

How to get benefits if you are nearing the end of your life

There are special benefit rules for people who are nearing the end of their life that provide fast-track access to certain benefits provided by the Department for Work and Pensions.

From 4th April 2022, the government is changing the Special Rules process for Universal Credit (UC) and Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). These changes are happening in England, Scotland and Wales. Similar changes are planned for Personal Independence Payment (PIP), Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and Attendance Allowance (AA).

This factsheet explains what is changing and the key things you need to know.

What are the Special Rules?

- If you are nearing the end of your life (sometimes also called having a terminal illness) because of a health condition or illness, you may be able to apply for benefits under the Special Rules.
- If you are eligible under the Special Rules, your claim can be fast-tracked. This means you do not have to wait as long to start getting payments.
- In most cases, you will qualify for a higher rate of benefit, without having to do a medical assessment.

Will I qualify for the Special Rules?

To receive benefits under the Special Rules, you must meet the Special Rules criteria for the benefit you are claiming:

- For UC and ESA – your doctor or specialist nurse has said you might have 12 months or less to live because of your health condition or illness.
- For PIP, DLA and AA – if your doctor or specialist nurse has said you might have less than 6 months to live because of your health condition or illness.

It can be difficult to predict how long someone might live for. If your doctor or specialist nurse has not talked to you about how long you might live for, you can still ask them about supporting your claim under the Special Rules.

What if I live longer than expected?

If you live longer than expected following your claim, you can continue claiming benefits. You can claim benefits under the Special Rules for 3 years. After that, your claim will be looked at again.

Making your claim

- You can apply for benefits straight away.
- Even if you are applying under the Special Rules, you must still qualify for the benefit. Each benefit has different criteria. For more information, visit:

- [Universal Credit](#)
 - [Employment and Support Allowance](#)
 - [Personal Independence Payment](#)
 - [Disability Living Allowance](#) (If your child is nearing the end of their life then you can only claim Disability Living Allowance for Children)
 - [Attendance Allowance](#)
- If you are claiming under the Special Rules, the DWP might ask for a factual statement from your doctor or specialist nurse when you make your claim. This statement provides information about your condition and treatment. It is either called a DS1500 form or an SR1 form.
 - If your doctor or nurse has said you might have less than 6 months to live, they should complete a DS1500 form. This will support a Special Rules claim for any of the benefits.
 - If your doctor or nurse has said you might have less than 12 months to live, they should complete an SR1 form. This will support a Special Rules claim for UC or ESA.
 - You will not need to provide more than one form to support your claim. DWP will share your form with the other benefits if it's needed.

Help and support

If you need support after your diagnosis or with applying for benefits, you can get help from the following:

- [Carers Trust](#) – support and advice for carers
- [Carers UK](#) – support and advice for carers
- [Citizens Advice](#) – financial advice and support
- [Macmillan Cancer Support](#) – practical and emotional support at the end of life and help with benefit claims
- [Marie Curie](#) – care and support through terminal illness
- [Money Helper](#) – advice on money and benefits.
- [Motor Neurone Disease Association](#) – has a dedicated benefits advice service for people affected by motor neurone disease (MND)
- [Multiple System Atrophy Trust](#) - has a dedicated benefits advice service for people affected by multiple system atrophy (MSA)
- [Rainbow Trust](#) – support for families with seriously ill children
- [Together for Short Lives](#) – support for seriously ill children and their families