

# Information you need to know about your claim for



## Carer Allowance

Carer Allowance is an income supplement for people who provide additional daily care and attention for an adult or child with a disability or a medical condition, or an adult who is frail aged. It can be paid in addition to wages, or another income support payment.

Carer Allowance is paid in addition to Carer Payment or any other payment. Carer Allowance is not taxable or assets tested. Carer Allowance is income tested. We will let you know if you need to provide your and your partner's adjusted taxable income plus any deemed income from account-based income streams (also known as an allocated pension or transition to retirement pension).

### Online services



You can access your Centrelink online account through myGov. myGov is a secure way to access a range of government services online with one username and password. You can create a myGov account at **my.gov.au** and link it to your Centrelink online account.

### Important information

You must return your claim form and **all** supporting documents at the same time you lodge your claim form. If you do not return all documents, your claim may not be accepted. The only exception will be if you are waiting for medical evidence or other documents from a third party.

### For more information



Go to **servicesaustralia.gov.au/carers** or visit one of our service centres.

Call us on **132 717**.

We can translate documents you need for your claim or payments for free.

To speak to us in your language, call **131 202**.

Call charges may apply.



If you have a hearing or speech impairment, you can contact the **TTY service** on Freecall™ **1800 810 586**. A TTY phone is required to use this service.



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### Carer Allowance (for a child under 16 years of age)

#### To be eligible for Carer Allowance you must be:

- providing additional care and attention on a daily basis, in your and your child's home or in hospital
- an Australian resident – see page 7.

#### The child you provide care for must:

- be your dependent child
- receive care in their home or in hospital
- be an Australian resident – see page 7, and
- have a permanent disability or a medical condition, or
- have a temporary condition for an extended period of at least 12 months.

#### There are 2 levels of Carer Allowance for children under 16 years of age:

- fortnightly payment and Health Care Card
- Health Care Card only.

#### Fortnightly payment (including a Health Care Card for your child)

Information will be provided by you and your child's treating health professional to assess if you are eligible for the fortnightly Carer Allowance payment, including a Health Care Card for your child. This information will help us determine the way your child functions compared with the average ability of a child of the same age who does not have a disability or a medical condition.

Some disabilities and medical conditions are considered to be significant enough to automatically qualify for the fortnightly payment and Health Care Card. These conditions are listed in the **Carer Payment and Carer Allowance – Medical Report (for a child under 16 years) (SA431)** form, available from [servicesaustralia.gov.au/forms](http://servicesaustralia.gov.au/forms)

#### A child under 3 years of age

There are behavioural elements of the child assessment tool that are only applied once a child turns 3 years of age. Where a child under 3 years of age with a disability or medical condition has not qualified for payment, you may want to re-test your eligibility for payment after the child has turned 3 years of age.

#### Health Care Card only

You may qualify for a Health Care Card, even if you are not eligible for a fortnightly payment of Carer Allowance, if your child needs 'substantially more care and attention' compared to a child of the same age who does not have a disability or a medical condition.

The Health Care Card assists with reducing the cost of some pharmaceuticals, doctors' fees (where bulk billing is offered) and other benefits that vary in each state and territory.

For more information, go to [servicesaustralia.gov.au/healthcarecard](http://servicesaustralia.gov.au/healthcarecard)

#### Shared care

In certain circumstances Carer Allowance payment can be shared between 2 people who provide care for the same child, provided that the 2 people are not a couple.

#### Caring for more than one child

You can claim Carer Allowance for each dependent child with a disability or a medical condition you provide care for, and may receive a payment for each.

You may qualify for a single rate of Carer Allowance for 2 children whose combined assessment meets the eligibility requirements for payment.

## Carer Allowance (for a person 16 years of age or over)

### To be eligible for Carer Allowance you must be:

- caring for a person with a disability or a medical condition who needs additional care and attention
- providing care for a person in either your private home, their private home, or in hospital
- an Australian resident – see page 7.

