Going into hospital?

A basic guide to
- **benefits you may be able to get**
- **effects on benefits you already get**
Other formats

This leaflet is also available in large print, Braille, on audio cassette and in the following languages:

• Arabic  • Bengali  • Chinese  • Gujarati
• Punjabi  • Somali  • Urdu  • Vietnamese.

You can also get these from your Pension Centre, Jobcentre, Jobcentre Plus or social security office or by ringing the Benefit Enquiry Line on 0800 88 22 00.
Sickness, injury and disability can come into someone’s life at any time, often when least expected. You or someone you claim for may have to go into hospital. You may need social security benefits to give financial help for yourself and your family.

- This leaflet gives basic advice on the benefits you may be able to get. We want to make sure you and your family get the right help, at the right time, in the right way.
- If you or someone you claim for has to go into hospital, the rules for some benefits you already get may also change.

Most social security benefits are paid to help with day-to-day needs or special needs because of a disability. If you go into hospital or someone you claim for goes into hospital, the National Health Service (NHS) takes over responsibility for some of these needs. This means the amount of benefit paid may go down during a stay in hospital.

If you get any benefits, the most important thing is to let your Pension Centre, Jobcentre, Jobcentre Plus or social security office know if you or someone you claim for are going into or coming out of hospital.

If you have a question which is not answered in the leaflet, or if you just want more advice, please contact your Pension Centre, Jobcentre, Jobcentre Plus or social security office or ring the Benefit Enquiry Line (BEL). See Where to get help and advice on the last page of this leaflet for details.
Check first what benefit or benefits you may be able to get. Also check if there are any effects on benefits you are already getting.

If you were working for an employer and earning enough to be relevant for National Insurance (NI) purposes (this amount is lower than the amount when you have to start paying NI contributions):

check Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)  
► see page 5.

If you want to know how much you have to earn to be relevant for NI purposes, contact your pension centre, or social security or Jobcentre Plus office.

If you were not working when you became sick, you were self-employed or you have been sick for more than 28 weeks:

check Incapacity Benefit  
► see page 5.

If you and your partner are on a low income and any of the following apply
• you are sick or disabled
• you are aged 60 or over
• you are a lone parent

• you are caring for someone who is ill or disabled
• you are registered blind:
  check Income Support  
  ► see page 7.

check Pension Credit  
► see page 7.

We use partner to mean a person you are married to or a person you are living with as if you are married to them.

If you cannot manage your own affairs while you are in hospital make sure someone lets the office that pays your benefit know.

If you are already getting benefits check if they are affected by going into hospital:  
► see page 9.

National Insurance (NI)

For some benefits you must have paid or be treated as having paid NI contributions. For more information contact your Pension Centre, Jobcentre, Jobcentre Plus or social security office.
### Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)

- Paid by your employer
- Paid for up to 28 weeks

**Were you:**

- ✓ Sick for at least four days in a row including weekends and Bank Holidays?
- ✓ Employed when you became sick?
- ✓ Earning enough on average to be relevant for NI purposes (this amount is lower than the amount when you have to start paying NI contributions)?

**If YES to all, claim SSP.**

*If you want to know how much you have to earn to be relevant for NI purposes, contact your Pension Centre, Jobcentre, Jobcentre Plus or social security office.*

- You can get SSP for up to 28 weeks in one spell of sickness.
- Spells with eight weeks or less between them are counted as one spell.
- If you have more than one job you may be able to claim SSP from each employer.
- SSP is not affected if you go into hospital.

*If SSP ends, claim Incapacity Benefit.*

**How to claim** see page 8.

### Incapacity Benefit

- Is paid if SSP has ended or you cannot get SSP
- Is not paid if you were over State Pension age when you became sick

**Have you:**

- ✓ Paid NI contributions?
- ✓ Been sick for at least four days in a row including weekends and Bank Holidays?

**If YES to both, claim Incapacity Benefit.**

*Incapacity Benefit can be paid at three different rates.*

**Short-term Incapacity Benefit at the lower rate**
Paid if you do not get SSP and have been sick for at least four days in a row including weekends and Bank Holidays.

**Short-term Incapacity Benefit at the higher rate**
Paid if you have been sick for more than 28 weeks and less than 52 weeks.

**Long-term Incapacity Benefit**
Paid if you have been sick for over 52 weeks.

*Continued on the next page*
Special circumstances
• If you became sick before reaching State Pension age, you may be able to get Incapacity Benefit after State Pension age. It can be paid at the State Pension rate for up to one year of sickness.
• If you get the highest rate care component of Disability Living Allowance or you are terminally ill, you will get Incapacity Benefit paid at the long-term rate after you have been sick for 28 weeks.
• To find out how your Incapacity Benefit is affected if you go into hospital, or someone you claim for goes into hospital, see page 10.
• If you get the long-term rate of Incapacity Benefit, you may qualify for extra money depending on your age when you became sick.

