# Benefits for children (Scotland)

## Introduction

If you have sight loss, or provide care for someone who does, there are a number of welfare benefits you may be entitled to. Some of these benefits can help provide you with an income if you are not able to work, while others can help towards the extra costs that often make life more expensive if you have a disability.

We have produced various factsheets to help you learn more about the benefits that you are most likely to be entitled to if your life is affected by sight loss.

In this factsheet we tell you about the different benefits, particularly Child Disability Payment (CDP), that you can claim if you are the parent or guardian of a child who is blind or partially sighted and you are living in Scotland. We also tell you how to claim these benefits and where to get more help.

CDP is the Scotland equivalent of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and has been introduced as a result of devolution. CDP is administered by Social Security Scotland (SSS) and can only be claimed by people living in Scotland.

DLA is administered by the Department for Work and Pensions except in in Northern Ireland where it is administered by the Department for Communities.

## Child Disability Payment

You can claim and be awarded CDP if:

* You are ordinarily resident in Scotland, habitually resident in the common travel area, not subject to immigration control, are present in the common travel area and have been present for not less than 26 weeks in the previous 52 weeks (limited exemptions apply).
* and you do not already have a claim for Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for the child in question (see note below).
* and you are the parent or guardian of a child under 16 with a long-term health condition or disability, such as sight loss
* and your child has had these problems for at least 13 weeks
* and your child is expected to have these problems for at least 26 weeks
* and your child’s needs satisfy the criteria.

Anyone living in Scotland whose child or children were already in receipt of DLA will have been automatically transferred to CDP without having to complete the new claims process.

Any 16 or 17 year olds making a new claim will need to apply for Adult Disability Payment (ADP). However, anyone who has already claimed and been awarded CDP will continue to be awarded CDP beyond their sixteenth birthday until they are aged 18 years, when they will need to claim Adult Disability Payment (ADP).

### Care and mobility components of CDP

CDP consists of a **care** component and a **mobility** component. You can get a payment for one or both components. Many blind and partially sighted children qualify for at least the lowest rate of both components (depending on their age).

Although you can claim the care component for your child from birth, Social Security Scotland cannot normally start paying this to you until your child is three months old.

There are three weekly rates of payment:

* lowest rate of **£28.70**
* middle rate of **£72.65**
* highest rate of **£108.55**

The earliest you can claim the **mobility** component for your child is when they are three years old. The higher rate is payable from the age of three years and the lower rate can only be paid from the age of five years.

There are two weekly rates of payment:

* lower rate of **£28.80**
* higher rate of **£75.75**

### Why should I claim CDP for my child?

You have nothing to lose and everything to gain from claiming CDP:

* you can receive CDP regardless of your other income as it is not a means-tested benefit
* CDP is tax-free
* it could increase your entitlement to other benefits and concessions, depending on the CDP award your child is given.

### Qualifying criteria

#### Lowest rate care component

Your child should qualify if they need extra help or attention for a **significant portion** of the day. A significant portion means about an hour, which may be a single period or may be split into shorter periods during the day.

Once your child reaches 16 years of age there is an additional route to an award of the lowest rate of the care component. This assesses if, due to a mental or physical disability, they are unable to prepare a cooked main meal for themselves.

#### Middle rate care component

To qualify you must show that your child needs extra attention or supervision **throughout the** **day**.In other words, there are many occasions at different times of the day when your child needs attention or supervision that a sighted or able-bodied child of the same age would not require. Your child may also qualify if they need the required level of extra attention or supervision **during the night only**. The night is generally defined as the time between the last adult going to bed and the first adult getting up in the morning.

#### Highest rate care component

If your child needs extra help or supervision during **both** **the day and** **night**, they may be able to get the highest rate of the care component.

If your child has a terminal illness, they may be entitled to the highest rate of the care component, regardless of how long they have had the illness.

#### The additional requirements test

It is generally accepted that children, especially younger children, need some help and supervision. As well as meeting the above criteria you need to show that either:

* your child’s attention or supervision needs are substantially in excess of the normal requirements of children of their age; or
* your child has substantial attention or supervision requirements which younger children may also have, but which persons of their age without a disability do not have.

