

What is DLA? (Disability Living Allowance)

DLA is a tax free benefit payable to people aged from birth to 65 who need help looking after themselves and/or find it difficult to walk or get around because of an illness or disability.

How does a child qualify?

To qualify for DLA, a child under 16 must need additional help, above those of an average child of the same age, during the day and/or with everyday living tasks such as:

Getting in and out of bed; Going to the toilet; Washing and bathing; Dressing or undressing; Playing and learning; Eating and drinking; Taking medicines; Climbing stairs; Turning over in bed; Communicating with other people and learning social skills.

How is it managed?

Foster carers looking after children who are entitled to DLA should claim this allowance. If DLA is granted, the foster carers will receive this allowance in addition to the foster care allowance and any fee payable. The child care social worker will help foster carers to apply for Disability Living Allowance and support and actively pursue the claim on the foster carer's behalf.

Foster carers for a child in receipt of DLA are advised to keep a log of how the monies are being spent on the child. We suggest a separate bank account into which the DLA should be paid. The foster carer(s) for the child should be named as the trustee for the account.

The child's social worker and foster carer and if appropriate the parent(s) should agree how the DLA is spent. This should be recorded on file and reviewed regularly.

DLA is not supposed to be a savings account, and should be spent for the purposes it is intended.

If a child is awarded the high to middle rate of DLA, the foster carer should consider making an application for Carers allowance.

Changes from April 2013

In 2013 the Government began to introduce the Personal Independence Payment (PIP) for people **aged 16** and over. This is being rolled out over a 4 year period.

The PIP aims to support disabled people to lead independent and active lives. It will introduce a more objective assessment based on individual need and will be subject to regular review. It will not consider the impairment an individual has and label them simply on this basis. Instead it will consider how their impairment affects their life, and consider their ability to carry out a range of everyday activities.

There are no plans for the PIP to be introduced to people under age 16, but young people in care who reach 16 will be affected as the PIP scheme is introduced across the UK.

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