If you have children:
• You may be able to get Child Tax Credit. To find out more about Child Tax Credit, phone the Inland Revenue Helpline on 0845 300 3900. If you use a textphone, the number is 0845 300 3909.

Extra help for adult dependants:
• If your husband or wife is aged 60 or over, or another adult cares for your children, you may be able to get extra money.

Additional State Pension:
• Depending on your NI record, you may build up additional State Pension, through State Second Pension, for every complete tax year you get long-term Incapacity Benefit, starting from 6 April 2002. For more information, see leaflet PM2 State pensions – your guide.

How to claim see page 8.
**Pension Credit**

From 6 October 2003, a new entitlement called Pension Credit replaced Income Support (paid as Minimum Income Guarantee) to those aged 60 and over.

It provides a contribution towards a guaranteed level of income of at least £105.45 a week for single people aged 60 and over and at least £160.95 for pensioner couples (at least one of whom must be aged 60 or over). These amounts will be more if you have caring responsibilities, are severely disabled or have certain housing costs.

People aged 65 and over who have made modest arrangements for their retirement (for example, through a pension or savings) may also be rewarded. This reward can be worth as much as:

- £15.51 a week for a single person; or
- £20.22 a week for a couple.

You can phone The Pension Service to apply for Pension Credit on freephone 0800 99 1234. The line is open 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday and 8am to 1pm on Saturday. If you have speech or hearing difficulties, the textphone number is 0800 169 0133.

We are writing to people aged 60 and over between April 2003 and June 2004 to help them decide whether to apply.

**Income Support**

- Is for people on a low income but savings over £8,000 usually mean you cannot get Income Support (£12,000 if your partner is aged 60 or over, £16,000 if you live in a care home)

**Are you:**

- ✔ Aged 16 or over?
- ✔ On a low income?
- ✔ Not working, or working on average less than 16 hours a week (24 hours a week for your partner)?

**If YES to all, claim Income Support.**

- Savings over £3,000 (£6,000 if your partner is aged 60 or over) or over £10,000 if you live in a care home, usually affect how much Income Support you can get.
- You may be able to get extra money to help towards certain housing costs.
- You can usually get extra money for your family.
- If you are sick and not getting SSP you must claim Incapacity Benefit as well as Income Support.
- If you get SSP you do not have to claim Incapacity Benefit as well as Income Support.
- To find out if you can get Income Support because of a low income, check with your Jobcentre, Jobcentre Plus or social security office.
- To find out how your Income Support is affected if you go into hospital, or someone you claim for goes into hospital, see page 11.

**How to claim** ▶️ see page 8.
How to claim

1. When to claim

Claim straight away. If you delay you may lose benefit.

2. Claim form

Ask your employer about SSP.

For other benefits, contact your Pension Centre, Jobcentre, Jobcentre Plus or social security office for a claim form. For your nearest office, look for the Jobcentre Plus, social security or Jobcentre display advert in the business numbers section of the phone book.

3. Filling in the form

Before you fill in your form, check that you are applying for everything you may be entitled to. Use this leaflet as a guide.

4. Proof of identity

It is important that we can be sure of your identity when you make a claim. We may need to ask you about your background and look at any official documents you have to support the information you give.

If you are not sure about this, get leaflet GL25 How to prove your identity for social security from your Pension Centre, Jobcentre, Jobcentre Plus or social security office.
You must tell your Pension Centre, Jobcentre, Jobcentre Plus or social security office as soon as you go into or come out of hospital. You must also tell them if someone you get benefit for goes into or comes out of hospital.

If you get Jobseeker’s Allowance (JSA), you must tell your Jobcentre about going into or coming out of hospital.

Most benefits reduce after you have been in hospital for a certain number of weeks.

For information about how much benefit you can get when you are in hospital, get leaflet GL23 Social security benefit rates from your Pension Centre, Jobcentre, Jobcentre Plus or social security office.

When we work out the date your benefit should reduce, we count spells in hospital with four weeks or less between them as one spell.

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<th><strong>Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)</strong></th>
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<td><strong>Reduced Earnings Allowance (REA)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Retirement Allowance</strong></td>
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These benefits are not affected however long you are in hospital.
If you are getting one of these benefits:

✓ Are you going into hospital?
✓ Is someone you get extra money for going into hospital?

If YES to one, check the details below.

As soon as you go into hospital, or someone who depends on you goes into hospital
• Nothing will usually happen to your benefit straight away.
• If you get extra money for someone who looks after children for you, and that person goes into hospital, the extra money may stop straight away.

