



S O C I A L
S E C U R I T Y
A G E N C Y

Going into Hospital?



Is this leaflet for me?

If you are getting benefits or a State Pension and you need to go into hospital for a while, this leaflet is for you.

It explains how your benefits could be affected by a stay in hospital. It also tells you how and where to find out more.

The main thing to remember is that whenever you go into or come out of hospital, you must tell the office that pays your benefits or State Pension as soon as possible.

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The effect that going into hospital has on the following benefits

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Partner

We will treat you as a couple if you live with your husband, wife or civil partner, or if you live with someone as if they were your husband, wife or civil partner. We call this other person your partner.

Attendance Allowance

What happens to my Attendance Allowance if I go into hospital?

Attendance Allowance will usually stop after you have been in hospital for 28 days, unless you are a private patient paying for your accommodation and treatment without help from the NHS.

If you go into or come out of hospital, you must tell the Disability and Carers Service straight away.

If you or your carer get Carer's Allowance, this may also stop (see page 6).

If your Attendance Allowance stops, you or your partner may also stop getting extra money in other benefits, like:

- Income Support
- Pension Credit
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Housing Benefit, or
- Rates Rebate

How do I find out more?

Call the Benefit Enquiry Line (for disabled people and carers).

Phone: 0800 22 06 74

Textphone: 0800 24 37 87

Open Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm

For information about call charges, see page 21.

Bereavement Benefits

What happens if I or my children go into hospital?

Tell the office that pays your benefit.

Your bereavement benefits will not be affected.

To find out more, contact The Pension Service, Windsor House. You can find our address and number in your local phone book.

Carer's Allowance

What happens if I or the person I am caring for go into hospital?

If you get Carer's Allowance, that money may stop as soon as you go into hospital.

Your Carer's Allowance may stop as soon as the disabled person you are caring for goes into hospital.

If you get extra money with your Carer's Allowance for someone who looks after your children, the extra money may stop straight away if that person goes into hospital.

However, in some cases you can carry on getting Carer's Allowance for up to 12 weeks.

If you go into or come out of hospital, you must tell the Disability and Carers Service straight away.

If your Carer's Allowance stops, you or your partner may also stop getting extra money in other benefits, like:

- Income Support
- Pension Credit
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Housing Benefit, or
- Rates Rebate

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How do I find out more?

Call the Benefit Enquiry Line (for disabled people and carers).

Phone: 0800 22 06 74

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Constant Attendance Allowance

If you need care every day because you have a disability, and you claim Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit or a War Disablement Pension, you can claim Constant Attendance Allowance.

If you or your partner get Constant Attendance Allowance, it will usually stop after you or they have been in hospital for 4 weeks.

How do I find out more?

[For Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit](#)

To find out more, contact Industrial Injuries Branch, you can find our address and numbers in your local phone book.

[For War Disablement Pensions](#)

The Veteran's Agency

Phone: 028 9032 7881

Lines are open from 9.00am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

[For information about call charges, see page 21.](#)

Partner

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Disability Living Allowance

What happens to my Disability Living Allowance if I go into hospital?

Both the care and mobility parts of Disability Living Allowance will usually stop after you have been in hospital for 28 days, unless you are a private patient paying for your accommodation and treatment without help from the NHS.

If some or all of your Disability Living Allowance is paid into the Motability scheme, you may carry on getting this mobility part until the Motability agreement ends.

If you go into or come out of hospital, you must tell the Disability and Carers Service straight away.

If you or your carer get Carer's Allowance, this may also stop (see page 6).

If your Disability Living Allowance stops, you or your partner may also stop getting extra money in other benefits, like:

- Income Support
- Pension Credit
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Housing Benefit, or
- Rates Rebate

What happens to my child's Disability Living Allowance if my child goes into hospital?

If your child gets Disability Living Allowance and is under 16, it will usually stop after they have been in hospital for more than 12 weeks.

If your child goes into or comes out of hospital, you must tell the Disability and Carers Service straight away.

How do I find out more?

Call the [Benefit Enquiry Line](#) (for disabled people and carers).

Phone: [0800 22 06 74](#)

Textphone: [0800 24 37 87](#)

Open Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm.

For information about call charges, see [page 21](#).

