 or £114.60 a week from April 2026: what decides the rate, how it adds £86.05 to Pension Credit, cuts London council tax and helps pay for care.

By the JNP Sidona team · 9 October 2026 · 11 min read

For the 2026/27 tax year, Attendance Allowance is £76.70 a week at the lower rate and £114.60 a week at the higher rate. The lower rate is for help or supervision during the day *or* at night; the higher rate is for help during both day and night, or for someone a doctor or nurse has said may be nearing the end of life. It is tax-free, it is not means-tested, and it can unlock extra Pension Credit and help with council tax that may be worth as much again.

KEY POINTS

- 2026/27 rates: lower £76.70 a week (£3,988.40 a year), higher £114.60 a week (£5,959.20 a year). Payments usually arrive every four weeks.
- Savings, income and the family home make no difference. The rate depends only on how much help your parent reasonably needs, whether or not anyone is giving it.
- If your parent lives alone and gets Attendance Allowance, Pension Credit can include an extra £86.05 a week for severe disability, even if they were turned down for Pension Credit before.
- Claim Attendance Allowance first, and make the Pension Credit and council tax claims while you wait for the decision, not after it. Attendance Allowance cannot be backdated, so the date you start the claim matters.
- If your parent gets Pension Credit with the £86.05 severe disability addition, get a benefits check before anyone claims Carer's Allowance, or the carer element of Universal Credit, for looking after them, because either would stop that addition. Whether the household comes out ahead depends on the carer's own benefits too.

What are the Attendance Allowance rates for 2026/27?

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) set these rates from April 2026. They stay the same until the next uprating in April 2027.

Attendance Allowance rates, 2025/26 and 2026/27

Rate	2025/26 weekly	2026/27 weekly	2026/27 every four weeks	2026/27 over a year
Lower rate	£73.90	£76.70	£306.80	£3,988.40
Higher rate	£110.40	£114.60	£458.40	£5,959.20

Weekly rates come from the DWP's published table of benefit and pension rates for 2026/27. We have worked out the four-weekly and yearly figures from the weekly rate (52 weeks). The higher rate is £37.90 a week more than the lower rate.

Age UK's factsheet notes that Attendance Allowance is usually paid four-weekly in arrears into a bank, building society or credit union account. It can be paid to an appointee or to someone with a lasting power of attorney if your parent cannot manage their own money.

Lower rate or higher rate: what is the difference?

Attendance Allowance has two rates and no mobility part. GOV.UK describes them like this:

- **Lower rate (£76.70):** frequent help or constant supervision during the day, or supervision at night.
- **Higher rate (£114.60):** help or supervision throughout both day *and* night, or a medical professional has said the person is nearing the end of life.

So the deciding question is whether your parent has needs at night as well as in the day. Age UK's factsheet sets out the tests in more detail.

What counts as daytime help

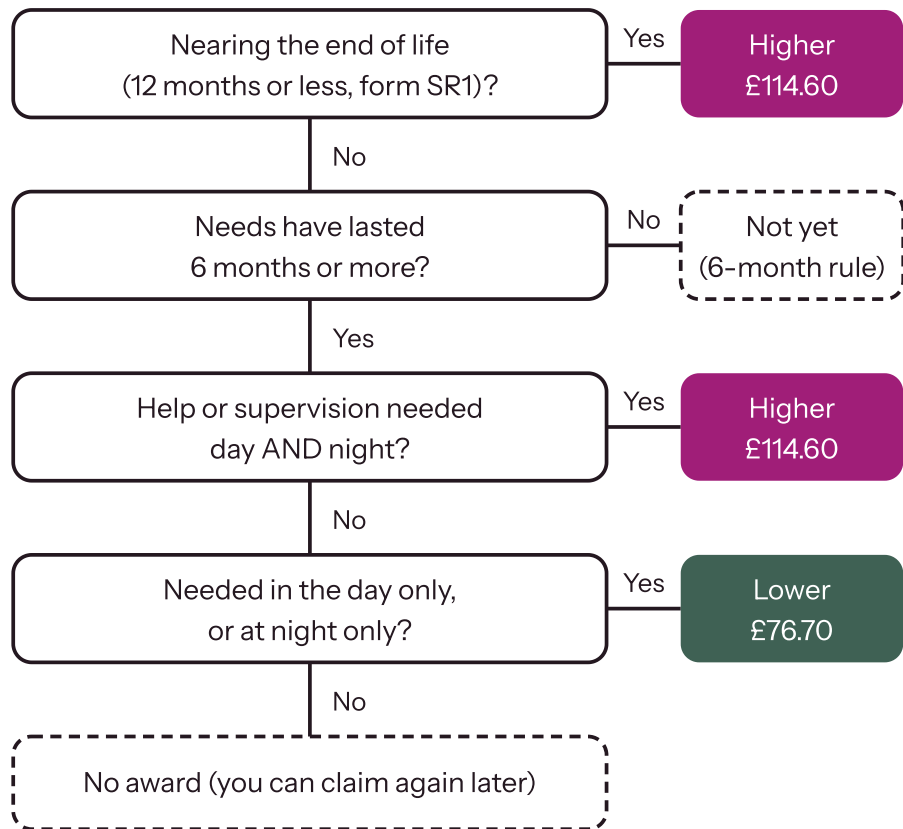
- **Frequent attention** with "bodily functions" throughout the day: eating, drinking, washing, dressing, using the toilet, getting in and out of bed, moving around the home, communicating or taking medication. Reminding and encouraging count, not just hands-on help.
- **Continual supervision** to avoid substantial danger, for example because of falls, confusion, seizures, or leaving the gas on. Age UK explains that "continual" does not mean non-stop, so breaks of an hour or so are fine.

