

## **SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS/DISABILITY**

Parents often do not receive accurate advice about the benefits that they may be able to claim for their children, if their children have disability or special needs. Hopefully, the information below may be useful to you.

*This pamphlet cannot cover all of these benefits in full detail – it is just a brief overview. All figures quoted are applicable to the 2009/2010 year.*

### **Disability Living Allowance (DLA) – for children and teenagers**

Disability Living Allowance is a benefit for children who have extra care/supervision needs above that of another child of the same age, or who may have mobility difficulties.

Disability Living Allowance is made up of two parts (components). The **Care component** and the **Mobility component**.

The **care** component has 3 rates of payment – high, middle and low – depending on how much looking after or supervision/prompting the child requires because of their disability. The rates do not relate to the severity of the disability itself. Think of it like a 24 hour clock – if a child needs help for *portions* of the day or night then they would get the low rate. If they needed help all day *or* all night, then they would get the middle rate. But if they needed help all day *and* for significant portions of the night, then they would get the high rate.

The rates for 2009/2010 are £70.35, £47.10 and £18.65 per week.

The **mobility** component has 2 rates of payment – high and low. The high rate is only for children over the age of 3 who have a significant physical problem that impairs their walking ability. The low rate is for a child over the age of 5 who needs to be supervised/guided when outdoors in places they do not know well (this low rate is commonly claimed by children with autism and Aspergers).

The rates for 2009/2010 are £49.10 and £18.65 per week.

It is possible to receive a) the care component only, b) the mobility component only, or c) both components simultaneously.

To claim, you need to call the DLA office on 08457 123456. They will send you the claim form. (You can claim for young people over age 16, their form just looks slightly different as you will be sent an “adult” form). You can also claim online :

[http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/FinancialSupport/DisabilityLivingAllowance/DG\\_10011925](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/FinancialSupport/DisabilityLivingAllowance/DG_10011925)

(be careful that you select the form for the right age!)

## **Carers Allowance – for parents/carers**

If your child receives the middle or high rate of the Care component of DLA, then you might be eligible to claim Carers Allowance for yourself. To be eligible for Carers Allowance *you* must be *either* not working, *or* earning less than £95 net per week. It does not matter if your partner is working - it is only based on the earnings of the main carer who is making the application for themselves. The payments are £53.10 per week. To claim, call 01253 856123 and they will send you a claim pack, or claim online

[http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/CaringForSomeone/MoneyMatters/CarersAllowance/DG\\_10012522](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/CaringForSomeone/MoneyMatters/CarersAllowance/DG_10012522)

Claims can be backdated for up to 3 months, if you fulfilled all of the qualifying criteria during that period.

## **Extra Child Tax Credit**

If your child receives any rate of DLA, then your Child Tax Credit payments may increase. This is because your calculations should include extra elements called the “Disability Element” (for each child who gets *any* rate of DLA), and/or the “Severe Disability Element” (for each child who gets the *highest* rate *Care* component of DLA).

How much extra money you get depends upon the taxable annual income of the whole household, so the rates vary from family to family (some families with higher earnings might get nothing extra at all). However, the *maximum* increase can be as much as £68.00 per week! So it is well worth a 10 minute phone call just to double-check that your family’s Tax Credit calculations include the relevant “disability elements”. Call 0845 300 3900 (open 7 days a week, 8am – 8pm).

## **Mobility problems**

If your child receives the highest rate of the Mobility Component of DLA, you may qualify for the Motability Scheme which provides cars for people with disability. Phone 0845 456 4566 or see [www.motability.co.uk](http://www.motability.co.uk).

A child who gets highest rate Mobility component of DLA also qualifies you for exemption from road tax on your main family car and a Blue Badge for disabled parking.

## **Road Tax exemption**

For more information - phone 0845 712 3456, or look at this internet link :

[http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/MotoringAndTransport/Yourvehicleandlicence/DG\\_10028003](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/MotoringAndTransport/Yourvehicleandlicence/DG_10028003)

## **Blue Badges in West Berkshire area**

For more information – call the West Berkshire Community Care contact centre on 0845 601 4726.

## **Employment Support Allowance in Youth (ESA Youth) – for young people aged 16+**

This benefit may be claimed by young people aged 16+ with special needs or disability, who :

- have left education and do not have a job,
- are attending Special needs schools (e.g. Castle, Brookfields, Priors Court, etc),
- are in mainstream education of *less than* 21 hours per week.

ESA Youth cannot be claimed by young people in mainstream education of 21 hours per week or more, until they reach 19 years of age.

Employment Support Allowance in Youth is an *adult* benefit. It is payable to young people under the age of 20 who would not be able to undertake paid employment at this time (because of their disability or special needs). If a young person is awarded ESA Youth before their 20<sup>th</sup> birthday, it can *continue* to be paid after that age.

Normally, you would continue to claim Child Benefit and Child Tax Credit for a child who is still in school. However, some families (particularly those where one or both parents are in employment), may receive only very low rates of Child Tax Credit. This is sometimes as little as £10.50 per week. This means that you may be financially better off as a family, if your child received ESA Youth for themselves as an adult instead (of course you can help them make the claim if they are unable to do this for themselves).

If you have more than 1 child in education, it may be difficult for you to work out how much of your Tax Credit is *only* for your child with disability and how much is for your other children, so you may need to the help of a welfare benefits adviser – because you may need some “better off” calculations done before making any final decisions.

If your child does make a claim for ESA Youth, then *you* must stop claiming Child Benefit and Child Tax Credit for them immediately. This is because they would be getting an adult benefit and would no longer qualify as a “child”.

**ESA Youth is £50.95 per week for the first 13 weeks (£64.35 if your child gets high rate Care component of DLA), and then it goes up to £108.55 per week from the 14<sup>th</sup> week onwards.** It then continues at that rate long-term. As you can see, for some families this can make a significant financial difference!