### The person you provide care for must be an Australian resident and meet one of the following:

- have a permanent disability or a medical condition or be frail aged
- have a temporary condition for an extended period of at least 12 months
- be diagnosed as being in the final phase of a terminal condition.

### Shared care

In certain circumstances, Carer Allowance may be shared between 2 people who provide care for the same person, provided that the 2 people are not a couple.

### If you live apart from the person you provide care for

To be eligible for Carer Allowance when you do not live with the person you provide care for, you must be providing at least 20 hours of personal care per week on a daily basis and the care must be provided in your home or theirs.

### Caring for more than one person 16 years of age or over

You can claim Carer Allowance for up to 2 people 16 years of age or over and may receive a payment for each.

## General information

We cannot pay claims that are made after the person you provide care for has died.

### Can I take a break from caring?

You can take breaks from caring for the person you usually provide care for. You can take up to 63 days per calendar year (1 January – 31 December) and still be eligible for Carer Allowance. It is important that you tell us each time the care receiver is out of your care for more than 24 hours (midnight to midnight).

For example

You provide care on Tuesday morning and the person you provide care for enters respite that same day. You provide care again on the Friday afternoon that they return home. This would result in a total of 2 respite days being used. The respite is from Wednesday to Thursday. You can use these breaks in a variety of ways including having a holiday, visiting friends and family or for formal respite. You may also use these days if you are sick and cannot provide care for the person you usually care for.

### What happens to my payments if the child I provide care for goes into hospital?

You can continue to receive Carer Allowance for a child under 16 years of age as long as you continue to provide care for your child while they are in hospital and you intend to resume caring for your child when they return home. It is important that you tell us if this occurs. If your child remains hospitalised for a period longer than 12 weeks, a review will be conducted every 12 weeks with a comprehensive review after 24 months of continuous hospitalisation.

### What happens to my payments if the person I provide care for goes into hospital?

You can continue to receive Carer Allowance for a person 16 years of age or over for up to 63 days per calendar year (1 January–31 December) as long as you continue to provide care for the person while they are in hospital and you intend to resume caring for the person when they return home. It is important you tell us if this happens. The hospitalisation period is in addition to the standard 63 day allowable break from caring period.

### Carer Allowance income test

To be eligible for Carer Allowance your and your partner's adjusted taxable income must be below \$250,000 per annum. Both members of a couple must provide their adjusted taxable income details for the same financial year.

The Carer Allowance income test uses your adjusted taxable income (see below) plus any deemed income from account-based income streams. The adjusted taxable income details you provide can be for either of the 2 financial years preceding the current financial year (for example, a Carer Allowance claim lodged in the 2018–2019 financial year would be assessed using the adjusted taxable income from the 2017–2018 or 2016–2017 financial year). If you are required to lodge an income tax return, the income should be the most recent details verified by the Australian Taxation Office. There is no assets test.

If the adjusted taxable income you have supplied plus any deemed income from account-based income streams is above the income limit, you may supply an estimate of your adjusted taxable income for the current financial year. An estimate will only be accepted where you can demonstrate that a change in circumstances has already occurred and that it is an acceptable reason for using an estimate of income for the current financial year.

Examples of acceptable reasons for using an estimate of income include:

- retirement or partial retirement from the workforce, closure of a business, or receipt of an inheritance
- reduced working hours (ongoing) because the care receiver requires more care and the carer is personally providing that care
- a substantial loss of income caused by a catastrophic event or natural disaster (for example, fire, flood or cyclone)
- a substantial one-off cost because of the disability or medical condition of the care-receiver.

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### What is adjusted taxable income

When assessing your taxable income, the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) excludes any foreign income that is exempt from Australian income tax, the value of any employer provided fringe benefits, tax-free government pensions or benefits, and the value of any reportable superannuation contributions. The ATO also allows you to reduce your taxable income by any losses that you incurred during the financial year from rental properties or financial investments.