#### Examples of needs that can lead to entitlement to the care component

##### Stimulation

A child with sight loss will need more active stimulation to enable learning and development. Young children learn about their environment through exploration, encouraged by what they can see. Children with sight loss may not be able to see objects around them, so their desire to explore may be considerably less than a fully sighted child. As a result, you may need to introduce everyday objects to your child through touch. Social Security Scotland should treat this as an attention need, which can be considered in the qualifying criteria for CDP.

##### Communication

Developing communication skills is crucial for children. A child with sight loss will need much more physical contact and verbal reassurance to encourage development of language and personal relationships. For example, your child may not be able to see smiles or other simple forms of communication and this in turn may affect social skills and bonding. Therefore, your child may need more contact by touch and cuddling as well as more verbal reassurance than a fully sighted child.

##### Development

Not all children develop at the same pace. However, it is possible to identify approximate ages by which children will have developed certain skills.

Because it can count as an attention need for CDP, you should highlight in your claim any additional help your child needs to achieve age-appropriate skills, such as the examples identified below:

* 6 – 10 months: sits up without support, crawls, pulls self up to stand, passes objects from hand to hand
* 8 – 12 months: picks up and eats food
* 10 – 16 months: walks unaided, drinks from a cup
* 14 – 24 months: uses a spoon to pick up and eat food, plays with building bricks, removes easy clothing, throws a ball
* 18 – 24 months: scribbles with a pencil or crayon, kicks a ball
* 2 – 3 years: pedals a tricycle, draws straight lines
* 3 – 4 years: uses a knife and fork
* 4 – 5 years: hops on one leg
* 6 – 7 years: independently enjoys a variety of activities and stays busy, likes to paint and draw, jumps ropes, rides a bike, ties shoelaces, reads independently, tells the time, explains objects and their use
* 8 – 9 years: jumps, skips and chases, dresses and grooms themselves completely, uses simple tools (e.g., screwdriver), knows the date, enjoys collecting objects
* 10 – 12 years: likes to write, draw and paint, meets with friends outside to play, listens to music, writes stories, enjoys chatting on the phone or by text/applications

##### Development through play

Blind and partially sighted children require much more active attention to assist and encourage them to play and develop; specially adapted or tactile toys alone are not enough. For example, your child may need help to locate a toy and pick it up after dropping it. Difficulties with locating or manipulating toys could frustrate your child. They may need assistance and encouragement so that they persevere with activities like drawing or painting.

Older children may require extra help to engage with age-appropriate activities such as social media, gaming, using smart phones and responding to non-verbal social cues when engaging with other people.

##### Extra help with dressing, bathing, feeding and other activities

A young, sighted child of the same age would need some help with these personal care tasks, but it is likely that your blind or partially sighted child will need **extra** support. This may count as attention for CDP purposes. For example, you may have to spoon-feed your child until a later age, or your child may be less able to manage with dressing, bathing or feeding themselves.

As your child gets older, they may continue to need help to ensure they are dressed appropriately and to manage their personal hygiene, particularly for girls needing to manage their menstrual cycle.

##### Supervision

All young children require supervision. Children with sight loss require a greater level of supervision because of the increased risk of danger. For example, a play area that is safe for a sighted child could be hazardous to your child as there will be more risk of them tripping over or bumping into things. There may be an increased risk of bullying and/or peer pressure to play in a way that is unsafe for a child with sight loss.

##### Schooling

Children with sight loss may encounter additional difficulties once they start school. Some examples are reading from boards or textbooks, describing maps or diagrams (which may be impossible to represent in tactile form), and finding their way to, from and around school (young children will rarely have received long cane training). These all count as attention that your child requires.

Additionally, whilst your child is at school the following can also count as attention needs: identifying classmates and or teachers, locating and cutting up food at mealtimes and making sure they are clean after eating, changing into and out of PE clothes, locating and using PE equipment and ensuring they are clean after using paints or other messy materials. They may find it more difficult to use the toilet facilities at school than at home and need extra assistance with wiping, dressing and washing their hands at school.

