

Mobility Advice

A helpful guide for wheelchair & Motability users



Information Booklet

Area

Introduction

If you are someone with a temporary or permanent disability, this guide is a fantastic starting point to finding out more about ways to enjoy more independence, greater mobility and freedom. It's packed full of information about the Motability Scheme, as well as using powered scooters, buggies, walking aids and equipment, and finding the right wheelchair for your needs.

You will also find an overview of financial support to which you may be entitled, as well as a handy list of contacts for more information.

The freedom of the road

Driving

For growing numbers of disabled people, whether still working or retired, being 'housebound' is not an option. Community transport services, such as Dial-a-Ride and Shopmobility schemes, and social car schemes run by voluntary organisations, can help solve some travel and shopping problems but, for many, the spontaneity and convenience afforded by the 'private car' is essential to leading a full, active life.

Help for disabled drivers and passengers

Whether you want to be able to drive or simply need a practical solution to enable you to travel as a passenger in the family car, Driving Assessment and Training Centres can provide advice and information on vehicles and equipment. Medical, physical and engineering assessments are tailored to individual needs to help you achieve safe, cost-effective mobility.

Centre facilities may include a computerised static assessment module (on an indoor rig) for measuring limb movement and strength, sight testing equipment, a private test track, and special vehicles catering to a variety of disabilities. Services generally include:

- Driving ability assessments
- Driving tuition in suitably adapted vehicles
- Seating and wheelchair hoisting and stowage assessments
- Vehicle appraisal and conversion

More information about assessment and training

The Forum of Mobility Centres helps to coordinate the work of UK mobility centres by producing literature, helping to develop policies, supporting new centres and promoting research. See www.mobilitycentres.org.uk to find out more.

Any disabilities must be reported to the DVLA when applying for a licence, or when they occur if a licence is already held.

Mobility Centres can offer advice and assistance, but the decision as to whether or not a person is fit to drive rests with the DVLA.

Any vehicle that is used for a disabled person (whether they are the driver or passenger) may be exempt from road tax. To get exemption, you must be receiving either the higher rate mobility component of Disability Living Allowance or the enhanced rate of the Personal Independence Payment, receiving a War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement or have an invalid carriage (the legal term for a mobility scooter or powered wheelchair with a maximum speed of 8mph on the road).

The vehicle must be registered in the name of the disabled person or in the name of a driver authorised to act on your behalf (known as the nominee). You will still need to apply for a tax disc and display the 'nil value disc', even if you don't need to pay for vehicle tax. Before you can get a free tax disc, you'll need to apply for an exemption certificate from the agency that issues your benefit. The exemption certificate will show your name and that of the nominee if you have nominated someone to drive for you. If your car is being used by the nominee or

someone else for his or her personal needs, the tax exemption will be lost.

The Motability Scheme

Motability is a national charity that enables disabled people to obtain a car, powered wheelchair or scooter simply by using their government-funded mobility allowances. The great thing about the scheme is that it gives you access to worry-free motoring without the financial and practical hassles of owning a car. Currently, more than 600,000 people in the UK are using the scheme.

Motability also administers the Government's Specialised Vehicles Fund, which provides grants for specially adapted vehicles for the more severely disabled.

Eligibility criteria

If you receive either the Higher Rate Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance (HRMC DLA), the Enhanced Rate of the Mobility Component of Personal Independence Payment (ERMC PIP), the War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement (WPMS) or the Armed Forces Independence Payment (AFIP) you may be eligible to join the Motability Scheme, although you must have at least 12 months' award length remaining.

Parents and guardians can order a car on behalf of a child aged three and above who is receiving the higher rate mobility component of DLA. Attendance Allowance cannot be used to lease a car through Motability.

You can download a number of helpful factsheets from the Motability website (www.motability.co.uk). It's changed our lives! Can it change yours? provides a good overview of the scheme.

How the scheme works

The Motability Scheme uses your mobility allowances towards funding the leasing of a car or a powered wheelchair or scooter through a local accredited dealership or premier partner.

There are nearly 5,000 Motability accredited dealerships across the UK and more than 4,000 eligible models (with 39 car manufacturers currently involved with Motability). The accredited dealerships prioritise disabled customers and urgent repairs, as well as providing knowledge of the Motability Scheme and wheelchair access. In fact, all of the accredited dealerships have at least one Motability specialist who can help you find the right car for your needs.

Most manufacturers offer nil or low deposits through the Motability Scheme, although offers change quarterly, so we would recommend

that you liaise with your local Motability premier partner to find the best deal for your needs.