What counts as night-time help

- **Prolonged attention** (one spell of at least 20 minutes) or **repeated attention** (two or more shorter spells), such as help to the toilet, turning in bed or settling back to sleep.
- **Someone awake to watch over them** for 20 minutes or more, or at frequent intervals (usually at least three times a night), to keep them safe from falls or wandering.

Age UK gives the example of a woman with dementia who needs a relative with her all day but sleeps through the night. She gets the lower rate, because she only needs supervision in the day.

On our reading of the rules, if she later needed someone to watch over her at night as well, she could ask the DWP to look at her award again straight away. The higher rate would then be paid once the night-time needs had lasted six months.



Weekly rates for 2026/27. Source: GOV.UK and DWP.

How the rate is decided. Needs are judged on the help your parent reasonably needs, not the help they actually get.

Who can get Attendance Allowance?

According to GOV.UK, your parent can claim if they:

- have reached State Pension age
- have a physical or mental disability or illness severe enough that they need help caring for themselves or someone to supervise them
- have needed that help for at least six months (this does not apply near the end of life)
- are in Great Britain when they claim, and have been here for at least two of the last three years, with exceptions for refugees and people with humanitarian protection
- normally live in the UK, Ireland, the Isle of Man or the Channel Islands (GOV.UK calls this being "habitually resident"), and are not subject to immigration control, unless they are a sponsored immigrant

The immigration point matters if your parent came to the UK later in life on a visa with no recourse to public funds. Age UK's factsheet lists the same conditions and says the residence rules are complex, so get specialist advice before claiming if this applies.

They do not need a carer, and they do not need to be getting any help at the moment. Age UK's factsheet is clear that entitlement depends on the help someone could reasonably do with.

Two exclusions catch families out. Your parent cannot get Attendance Allowance alongside Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment (PIP); if they already get PIP when they reach State Pension age, it can continue. And if they live in a care home that the council pays for, it usually stops (more on that below). In Scotland the equivalent is Pension Age Disability Payment.

Near the end of life? If a doctor or nurse has said your parent might have 12 months or less to live, their claim is paid at the higher rate of £114.60 automatically, with no six-month wait and no face-to-face assessment. You still need to make a claim: ask the doctor or nurse for form SR1 to send with it. Someone else can claim for them without their permission, so they do not have to discuss their prognosis.

How Attendance Allowance affects Pension Credit

This is where Attendance Allowance is often worth far more than its headline rate. GOV.UK lists Attendance Allowance as income that does *not* count for Pension Credit. On top of that, getting it can raise the amount Pension Credit tops your parent's income up to.

For 2026/27, the Pension Credit guarantee tops weekly income up to £238 for a single person or £363.25 for a couple. Someone who gets Attendance Allowance can have an extra **£86.05 a week** added for severe disability (£172.10 for a couple if both qualify). Age UK sets out the conditions:

- your parent gets Attendance Allowance (or another qualifying disability benefit)
- they live alone, or the only other people at home can be ignored, for example someone under 18, or an adult who also gets a disability benefit or is registered severely sight impaired
- nobody is paid Carer's Allowance, or the carer element of Universal Credit, for looking after them

A worked example

A hypothetical example: take a widowed mother in Lewisham with a State Pension and small private pension totalling £250 a week. She lives alone and has £8,000 in savings. (For simplicity, this ignores savings credit and housing costs.)

