

CARERS PREMIUM

WHAT IS IT?

The Carers Premium is not a benefit in its own right -it's merely an element of Income Support/Pension Credit, Jobseekers Allowance (income-based), Employment and Support Allowance (income-related), Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit. However it will increase the level of these benefits, and for some it will mean entitlement for the first time.

TO QUALIFY

- ◆ You or your partner must get or qualify for Carers Allowance for looking after someone on Disability Living Allowance middle/higher rate Care or Attendance Allowance.

HOW MUCH?

- ◆ It increases your Income Support/Pension Credit/Jobseekers Allowance (income-based)/ESA (income-related) by an amount which increases every year. For April 2011/12 it is £31.00 per week. This means if you already get Income Support/Jobseekers Allowance (income-based)/ESA (ir)/Pension Credit, you will be £31.00 better off.

If you are a couple and both qualify for Carers Premium (i.e. both get or have an *underlying entitlement* to Carers Allowance), you will be entitled to 2 x Carers Premium, or £62.00 per week.

An example of this would be a couple, where one looks after their disabled child, the other cares for an elderly relative.

- ◆ The Carers Premium increases the figures used in calculating Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit in a similar way - so your Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit will also increase.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- ◆ If you get Income Support/Pension Credit/Jobseekers Allowance (income-based)/ESA (ir) your total benefits will increase if you receive Carers Allowance, or if you have an '*underlying entitlement*' to Carers Allowance (see below for what this means).

Similarly, your Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit will increase.

- ◆ If you currently get Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit, you could find that the increase in entitlement means you now qualify for Income Support/Pension Credit/Jobseekers Allowance (income-based)/ESA (income-related).
- ◆ If you do not qualify for Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit before, the increase in entitlement might mean you could now get some Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit.
- ◆ *Underlying entitlement* means that you would be paid Carers Allowance, but for the fact that you already get another benefit, e.g. Retirement Pension, at the same or a higher rate. You can't get both, but you can still qualify for a Carers Premium on your Income Support/ JSA(ib) / ESA(ir) / Pension Credit, Housing/Council Tax Benefit.
- ◆ See also our leaflet: Carers Allowance and Older Carers (Pb33).

HOW TO CLAIM

- ◆ Carers Allowance – contact the Social Security Enquiry Line on 0800 882200.
- ◆ For Income Support / Jobseekers Allowance (ib) / ESA (ir) contact your local JobCentre. For Pension Credit contact the Pension Service.
- ◆ Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit – contact your local Council.

FURTHER HELP

Your local Citizens Advice Bureau or other advice agency.

If you are refused the Carers Premium increase, you have the right to appeal but it must be received by the Social Security Office within 1 month of the date on the decision letter.

The information in this factsheet is correct as of April 2011

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