A better deal for you

Accounting for around 10% of all new cars in the UK, Motability has the power to negotiate better deals on finance, the purchase price of cars, powered wheelchairs and scooters, insurance, breakdown recovery services and regular maintenance.

A choice of options

You can lease a new car from an extensive list of vehicles on a three-year contract hire lease; a hire purchase scheme is also available. Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAVs) are available to travel in as a passenger or driver on five-year leases.

When you receive a brand new car through Motability, it will include insurance, servicing and maintaining, full breakdown assistance, 60,000-mileage allowance over three years for standard cars (100,000 for WAVs), window and windscreen repair or replacement, many adaptations at no additional cost, and replacement tyres.

Car adaptations

Adaptations available through the Motability Scheme are designed to make your experience of driving as safe and comfortable as possible. They can help you with vehicle access,

equipment loading, and driving, including steering, braking and acceleration. You can find a full list of available adaptations on the Motability website.

Various drive-from-wheelchair solutions can enable you to travel without transferring to a seat.

Obtaining a scooter or powered wheelchair through the Motability Scheme

It is possible to obtain a brand new scooter or powered wheelchair on a three-year lease through Motability. You will also receive loss and damage protection for your product, insurance, breakdown assistance, tyre and battery replacement, service, maintenance and repairs.

Motability offers a choice of more than 200 products, with most costing less than your weekly mobility allowance.

Visiting a dealership

We would always recommend that you visit your local Motability dealership before committing to a specific car. To make the most out of your visit:

- Look at the cars and WAVs section of the Motability website to see what's available for your needs and budget
- Take your mobility aids with you, so you can check the car for size and accessibility

- Use Motability's checklist of tips (available for download from the Motability website)
- Arrange to take a test drive
- Fill out the Motability Suitability Questionnaire
- Find out the expected delivery time
- Ask questions

How to claim your mobility allowance

We have provided information about the various mobility allowances and other financial support to which you may be entitled on page 14.

The Blue Badge Scheme

The Blue (formerly Orange) Badge Scheme provides a national arrangement of on street parking concessions enabling people with severe walking difficulties who travel as either drivers or passengers to park close to their destinations. The Scheme applies to people who meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Receive the higher rate of the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance (see note below about Personal Independence Payments)
- Receive War Pensioners Mobility Supplement

- Have been both awarded a lump sum benefit at tariffs 1-8 of the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme and certified as having a permanent and substantial disability which causes inability to walk or very considerable difficulty in walking
- Are registered blind
- Have a severe disability in both upper limbs and cannot turn a steering wheel by hand even if it is fitting with a turning knob
- Have a permanent and sustainable disability which means they are unable to walk or have considerable difficulty in walking

The parent of a child who is less than three years old may apply for a Blue Badge if their child has a specific medical condition which means that they must always be accompanied by bulky medical equipment or they need to be kept near their vehicle at all times so that they can be treated in their vehicle or quickly taken to a hospital for treatment.

The Scheme is administered by local authorities who deal with applications and issue badges.

NB: Some London boroughs and other town centres don't operate this scheme, so you should always check whether the scheme is running before parking with your blue badge.

The Department for Transport has produced an explanatory booklet - 'The Blue Badge Scheme: rights and responsibilities in England' - explaining the Scheme in more detail (see www.dft.gov.uk for this and other publications).

The Blue Badge Improvement Service came into effect in April 2012 with the aim of cutting down on abuse of the system and ensuring only those eligible for the scheme will be accepted. To check the fees (for badges) and if you are eligible, please contact your local authority in the first instance. You may be asked to see an independent mobility assessor when you apply for a badge.

On 25 January 2013, Norman Lamb, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department of Transport, announced that the government will endeavour to maintain a legislative link between the Blue Badge Scheme and Personal Independence Payments, with people scoring eight or more in the 'moving around' activity of PIP being automatically eligible for a Blue Badge.

Powered Scooters/Buggies

A number of battery-powered scooters or buggies are available, including lightweight models that can be dismantled or folded to fit into even a small car boot. Scooters are designated by law as either Class 2 or Class 3. Class 2 scooters are generally smaller and lighter, are designed for use on pavements only and have a top speed of 4mph.

Class 3 scooters are larger and more powerful. They can be used on pavements at up to 4mph and on roads at up to 8mph. They also have to have lights, a horn, etc. You do not need a driving licence or insurance to use a scooter, but personal liability insurance is recommended. You are required to register a Class 3 Scooter or wheelchair with the DVLA and display a 'nil duty' tax disc.

