

money matters

Managing finances may be a worry for both you and the person for whom you care. You may be unsure of your entitlements or how to make a claim. You may be worried about falling into debt because of reduced income or increased expenditure. Such concerns can lead to you and the person you care for becoming stressed.

Although money matters, particularly **social security benefits**, can be complicated, there are a number of organisations that can help, in terms of providing both practical **support and advice**. This factsheet gives basic information about a range of financial matters, plus details of sources of further information.

You may also find the following Carers UK information booklets useful – *Benefits: what's available and how to get them, Carer's Allowance and the Carer Premium and Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance.*

They are free to carers, available from

0845 241 0963 or

www.carersuk.org/

Information



Social security benefits

Listed below are the main relevant benefits and how to claim. Further information is available from the Benefit Enquiry Line (0800 88 22 00, textphone 0800 24 33 55), which can also help you to fill in the claim forms. Some forms are also available from Brent Carers Centre (020 8795 6240).

Further details are available in the booklets *A guide for disabled people, those with health conditions and carers* and *Grants and loans from the Social Fund*, available from Jobcentre Plus offices or see www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/jcp/customers/leaflets_and_guides.

Asylum seekers and **refugees** need to get very good advice about their entitlement to benefits as this can affect their right to stay in the country. Also, people with certain visas and permissions may have benefit restrictions. Contact the Refugee Council advice line (020 7346 6777) or www.refugeecouncil.org.uk, or the Brent Community Law Centre legal advice line (020 8451 1122) or brentlaw@brentlaw.org.uk.

If you feel any decision about benefits is wrong you are entitled to **appeal**. Refer to the letter you receive for details on where to appeal, and contact one of the organisations listed under 'Sources of further information and advice' for advice.

SUPPORT FOR CARERS

There are two main benefits available to full-time carers – those spending at least 35 hours a week caring. Thirty-five hours may sound a lot, but is, in fact, the equivalent of less than two full days.

- You may be eligible for **Carer's Allowance (CA)** (formerly called Invalid Care Allowance) if you are aged 16 or over and the person you care for receives Attendance Allowance or Disability Living Allowance at the middle or higher rate for personal care. You cannot get CA if you are in full-time education or earn above a certain amount. CA claim packs are available from the CA Unit (01253 856 123 or cau-customer-services@dwp.gsi.gov.uk). You can also claim online – see www.dwp.gov.uk/carersallowance.

If you receive certain other benefits, including a state pension, which are paid at a rate that is the same or more than CA, you may not be paid CA.

However, it is still worth claiming as you may have an 'underlying entitlement'. This means you may be entitled to other benefits, including Pension Credit (PC) and/or the carer addition to PC, Council Tax Benefit and Housing Benefit.



- The **Carer Premium** is not a benefit, but an extra amount included in the calculation of Income Support, Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit. An equivalent amount is used in the calculation of Pension Credit.

If you successfully apply for CA and are on Income Support or income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, you should receive the carer premium automatically. If you receive the carer premium and already receive Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Benefit, tell the office dealing with your benefit(s) that you have been awarded CA or have an underlying entitlement to it. They will recalculate the benefit to take this into account.

The carer premium continues to be paid for up to eight weeks after a cared-for person dies.

SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE RECEIVING CARE

There are three main state benefits.

- **Disability Living Allowance** – for people aged under 65 who need help looking after themselves or who have mobility problems.
- **Attendance Allowance** – for people who develop a long-term illness or who become disabled and need help on or after their 65th birthday.
- **Incapacity Benefit** – for people under statutory retirement age unable to work because of illness or disability, who have paid enough National Insurance contributions and cannot get Statutory Sick Pay.

Some people receive **Severe Disablement Allowance (SDA)**, but this was abolished in April 2001. However, people already receiving SDA should continue to receive it on the same basis as before.

HOW TO CLAIM

- **Disability Living Allowance/Attendance Allowance:** 08457 12 34 56, textphone 08457 22 44 33, DBU-Customer-Service@dwp.gsi.gov.uk
- **Incapacity Benefit:** Jobcentre Plus – 0800 055 6688 – Monday-Friday, 8am-6pm.

SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE ON LOW INCOMES

A number of benefits are available for both carers and cared-for.

- **Income Support** – for people aged under 60 who have no income or whose income needs topping up to levels set by the government each year. This could include people who are ill or have a disability. Ring Jobcentre Plus (0800 055 6688: Monday-Friday, 8am-6pm) to make a claim.
- **Working Tax Credit (WTC)** – for people who are employed or self-employed, who:
 - are aged 16 or over, usually work 16 or more hours a week and are responsible for one or more children, or
 - are aged 16 or over, usually work 16 or more hours a week and are disabled, or
 - are aged 25 or over and usually work at least 30 hours a week.