Incapacity Benefits

How going into hospital affects Incapacity Benefit

If you spend longer than 52 weeks in hospital, any extra amount of benefit you are receiving for an adult dependant will stop.

These rules also apply if you get Severe Disablement Allowance.

How to find out more?

To find out more, contact Incapacity Benefits Branch, you can find our address and numbers in your local phone book.

Partner

We will treat you as a couple if you live with your husband, wife or civil partner, or if you live with someone as if they were your husband, wife or civil partner. We call this other person your partner.

Income Support

What happens to Income Support if I (or someone I am claiming for) go into hospital?

If you, your partner or a child who you are claiming benefit for go into hospital, your Income Support should stay the same for up to 52 weeks as long as you still meet the conditions for getting it.

If you are getting other benefits that stop earlier because you (or someone you are claiming for) go into hospital, this could affect your Income Support.

If you know you have to stay in hospital for longer, ask your local Social Security or Jobs and Benefits office for advice.

If you have a partner and you get Income Support, and one (or both) of you has been in hospital for more than 52 weeks, you may each have to claim separately, as 2 single people.

How do I find out more?

To find out more, contact the Social Security Agency or visit www.dsdni.gov.uk or you can find our address and numbers in your local phone book.

Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit

I get Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit - what if my circumstances change?

There is no need to tell us if you go into hospital as this will not affect your Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit.

If you get Constant Attendance Allowance and you go into hospital, you must tell us as soon as you have been in hospital for 4 weeks.

Partner

We will treat you as a couple if you live with your husband, wife or civil partner, or if you live with someone as if they were your husband, wife or civil partner. We call this other person your partner.

Jobseeker's Allowance

What happens to Jobseeker's Allowance if I (or someone I am claiming for) go into hospital?

If you go into hospital, you may be able to still claim Jobseeker's Allowance for up to 2 weeks, please ask us for advice. After that time you must claim Incapacity Benefit and/or Income Support as you cannot meet the conditions for getting Jobseeker's Allowance.

If your partner or a child who you are claiming benefit for go into hospital, your Jobseeker's Allowance should stay the same for up to 52 weeks as long as you still meet the conditions for getting it. If the hospital stay will be for more than 52 weeks, ask us for advice. If your partner or child is in hospital for more than 52 weeks, the amount of benefit you get may go down.

How do I find out more?

To find out more, contact your local Social Security or Jobs and Benefits office or visit www.dsdni.gov.uk or you can find our address and numbers in your local phone book.

Pension Credit

How does being in hospital affect my Pension Credit?

If you are single

Your Pension Credit will normally stay the same unless you get extra amounts for:

- severe disability (you will stop getting this extra money once your Attendance Allowance or Disability Living Allowance stops, usually after 28 days in hospital),
or
- being a carer (you will stop getting this extra money 8 weeks after your Carer's Allowance stops).

If you and your partner are treated as a couple for the purposes of Pension Credit

If one of you goes into hospital, your Pension Credit will normally stay the same for the first 52 weeks. It may reduce if:

- you get an extra amount for severe disability or being a carer (this will stop when the Attendance Allowance or Disability Living Allowance or Carer's Allowance stops), or
- one of you is not likely to go back home after leaving hospital.

Partner

We will treat you as a couple if you live with your husband, wife or civil partner, or if you live with someone as if they were your husband, wife or civil partner. We call this other person your partner.

If your partner is in hospital and you do not expect them to be able to come back home, we will work out your Pension Credit as if you were a single person. If your partner was the one getting Pension Credit, you will need to apply for Pension Credit yourself.

If you and your partner are both in hospital, your Pension Credit will normally stay the same for the first 52 weeks. It may reduce if:

- one of you gets an extra amount for severe disability or being a carer (this will stop when the Attendance Allowance or Disability Living Allowance or Carer's Allowance stops), or
- you stop being treated as a couple.

After you and your partner have been in hospital for 52 weeks, we will treat you both as single people, unless you both expect to come home soon after that time. If your partner was the one getting Pension Credit, you will need to apply for Pension Credit in your own right.

What counts as a hospital (for Pension Credit)?

An NHS nursing home counts as a hospital when we work out Pension Credit. For example, if you are in hospital for 3 weeks and an NHS nursing home for 5 weeks, your total stay in hospital counts as 8 weeks.