Drivers within either class of vehicle must be disabled and aged 14 or over. Within each category, there is a range of different models and accessories, each with their own features to meet individual needs. Scooters and buggies look very similar, the main difference being that scooters dismantle while buggies do not.

Scooters and buggies are not available through the NHS Wheelchair Service and must be bought privately. Funding may be available through various schemes or

charitable sources. You can find out more through the Disability Living Foundation (see page 19 for contact details). Their leaflets Choosing a scooter or buggy and Choosing a powered wheelchair are handy starting points.

Walking aids and equipment

Walking equipment is generally regarded as a mobility device, and is therefore provided by a physiotherapist based at a local hospital or health centre. Referral to a physiotherapist can be made by a range of professionals including therapists, nurses, and doctors. Provision may include walking/pulpit frames, mobile frames/rollators, crutches, walking sticks, or tripods/quadrupods.

As a rule, you should consult your GP or physiotherapist before you consider buying walking equipment privately. Some suppliers are reluctant to provide a walking device to private individuals without a letter verifying the suitability from a physiotherapist or medical practitioner.

Walking equipment is used for two purposes: first, as part of a rehabilitation programme when the user is recovering from an injury or operation, and second: as a long-term aid to mobility when the user has a permanent difficulty with walking.

If you need temporary help in getting around, the NHS can provide 'personal

mobility aids' such as walking sticks, Zimmer frames, crutches and other aids on short-term loan. The NHS is not allowed to charge for equipment, but you may be asked to pay a returnable deposit in some instances.

If your needs are more long-term, you should ask to be assessed by a physiotherapist through your local social services department. The physiotherapist will also be able to give you more information about charities and private organisations selling mobility aids.

Before buying, try to see and use the equipment to check that it suits your needs. The Disabled Living Centres around the country have a wide range of equipment on display and all can give advice and information on walking equipment. For details of your nearest centre, contact Assist UK (see page 19).

Wheelchairs

A range of wheelchairs is available to provide you with greater comfort and safety with maximum mobility, making you less reliant, where possible, on carers and home help.

How do I get a wheelchair?

There are four main ways of getting a wheelchair:

- short-term loan - usually, when you

will need a wheelchair for less than six months, you would like to try a wheelchair before you buy one or you are waiting for an assessment with your local NHS Wheelchair Service (see page 10 for information about short-term loans)

- long-term loan – when you are likely to need a wheelchair for more than six months
- buying a new or second hand wheelchair
- hiring a wheelchair

Once your need for a wheelchair has been identified - regardless of whether your disability is temporary or permanent – your GP, occupational therapist or physiotherapist can refer you to your local NHS Wheelchair Service (some services may also operate a self-referral system).

There, you will be assessed by an occupational therapist who will ensure that you are provided with a suitable wheelchair.

The way the NHS Wheelchair Scheme is organised and provided varies across the UK. This can affect the type of wheelchair you are offered (if any) as well as the timescale in which it will be provided and the way it is funded. Normally, NHS wheelchairs are available on loan; various terms and conditions may apply to your loan, such as receiving a wheelchair for indoor or short-term use only, for example.

If you feel that the chair provided by your wheelchair service does not meet your needs, you can ask to be re-assessed. If you still feel that the chairs offered are not what you want, then you may be able to get a different model through the NHS Wheelchair Voucher Scheme (see page 10).

You should be aware that there could be long waiting lists for assessment through the NHS Wheelchair Service, as well as strict eligibility criteria that varies from region to region.

While you're waiting, you may want to ask your GP whether they have a wheelchair loan system or contact the British Red Cross or Shopmobility, both of which offers short-term support and products for independent living and may be able to provide you with a wheelchair on a short-term basis.

The right wheelchair for your needs

Once your GP, occupational therapist or physiotherapist has referred you to the wheelchair service, your exact needs will be assessed. The assessment may be carried out in your own home, at a clinic or in hospital, as well as at the service's own centre, depending on your situation.

You will be assessed by a professional qualified in wheelchair assessment, such as an occupational therapist, who will possibly work with a rehabilitation

engineer. The engineer will be able to make refinements, adjustments or modifications to wheelchairs to be sure that you get the chair that is right for you. For instance, you may have particular needs for special seating or for pressure-relieving cushions.

Where necessary, a specialist team can provide assessments if you have severe physical disabilities which make it difficult to use a standard wheelchair or controls.