- 1 Before Attendance Allowance:** her income of £250 is above the £238 guarantee, so she gets no Pension Credit.
- 2 Awarded the lower rate:** she receives £76.70 a week, which does not count as income.
- 3 Pension Credit recalculated:** her guarantee becomes $£238 + £86.05 = £324.05$. Her income is still £250, so she gets £74.05 a week Pension Credit.
- 4 Result:** £150.75 a week in total, nearly double the Attendance Allowance alone, before any extra help with council tax or rent.

GOV.UK says savings of £10,000 or less do not affect Pension Credit. Above that, every £500 counts as £1 a week of income. If you are unsure, a free benefits check from Age UK or your council's welfare advice team will run the figures properly.

Make the Pension Credit claim while you wait. Age UK advises starting a new Pension Credit, Housing Benefit or Council Tax Reduction claim while the Attendance Allowance decision is pending, because payments may be backdated to when the Attendance Allowance started.

Already on Pension Credit? Tell the Pension Service about the Attendance Allowance award as soon as the letter arrives, and check the next Pension Credit letter includes the severe disability amount. Age UK says the DWP should already know about the award, but it is worth checking. Under the decision-making regulations, the extra amount is added from the date her entitlement to Attendance Allowance began. Age UK says you also need to tell the council, so it can review Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction.

Award letter already arrived? If your parent claimed Pension Credit while waiting and was turned down, claim again within three months of the Attendance Allowance decision. The law then treats the new claim as made on the date of the first one, or the date Attendance Allowance started if that is later. This only works if the Attendance Allowance claim was made before, or no more than 10 working days after, the first Pension Credit claim. If they never claimed, claim now: GOV.UK says Pension Credit can be backdated by up to three months, and Age UK notes you must ask for this on the form because it is not automatic.

The Carer's Allowance trap

If a son or daughter starts being paid Carer's Allowance (£86.45 a week in 2026/27), or gets the carer element of Universal Credit, for looking after a parent, the parent loses the £86.05 severe disability addition. This only bites if your parent gets that addition in the first place.

What the parent loses

- The £86.05 a week severe disability addition in their Pension Credit.
- Nothing if the carer only has an "underlying entitlement" to Carer's Allowance, for example because their own State Pension pays more. Age UK says this does not count as being paid it.

What the carer gains

- National Insurance credits for each week of Carer's Allowance, which GOV.UK says protect their own State Pension.
- A carer addition of £48.15 a week in their own Pension Credit, or a carer amount in their Universal Credit.
- Note that Carer's Allowance itself counts as income for the carer's own means-tested benefits.

So the household can still come out ahead. It depends on both people's benefits. Our Carer's Allowance guide covers the earnings limit and the other conditions.

Get a benefits check first. Before anyone claims Carer's Allowance or the Universal Credit carer element, ask Age UK or your council's welfare advice team to run the figures for both of you.

What Attendance Allowance does to council tax in London

GOV.UK says Attendance Allowance can lead to extra Council Tax Reduction. It can also help unlock two council tax disregards. The rules are national, but each London borough's council tax office words its guidance differently, and some pages are out of date.

Severe mental impairment (often relevant with dementia)

Someone certified by a doctor as having a severe impairment of intelligence and social functioning that is expected to be permanent, and who gets a qualifying benefit such as Attendance Allowance (any rate), is "disregarded" for council tax. Lewisham Council says that if they live alone, they pay no council tax at all. If they live with one other adult who pays, the bill drops by 25%. See our guide to Attendance Allowance for dementia for the claim itself.

Live-in family carer disregard

A carer who lives with the person, provides at least 35 hours of care a week and is not their spouse, partner or child under 18 can also be disregarded. The person cared for must be entitled to a qualifying benefit. In England, the national regulations have accepted *any* rate of Attendance Allowance since April 2013 (before that it had to be the higher rate). Lambeth's page says "any rate". Lewisham's page still asks for the higher rate. If your parent gets the lower rate and the council turns the disregard down, ask in writing for it to apply paragraph 3 of the Schedule to the Council Tax (Additional Provisions for Discount Disregards) Regulations 1992. Since 8 April 2013 that paragraph has required the person cared for to be entitled to "an attendance allowance", after the Council Tax (Additional Provisions for Discount Disregards) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2013 removed the words "a higher rate".