##### Medication

Your child may need eye drops or other medication several times a day. This may take longer if they cannot see what is happening.

##### Night-time care

Most children with sight loss should qualify for the lowest or middle rate care component for daytime care needs. However, if your child also needs help during the night because of any other disabilities they have, they may be able to claim the higher rate. For example, you may need to take your child repeatedly to the toilet or give them medication during the night. The time you take to settle your child back to sleep can also count. Night-time means after the adults in the house normally have gone to bed.

### The mobility component of CDP and qualifying criteria

#### Lower rate

Social Security Scotland can award the lower rate of the mobility component to children aged 5 and over who need guidance or supervision when walking outdoors in unfamiliar places.

To qualify for the lower rate mobility component your child will need to satisfy the additional requirements test, this means that either:

* they require substantially more guidance or supervision than children of their age who don’t have a disability; or
* children of their age who don’t have a disability would not require such guidance or supervision.

For example, all young children need help when crossing busy roads but a child with sight loss will need **extra** help in locating a safe place to cross the road, recognising when it is safe to cross the road and they will need attention so that they avoid bumping into obstacles or hazards on the pavement.

#### Higher rate – qualifying through sight loss only

Your child may qualify for the higher rate of the mobility component based on severe sight loss **alone**. The higher rate can be awardedfrom the age of three.

The regulations for CDP state that a child is to be taken to have a severe visual impairment if your child’s visual impairment fulfils the definition of ‘Visual Impairment’ given by the Visual Impairment Network for Children and Young People (VINCYP). This definition can be found at **vincyp.scot.nhs.uk/vincyp-definition/**

* Best corrected visual acuity (both eyes open) equal to or worse than 6/18 (Snellen Scale)/0.5 (LogMar); or
* Requires N18 print or larger to read comfortably; or
* Visual field loss with both eyes open which significantly affects function; or
* Any eye movement disorder which significantly affects visual function; or
* Any form of cognitive visual dysfunction due to disorders of the brain which can be demonstrated to significantly affect function.

If your child’s sight is too poor to be measured in this way, for example if they only have light perception, they will qualify for the higher rate of mobility.

If your child’s visual acuity is better than 6/18 and none of the other criteria apply, then they will **not** qualify, for example if their visual acuity is 6/12 (Snellen Scale).

It can be hard to accurately measure a young child’s visual acuity, and your child may not have a Certificate of Vision Impairment (CVI) or be registered, as children under the age of 16 years who are living in Scotland are no longer being registered as of April 2018.

If your child’s sight cannot be measured in these terms, Social Security Scotland may contact your child’s consultant ophthalmologist to ask their opinion. However, if you have any letters or information about their level of sight loss, it is generally useful to send them to Social Security Scotland with your claim.

#### Higher rate – qualifying through sight loss and other health problems

If your child cannot qualify for the higher rate of mobility component because of sight loss alone, they may qualify because of an additional disability or health problem. For example, Social Security Scotland can pay the higher rate to children who are unable or “virtually unable” to walk because of a physical disability. This may apply to children who have physical problems with their legs or feet or feel pain or discomfort after walking a short distance.

Social Security Scotland can pay the higher rate of the mobility component to children who are deafblind. They can also award it to children who are “severely mentally impaired” and have behavioural problems, although there is a strict legal definition of what this means.

### Terminal illness

The definition of terminally ill is different for CDP than for benefits administered by the DWP. For CDP, ‘terminally ill’ means that, in the judgement of a registered medical practitioner or a registered nurse, who is involved in the child’s care or diagnosis, the child has a progressive disease that can be reasonably expected to cause death. The medical practitioner or nurse must have regard to the guidance published by the Chief Medical Officer of Scotland. If the child is terminally ill, s/he should get the highest rate of the care component and, if s/he is aged three or over, the higher rate of the mobility component.

### How to claim CDP

Anyone living in Scotland can claim by completing an online application or by requesting a claim form by telephone. You can request a copy of the form in alternative formats such as large print if this will help you:

Online: **mygov.scot/child-disability-payment/how-to-apply**

Tel: **0800 182 2222**

Text Relay Service (if you have hearing loss): **18001 +0300 244 4000**

If English is not your first language and you would like an interpreter, please call **0800 182 2222** and Social Security Scotland can arrange that for you.