If your child needs a wheelchair, their assessment may include other professionals across the health, education and social services to ensure that the wheelchair can be used at school, on transport or for social activities. As a child's parent or carer, you should be part of the assessment process and consulted on your views and opinions.

The NHS does everything possible to tailor wheelchairs to the needs of users. The best way to find out what type of wheelchair you need is to use one over a few weeks for your normal activities, such as getting around at home or in and out of the car. You may be able to borrow a wheelchair on a trial basis, although this may vary according to which NHS Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) you come under.

Usually, the NHS Wheelchair Service does not cover electric outdoor wheelchairs, electric scooters or specialist sports wheelchairs, for

example, and you will probably have to buy these privately.

It may be possible to arrange the loan of more than one wheelchair if it is necessary, for example, one for using at home and the other for use at work.

The Types Of Wheelchair

There are three different types of wheelchair:

- self-propelled – controlled by user
- attendant-propelled – steered by someone else
- electric powered – class 2 for pavement use and class 3 for pavement and road use

With powered wheelchairs, a careful assessment is made with regard to safety and suitability as users must be fully competent to operate them without accident or injury.

There are strict rules about the supply of indoor/outdoor chairs. These are only provided to people who need them and who are not able to use a manual chair. There may also be a long delay before one can be supplied.

The NHS does not provide battery powered scooters or buggies (see page 8 to find out more about obtaining one of these).

How long does it take?

The length of time it takes for you to receive your wheelchair will vary according to how your local NHS Wheelchair Service is structured, the type of wheelchair to be provided and local resources. In some regions, you may be able to take a standard wheelchair away with you after your assessment, if the appropriate chair is in stock. However, you may have to wait six to eight weeks for your chair to be ordered and delivered from the manufacturer. If you need a bespoke chair that requires special refinements or alterations, you may have to wait several months or longer for your chair.

See 'Short-term wheelchair use' (page 10) to find out more about borrowing a wheelchair while you are waiting for your own to be supplied.

When your wheelchair is ready, it will be formally handed over to you with an explanation about how to use it (including safety issues), the relevant documentation and a point of contact for future enquiries, as well as information regarding insurance, repairs and maintenance (including details of who is responsible for this).

Advice on transportation

Your local wheelchair service centre may be able to offer advice to you or a relative/carer on loading your wheelchair into a car or other vehicle and on ways in which you can travel in a vehicle whilst in your chair, if necessary.

The Disability Living Foundation publishes a series of useful factsheets providing information on indoor and outdoor mobility, including guidance on transporting your wheelchair. See their factsheet, Out and about with your wheelchair, as a good starting point.

Short-term wheelchair use

You may only need a wheelchair for a limited period, perhaps because of an accident or other circumstances. In such cases, you may be provided with a wheelchair through your CCG's Home Loans Service. Some CCGs also operate a hire service that can be used when a chair is needed on a temporary basis, such as for a visiting relative.

The British Red Cross or Shopmobility also provide wheelchairs and other equipment on a temporary basis through its short-term support for independent living. You can buy

equipment from the British Red Cross or Shopmobility mobility range; this includes walkers, shoppers, walking frames, walking sticks and wheelchairs.

You can find more details about the service at www.redcross.org.uk or www.shopmobility.org

The Wheelchair Voucher Scheme

The NHS Wheelchair Voucher Scheme allows you to choose from a wider range of wheelchairs than just a standard NHS model.

Once your needs have been assessed by staff at your local NHS Wheelchair Service, you may ask for a voucher rather than having the chair offered. You can then put the voucher towards the cost of a wheelchair of your choice, if it meets your needs according to the assessment.

Voucher schemes do not operate in every area of the UK and may differ from region to region. However, when you receive an assessment for a wheelchair under the Voucher Scheme, you may find that there are three options open to you.

1) Standard NHS option - You are provided with a wheelchair that will be supplied, repaired and maintained free of charge.

2) Partnership option - You choose an alternative to the type of wheelchair you are assessed as needing. This lets you to buy a wheelchair of a higher

standard than that which the NHS Wheelchair Service supplies. The voucher reflects the value of the wheelchair originally recommended and you then pay the difference in cost. The wheelchair will be repaired and maintained free of charge. Under the Partnership option, you have to choose a wheelchair from an 'approved supplier' that has to meet certain standards, including quality of service.

3) Independent option - This is similar to the partnership option but you own the wheelchair and are responsible for its repair and maintenance. However, the voucher you receive will include an amount towards the anticipated costs of repair and maintenance (usually over five years).

