

# Carer Allowance—caring for someone 16 years or over that you do not live with



## What is Carer Allowance?

Carer Allowance is a payment available to carers who provide daily care for a person with a disability, severe medical condition or who is frail aged. Carer Allowance is not income or asset tested and is not taxable. It can be paid in addition to other income support payments like Carer Payment or Age Pension.

## Am I eligible?

You may get Carer Allowance even if you do not live with the person you care for. However, if you do not live in the same home you will need to meet the following requirements:

- you must be providing some personal care every day, **and**
- this care must amount to at least 20 hours per week, **and**
- you must be providing this care in either your home or the home of the person you are caring for, **and**
- you must not be receiving wages (at or above the relevant minimum wage) for providing this care.

Two carers, who do not live with the person being cared for, can share one payment of Carer Allowance if together they are providing personal care every day that amounts to at least 20 hours per week. If you think this may apply to you, ask Centrelink for more information.

Carer Allowance cannot be shared when one carer lives with the person being cared for and the other carer does not. In this case, the carer living with the person is paid the full amount of Carer Allowance.

## What do I get?

You will receive a fortnightly Carer Allowance—see the 'Disability and Carer Payment Rates' factsheet for how much.

## How do I claim Carer Allowance?

You can get a Carer Allowance claim pack by phoning Centrelink on **13 2717** or by visiting your local Centrelink Customer Service Centre. The claim pack includes a claim form, a form to be completed by the doctor or health professional who treats the person you are caring for, and information that tells you everything you need to know to complete your claim. If you are claiming Carer Allowance and you do not live with the person being cared for you will also be sent extra questions that you will need to answer about the personal care you provide.

If you intend to claim Carer Allowance you should contact Centrelink as soon as possible.

## Telephone lodgement

Centrelink understands it is often difficult for people with caring responsibilities to attend a Centrelink Customer Service Centre. Your intention to claim Carer Allowance can be advised over the telephone. Provided a formal claim is lodged within 14 days from the date of the initial contact, Centrelink will treat the date you told us you were intending to claim as the date that you applied.



## Can Carer Allowance be backdated?

Carer Allowance (caring for an adult) may be backdated for up to 12 weeks prior to the claim being lodged, provided all care needs were caused by an acute event. An acute event is an illness or injury that occurs unexpectedly (for example a stroke, brain injury or heart attack). All requirements for Carer Allowance need to have been met during this period.

## Other help for carers

### Carer Payment

Carer Payment is an income support payment for carers who, because of the demands of their caring role, are unable to support themselves through substantial work force participation. It is an income and asset tested payment for full-time carers or parents of children or adults with a disability, severe medical condition or who are frail aged. You may get Carer Payment in addition to Carer Allowance. You can claim for Carer Payment and Carer Allowance using the same claim form. Phone Centrelink on **13 2717** for more information.

### Carers Australia

Carers Australia is the national peak body for carers and represents the needs and interests of carers at the national level. Visit [www.carersaustralia.com.au](http://www.carersaustralia.com.au)

### Commonwealth Carer Resource Centres

Commonwealth Carer Resource Centres can assist you with referrals, counselling, support and resources on a range of topics, including carer support groups, home help, financial entitlements, support services and arranging respite. Most of the services are free. For more information, **Freecall™ 1800 242 636** or go to [www.carersaustralia.com.au](http://www.carersaustralia.com.au)

### Commonwealth Carer Respite Centres

Commonwealth Carer Respite Centres support carers to access respite or 'take a break'. The centres can provide information and advice about respite options, help with organising emergency or planned respite, and purchase or subsidise for short term or emergency respite when needed. **Freecall™ 1800 059 059**.

### Commonwealth Carelink Centres

Commonwealth Carelink Centres assist Australians and their families, people with special care needs and carers with information about community, residential and other care services. **Freecall™ 1800 052 222** or go to [www.commcarelink.health.gov.au](http://www.commcarelink.health.gov.au)

## How to find out more

**Disabilities, Sickness and Carers** **13 2717**

**To speak to Centrelink in languages other than English** **13 1202**

**Customer relations** **Freecall™ 1800 050 004**  
(for complaints, compliments and suggestions)

**Australian Government Services Fraud Tip-off Line** **13 1524**

**TTY\* payment enquiries** **Freecall™ 1800 810 586**  
\*TTY is only for people who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment. A TTY phone is required to use this service.

**To make an appointment** **13 1021**

Go to our website on [www.centrelink.gov.au](http://www.centrelink.gov.au)

Check the 'we speak your language' link on Centrelink's website for information in languages other than English.

**Important:** Calls to '13' numbers from a standard telephone service can be made from anywhere within Australia for not more than the cost of a local call (call charges may vary depending upon the telephone service provider). Calls to '1800' numbers are free of charge. Calls from public and mobile telephones may be charged at a higher rate.

## Disclaimer

The information contained in this publication is intended only as a guide to payments available.

### What are your responsibilities?

- It is your responsibility to decide if you wish to apply for a payment and to make the application, having regard to your particular circumstances.
- The information is accurate as at June 2006, but may of course change. If you use this publication after that date, you should not rely on any information in the publication without checking with Centrelink as to whether it is up to date.

### From what date are benefits payable?

Most government payments are paid from, or after, the date on which the application is made. Thus you may wish to apply as soon as possible to avoid any loss of payment.

### What is the position if you deal with a third party?

You may deal with a third party who is not a member of Centrelink's staff. If you do so, please remember that Centrelink has not authorised any third parties to provide information or advice to you about payments.