You can also contact one of Social Security Scotland’s client advisers on their web chat service at **mygov.scot/contact-social-security-scotland**

Give plenty of detail about your child’s problems and special needs on the form. Some people are turned down for benefits they should be entitled to because they don’t give enough information. Describe all the extra help that your child needs, emphasise the **extra** help and attention that they need, how **often** your child needs it and at **what times** throughout the day they need it.

Sometimes additional evidence can be helpful. For example, you may want to keep a diary for a few days, recording every occasion when your child needs extra help. Additionally, you could include a letter from a teacher or classroom assistant describing the extra attention your child needs at school.

You can also use an individual educational programme (IEP) or co-ordinated support plan (CSP) to support your claim if your child has one.

### Getting help to apply

There are two forms of assistance available to claimants of any benefit administered by Social Security Scotland.

The first, which is available to all claimants, is Social Security Scotland’s Local Delivery service. This can help you to apply for Child Disability Payment by arranging a local delivery appointment.

A local delivery appointment is a meeting with a client support adviser where you can:

* go through the full Child Disability Payment application
* get guidance on the supporting information you need to provide
* ask questions about the application process.

The client support adviser might be able to:

* visit your home
* meet you at a local public venue.

If they can’t do this, or you don’t want to meet in person, you can book a video or telephone appointment. If you want to book an appointment or ask for help, contact Social Security Scotland.

The second type of assistance is Social Security Scotland’s new Advocacy Service, which is available to people with disabilities.

This new, independent service is delivered by VoiceAbility and will offer advocacy support to disabled people looking to access Scottish social security benefits.

People can access the service either by calling VoiceAbility on **0300 303 1660**, visiting **voiceability.org** or by calling Social Security Scotland on **0800 182 2222** and asking to be referred to the independent advocacy service.

### If your claim is awarded

If your child is awarded CDP, the payment will start from the date you made the call to request a form or from when you completed an online claim, as long as you comply with all time limits and your child has been impacted by their condition for at least three months.

### If your claim is turned down, do not give up

Sometimes benefit decision makers make the wrong decision, even if you have filled out your claim form comprehensively. You can ask Social Security Scotland to look at their decision again if you wish to dispute it. This is called a **re-determination** and must usually be requested within six weeks of the initial decision, although late applications are possible.

There are two ways to ask Social Security Scotland to look at their decision on your new application again:

1. Call Social Security Scotland free on **0800 182 2222**

Text Relay Service: **18001 +0300 244 4000** for the hard of hearing.

If English is not your first language and you would like an interpreter, please call **0800 182 2222** and Social Security Scotland can arrange that for you

1. By completing a paper re-determinations form from **mygov.scot/child-disability-payment-re-determinations-form** and return your completed form to:

Social Security Scotland  
PO Box 10303  
Dundee  
DD1 9FY

You’ll also get this form with the letter telling you whether you’ll be paid CDP.

### How long you have to make a request for a re-determination?

From the day you receive Social Security Scotland’s decision about your application for Child Disability Payment, you have **42 days** (6 weeks) to ask them to look again at their decision although late applications are possible, but you’ll need to let them know the reason why.

From the day of getting your request, Social Security Scotland has 56 days (eight weeks) to make a decision. They'll write to you to let you know their new decision. If Social Security Scotland do not make a decision during this time, you'll have the right to appeal directly to the First-tier Tribunal. For further information on the appeals process, please see our “Benefits appeals (Scotland)” factsheet which provides details of how to appeal.

If your Child Disability Payment has been stopped or reduced, you can apply for short-term assistance payments while you apply for a re-determination; **mygov.scot/short-term-assistance**.

This scheme enables you to continue receiving the same rate of CDP that was previously in payment whilst you await a new decision (either from the result of a re-determination or an appeal). If the new and last decision is not to award CDP or to award it at a lower level, you will not need to pay the short-term assistance payments back. However, if you are awarded CDP, then these payments will be considered and are likely to be deducted when any arrears of benefit owed are calculated.