The voucher period is generally five years and you will not normally be entitled to a new voucher until this period has expired. However, if your needs change – making the wheelchair you have bought unsuitable - you will be eligible for a reassessment of your needs.

You cannot exchange the voucher for cash.

In addition, if you buy a wheelchair privately from a commercial company or individual, you cannot 'claim back' the money from the NHS Wheelchair Service as these vouchers are not issued retrospectively. The voucher is non-taxable so it will not affect any disability benefits you are receiving.

The supplier you choose for your chair will need to have the specification given to you by the Wheelchair Service. They will also check with the service before providing the chair to you, thus ensuring that it will meet your needs.

Please note that the voucher scheme applies to manual chairs only and is only available in England.

Buying your own wheelchair

If you are not eligible for an NHS wheelchair or you are unhappy with the chairs you have been offered, you can choose to rent or buy a wheelchair yourself. Voluntary organizations and charities such as the British Red Cross or Shopmobility may work in partnership with NHS Wheelchair Services to provide a greater choice of wheelchairs. You may also choose to rent or buy through a private company.

Before buying, it is advisable to consult one of the trade associations that monitor its members' products and practices. One such association is the British Healthcare Trades Association (BHTA), which covers 16 different healthcare sectors and has over 350 organisations, both large and small, in its membership (see page 19 for contact details). The BHTA can provide information about mobility vehicle distributors as well as other useful

information. They currently publish a series of free 'Get Wise' leaflets that may be of particular interest when choosing mobility options.

It is worth noting that organisations, such as Whizz-Kidz and Go Kids Go!, provide wheelchair skills training.

Your local Wheelchair Service Centre

Your local NHS CCG can give you details of your nearest Wheelchair Service Centre. Alternatively, you can call NHS Direct on 0845 4647 or visit the website www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk for links to information about your local NHS services.

Using a wheelchair at work

If you use or need to use a wheelchair, are looking for work or are in work and having difficulties in relation to your disability, you should contact your local Jobcentre Plus Office and ask to speak to a Disability Employment Advisor (DEA).

The DEA will be able to give you advice about:

- Equipment you need for the workplace such as lightweight, powered or elevated wheelchairs
- Adaptations to the premises if possible
- Information about job vacancies and employer advocacy

- Providing a support worker in the workplace

They will also be able to tell you more about the 'Access to Work Scheme', which you may find useful (see www.gov.uk for more information about 'Access to Work').

Help for disabled people at home

How Homecare Organisation can help

First Steps in securing help at home

If you have problems with your mobility, you may need help with some of your daily activities, such as doing your cleaning, shopping or driving, as well as personal care like washing or using the toilet.

Homecare is often the first choice for people who need help to lead an independent life because the level of care provided is flexible and can enable you to stay in the comfort and security of your own home.

Before you begin to consider finding help, it is essential that you receive a Community Care Assessment. Your local authority arranges these, so you will need to approach its Social Care Department in the first instance. A specialist, often an occupational therapist, will visit you at home to

assess your individual needs. It could be that your needs vary but even if they are visiting you on a good day, it's important you bring to their attention all the practical tasks you find difficult to do without help. How this assessment is carried out depends on the arrangement in operation in your area.

Whatever arrangements are put in place, they will be reviewed, generally after three months, then on a yearly basis. In addition to Homecare services accessed through your local authority, there are a number of private Homecare agencies. It is best to explore all of your options carefully, contacting your local authority in the first instance, or organisations such as the United Kingdom Homecare

Association (www.ukhca.co.uk).

What services does a Homecare Agency offer?

The aim of Homecare agencies is to provide care services that enable people to maintain their personal independence, comfort and contact with their local community within their own home. The level and type of care you receive can range from a small amount of support (half an hour a week) to several hours a day, or even 24-hour live-in care, depending on your individual circumstances. You can engage the services of a Homecare agency on a temporary basis, intermittently or long-term.

Homecare agencies can typically provide carers who are able to give you practical support with your daily chores, such as cleaning, shopping, banking or paying bills. They may also provide a sitting service or help with preparing your meals.

You can request carers trained to give personal care, such as help with going to the toilet, bathing or dressing, as well as carers who can perform medical tasks, such as administering your medication, giving injections or changing a catheter. A Homecare agency usually has carers who are able to drive for you or provide you with help getting around. You can arrange for a carer to come into your home at specific times, for example, to help you get out of bed in the morning or go to bed at night, or to accompany you to a hospital or doctor's appointment.

