

Benefits and services

Are you getting the benefits you're entitled to?

RNID •)))

Changing the world for deaf and hard of hearing people

Our vision is of a world where deafness or hearing loss do not limit or determine opportunity, and where people value their hearing.

www.rnid.org.uk

This leaflet is for you if you are deaf and would like to find out about benefits and services you may be entitled to.

You should read this leaflet if you want to find out about:

- help you can get with equipment and services
- the benefits you may be entitled to
- how to claim benefits
- where to get further information.

You may be entitled to benefits because you have a hearing loss or for reasons that are unrelated to your hearing loss.

Some benefits depend on whether you are working or have savings.

There are some benefits you can apply for no matter what funds you have.

If you are deaf, you can get a lot of support from:

- your local authority (your local council)
- your local Jobcentre Plus
- the NHS
- other organisations, such as RNID.

See pages 10-12 for all contact details.

We use the term 'deaf people' to refer to deaf, deafened and hard of hearing people throughout this leaflet.

Please contact the Information Line (see back page) if you would like this leaflet in Braille, audio tape or large print.

Can I get help with equipment and services?

Yes. There are several ways you can apply for and get help, at home, at work and in education.

If you need equipment at home

You may be able to get help with this from the social services department of your local authority or from an agency working on its behalf. It is a good idea to register with your local authority if you are deaf.

If you apply for help, someone from your local authority, such as a social worker with deaf people or a technical officer, must visit you to assess your needs.

You may be given equipment such as a loop system to hear music or the television more clearly, a textphone, a vibrating alarm clock, an amplifier for your voice telephone or flashing lights so that you know when your doorbell or telephone is ringing or your smoke alarm is activated. It may be possible to try equipment out first.

See our factsheet **Social services for deaf adults** for more information.



If you need help at work

If you are deaf and you are in work, or looking for work, the government's Access to Work scheme can help with the cost of equipment, communication support and changes to your working environment to provide access for you at work.

If you are already in work, your employer has to pay part of the cost of the equipment. If you apply within six weeks of starting a new job, your employer may not have to pay anything.

Access to Work covers the full cost of any kind of communication service. This could include interpreters, lipspeakers, speech-to-text reporters or notetakers that you need at work. Examples of equipment could include telephone amplifiers, textphones or loop systems.

Contact Jobcentre Plus (see page 11) for more information about Access to Work or to speak to a disability employment adviser.

If you need help with education

If you are already in education or want to apply to do a course, you may be able to get communication services and equipment. Most disabled students – including deaf students – can get Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA) to pay for communication services or equipment while studying in higher education.

To find out more, contact your local education authority (LEA), Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS) or Education and Library Board (Northern Ireland).

If you are studying in further education, you usually won't qualify for DSA. Instead, the college where you are studying should provide what you need. Different colleges provide different amounts of support. Contact your college disability or learning support officer for further details.

Further and higher education institutions in the UK may have to provide equipment and communication services as part of their duty to make reasonable adjustments under the Disability Discrimination Act.

For more information, contact RNID's Information Line.

If you need help with transport

You may be entitled to free or discounted travel on local public transport. Contact your local authority for further information.

You may also qualify for a disabled person's railcard. There is a small annual cost but you will get a third off most rail journeys.

For more information, go to **www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk** or contact 0845 605 0525 (telephone) or 0845 601 0132 (textphone).

If you live in Scotland, anyone aged 60 or over and many disabled people can travel free on local buses and scheduled long distance coach services in Scotland. Contact your local authority or local concessionary travel scheme office to apply for a National Entitlement Card.



Benefits for disabled people and their carers

Disability Living Allowance (DLA)

Children or adults under 65 can claim DLA if they have a disability that affects their everyday life. It is paid whether you are working, unemployed or studying, and it doesn't matter if you have other income or savings. DLA is not taxable and will not reduce any other benefits you are getting – in fact, it may even increase your entitlement to other benefits.

DLA has two parts – a care component and a mobility component. If you are deaf, you may qualify for the care component if you need help with communication on most days. In addition, you may qualify for the mobility component if you need guidance or supervision out of doors. You may also get DLA if you have care or supervision needs because you have other disabilities.

Read our factsheet **Disability Living Allowance** for more information.

Attendance Allowance (AA)

Adults over 65 can claim AA if they have a disability that affects their everyday life. If you are deaf, you may qualify if you need help with communication on most days. You may also get AA if you have care or supervision needs because you have other disabilities.

Read our factsheet **Attendance Allowance** for more information.

Carer's Allowance (CA)

If you care for someone who gets AA or the middle or higher rate of DLA care component, you can claim CA. You must be a carer for more than 35 hours a week and you must not be in education for 21 hours or more a week. If you work, you must not earn more than the current limit. If you are entitled to CA you may get an increase in or become entitled to other benefits. CA cannot be paid on top of some other benefits.