### What happens to your child’s CDP at age 18?

Unlike the rules for DLA, children in receipt of CDP can continue to receive it until they reach 18 years of age.

When your child reaches age 18 you will have to claim Adult Disability Payment (ADP) for them, and once a decision is made about ADP their CDP will stop. Social Security Scotland will contact you as your child approaches their 18th birthday to give you notice of this.

RNIB has an ADP fact sheet with further information on this benefit.

### CDP for children in hospital

If your child was under 18 when they became an in-patient in an NHS hospital, payments of their DLA or PIP continue as normal while they are in hospital and it doesn’t matter how long they are in hospital for.

You don’t have to show how much care you are continuing to provide to your child while they are in hospital or show what extra costs you are still incurring. Children aged under 18 are exempt from the rules restricting payments of the care component of CDP and the daily living element of PIP while in hospital.

If your child first claims CDP, (or PIP if they are aged 16 to 17), while they are in hospital, payments can still start regardless of this.

### CDP for children in a residential setting or care home

The care component of CDP (or the daily living component of PIP) cannot be paid after the first 28 days of a child’s stay in residential accommodation. This rule applies where any of the costs of the accommodation is being met from public or local authority funds. There are some exceptions to this rule if you or a third party are contributing towards those costs, so please seek advice if this applies to you.

Please note: if you have a child who is in residential accommodation (for example at a school or college), they can still receive CDP or PIP for any nights spent away from the accommodation, such as during weekends or school holidays. During temporary absences the benefit can be paid from the day your child leaves the accommodation until and including the day they return e.g., if they left on a Friday and returned on a Sunday the care component or daily living element will be paid for a three day period.

An individual is not considered a resident in a care home during any period when the individual is being looked after by a local authority and he or she:

* has been placed temporarily in a private dwelling with a family, relative or some other suitable person while:
* under the age of 16, or
* aged between 16 and 18 and receiving services under Part II of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 by virtue of being a child in need within the meaning of section 93(4)(a)(ii) (impairment of health), or 93(4)(a)(iii) (disability) of that Act, or
* is accommodated in a care home outside the United Kingdom, where the costs of any qualifying services are met by a local authority exercising its powers under section 25 of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004.

The mobility component of CDP or PIP/ADP can continue to be paid when a child stays in residential accommodation.

## Other benefits and services

Being able to receive one type of benefit often means that you can also receive other benefits or concessions. This is called “passporting”. For CDP, the same passporting rules apply as do with DLA for children. You'll still be eligible for related benefits and services. This can include things like a Blue Badge or a discount on your Council Tax or, in some circumstances access to the Scotland equivalent of the Motability scheme; Accessible Vehicles and Equipment (AVE) scheme.

The AVE scheme is available if your child is awarded the **higher rate mobility component** of CDP. Under the AVE scheme you can lease:

* cars
* wheelchair accessible vehicles
* powered wheelchairs
* scooters.

All leases include insurance, breakdown cover, servicing and road tax.

## Impact of an award of CDP on means tested benefits

### Child Tax Credits

If you already get **Child Tax Credit** (CTC) or have an existing claim of **Working Tax Credits** (WTC) that enables you to claim CTC, then you could get an increased amount of CTC called the “disabled child element”. You will qualify for this if either your child receives any rate of CDP, DLA or PIP, or if they are certified as severely sight impaired or blind.

If your child is entitled to the highest rate of the care component of CDP, DLA or the enhanced rate of the daily living element of PIP, you will get the Severely Disabled Child element and the Disabled Child element.

Current rates for 2024/2025 are:

Disabled child element: £4107.00 per annum

Severely disabled child element: £1680.00 per annum

### Universal Credit

If you get Universal Credit, it can include a “disabled child addition,” which will be paid for each qualifying child. You will get the higher rate addition if your child is certified as severely sight impaired or blind, **or** if they are entitled to either the CDP/DLA care component at the highest rate, or the PIP/ADP daily living element at the enhanced rate. You will get the lower rate addition if your child receives any other award of CDP/DLA or PIP/ADP.