Council Tax Reduction

Age UK confirms Attendance Allowance is ignored as income for Council Tax Reduction and Housing Benefit, and that an award can mean higher amounts. Tell the council's benefits team as soon as the award letter arrives.

Can Attendance Allowance pay for care at home?

Yes. Age UK puts it simply: your parent can spend it on whatever they want. It could go towards visiting carers, a cleaner, a community alarm, taxis to appointments, or a short break for the main carer. It is paid to your parent, or to their appointee or attorney, not to the carer.

The catch comes if the council arranges and charges for your parent's care. Under the Care Act charging rules, the council can count Attendance Allowance as income in its financial assessment. When it does, it must let your parent keep enough to cover **disability-related expenditure**: costs from their disability that the council is not meeting.

The statutory guidance gives examples of disability-related expenditure, including:

- a community alarm
- privately arranged care, such as respite
- day or night care that the council is not arranging

Age UK adds that some councils automatically ignore the difference between the lower and higher rate (£37.90 a week in 2026/27) when they are not providing any night care. That is a local policy, not a legal right. Whatever the policy, the council must still look at your parent's actual disability-related costs. Our guide to the [council financial assessment for care](/blog/financial-assessment-for-care) (</blog/financial-assessment-for-care>) explains the rest of the calculation.

Ask the council. Ask for a copy of your borough's charging policy, and whether it ignores the higher-rate difference when it provides no night care. If the family pays privately for night care, list that cost and ask for it to be counted.

If your parent pays for their own care, the allowance simply adds to the budget. Our [paying for care in London](/paying-for-care-in-London) (</paying-for-care-in-London>) page sets out the funding routes side by side.

When payments change or stop

- **Needs increase:** on the lower rate but now needing help at night as well? Ask the DWP to look at the award again. You fill in a new form, and the higher rate is paid once the night needs have lasted six months. Age UK warns that a review can also go the other way, so get advice if needs are borderline.
- **Hospital:** payment carries on for the first 28 days of an NHS stay, then is suspended. Stays separated by 28 days or less are added together.
- **Care home:** if your parent pays the full fees themselves, Attendance Allowance continues. If the council or NHS pays any of the fees, it stops 28 days after admission, or sooner if they went in straight from hospital. It is still paid during temporary council funding that will be repaid later, such as a deferred payment agreement.
- **Respite stays:** council-funded respite in a care home counts towards the 28 days, and short stays are linked. It may be possible to plan breaks so payments are not affected.

Tell the DWP about any hospital or care home stay, and tell the Pension Credit and council tax offices too, or your parent could be overpaid and asked to pay it back.

How to claim, and why the start date matters

Claim online on GOV.UK, by post, or by calling the Attendance Allowance helpline on 0800 731 0122 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm) for a form. An online claim starts on the day it is made. If you ring for a form, the claim starts on the day of the call, as long as the form is back within six

weeks. A downloaded form only counts from the day the DWP receives it. Since the allowance cannot be backdated, ringing for a form or claiming online protects the date while you gather details. GOV.UK says you should hear within three weeks when to expect a decision.

If the claim is refused or the rate looks wrong, ask for a mandatory reconsideration, usually within one month of the decision letter. Our step-by-step guide on [how to apply for Attendance Allowance](/blog/how-to-apply-for-attendance-allowance) (/blog/how-to-apply-for-attendance-allowance) covers what to write on the form.

Questions families ask

What if my parent is under State Pension age?



If Mum moves in with us, does she lose anything?



Can both parents get Attendance Allowance?



Is the award for life?



How we can help

If you are working out how Attendance Allowance fits with [paying for care at home in London](#) (/paying-for-care-london), Jackie can talk it through with you at a free home assessment.

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About this guide

Written by the JNP Sidona team using the official sources listed above, which we checked on 9 October 2026. Rules, rates and thresholds change, usually each April, so always confirm the current position with the source or your council. This guide is general information, not medical, legal or financial advice. If you spot something out of date, email info@jnpsidonasupportservices.co.uk (<mailto:info@jnpsidonasupportservices.co.uk>) and we will correct it.