The same exclusions and deductions are not allowed under the income test for Carer Allowance. These amounts are added back onto your taxable income or other assessable income. If you or your partner are 60 years of age, we will deem any account-based income streams to be earning income. This will also be added to your total adjusted taxable income assessment. The full amount of any child support you paid in the financial year will be deducted from your income.

Your adjusted taxable income is the sum of:

- your taxable income as shown on your Notice of Assessment, including Paid Parental Leave. If you are not required to lodge a tax return, give the amount of taxable income you received, **plus**
- any foreign income that you received that you did not have to pay Australian income tax on (the ATO refers to this as target foreign income), **plus**
- your total net investment loss (this includes any losses that the ATO has deducted from your gross income including net rental property and financial investment losses), **plus**
- the value of any employer provided benefits above \$1,000, **plus**
- your reportable superannuation contributions, **plus**
- any tax free government pensions or benefits (includes disability pensions, carer payments and defence pensions), **plus**
- the deemed income from the current balance of any account-based income stream (where the account holder is 60 years of age or older), **less**
- child support you have paid.

## Australian residence requirements

To be eligible for Carer Allowance, you and the person you provide care for must satisfy residence requirements.

You and the person you provide care for must both be Australian residents and you, as the person claiming, must be in Australia when you lodge your claim.

You are an Australian resident (as defined by the *Social Security Act 1991*) if you are living in Australia and you are one of the following:

- an Australian citizen
- a permanent visa holder
- a protected Special Category visa holder. That is, you arrived in Australia on a New Zealand passport and you were in Australia on 26 February 2001, or for 12 months in the 2 years immediately before this date, or you were assessed as 'protected' before 26 February 2004.

You and the person you provide care for must be Australian residents and you must be in Australia when you lodge your claim.

We consider you to be living in Australia if Australia is your usual place of residence. That is, Australia is where you make your home.

When we are deciding whether you are living in Australia we will look at all of the following:

- the nature of your accommodation
- the nature and extent of your family relationships in Australia
- the nature and extent of your employment, business or financial ties with Australia
- the frequency and duration of your travel outside Australia
- any other matter we think is relevant.

Newly arrived residents generally have a 52 week waiting period for Carer Allowance. This may not apply to you if you:

- are an Australian citizen
- arrived under a refugee or humanitarian program
- hold a certain visa subclass
- are the partner of a refugee, former refugee or humanitarian migrant, and were the partner of that person at the time they arrived in Australia
- are currently in receipt of another payment from us.

You can find more information on how long you may need to wait and other reasons you may be exempt by going to [servicessaustralia.gov.au/newresidentswaiting](https://servicessaustralia.gov.au/newresidentswaiting)

For more information about the conditions for payment outside Australia, go to [servicessaustralia.gov.au/paymentsoverseas](https://servicessaustralia.gov.au/paymentsoverseas)

Check with us if you are not sure about your circumstances.

Proof of residence status is required. This is separate to the requirement to confirm your identity.

## Medical information

Details of the medical reports you need to provide are listed on your Intention to Claim letter. If we already have a carer medical report for the person you provide care for, you may not need to provide a new medical report.

Information about medical reports, including who can complete them, can be found on the medical reports.

If you are claiming for more than one person, you will need a separate medical report for each person.

## Who is a parent or legal guardian?

The term 'parent' refers to a natural parent, adoptive parent or a person who is legally responsible for a child born through an artificial conception procedure, or where a surrogacy court order is in place.

The term 'guardian' in relation to Carer Allowance, refers to a person who has been granted guardianship of the child under a law of the Commonwealth, a state or a territory.

## Someone to deal with us on your behalf

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You can choose another person or organisation to deal with us on your behalf for your Centrelink payments and services.

You can authorise them to enquire, act or get payments for you.

If you want someone to deal with us on your behalf, complete the **Authorising a person or organisation to enquire or act on your behalf (SS313)** form.

