

## What is the Carer Allowance?

The [Carer Allowance](#) is a fortnightly payment of approximately \$94.70<sup>1</sup>. It is paid to carers who provide daily care and attention for an adult who is frail aged, or has a disability or severe medical condition.

Carer Allowance is not subject to the Income and Assets Test and is not taxable. It may be paid in addition to Carer Payment or another pension or benefit such as the Aged Pension.

## Who is eligible?

Not all carers are eligible for Carer Allowance. It depends on the level of assistance needed by the person you care for.

To be eligible, you and the person you care for must be Australian Residents. You must provide care on a daily basis, amounting to at least 20 hours per week, but it is not necessary for you to live in the same home.

Two people who are caring for the same person can share the Carer Allowance.

In addition, you can apply for two Carer Allowance payments if you care for more than one person.

## What is the Carer Payment?

The [Carer Payment](#) is an income security payment paid to carers who are unable to support themselves through work, as a result of their caring role. Carer Payment provides up to \$499.70 per fortnight (plus \$5.80 [Pharmaceutical Allowance](#)) for a single person, or up to \$417.20 (plus \$2.90 Pharmaceutical Allowance) for a person who is married or in a de-facto relationship<sup>2</sup>.

People who receive full or part Carer Payment get the same concessions as other pensioners, including the Health Concession Card.

## Who is eligible?

To be eligible for the Carer Payment you need to provide full time care for an extended period of time for a person with a disability or chronic illness. The person you care for must be a pensioner or part pensioner and meet the requirements of the Income and Assets Test. Alternatively, the person you care for may be ineligible for a pension because they have not lived in Australia long enough to qualify.

Carer Payment is means and assets tested. This means that if you have an independent income, or an employed partner with income and assets above the threshold, you may not be eligible.

You do not have to live with the person you care for, however you need to live within a reasonable distance and provide care on a daily basis. You are still entitled to work or undertake education and training for up to 25 hours per week.

Two people who are caring for the same person can each apply for the Carer Payment, if that person's disability is severe.

<sup>1</sup>Indexed annually in January. Current at time of publishing.

<sup>2</sup>Current at time of publishing.



## How to apply for the Carer Allowance or Carer Payment

Contact Centrelink to register your intention to claim the Carer Allowance or Carer Payment. You can do this by phone (132 717), on their [website](#) or by making an appointment with a Customer Service Officer.

You will then be given an application form to complete. Part of this form needs to be completed by your family member's doctor or an approved health professional.

The Carer Allowance can be backdated for up to 12 weeks before your application is lodged, if you have been providing care during this time.

Your application will be assessed and you will be notified as to whether you have been successful. If your application is unsuccessful, you have the right to ask Centrelink to review the decision. You can also request a review by the Social Security Appeals Tribunal.

### Other important information

- ▣ If you receive the Carer Payment or Carer Allowance you can take a break from caring and use a respite service for up to 63 days per calendar year before either payment is affected.
- ▣ If the person you care for goes to live in an aged care facility or dies, you are entitled to continue receiving Carer Payment for up to 14 weeks.
- ▣ Over the last few years carers receiving the Carer Allowance or Carer Payment have been given annual carer bonus payments of \$600 and \$1,000 respectively. Centrelink automatically pays these. Wife or Veterans Affairs Partner Pensioners are now also eligible, however the \$1000 payment does not yet extend to other pensioners who are full time carers. There is no guarantee that bonus payments will be offered every financial year.

### Further information:

- ▣ [Centrelink](#) - phone: 132 717

Contact the [Commonwealth Carer Resource Centre](#) on 1800 242 636\* to request that the above information sheets be sent to you - or to find out about other information sheets in this series.

\*Free call except from mobile phones. Mobile calls at mobile rates.

We do our best to keep these links up to date, but the internet changes all the time. If you can no longer access any of the above resources, please go to our [Internet Troubleshooting Guide](#), or email us at [website@carersvic.org.au](mailto:website@carersvic.org.au)