Homecare agencies are strictly regulated, and homecare workers are required to undergo initial training to make sure that they are able to provide a good standard of care in a person's home.

Many care workers go on to achieve further recognised qualifications in care. In the UK, all homecare workers are required to undergo a criminal record disclosure. Homecare agencies are required to register with their statutory regulator if they provide personal care, and will be expected to undergo regular inspection. These agencies are also required to comply fully with health and safety legislation in order to identify and minimise risks to people receiving care.

What happens after you receive an assessment?

Once you have an agreed assessment, you have three ways of arranging homecare (sometimes called home support or home help).

1. Your local council provides the carer, in which case everything is arranged for you.
2. You ask an agency to find you the appropriate carer. You still have to find the agency but all you need to do after that is pay the agency.
3. You find your own carer. This gives you flexibility, but also more responsibility since you become the carer's employer.

The system of direct payments now in operation allows you independence in using methods two or three but does involve more responsibility and work for you or your family.

How can you find the right agency for you?

All carers and homecare agencies in the UK have to be registered. You can find details of appropriate agencies on the following websites:

Care Quality Commission

(www.cqc.org.uk)

United Kingdom Homecare Association

(www.ukhca.co.uk)

Since April 2012, the Care Quality Commission has been carrying out an inspection programme of all agencies offering homecare services.

How can I find my own carer?

To find your own individual carer, you can place advertisements in shops, supermarkets, voluntary organisations, local Jobcentres or newspapers. Help in drawing up advertisements and considering all the implications of employing your own carer is available on the new Gov website (www.gov.uk). In particular, they draw attention to the implications of tax and National Insurance and Employers Liability Insurance. You can also ask your local social services department to help you with the paperwork.

Financial assistance

As someone with a disability or illness (physical or mental) that restricts your mobility, you may be able to claim one or more of the benefits and entitlements listed on pages 15-18, although this will depend on your individual circumstances. To find out more, we would suggest looking at the Gov website (www.gov.uk) or calling the Benefit Enquiry Line on 0800 882 200.



Disability Living Allowance

Disability Living Allowance (DLA) is a tax-free benefit for anyone under the age of 16 or over the age of 65 who has care needs or issues with mobility. It is a benefit for people with a long-term illness or disability (either physical or mental) and features a Care Component (payable at three different rates – lower, middle and higher) and a Mobility Component (payable at a lower or higher rate). DLA is not means-tested but eligibility has recently changed, so that Personal Independence Payments are being introduced to replace DLA for people aged 17 to 64.

If you are eligible for Disability Living Allowance, you will receive the component deemed appropriate to your needs. You must have needed help for at least three months before you can claim and should expect to need help for at least a further six months (different rules apply if you are terminally ill).

The Care Component of DLA takes into account how much care you need (regardless of whether you are actually receiving it). There are different criteria for establishing which rate you should receive.

The Mobility Component of DLA considers what help you may need to

be mobile and looks at whether you need someone to provide guidance or supervision when you are outside on unfamiliar routes (lower rate) or whether you have severe mobility problems.

DLA is currently paid at the following rates

(April 2013 onwards):

Care Component -

Lowest rate - £21 per week

Middle rate - £53 per week

Highest rate - £79.15 per week

Mobility Component -

Lower rate - £21 per week

Higher rate - £55.25 per week

Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

From April 2013 onwards, the Government is introducing a new allowance called Personal Independence Payment (PIP), which will gradually replace Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for disabled people aged between 17 and 64 (DLA will continue for children and people aged 65 and over). Personal Independence Payment is a non-means tested, tax-free payment that you can spend as you choose.

Most people currently receiving DLA won't be affected by PIP until 2015 or later.

PIP is designed to help with some of the extra costs caused by long-term ill health or a disability. What you receive will depend on how your condition affects you. When you make a claim for PIP, you will be assessed so that the Department of Work & Pensions can work out what level of support you should receive. Your award will be assessed on a regular basis.

NB: The Motability Scheme will work with PIP in the same way as it does with DLA.

PIP is currently paid at the following levels:

Daily living component –

Standard - £53

Enhanced - £79.15

Mobility component

Standard - £21

Enhanced - £55.25

Attendance Allowance

Attendance Allowance is a tax-free benefit for people aged 65 or over who have specific care needs because of an illness or disability (either physical or mental).

This benefit looks at the amount of care you need, regardless of whether you are actually receiving that care or not, and is not means-tested.

