

Completing DLA statements for children and young people – suggestions for education staff



Often when a parent claims disability living allowance (DLA) for a child, s/he will ask someone to complete a supporting statement.

Disability Living Allowance (DLA)

There are two components of DLA. A pupil may get one or both of them.

The care component is for people who need extra help with day-to-day activities, including learning at school. These include communication needs, social interaction, concentrating and staying motivated; as well as dressing, eating, using the toilet, etc. It can also be awarded if a pupil needs extra supervision to avoid danger to her/himself or others.

The mobility component is for people who have a physical problem that causes difficulty walking (this includes genetic conditions such as Down's Syndrome or an Autistic Spectrum Disorder, if they make walking outside difficult); or who require extra help to get to new places and when outside in areas they do not know well.

For pupils under 16, the needs must be greater than those of someone the same age without any disability or health problem; or similar to those that a younger child would be expected to have.

IMPORTANT: most young people over 16 will now be claiming personal independence payment (PIP) instead. The entitlement rules are very different. You can download a free factsheet about PIP from the [CPAG website](#)

A page of the DLA claim form is for someone who knows the pupil well to complete. First think about whether you or a colleague is best placed to complete it (see overleaf). If nobody at school can complete the statement, check that the parent has asked other medical or social care professionals who are involved, as they may be able to help.

It is better to copy this page and return the form to the parent if you are not able to complete it immediately. If the form goes missing, or there is a delay in returning it to the DLA office, the family may lose money. It can be useful to read the rest of the form, to see the things that the pupil's parent has felt it is important to mention.

The statement can be attached to the form or returned separately. If returning it separately, it is important to write the name, date of birth and national insurance number of the pupil and parent on the statement. It should be returned to the parent as soon as possible, or a decision may be made on the claim without your extra information.

If you are able to do so, it is best to provide a specific statement for the claim. If you are not able to do this, a copy of any individualised educational programme or co-ordinated support plan may demonstrate some of the extra help that the pupil needs. It is not usually a good idea to provide a school report. The focus on a pupil's achievements and progress means that school reports are not likely to show the extra help that is needed.

The following points may be helpful to consider when completing a statement:

- State all of the pupil's disabilities and health problems that you are aware of
- Explain any help that the pupil needs with taking medication or other treatment at school, including emergency medications, if applicable
- If the school is non-mainstream, indicate the staff-pupil ratio, and any specialist training that staff have
- If the education is in a mainstream setting, explain what classroom-based support is provided to the pupil, and any other extra help that is needed
- Describe any special classroom materials or techniques used by the pupil (such as Braille materials, signing, etc.), and if help is needed to use these
- Describe any behavioural problems that the pupil has, and what staff do to help overcome them
- Highlight any difficulties the pupil has with the logistics of school life, whether caused by physical problems getting around school, memory problems, or need to follow a fixed routine, etc.
- Describe the extra help needed with personal care tasks during school hours. This may include:
 - using the toilet or dealing with incontinence
 - changing for PE classes
 - eating and drinking, including special diets
- Explain the arrangements made for school trips, and whether extra needs result from a physical disability or a requirement for close supervision. Bear in mind that the school's arrangements may already provide a high level of supervision, even if no extra arrangements are in place for a particular pupil
- If you are aware of the extent of a pupil's needs for extra help outside school hours, explain this. This is especially relevant to staff in residential schools

The most important thing is to use your knowledge of the individual pupil to make clear the extra help that they require, compared to a non-disabled child.

Information and advice for parents

The charity Contact a Family (CAF) produces 'A guide to claiming Disability Living Allowance for children' aimed at parents of a disabled child. It is available from their website: www.cafamily.org.uk
CAF also run a helpline on **0808 808 3555** open Monday to Friday, 9.30am – 5pm.

A carer's centre, CAB, local authority welfare rights unit or a specialist disability charity may be able to help a parent claim DLA.

There is helpful information about claiming DLA at www.gov.uk.

CPAG in Scotland operates an advice line for frontline workers, advisers, support staff, teachers and other professionals on **0141 552 0552**
Mon to Thurs 10am-4pm, Fri 10am-12pm.
We provide advice by email for less urgent queries, contact advice@cpagscotland.org.uk.

There are also a range of free factsheets available from our website, www.cpag.org.uk/scotland

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