Current rates for 2024/2025 are:

Disabled child element lower: £156.11 per month

Disabled child element higher: £487.58 per month

## Other benefits when CDP is awarded

### Carer’s Allowance

If Social Security Scotland awards your child the CDP care component at the middle or highest rate, someone else, including you or your partner may be able to claim Carer’s Allowance. It is worth **£81.90** per week.

Carer’s Allowance is **not** means-tested and does not depend on your National Insurance contributions. It is taxable. For a copy of our Carer’s Allowance factsheet please contact our Helpline.

### Carer Element (Universal Credit)

If Social Security Scotland awards your child the CDP care component at the middle or highest rate, you or your partner may be able to claim an additional Carer’s Element on a Universal Credit (UC) claim. This element is £198.31 per month.

For a copy of our Universal Credit factsheet please contact our Helpline.

### Carer’s Allowance Supplement:

You should automatically receive the Carer’s Allowance supplement if you live in Scotland and have been paid Carer’s Allowance on the applicable dates.

The qualifying dates and amounts for 2023 are:

* £288.60 in June 2024 – you'll get this payment if you're getting Carer's Allowance on 8 April 2024
* £288.60 in December 2024 – you'll get this payment if you're getting Carer's Allowance on 7 October 2024.

**Please note:** the Carer's Allowance supplement is disregarded for means-tested benefits and tax credits. The additional payments will therefore not reduce other benefits that you receive.

### Child Winter Heating Payment:

Child winter heating payment is payable to all families with a severely disabled child, aged 19 or under and receiving the highest rate of the care component of DLA/CDP or the enhanced daily living element of PIP/ADP on at least one day within the qualifying period. At the time of going to print we were unable to establish this period, but it is likely to run between Monday 16 September to Sunday 22 September, regardless of other income, savings or benefits.

The child winter heating payment is **£251.50** and is payable for each severely disabled child. If CDP/DLA, or the enhanced daily living element of PIP/ADP, is awarded later but backdated to cover this date, child winter heating assistance is payable. Payments are made in November, usually into the same account into which CDP/DLA/PIP/ADP is paid.

There is usually no requirement to make an application for child winter heating assistance.

### TV licence discount

If your child is severely sight impaired (blind), you could be entitled to a 50 per cent discount on the cost of a television licence. It is likely, given the absence of new certification for children living in Scotland as of April 2018, that you will need to supply a copy of the letter issued from your ophthalmologist or paediatrician confirming your child’s diagnosis as proof of entitlement.

For further information, call the TV Licensing Helpline on **0300 790 6071** or visit **tvlicensing.co.uk**.

## How we can help

If you would like any more information about benefits for children, you can speak to our Sight Loss Advice service by calling our Helpline. Our advisors can also carry out a full benefit check with you and give you advice about applying for other benefits you may be missing out on.

Our Welfare Benefit Sight Loss Advisers are available to offer you help if you would like to challenge a benefit decision or think you should be awarded more than you have been. Our advisers can help you with the mandatory reconsideration and First-Tier Tribunal (appeals) process.

RNIB’s Legal Rights service is available to offer you help with more complex benefit queries and appeals, such as those to the Upper Tribunal, once the initial appeals process to the First Tier Tribunal has been completed.

### RNIB Helpline

If you need someone who understands sight loss, call our Helpline on **0303 123 9999**, say **“Alexa, call RNIB Helpline”** to an Alexa-enabled device, or email **helpline@rnib.org.uk**. Our opening hours are weekdays from 8am – 8pm and Saturdays from 9am – 1pm.

### Sight Advice FAQ

Sight Advice FAQ answers questions about living with sight loss, eye health or being newly diagnosed with a sight condition. It is produced by RNIB in partnership with other sight loss organisations. **sightadvicefaq.org.uk**

### Connect with others

Meet or connect with others who are blind or partially sighted online, by phone or in your community to share interests, experiences and support for each other. From book clubs and social groups to sport and volunteering, our friendly, helpful and knowledgeable team can link you up with opportunities to suit you. Visit **rnib.org.uk/connect** or call **0303 123 9999**.



**RNIB Legal Rights Service**

April 2024

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