To be eligible for Attendance Allowance, your care should include the following:

- frequent attention during the day in connection with your bodily functions
- or continual supervision during the day in order to prevent substantial danger to yourself or others
- or the need for prolonged or repeated attention during the night in connection to your body functions
- or being watched for much of the night

You can claim Attendance Allowance if you have needed looking after for at least six months (this qualifying period is waived if you are terminally ill). The care help you need should cover things like bathing, eating, going to the toilet and getting dressed. It can also include help with medical treatment (e.g. administering tablets or injections, or using a kidney dialysis machine). Attendance Allowance takes into account supervision that you might need because of dizzy spells, falls or seizures.

Attendance Allowance is tax-free and paid at two rates (depending on whether you need care during the day, night, or both).

The rates from April 2013 are as follows (the rate usually increases each April):

Higher rate - £79.15 per week

Lower rate - £53 per week

If you receive Attendance Allowance, you may also be entitled to extra Pension Credit, Housing Benefit or Council Tax Reduction.

Disablement Benefit

You may be entitled to receive Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit (accidents) if you are ill or disabled because of an accident or event that happened in connection with work. The amount you may receive will depend on your individual circumstances (e.g. your age and the assessed level of your disability). If you are awarded Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit, this may affect the other benefits you receive. There is also an Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit (diseases), which covers more than 70 diseases that can be caused by certain types of work.

War Disablement Pension

You may be able to claim War Disablement Pension under the War Pensions Scheme if you were injured or disabled as a result of service in Her Majesty's (HM) Armed Forces, you are no longer serving in HM Armed Forces and the claimed condition was caused by service before 6 April 2005.

Claims for disablement that occurred on or after 6 April 2005 should be made under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme.

The amount you receive will depend on the assessed level of your disability.

Armed Forces Independence Payment

As part of the Welfare Reform Act 2012, a new allowance called Armed Forces Independence Payment (AFIP) is being introduced. Those who receive this allowance will be eligible to join the Motability Scheme. For more information, visit the Service Personnel and Veterans' Agency website (www.veterans-uk.info).

Constant Attendance Allowance

If you need daily care and attention because of a disability and you claim Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit or a War Disablement Pension, you can claim Constant Attendance Allowance (CAA).

The criteria you need to fulfil to receive CAA will depend on which of these two benefits you receive.

Constant Attendance Allowance is paid at the following weekly rates (April 2013):

Exceptional rate - £129.40

Intermediate rate - £97.05

Normal maximum rate - £64.70

Part-time rate - £32.35

Carers' Allowance

If you are caring for an ill or disabled person in their home for more than 35 hours a week, you may be entitled to claim Carers' Allowance. However, it is worth being aware that Carers' Allowance can cause other benefits to increase or decrease, and may affect the benefits of the person for whom you are caring.

Carers' Allowance is a taxable benefit, currently paid at a rate of £58.45 per week (April 2013).

Health and independent living

As mentioned earlier in this guide, financial assistance towards your health and independent living may be available in the form of Direct Payments, Value Added Tax relief on equipment and services, equipment for independent living and Disabled Facilities Grants (available through your local authority).

You may also be entitled to help towards health costs such as free NHS prescriptions, dental care, hospital travel costs, wheelchairs and hearing aids.

Home and housing

You may be able to arrange a reduction in your Council Tax Bill if your home has certain features that are essential to you living there. If you are on a low income and paying rent, you may be entitled to claim Housing Benefit towards your rent.

If you are registered blind, you are entitled to a 50% reduction on the cost of a TV licence.

VAT on mobility aids and equipment

If you have a long-term illness or you are disabled, you may not have to pay VAT on cars and other equipment designed to help your mobility. People aged 60 and over may be able to pay a lower rate of VAT on mobility aids installed in their home. The rules regarding VAT are complicated; therefore, we would suggest that you contact HM Revenue and Customs (see page 20 for contact details) for more advice about VAT exemption applicable to your individual circumstances.

Further advice and information

Listed below are a number of organisations that will be able to give you more advice about meeting your mobility requirements. This is by no means an exhaustive list and you may find that there are local organisations who can tell you more about the services on offer in your area.

If you are living in Scotland, you are advised to read our Scottish edition of the Mobility Advice guide as many of the organisations listed below have a dedicated Scottish branch, and different rules, regulations and legislation may apply.