If you do not have this form, or want more information, go to [servicesaustralia.gov.au/nominees](https://servicesaustralia.gov.au/nominees)

## Confirming your identity

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When claiming a payment or service from us, you may be required to confirm your identity.

You must provide the following original documents (not copies), one of which must be an acceptable photo ID document:

- 1 commencement document to confirm your birth or arrival in Australia, and
- 1 primary document **and** 1 secondary document to show the use of your identity in the community.

You may need to attend a service centre in person so we can compare you to a photo on 1 of your documents.

If your name differs between the identity documents you have provided, you will also need to provide evidence of change of name, such as a marriage certificate or change of name certificate.

We cannot accept:

- copies or certified copies
- expired documents
- the same document for more than 1 category.

To confirm your identity, we will need to verify the documents you provide with the issuing agency.

If you do not have enough documents, tell us and we will talk to you about other options.

**All documents must be Australian issued and current unless otherwise specified.**

You may be required to provide documents again if you claim another payment or your circumstances change.

### Commencement documents to confirm your birth or arrival in Australia

You must provide 1 of the following:

Document	Details
Australian birth certificate	A full birth certificate in your name or former name, issued by an Australian state or territory Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages. We cannot accept birth extracts or birth cards.
Australian visa	Must be a current visa issued in your name or former name. We cannot accept visa grant notification letters or expired visas.
Australian citizenship certificate	Issued in your name or former name. If you do not have a certificate issued in your own name, we will accept your parents' certificate if you are listed as a child with your full name and date of birth.
ImmiCard	A photo identity card issued in your name or former name by the Department of Home Affairs or the Department of Immigration and Border Protection.
Australian passport	A current passport issued in your name or former name.
Certificate of Identity	Issued in your name or former name by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.
Document of Identity	Issued in your name or former name by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.



### Primary documents to show the use of your identity in the community

You must provide either:

- another document to confirm your birth or arrival in Australia, or
- 1 of the following:

Document	Details
Australian driver licence – motor vehicle	Current licence, learner permit or provisional licence issued by an Australian state or territory road transport authority in your name with your photo and signature.
Australian marriage certificate	Issued by an Australian state or territory Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages. We cannot accept ceremonial, church or celebrant issued certificates.
Foreign passport	Current passport issued by another country, with a valid entry stamp or visa.
Proof of age card	Current card issued by a state or territory government agency in your name with your photo.
Shooter or firearm licence	Current licence issued by a state or territory government agency in your name with your photo. We cannot accept minor or junior permits or licences.
Secondary student ID Card	Current card issued by an Australian secondary school in your name with your photo. This is only if you are under 18 and do not have any other primary documents.

### Secondary documents to show the use of your identity in the community

You must provide either:

- another document to confirm your birth or arrival in Australia, or
- another primary document, or
- 1 of the following:

Document	Details
Security licence	Current security protection industry or crowd control licence issued by an Australian state or territory government agency, in your name with your photo.
Bank or financial institution card, statement or passbook	Current ATM, credit or debit card with your name issued by an Australian bank, credit union or building society. You can also use a statement or passbook from a current account with your name and address. We cannot accept documents from foreign banks or institutions.
Child's birth certificate	Birth certificate for a child issued by an Australian state or territory Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages showing your name as a parent or guardian.
Defence Force identity card	Issued by the Australian Defence Force and shows your name and photo.
Australian divorce papers	In your name or former name, for example, a Decree Nisi or Decree Absolute.
Educational certificate	Qualification certificate from a school, TAFE, university or Registered Training Organisation in your name or former name.
Certified academic transcript	Issued by an Australian school, TAFE, university or Registered Training Organisation in your name or former name.
Name change	Legal change of name certificate issued by an Australian state or territory Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages.
Veterans' Affairs card	Current card issued by the Department of Veterans' Affairs in your name.
Tenancy agreement or lease	Current formal agreement or lease in your name and showing your address.
Motor vehicle registration	Current registration showing your name and address.
Documents issued by foreign governments	Foreign birth, marriage or education certificate, driver licence, national identity card or expired passport.
Australian Government issued photo ID card	Current Commonwealth, state or territory issued card in your name.
Rates notice	Notice in your name and showing your address that is less than 12 months old.
Utility account	Water, gas, electricity or phone account in your name and showing your address that is less than 12 months old.
Student ID card	Current card issued by an Australian secondary school, TAFE, university or Registered Training Organisation in your name with your photo.
Electoral enrolment	Proof of enrolment card in your name and showing your address.
Aviation security identity card (ASIC)	Current card issued by an approved ASIC issuing body in your name with your photo or signature.
Maritime security identity card (MSIC)	Current card issued by an approved MSIC issuing body in your name with your photo or signature.