If you are unable to work because of a disability

If you are deaf and not working (or working fewer than 16 hours a week), you may be accepted as incapable of work and allowed to claim Employment and Support Allowance (ESA).

ESA is a new benefit paid if your ability to work is limited by ill health or disability. It replaces both incapacity benefit (IB) and income support (IS) paid on the grounds of incapacity.

What are the rules for ESA?

If you are claiming ESA, you must:

- be at least 16 years old
- be under pensionable age
- undergo a 13-week assessment phase.

You must also:

- pass a contributory test
- be under age 20 (or 25 in certain cases)
- pass a low income test.

For more information, see our factsheet **Employment Support Allowance (ESA)**.



If you have been made deaf by your work or service in the armed forces

If you have become deaf as a result of exposure to noise or an accident at work you may be able to claim Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit.

Read our factsheet **Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit** for more information.

If your hearing loss is due to serving in the armed forces, you may be entitled to a War Disablement Pension, but there are strict rules about deafness. Some civilians disabled in wartime are also eligible. The Armed Forces Compensation Scheme replaces the War Pensions Scheme but only for those who have become deaf or disabled while serving in the armed forces on or after April 2005.

Read our factsheets **War pensions** and **The Armed Forces Compensation Scheme** for more information.

If you are a low earner

If you have low earnings you may be able to claim Working Tax Credit to top-up your earnings. The amount you get will depend on your circumstances, but there are extra amounts for people who have a disability. You claim Tax Credits from the Inland Revenue.

If you have children

Child Tax Credit is paid to people who are responsible for at least one child or qualifying young person. How much you get depends on your income and your circumstances.

If you need help with your council tax or rent

Council Tax Benefit can help you if you are on a low income and are liable to pay council tax. The amount you get depends on your circumstances, including income and disability.

Housing Benefit can help you pay your rent if you are on a low income. The amount you get depends on your circumstances, including income and disability.

If you are 60 or over

Pension Credit is a means-tested benefit for people aged 60 and over. There are two parts to Pension Credit.

- Guarantee Credit – for people aged 60 and over, whose income is below a certain level.
- Savings Credit – for people aged 65 and over, to provide extra money for those who have made modest provision for their retirement.

Community Care Grants

Community Care Grants are discretionary awards to help people live independently in the community. 'Discretionary' means that you don't automatically get them because you are disabled – you must meet certain conditions to receive a grant.

Read our factsheet **Community Care Grants** for more information.

How do I claim benefits?

For Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance or Carer's Allowance, contact:

- The Benefit Enquiry Line (BEL), a free advice line run by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). They can help you fill in your form.
Telephone 0800 882 200 Textphone 0800 243 355
Monday-Friday, 8.30am-6.30pm, Saturday, 9am-1pm.

Northern Ireland:

- Telephone 0800 220 674 Textphone 0800 243 787
Monday-Wednesday, 9am-5pm, Thursday 10am-5pm,
Friday 9am-5pm. Or you can claim online at **www.dwp.gov.uk**
- Or call the Disability Benefits Helpline
Telephone 08457 123 456 Textphone 08457 224 433
Monday-Friday, 7.30am-6.30pm
- For Carer's Allowance, call the Carer's Allowance Unit of the Disability and Carer's Service.
Telephone 01253 856123 Textphone 01772 899489

To claim Incapacity Benefit, Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance and Carer's Allowance, contact Jobcentre Plus.

- Visit **www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk** for details of your nearest office. The website also features all kinds of useful information, whether you are in work or not.
- Contact Jobcentre Plus to speak to a Disability Employment Adviser. They can help you with benefits if you are working or looking for work. They can also provide specialist support on employment issues, and can refer you to an Access to Work adviser.

For Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit and the Council Tax Disability Reduction Scheme, contact your local authority (details in your phone book).

To claim War Disablement Pension and the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme, contact:

- Service Personnel and Veterans Agency, Norcross, Thornton Cleveleys, Lancashire FY5 3WP
Free telephone helpline 0800 169 22 77
Textphone 0800 169 34 58
Monday-Thursday, 8.15am-5.15pm. Friday, 8.15am-4.30pm.
veterans.help@spva.gsi.gov.uk
www.veterans-uk.info

To claim Pension Credit, contact:

- The Pension Credit application line.
Telephone 0800 99 12 34 Textphone 0800 169 01 33
Monday-Friday, 8am-8pm, Saturday 9am-1pm
www.thepensionservice.gov.uk

To claim Tax Credits, contact:

- Tax Credits helpline
Telephone 0845 300 3900 Textphone 0845 300 3909
Open 8am-8pm, seven days a week.
www.taxcredits.inlandrevenue.gov.uk

Where can I get further information?

