



## **Disability Living Allowance: face-to-face medicals for adults and children**

**December 2015**

If you are putting in your first claim for Disability Living Allowance (DLA), a renewal claim or a revision or appeal, the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) may require you to have a medical.

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## **How will my claim be assessed?**

A decision maker at the DWP will assess your claim form and decide whether they need any further information about you. They may write to your GP or consultant so it is a good idea to update anyone you have named on your form.

The decision maker may decide that you need a face-to-face medical with a health care professional. The person carrying out your medical assessment will be a Health Professional (HP) approved by the DWP. They will usually visit you at home but you may be asked to attend a medical centre.

## **Will my child have to have a medical?**

The decision maker will generally avoid sending out a HP to children. However, there will be occasions when this is necessary if more information is required to support the claim. The parent or guardian will be expected to be present.

## **What can I do to prepare for the medical?**

Often people are given very little notice of a medical. You may get a phone call rather than a letter, but you should be given at least seven days' notice.

If you are offered an appointment that does not give you enough time to prepare or to arrange to have someone with you, don't feel pressured into agreeing to something at short notice.

You can do a certain amount of preparation for the visit. Hopefully you will have made a photocopy of your DLA claim form and it will be useful to read through this prior to the medical.

It may also be helpful to study the qualifying criteria so that you are as well informed about the benefit as possible. The criteria are outlined in the Action for M.E. factsheet *Disability Living Allowance: a guide to filling in the form for children*.

Just prior to the visit, where possible, make sure that you have all the medication and/or aids and equipment available to show the HP. Do not dress up or down. It is important that the HP sees you or your child as you would normally be. It is a good idea to note the time that the HP arrives and leaves.

## **What will happen at the medical?**

The HP is required to complete a report about you. They will need to ask you about your background, so this will include questions about your or your child's M.E and any other conditions that are present, they will want to take a medical history and discuss any medication that you take. They will want to find out how your M.E affects you or your child on a day to day basis and will ask about a typical day.

Many people with M.E. may have difficulty describing a typical day as the condition can be so variable. You may need to explain that you don't have typical days and it will be necessary for you to describe how your condition fluctuates.

Keeping a diary for a representative period can help you to answer questions and give an accurate account of the problems that are being experienced. It is important not to underestimate the difficulties.

During the assessment the healthcare professional should ask questions relating to each of the areas covered on the claim form. In the case of a young child the HP will ask the parent the questions but if your child is older they may ask them direct questions. You can add anything that you feel is required.

Remember that the HP will not see the after effects of any over-exertion and may assume that you can walk further distances than you are safely able to. If there are any movements that would be too difficult for you or may cause a worsening of your condition, let the HP know.

**Do not underestimate your needs.** Do not assume that the HP has read your forms or knows anything about you, your needs or about M.E. in general. The HP will hopefully have had access to your forms but may not have.

Do not be tempted to answer questions briefly to get the medical over with quickly or because the HP appears to be in a hurry.

**Take your time and think about your answers carefully.** Try to ensure that you give the HP as much information about your care and mobility needs as possible.

If you have stated on your form that you or your child have problems with walking, the HP may ask about your ability to walk to familiar places like the corner shop, bus stop or the end of the road.

You need to be very clear in your own mind how far you or your child can walk. If necessary, get someone to help you measure the distance that you can walk before hand. **Remember, the distance that you can walk without severe discomfort is the distance that the HP needs to be aware of.**

As well as thinking about how far you can walk at a given time also consider whether you need to rest beforehand and how you feel afterwards.

## **When will I know if my claim has been successful?**

The HP does not make the final decision about your claim; a DWP officer known as the decision maker or case manager makes the decision but the medical report is a key part of this process.

The DWP decision maker may also consider the A-Z of medical conditions when making a decision about the claim.

You can find it at

[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/434373/a-z-adult-medical-conditions-jun-15.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/434373/a-z-adult-medical-conditions-jun-15.pdf)

You will get a letter from the DWP telling you the decision about your claim sometime after the medical has taken place. If your claim fails you will need to request a Mandatory Reconsideration. This is where the DWP look at the decision again to see if they can change it. If this is unsuccessful you then have a right to appeal directly to the Tribunals service. There are strict time limits for both and it is very important to stick to the time limits.

Download/read the Action for M.E. factsheet *DLA revisions and appeals* in our Online M.E. Centre at [www.actionforme.org.uk](http://www.actionforme.org.uk) or call 0117 927 9551 to request a paper copy.

## Useful contacts

### Action for M.E.

Information and support for people with M.E. and their carers  
General enquiries: 0845 123 2380 or 0117 927 9551 (Mon-Fri 9am-5pm)  
Enquiries email: [admin@actionforme.org.uk](mailto:admin@actionforme.org.uk)  
Welfare Rights Line: 0800 138 6544 (times vary)  
Online M.E. Centre: [www.actionforme.org.uk](http://www.actionforme.org.uk)

### Citizens Advice Bureau

Offers advice on a range of issues and may complete a benefits check for you  
[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

### Civil Legal Advice

Help with some benefit appeals for eligible people.  
[www.gov.uk/civil-legal-advice](http://www.gov.uk/civil-legal-advice)

### Disability Information and Advice Line (DIAL)

To find your local DIAL office, contact Scope, 6 Market Road, London N7 9PW  
Tel: 0808 800 3333  
[www.scope.org.uk/help-and-information/dial-groups](http://www.scope.org.uk/help-and-information/dial-groups)

### Disability Rights UK

Factsheets on benefits, tax credits and independent living  
[www.disabilityrightsuk.org](http://www.disabilityrightsuk.org)

### Local councils

Some local councils employ welfare rights workers. The council may also have information about other services that offer welfare rights advice in your area.  
[www.gov.uk/find-your-local-council](http://www.gov.uk/find-your-local-council)



**If you have found the information in this factsheet helpful, please consider making a donation to Action for M.E. at [www.actionforme.org.uk](http://www.actionforme.org.uk) or by calling 0845 123 2380 or 0117 927 9551. Thank you**

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