



# **Citizens Advice Southwark - We're here to help in times of crisis**

## **August 2023 Newsletter**

### **Are you ill or disabled and missing out on financial support?**

Attendance Allowance is for people over state pension age and Personal Independence Payment is for people under state pension age. These benefits are designed to help with the extra costs you face because of your care needs or disability. They're not means-tested, so don't depend on your income or savings.

These benefits can help you to live safely, comfortably and as independently as possible. Even if you feel you can manage without them, if you qualify – you have a right to claim them.

Claiming everything you're entitled to now might help your income and savings last longer. It can also help you become eligible for other financial support.

### **Attendance Allowance (AA)**

We know that the number of people claiming Attendance Allowance in Southwark is declining, and that lots of people are entitled to AA but don't know enough about it to claim.

To claim AA you need to be State Pension age and have a disability or illness that makes it hard for you to look after yourself.

You could get £68.10 or £101.75 a week to spend however you like. The amount you get will depend on how much help you need. It could help you stay independent in your own home for longer.

Also, it isn't means tested so it doesn't matter what other money you get. It doesn't matter how much you have in savings either - there's no limit.

AA won't affect your state pension and you can claim it if you're still working and earning money. AA is a tax-free benefit. You'll be exempt from the Benefit Cap so you won't have money taken away from any other benefits.

## **Eligibility**

You should apply for AA if you have a disability or illness and need help or supervision throughout the day or at times during the night (even if you don't currently get that help):

- with your personal care - for example getting dressed, eating or drinking, getting in and out of bed, bathing or showering and going to the toilet
- to stay safe

You should also apply if you have difficulties with personal tasks, for example if they take you a long time, you experience pain or you need physical help, like a chair to lean on.

AA isn't just for people with a physical disability or illness. You should also claim if you need help or supervision throughout the day or night and have:

- a mental health condition
- learning difficulties
- a sensory condition - for example if you're deaf or blind

## **Applying**

You'll need to complete a long claim form when you apply for Attendance Allowance. It might seem daunting at first but we can help you so don't let the form put you off applying.

If you'd prefer to do it yourself you can follow our advice on how to fill in your claim form [here](#).

## **Personal Independence Payment (PIP)**

You might be able to get PIP if you need extra help because of an illness, disability or mental health condition.

You don't need to have worked or paid National Insurance to qualify for PIP, and it doesn't matter what your income is, if you have any savings or you're working.

## **Eligibility**

To get PIP you must be over 16 and under state pension age, and find it hard to do everyday tasks or get around because of a physical or mental condition.

PIP is not based on the condition you have or the medication you take. It is based on the level of help you need because of how your condition affects you.

You're assessed on the level of help you need with specific activities. It's hard to say if the level of help you need will qualify you for PIP. But, if you get or need help with any of the following because of your condition, you should consider applying:

- preparing and cooking food
- eating and drinking
- managing your treatments
- washing and bathing
- managing toilet needs or incontinence
- dressing and undressing
- communicating with other people
- reading and understanding written information
- mixing with others
- making decisions about money
- planning a journey or following a route
- moving around

The help you get may be from a person, an aid (such as a walking stick or guide dog) or an adaptation to your home or car.

## **Applying**

There is further information on how to claim PIP [here](#).

Alternatively, you can contact us for help.

## **Are you missing out on Pension Credit?**

We know that some people are not getting Pension Credit when they might be eligible for it.

Pension Credit tops up weekly income to a guaranteed minimum level of £201.05 a week for single pensioners or £306.85 for couples. It is a tax-free payment for those who:

- have reached State Pension age, and
- live in Great Britain

You may still get Pension Credit if you:

- have not paid National Insurance contributions
- have some savings or a small pension

- live with your grown-up family
- own your own home

Therefore, if you are of State Pension age you may be entitled to Pension Credit even if you have modest savings, or a retirement income or own your own home.

An award of Pension Credit can provide access to a range of other benefits such as help with housing costs, council tax, heating bills and for those aged 75 or over, a free TV licence.

Please contact us if you need more advice on Pension Credit.

## **Citizens Advice Southwark Cost of Living Support Roadshows**

Our Roadshows for local residents who need help with benefits, debt, housing, energy, immigration or finding a job, are growing in popularity.

These Roadshows involve multiple partners, including the council, the DWP, and a range of local charities, all of whom can help people who are struggling financially.

Our next Roadshow is at 10am to 1pm on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> September at Canada Estate Tenants' Hall at Renforth Street, SE16 7BE.

## **Help if you are worried about your finances**

[Our Worrying About Money leaflet](#) provides an online and user friendly and online way for people facing financial crisis to be aware of the options that exist and the sources of help that are available.

If you want paper copies of the leaflet please contact:

[Administration@citizensadvicesouthwark.org.uk](mailto:Administration@citizensadvicesouthwark.org.uk)

## **Update on Streamlined Asylum Process and Asylum Legacy Cases**

On 23 February 2023, the Home Office introduced a new 'streamlined asylum processing' policy, where some people seeking asylum will have to complete a questionnaire instead of having an interview.

This policy applies to adults from Afghanistan, Eritrea, Libya, Syria and Yemen who claimed asylum on or before 7 March 2023, or from Sudan who claimed asylum on or after 28 June 2022, and who have not had an asylum substantive interview.

There is also a new Asylum Legacy Cases process which currently applies to Iraqi and Iranian nationals who claimed asylum before 28 June 2022 but have yet to receive a decision from the Home Office.

We are working with the Council and Southwark Law Centre, Southwark Day Centre for Asylum Seekers, Panjshir Aid and Southwark Refugee Communities Forum, to assist people who need help to complete these questionnaires.

If you are struggling to access legal help to complete the questionnaire or you are worried because you have not yet received the Questionnaire please contact us.

## **Contact us for help**

If you need advice, please visit us or call us.

Please note our Bermondsey office is now closed.

If you want to visit us for help at:

- our Peckham office at 97 Peckham High Street, SE15 5RS, you can drop in anytime between 10.00 am and 2.00 pm 5 days per week
- our Walworth office at 6-8 Westmoreland Road, Walworth, SE17 2AY, you can drop in anytime between 10.00 am and 2.00 pm 5 days per week

If you want to call us our Adviceline number is 080 8278 7849.

If you need help claiming Universal Credit please call on 0800 144 8 444

For online referrals, please go to our website:

<https://www.citizensadvicesouthwark.org.uk/advice/email-enquiry-form/>

For webchat please visit here:

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk/webchat](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/webchat)

For more information about our services see our website

<https://www.citizensadvicesouthwark.org.uk/>

Or see us on Twitter @SouthwarkCAB

**Wishing you all the very best**

**All at Citizens Advice Southwark**