After 12 weeks
• If you get extra money for a child and they are in hospital, the extra money may stop. The extra money may continue if you regularly spend money on them for things like toys, gifts and visits while they are in hospital.

After 52 weeks
• Your benefit will be reduced after you have been in hospital for 52 weeks.
**Income Support**

**If you are getting Income Support:**

✓ Are you going into hospital?
✓ Is someone you get extra money for going into hospital?

If YES to one, check the details below.

**As soon as you go into hospital, or someone who depends on you goes into hospital**

- Nothing will usually happen to your Income Support straight away.

**After 4 weeks**

- If you stop getting Attendance Allowance or Disability Living Allowance, your Income Support will be reduced if you or your partner are in hospital.

_We use partner to mean a person you are married to or a person you are living with as if you are married to them._

**After 12 weeks**

- If any children you claim for are in hospital, your Income Support will usually be reduced.
- If you get help with housing costs, we will look at them to see if they should continue. We will do this every 12 weeks if you are still in hospital.

**After 52 weeks**

- Your benefit will be reduced after you have been in hospital for 52 weeks.

**If someone living with you who is not dependent on you goes into hospital**

- If you get help with your housing costs in your Income Support and someone who shares your accommodation but is not dependent on you has been in hospital for more than 52 weeks, we will stop making a deduction from your housing costs in respect of their contribution to your household finances.
Pension Credit

If you are getting Pension Credit:

✓ Are you going into hospital?
✓ Is your partner going into hospital?

If YES to one, check the details below.

As soon as you go into hospital, or someone who depends on you goes into hospital

• Nothing will usually happen to your Pension Credit straight away.

After 4 weeks

• If you stop getting Attendance Allowance or Disability Living Allowance, your Pension Credit will be reduced if you or your partner are in hospital.

We use partner to mean a person you are married to or a person you are living with as if you are married to them.

After 52 weeks

• Your benefit will be reduced after you have been in hospital for 52 weeks.

If someone living with you who is not dependent on you goes into hospital

• If you get help with your housing costs in your Pension Credit and someone who shares your accommodation but is not dependent on you has been in hospital for more than 52 weeks, we will stop making a deduction from your housing costs in respect of their contribution to your household finances.

Jobseeker’s Allowance (JSA)

If you are getting JSA:

✓ Are you going into hospital?
✓ Is someone you get extra money for going into hospital?

If YES to one, check the details below.

As soon as you go into hospital, or someone who depends on you goes into hospital

• Nothing will usually happen to your JSA straight away.
• But you must tell your Jobcentre or Jobcentre Plus office straight away that you have gone into hospital. If you do not, your JSA may stop.

After 2 weeks

• If you are the person in hospital, your JSA will stop.
• You may be able to get Incapacity Benefit or Income Support.

After 4 weeks

• If your partner is the person in hospital and you get a Severe Disability Premium for them, this will usually stop.

After 12 weeks

• If any children you claim for are in hospital, your JSA will usually be reduced.

After 52 weeks

• If your partner is the person in hospital, your JSA will usually be reduced.
If someone living with you who is not dependent on you goes into hospital

- If you get help with your housing costs in your Jobseeker’s Allowance and someone who shares your accommodation but is not dependent on you has been in hospital for more than 52 weeks, we will stop making a deduction from your housing costs in respect of their contribution to your household finances.

### Attendance Allowance (AA)

### Constant Attendance Allowance (CAA)

**If you are getting one of these benefits:**

- ✅ Are you going into hospital?

**If YES, check the details below.**

**After 4 weeks**

- Your AA or CAA will usually stop.

**As soon as you go into hospital,**

let the Disability Benefits Unit know if you are receiving AA. Ring **08457 123456**, or contact your Pension Centre, Jobcentre, Jobcentre Plus or social security office.

If you are receiving CAA paid with your War Pension then you must let the Veterans Agency know (see page 14 for details).

Let the Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit unit know if you are receiving CAA.

**Contact your Pension Centre, Jobcentre, Jobcentre Plus or social security office.**

### Disability Living Allowance (DLA)

**If you are getting DLA:**

- ✅ Are you going into hospital?

**If YES, check the details below.**

**After 4 weeks**

- If DLA is paid for someone aged 16 or over, it will usually stop.
- If some or all of your DLA is paid into the Motability scheme and you go into hospital, your DLA mobility component may continue until your Motability agreement ends.

**After 12 weeks**

- If DLA is paid for a child aged under 16, it will usually stop.

Let the Disability Benefits Unit know if you, or a child you are looking after, are receiving DLA. Ring **08457 123456**, or contact your Pension Centre, Jobcentre, Jobcentre Plus or social security office.