For advice and information contact the WTC helpline on 0845 300 3900 or see www.hmrc.gov.uk (click on 'tax credits').
- **Pension Credit (PC)** – for people aged 60 or over. PC guarantees a contribution to bring weekly income up to a minimum figure. People aged 65 or over with modest savings or second pensions may be entitled to extra money. For further details see the factsheet *Older carers and carers of older people* or www.thepensionservice.gov.uk/pensioncredit.
- **Housing Benefit (HB)** – help with paying rent (whether council or private). If you are in council accommodation and qualify for HB you will get a rent rebate. If you pay a mortgage you cannot get HB, but you might qualify for help with mortgage interest payments through Income Support.
- **Council Tax Benefit** – help with paying Council Tax.
- **The Social Fund** – *lump sum payments* for one-off expenses, *crisis loans* if you need money urgently, *community care grants* for people receiving Income Support to help them stay in the community (also payable to carers), *budgeting loans* for people receiving Income Support to help them buy essential items.

GOING INTO HOSPITAL

During a stay in hospital, some benefits are reduced or stopped. For further information see *Going into hospital* (GL12), available from www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk (click on 'customers', 'leaflets and guides', 'customer specific leaflets').

COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS

It may be possible to get a discount on your Council Tax even if you do not qualify for Council Tax Benefit. For further information on the schemes described below telephone 020 8937 1800, email benefits@brent.gov.uk or see www.brent.gov.uk/revben.nsf.

- If only one adult is resident in a property a 25% discount is given. In some cases it is possible to receive a discount even if there are two adults because the second adult will be discounted for Council Tax purposes. This applies to some people with dementia, and full-time carers.
- A **disability reduction** may be payable if anyone resident in your home is substantially and permanently disabled.

The Council Tax payable on a property depends on its banding (A-H). If you are in a band A property the reduction will be about one-sixth of your liability.

OTHER SUPPORT

- Some disabled people aged between 16 and 65 are eligible for payments from the **Independent Living (1993) Fund**, whose aim is to help people stay in their own home. Applications are made by social services. For further information telephone Brent Association of Disabled People (020 8451 3822, info@badp.org) or the Independent Living Fund (0845 6018815, fund@ilf.org.uk, www.ilf.org.uk).
- If you are unable to pay National Insurance contributions or have not paid enough for any year because of caring responsibilities, you may be able to get **Home Responsibilities Protection** – a scheme that protects your basic state pension. For further information contact the Pensions Service on 0845 606 365, textphone 0845 606 0285 or see www.thepensionservice.gov.uk (click on 'AtoZ').

Handling someone else's money

The person you are caring for may need help in managing their money, for either physical or mental reasons.

- All benefits and state pensions are now paid by **direct payment**, direct into a bank, building society or Post Office card account.
- If the person you care for has a **Post Office card account**, they can arrange for a second card to be issued so that you can collect their money. For details telephone 08457 22 33 44 (typetalk 08457 22 3 55) or see www.postoffice.co.uk (click on 'direct payments').
- If the person you are caring for wants you to operate a **bank or building society account** on their behalf you can take out a **third party mandate**. For further information speak to the bank or building society manager.

- A **power of attorney** is a legal document that gives one person the right to make binding (including financial) decisions for another person. It can only be taken out by someone who knows what they are doing, ie is mentally capable.
- An **enduring power of attorney (EPA)** remains in force even if later the person becomes mentally incapable. So, if the person you are caring for has been diagnosed with dementia, it may be advisable for them to consider giving you an enduring power of attorney.

In October 2007, under the Mental Capacity Act 2005, the EPA will be replaced by a **lasting power of attorney (LPA)**, which can cover personal welfare matters as well as property and affairs. You will not be able to change an EPA to an LPA, but it will be possible to continue to use an EPA after the Act is implemented.

- If someone becomes mentally incapable, and there is no enduring power of attorney, the **Court of Protection** and the **Public Guardianship Office** (changing to the **Office of the Public Guardian** in October 2007) must appoint a **receiver** (changing to **deputy** in October 2007) to handle the person's financial affairs. This can be a relative or a professional person such as a solicitor or social worker. Appointing a receiver can be a lengthy and expensive process, involving a lot of administration, and with ongoing costs. It is therefore advisable, wherever possible, for the person you care for to take out an enduring power of attorney.

FURTHER INFORMATION

- Age Concern England's information sheet 22 *Legal arrangements for managing financial affairs*, from www.ace.org.uk (click on 'How we can help' and 'Income and pensions') or 0800 00 99 66.
- Department for Work and Pensions leaflet *Help with getting benefits for people with a disability or illness*, from www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk (click on 'customers', 'leaflets and guides', 'customer specific leaflets').
- For more information about **power of attorney** or **enduring power of attorney** contact a solicitor, law centre, citizens advice bureau, or the Public Guardianship Office (see below).
- For more information about becoming a **receiver** contact the Public Guardianship Office, Archway Tower, 2 Junction Road, London N19 5SZ (0845 330 2900, www.guardianship.gov.uk).