### Secondary documents to show the use of your identity in the community

You must provide either:

- another document to confirm your birth or arrival in Australia, or
- another primary document, or
- 1 of the following:

Police identity card	Current card issued by an Australian police force in your name with your photo or signature.
Prison release certificate	In your name with your photo or signature.
Tangentyere Community ID card	Current card issued by the Tangentyere Council in your name and with your photo.

## Changes you must tell us about

**If you do not tell us about changes, you could incur a debt. If you have a debt, you will need to pay all or some of the money back.** After you claim **Carer Allowance**, you must tell us **within 14 days** if any of the following happens.

If you are claiming **Carer Allowance**, make sure you understand all of the changes you must tell us about.

To advise us of changes, call **132 717**.

### Changes to your bank account

You must tell us if you change or close the account into which payments are made.

### Changes to your financial circumstances

You must tell us if:

- your and your current partner's (if you have one) combined, adjusted taxable income for the previous financial year was \$250,000 or more
- your or your partner's income stream balance or payments change or you start receiving an income stream payment (for example, account-based income stream, defined benefit pension or annuity).

### Changes to your care arrangements

You must tell us if:

- you no longer provide care to this person
- the person you provide care for no longer requires the same amount of care
- the person you provide care for no longer requires daily care and attention on a temporary or permanent basis
- the person you provide care for has an improvement in health so that they would no longer be considered to have a disability
- the person you provide care for leaves your care or is in hospital for a period of 24 hours or more
- you start or stop sharing care with someone else (including an institution such as a nursing home or care facility) or make changes to your current shared care arrangement
- you regularly share care at some time in the fortnight with another person you do not live with
- you or the person you provide care for change residential address
- the child you get Carer Allowance for is absent for 24 hours or more for education, training or treatment (other than hospital)
- you or the person you provide care for are sent to prison or charged with an offence and are in custody on remand
- you or the person you provide care for are admitted to an institution such as a nursing home or psychiatric facility
- a paid carer helps you provide care for the person
- you start to be paid at award wages for the care you provide
- the person you provide care for dies (you must tell us within 28 days).

**Travelling outside Australia** If you are leaving Australia to travel or live in another country, you may need to tell us. Travelling outside Australia may affect your payments. For information about how your payment or concession card may be affected, or if you should contact us about leaving or returning to Australia, go to [servicesaustralia.gov.au/paymentsoverseas](https://servicesaustralia.gov.au/paymentsoverseas)

## Other payments, concessions and help

If you receive Carer Allowance, there are other payments, concessions and help you may receive.