### Carer’s Allowance (CA)

**If you are getting CA:**

- ✅ Are you going into hospital?
- ✅ Is someone you get extra money for going into hospital?
- ✅ Is the person you look after going into hospital?
If YES to one, check the details below.

As soon as you, someone you get extra money for, or the person you look after go into hospital

- CA may stop straight away. But in certain circumstances it may continue for 12 weeks.
- Let the Carer’s Allowance Unit know. Ring 01253 856123, or contact your Pension Centre, Jobcentre, Jobcentre Plus or social security office.

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit

- If you do not expect to be in hospital for more than 52 weeks, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit may continue. But you must still tell your local council if you go into hospital.
- If you want more information, contact your local council.
- If someone who shares your accommodation but is not dependent on you has been in hospital for more than 52 weeks, we will stop making a deduction from your Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit in respect of their contribution to your household finances.

If YES, check the details below.

If the child normally lives with you

- You will continue to get Child Benefit or Guardian’s Allowance unless:
  - your child has been in hospital for more than 12 weeks, and
  - you no longer regularly spend money on the child for things like toys, gifts and visits while they are in hospital.
- If the child does not usually live with you, but you get Child Benefit or Guardian’s Allowance because you pay to support them, this can continue as long as you continue to support the child.
- If you stop spending money on the child, you must let us know, as your Child Benefit or Guardian’s Allowance will usually stop.

War Pension

War Disablement Pension and War Widow’s or War Widower’s Pension can be affected if you or one of your dependants go into hospital.

You must contact the Veterans Agency at:

Veterans Agency
Norcross
Blackpool
FY5 3WP
Freephone: 0800 169 2277

Are you:

✓ Getting Child Benefit or Guardian’s Allowance for a child who is going into hospital?
Travel costs

Travel costs to and from hospital

• Help with the cost of your fares or petrol when you go into hospital for NHS treatment and when you come out of hospital
• Help with the cost of your fares or petrol when you go to and from hospital as an out-patient for NHS treatment

Do you get:
✓ Income Support?
✓ Income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance?
✓ Pension Credit?

If YES to one, you can get help with travel costs to hospital.

If NO, you may be able to get help with travel costs through the NHS Low Income Scheme.

• If you need someone to travel with you, you may also be able to get help with the cost of their fares.
• If you want more information get leaflet HC11 Are you entitled to help with health costs?
• For information on a range of health-related subjects, phone the Health Information Service on 0800 66 55 44. Calls are confidential.

Travel costs to visit someone in hospital

• Help with the cost of fares or petrol when you, or a member of your family, visit a close relative or close friend in hospital

Do you get:
✓ Income Support?
✓ Income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance?
✓ Pension Credit?

If YES to one, you or a member of your family may get help with travel costs to visit someone in hospital.

• If you want more information, get leaflet SB16 A guide to the Social Fund or contact your Pension Centre, Jobcentre, Jobcentre Plus or social security office. See the display advert in your local phone book.
Where to get help and advice

To get more information or other leaflets get in touch with your Pension Centre, Jobcentre, Jobcentre Plus or social security office. The address and telephone number will be on any letters you have received from them. Alternatively look for the social security, Jobcentre Plus or Jobcentre display advert in the business numbers section of the phone book.

You can get more information from the DWP website. The address is: www.dwp.gov.uk

A confidential telephone service is available for people with disabilities, their representatives and their carers. Ring the Benefit Enquiry Line (BEL) on 0800 88 22 00. People with speech or hearing problems can dial 0800 24 33 55.

The person taking your call will not have your personal papers, but will be able to give you general advice. This advice must not be taken as a decision on any matter about which you are making an enquiry.

You can also get leaflets and forms from the BEL.

To contact us by email see the Contact Us section of the website.

There are other benefits which you may be able to get. You can get information on them from other leaflets:

**SD1 Sick or disabled** A basic guide to benefits and tax credits for people of all ages with a physical or mental illness or disability – and people who look after them

**RM1 Retirement** A basic guide to benefits for people who are retiring or have retired

**PC1L Pension Credit. Pick it up. It’s yours** A basic guide to Pension Credit

**BC1 Babies and children** A basic guide to benefits and tax credits for anyone expecting a baby or caring for children

**GL21 A helping hand for benefits**
How you can help somebody with a disability claim the social security benefits due to them

**WK1 Financial help if you work or are looking for work** A basic guide to benefits and back to work schemes if you are working, looking for work or starting a job – including voluntary work

**GL23 Social security benefit rates**

Remember that this leaflet is a general guide to benefits and is not a full and authoritative statement of the law. We have made every effort to ensure that the information in this leaflet is correct at the date shown on the cover. However, changes in the law may make the leaflet become gradually less accurate.

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