Assist UK

Redbank House, 4 St Chad's Street,
Manchester M8 8QA
Tel: 0161 832 9757
Email: general.info@assist-uk.org
www.assist-uk.org

British Healthcare Trades Association (BHTA)

New Loom House
Suite 4.06, 101 Back Church Lane
London E1 1LU
Tel: 020 7702 2141/ Fax: 020 7680 4048
Email: bhta@bhta.com (and bhta@bhta.net)
www.bhta.net

British Red Cross

UK Office
44 Moorfields, London EC2Y 9AL
General enquiries: 0844 412 2804
Email: information@redcross.org.uk
www.redcross.org.uk
Facebook/Twitter - @BritishRedCross

Citizens Advice Bureau

The CAB provides free confidential and independent advice from over 3,400 locations throughout the UK. Their website provides contact details of a local office near you. Alternatively, your Yellow Pages will have details for your nearest office.

www.citizensadvice.org.uk or
www.adviceguide.org.uk
Facebook/Twitter - @CitizensAdvice

Community Transport Association (CTA)

Highbank, Halton Street, Hyde, Cheshire SK14 2NY

Advice: 0845 130 6195
Email: advice@ctauk.org www.ctauk.org

Department for Transport

Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road, London SW1P 4DR
Enquiry helpdesk: 0300 330 3000
Email: online contact form
www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport

Disability Rights UK

12 City Forum,
250 City Road, London EC1V 8AF
Tel: 020 7250 3222
Independent Living Advice Line: 0845 026 4748
Email: enquiries@disabilityrightsuk.org
www.disabilityrightsuk.org
Facebook/Twitter - @DisRightsUK
'Get Mobile' guide available

Disabled Living Foundation

380-384 Harrow Road, London W9 2HU
Tel: 020 7289 6111 Helpline: 0845 130 9177
Email: info@dlf.org.uk www.dlf.org.uk

Disabled Motoring UK

National Headquarters
Ashwellthorpe, Norwich, NR16 1EX
Tel: 01508 489 449
Email: info@disabledmotoring.org
www.disabledmotoring.org

Forum of Mobility Centres

c/o Providence Chapel
Warehorne, Ashford, Kent TN26 2JX
Tel: 0800 559 3636
Email: mobility@rcht.cornwall.nhs.uk
www.mobility-centres.org.uk

Go Kids Go!

206 Norwood, Beverley,
East Yorkshire HU17 9JA
Tel: 01482 887163
Email: Roy@go-kids-go.org.uk
www.go-kids-go.org.uk
Facebook

HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC)

VAT Disabled and Elderly Reliefs Correspondence
PO Box 205, Bootle, L69 9AZ
Tel: 0845 302 0203
Email: via online enquiry form
www.hmrc.gov.uk

The Mobility Trust

17B Reading Road
Pangbourne, Reading, Berkshire RG8 7LR
Tel: 0118 984 2588
Email: mobility@mobilitytrust.org.uk
www.mobilitytrust.org.uk

Motability

For general enquiries about the car, scooter
or powered wheelchair scheme, contact:
City Gate House
22 Southwark Bridge Road
London SE1 9HB
Tel: 0845 456 4566
Textphone: 0845 675 0009
Email: via online enquiry form
www.motability.co.uk

The National Federation of Shopmobility UK (NFSUK)

163 West Street, Fareham, Hampshire,
PO16 0EF. Tel: 0844 4141 850
Email: info@shopmobilityuk.org
www.shopmobilityuk.org

Scope (includes contacts and information about
the DIAL network – local disability information
and advice)

6 Market Road, London, N7 9PW
Scope: 0808 800 3333
DIAL UK: 01302 310 123
Email: response@scope.org.uk
www.scope.org.uk/dial

Transport for London Customer Services

4th Floor, 14 Pier Walk, London, SE10 0ES
Tel: 0343 222 1234
Dial-a-Ride: 0845 999 1 999
www.tfl.gov.uk

Whizz-Kidz

4th Floor, Portland House, Bressenden Place,
London, SW1E 5BH. Tel: 020 7233 6600
Email: via online enquiry form
www.whizz-kidz.org.uk
Facebook and Twitter - @WhizzKidz

Useful websites

www.dvla.gov.uk
www.gov.uk
www.nhs.uk
www.ricability.org.uk/consumer_reports/mobility_reports/car_controls/ (Find out more about
having your existing car adapted)
www.wheelchairmanagers.nhs.uk

Please note that the information in this guide is
given in good faith but we are in no way connected
to or affiliated with any of the organisations
included. Throughout the UK, there is a great
deal of variation in the structure of NHS Wheelchair
Services; therefore, you are advised to use this
guide as a starting point and speak to your local
service for information applicable to your region.
Any general information given is correct as of
April 2013 but may be subject to change.