**Carer Supplement** Carer Supplement is an annual lump sum payment to help you with the costs of caring for a person with a disability or medical condition, if you are receiving Carer Payment or Carer Allowance. For more information, go to [servicesaustralia.gov.au/carers](https://servicesaustralia.gov.au/carers)

**Centrepay** Centrepay is a voluntary bill-paying service which is free for Centrelink customers. Use Centrepay to arrange regular deductions from your Centrelink payment to pay bills and expenses like rent, gas, electricity, water, phone and other household costs. You can start or change a deduction at any time. The quickest way to do this is through your Centrelink account online. For more information, go to [servicesaustralia.gov.au/centrepay](https://servicesaustralia.gov.au/centrepay)

**Child Disability Assistance Payment** Child Disability Assistance Payment is an annual lump sum payment to help parents with the costs of caring for a child with a disability if you are receiving Carer Allowance. For more information, go to [servicesaustralia.gov.au/carers](https://servicesaustralia.gov.au/carers)

**Community Engagement Officers** These officers can help you:

- manage your income support and other business with us
- link with government and community services for assistance and other support.

They provide Centrelink services in locations like mental health facilities, general crisis or support services, specialist accommodation services, youth services, drug and alcohol services, family and domestic violence services, and organised meeting places. For more information, go to [servicesaustralia.gov.au/communityofficer](https://servicesaustralia.gov.au/communityofficer)

**Essential Medical Equipment Payment** If you use, or provide care for someone that is using, essential medical equipment or medically required heating/cooling in your current residence, you may be eligible for the Essential Medical Equipment Payment. For more information, go to [servicesaustralia.gov.au/emep](https://servicesaustralia.gov.au/emep)

**Health Care Card** A Health Care Card provides you access to pharmaceutical medications listed under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme at a reduced cost. You may also receive other concessions provided by state and territory governments.

**Indigenous Services Officers** These officers are located in some of our service centres. We also have interpreters who speak Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander languages and teams who visit and help remote communities.

**Mobility Allowance** Mobility Allowance provides help to people with disabilities who are doing voluntary work, paid work, vocational training, or any combination of these and cannot use public transport without extra help. There does not need to be public transport in the person's area to qualify.

Mobility Allowance helps with the extra costs of travel.

For more information, go to [servicesaustralia.gov.au/mobilityallowance](https://servicesaustralia.gov.au/mobilityallowance)

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**Remote Area Allowance** Remote Area Allowance is an additional payment for customers living in remote areas. It recognises that many customers who do not pay tax, or very little tax, do not get the full benefit of tax zone rebates.

Remote Area Allowance makes a contribution towards some of the costs associated with living in particularly remote areas.

For more information, go to [servicesaustralia.gov.au/remoteallowance](https://servicesaustralia.gov.au/remoteallowance)

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**Senior Customer Service Officers** Centrelink has Senior Customer Service Officers in our service centres and smart centres throughout Australia. Senior Customer Service Officers help people with disabilities to access specialist and mainstream employment and training services, and arrange referral to other agencies for information and support services.

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**Social Workers** We have professional social workers in our service centres and smart centres throughout Australia. Social workers can offer you personal counselling and support in difficult times, such as domestic and family violence, severe financial hardship, homelessness, loss and bereavement. They can refer you to other services and programs like housing, health, emergency relief, legal and/or counselling services and support groups.

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## Assistance for carers

### Access to other carer services

Carer Gateway is a national service providing in-person, online and phone-based support and services to people who care for a family member or friend with disability, a medical condition, mental illness, or who is frail due to age.

Carers can access Carer Gateway by calling **1800 422 737**, Monday to Friday between 8.00 am and 5.00 pm or by visiting [carergateway.gov.au](https://carergateway.gov.au)

Carers can also contact Carer Gateway via the National Relay Service at [communications.gov.au/accesshub](https://communications.gov.au/accesshub)

### Needing help after someone has died?

For information on payments and services available after someone has died, go to [servicesaustralia.gov.au/bereavement](https://servicesaustralia.gov.au/bereavement)

### News for carers

'News for Carers' is an electronic newsletter for carers receiving Carer Allowance.

'News for Carers' keeps carers up to date with changes to payments and provides useful information from us and the wider community. For more information, go to [servicesaustralia.gov.au/carers](https://servicesaustralia.gov.au/carers)