More information about Pension Credit

Phone: [0808 100 6165](tel:08081006165)

Textphone: [0808 100 1165](tel:08081001165)

Lines are open from 9.00am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

Or visit

[www.dsdni.gov.uk/pension credit](http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/pension-credit)

For information about call charges, see page 21.

Partner

We will treat you as a couple if you live with your husband, wife or civil partner, or if you live with someone as if they were your husband, wife or civil partner. We call this other person your partner.

State Pension

How going into hospital affects State Pension

Your weekly State Pension is not affected by being in hospital, even if you stay in hospital for longer than 52 weeks. You can also continue to earn extra pension or a lump-sum payment if you stay in hospital while you are putting off claiming your State Pension.

But if you get an extra amount paid with your State Pension for your husband, wife, civil partner or someone who looks after your children, you need to tell us when you go into and come out of hospital.

To contact The Pension Service, Windsor House

- Phone: [028 9054 9393](tel:02890549393)

The Pension Service record phone calls to help them provide an accurate and consistent service and for training and security purposes.

For information about call charges, see [page 21](#).

Other help you can get

Help with housing costs

Your local authority may help you pay your rent and/or rates if you get:

- Income Support
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, or
- Pension Credit.

Please contact the NI Housing Executive or the Land & Property Service.

If you get help with your housing costs through one of the benefits shown above, and you expect to stay in hospital for more than 52 weeks, you should tell The Pension Service, your local Social Security or Jobs and Benefits office or the NI Housing Executive straight away. Your partner, if you have one, may be able to claim this help with housing costs instead of you.

If you get Income Support or income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, contact your local Social Security office for more information on help with housing costs. If you receive Pension Credit, contact The Pension Service.

Help with hospital travel costs

If you are having treatment provided by the NHS, you may get help from the NHS with your travel costs:

- when you go into and come out of hospital, and
- when you go to and from hospital as an outpatient or day patient to see a consultant.

You may be able to get this help if you get:

- Income Support
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, or
- the guarantee part of Pension Credit.

You may also be able to get help through the NHS Low Income Scheme.

How do I find out more?

To find out more about help from the NHS, visit the website for the area where you live.

What is the Social Fund?

The Social Fund is for people who are living on a low income and cannot meet important costs out of their normal income.

If you are visiting a close friend or relative in hospital regularly, you may be able to get help from the Social Fund.

To find out more about the Social Fund, contact the Social Security Agency, www.dsdni.gov.uk or you can find our address and numbers in your local phone book.

Call charges

Calls to 0800 numbers are free from BT land lines but you may have to pay if you use another phone company, a mobile phone, or if you are calling from abroad.

From 1 August 2007, calls to 0845 numbers from BT land lines should cost no more than 4p per minute with a 6p call set up charge. You may have to pay more if you use another phone company or a mobile phone, or if you are calling from abroad.

Calls from mobile phones can cost up to 40p per minute, so check the cost of calls with your service provider.

Textphones

Where textphone numbers are provided, these are for people who find it hard to speak or hear clearly.

If you do not have a textphone, some libraries or citizens advice bureaux may have one.

Textphones do not receive text messages from mobile phones.

Important information about this leaflet

This leaflet is only a guide and does not cover every circumstance. We have done our best to make sure that the information in this leaflet is correct as of March 2008.

It is possible that some of the information is oversimplified, or may become inaccurate over time, for example because of changes to the law.

Where to get help and advice

For more information on other Benefits, get in touch with your Social Security or Jobs & Benefits office or look for our display advert in the business numbers section of the phone book.

You can get more information from our website. The address is **www.dsdni.gov.uk**

A confidential phone service is available for people with disabilities and their carers. Ring the **Benefit Enquiry Line (BEL)** on **0800 22 06 74**.

People with speech or hearing problems using a textphone can dial **0800 24 37 87**.

The person taking your call will not have your personal papers but will be able to give you general advice. You must not take this advice to be a decision on any matter you are asking about.

Remember that this leaflet is a general guide to benefits. It is not a full and authoritative statement of the law. We have made every effort to make sure that the information in this leaflet is correct at the date shown on the cover. However, changes in the law may make the leaflet become gradually less accurate.

Leaflet GIHA5NI from June 2008. Replaces leaflet GL12 from October 2007.