Managing money

Caring for someone can be expensive, in terms of both reduced income and increased expenses. Below are some suggestions for ways of managing your money, increasing your income and reducing your expenditure.

- Make sure you are receiving your benefit entitlements (see above).
- If you are receiving Income Support, you may be entitled to help with other expenditure, such as school meals, dental charges, prescriptions and eye care.
- Check whether you are paying too much tax, or whether you are receiving all the tax benefits to which you are entitled.
- You may be entitled to a home insulation grant, which will cut down heating bills; see the *Housing factsheet* for details.
- Some charities give grants to individuals to pay for items not funded by government grants – see *A guide to grants for individuals in need*, published by the Directory of Social Change (0845 0777707, info@dsc.org.uk, www.dsc.org.uk). It may be available in your local library.

If you are worried about getting into debt you can get advice from the citizens advice bureau (0845 0 505250, brent.cab@brentcab.co.uk or www.citizensadvice.org.uk).

Making a will

Although this may seem a distressing subject, if someone dies without having made a will it can cause problems for their family. It is possible to make a will without contacting a solicitor, although it is advisable to do so. For details contact the Law Society on 0870 606 6575 or www.solicitors-online.com. The Age Concern England factsheet no 7 *Making your will* includes useful information on this subject.

Mencap runs wills and trusts seminars that give guidance to families who want to provide for someone with a **learning disability** in their will. It also publishes a free booklet *Leaving money by will to people with a learning disability*. For details of the seminars and booklet ring 020 7696 6996, email legaciesweb@mencap.org.uk or see www.mencap.org.uk/html/legacies/index.htm

Sources of further information and advice

Adviceguide – a website run by Citizens Advice, giving online advice on a range of topics, including benefits and debt – see www.adviceguide.org.uk

The **Benefit 'Check Up'** – confidential sessions on a range of benefits run by Brent Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) – held at the following health centres:

Wembley Centre for Health and Care

Tuesday 2am-4pm

Kilburn Square Clinic:

Monday 9.30am-noon

Craven Park Health Centre:

Wednesday 9.30am-noon

Appointments only – via the Brent CAB advice line or open sessions (see below).

Brent Age Concern Advice and Advocacy Service
(020 8965 7711)

Brent Carers Centre (020 8795 6240)

Brent Citizens Advice Bureau

Advice line: (0845 0 505250): 9.30am-5pm,

Monday-Friday

Open sessions: Monday-Friday (closed Tuesday) at: 270-272 High Road, London NW10 2EY. Timed tickets are issued from 9.30am.

Brent Community Law Centre legal advice helpline

(020 8451 1122, brentlaw@brentlaw.org.uk)

Monday-Friday 10.15am-2pm; 2.15am-6pm

(closed Thursday afternoon)

The **Benefit Enquiry Line** (0800 88 22 00, textphone 0808 24 33 55) – a confidential, free telephone service, which can also help with completing forms:

Monday-Friday 8.30am-6.30pm and Saturday

9am-1pm. Also available via e-mail:

BEL-Customer-Services@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

Brent Association of Disabled People

(020 8451 3822, textphone 020 8451 7808

info@badp.org, www.brentadp.org.uk) – benefits

advice; home visits are possible.

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) – the DWP's website www.dwp.gov.uk includes useful information about welfare benefits, including leaflets and guides (click 'Resource centre').

The government website www.direct.gov.uk/caringforsomeone/fs/en includes a range of information of use to carers.

Jobcentre Plus (0800 055 6688, textphone 0800 0 23 4888) – to make a claim for Income Support or Incapacity Benefit. Available Monday-Friday 8am-6pm.

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefits

are dealt with by the council. Contact the call centre (020 8937 1800: Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm), e-mail benefits@brent.gov.uk or visit a One Stop Shop (see the factsheet *Useful contacts*). Claim forms can also be downloaded from www.brent.gov.uk/revben.nsf

The **HM Revenue and Customs** website www.hmrc.gov.uk includes information about, and claim forms for, tax credits.

One Stop Shop (020 8937 1200, textphone 020 8937 1993, customer.services@brent.gov.uk, www.brent.gov.uk/OSS2.nsf).

Social Services Direct (020 8937 4300)

The Pension Service (www.thepensionservice.gov.uk) – information about entitlements available to people of pensionable age.

Tax enquiry offices: North West London Area (0845 302 1455) – income tax and tax credit enquiries.

A number of organisations listed in the factsheet *Carers from black and minority ethnic communities* also give benefits advice.

Remember that other factsheets in this pack may also include information useful to you



The Princess Royal Trust **Brent Carers Centre**
Wembley Centre for Health and Care, 116 Chaplin Road, Wembley HA0 4UZ Tel: 020 8795 6240