Citizens advice bureau (CAB)

Your local CAB will give free advice. See your phonebook for your nearest CAB or search **www.nacab.org.uk**

Directgov

For comprehensive information about benefits and allowances.

www.direct.gov.uk/DisabledPeople

Disability Alliance

For a range of information about benefits.

Disability Alliance, Universal House, 88-94 Wentworth Street,
London E1 7SA

Tel/textphone 020 7247 8776

Fax 020 7247 8765

office.da@dial.pipex.com

www.disabilityalliance.org

Law centres

Law centres provide free advice and representation. You can find details of your local law centre from:

The Law Centres Federation, Third Floor,
293-299 Kentish Town Road, London NW5 2TJ

Telephone 020 7428 4400 Fax 020 7428 4401

info@lawcentres.org.uk

www.lawcentres.org.uk

Social Security Agency for Northern Ireland

If you live in Northern Ireland, visit **www.dsdni.gov.uk/ssa** for information about benefits.

Welfare rights advice centres

See your phonebook to find your local welfare rights advice centre.

Want to know more?

Are you affected by hearing loss or tinnitus? Joining RNID is a great way to keep updated on developments, the new products that can help, details of accessible entertainment in your region, latest information and advice, and much more. You'll also be able to share your experiences of hearing loss with other members.

As a member we'll update you six times a year, through our award-winning membership magazine, *One in Seven*.

If you're retired, membership costs just £15 a year.

How to join

Complete the form on reverse and send to our Freepost address.

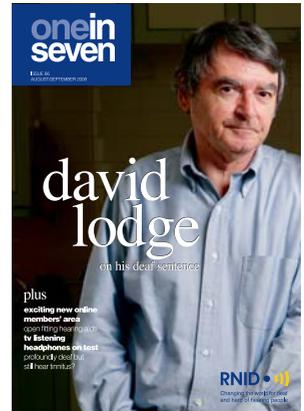
Alternatively:

- visit www.rnid.org.uk/leafletjoin or
- call **0845 634 0679** (tel/textphone) or
- email membership@rnid.org.uk.

Contact us for more information:

Membership Team
RNID
19-23 Featherstone Street
London EC1Y 8SL

Tel/textphone **0845 634 0679**
membership@rnid.org.uk
www.rnid.org.uk/leafletjoin



Yes, I want to join RNID

Title (Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss) _____ First name _____

Surname _____

Address _____

Postcode _____ Email _____

Telephone _____ Textphone _____

Please accept my membership payment: (tick relevant boxes)

£22 standard rate £15 if you are retired, unwaged
or a full-time student

In addition, I would like to make a donation of £ _____

Payment method:

I enclose a cheque/PO made payable to RNID (delete as appropriate)

I prefer to pay by credit card/debit card/CharityCard (delete as appropriate)

Card number:

Start date: / Expiry date: /

Issue number (if present): Security number:
(last 3 digits on signature strip)

Signature:

Please return this form to:

RNID, FREEPOST LON13186, London EC1B 1AL

Please tick here if you **would like** to receive emails from us including your membership email every two months.

Occasionally, we may want to let you know about the work we are doing. If you would **prefer not** to be contacted in this way, please tick this box.

Occasionally, we will allow other organisations to contact you, but if you would **prefer not** to be contacted, please tick this box.



Further information from RNID

You might find some of our other factsheets or leaflets useful.

- Don't miss out (leaflet)
- Products to make life easier (leaflet)
- Getting a hearing aid (leaflet)
- Social services for deaf adults (factsheet)
- Benefits and work (factsheet)
- Benefits and incapacity for work (factsheet)
- Attendance Allowance (AA) (factsheet)
- Community Care Grants from the Social Fund (factsheet)
- Disability Living Allowance (DLA) (factsheet)
- Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefits (IIDB) (factsheet)
- Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (factsheet)
- War pensions and priority health treatments for veterans (factsheet)
- Challenging Disability Allowance (DLA) and Attendance Allowance (AA) decisions (factsheet)

Please contact the Information Line (see back page) for free copies of these. And let us know if you would like any of them – or this leaflet – in Braille, large print or audio format.

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where deafness or hearing
loss do not limit or determine
opportunity, and where
people value their hearing.

There are a number of ways
to support us. To find out more:

Go to

www.rnid.org.uk

Information line

Telephone 0808 808 0123

Textphone 0808 808 9000

SMS 0780 0000 360

Or write to us

informationline@rnid.org.uk

19-23 Featherstone Street

London EC1Y 8SL

Fax 020 7296 8199



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this booklet please recycle it

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