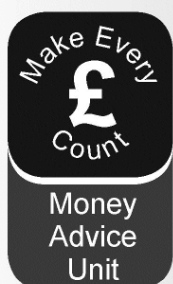


Factsheet

Promoting independence, well being and health

Hospital and benefits



Going into hospital

This leaflet tells you what happens to your benefits when you go into hospital. If you are getting any benefits it is your responsibility to tell whoever pays these benefits when you have a stay in hospital. Failure to do this could lead to you being paid too much and, if you are overpaid, you may have to pay this back.

This factsheet looks at the impact of a hospital stay on the most common benefits. It also includes information on the new universal credit. Universal credit is a benefit for people under pension credit age who are on a low income. When fully implemented, it will replace income support, income-based JSA, income-related ESA, housing benefit and tax credits. It is due to be introduced in stages and is rolling out in Hertfordshire during 2015/16 but only for new claims for certain single, childless claimants in the first instance. For more information about universal credit see www.hertsdirect.org/benefits

When you are in hospital some social security benefits are reduced or stopped. This could happen after 2, 4, 12, or 52 weeks (six months for universal credit) - see the table at the end of this leaflet for details. If you are claiming council tax support you should contact your local council to check the effect of a hospital stay on your benefit.

If you are a hospital in-patient detained under s45A or s47 of the Mental Health Act, you are not entitled to receive benefits.

Who counts as a patient?

You count as a patient for benefit purposes if you are undergoing medical or other treatment as an inpatient in a hospital or similar institution free of charge and:

- the treatment is funded by the NHS or
- the hospital or similar institution is run by the Defence Council.

You do not count as a patient for benefit purposes if you are a private patient.

For disability living allowance (DLA), personal independence payment (PIP) and attendance allowance you do not usually count as a patient on the day you go into hospital or the day you leave. For other benefits you do not count as a patient the day you go in but you do count as a patient on the day you leave.

Hospital or similar institution

Hospitals include all NHS hospitals, armed forces hospitals and special hospitals. Similar institutions may include hospices, rehabilitation units that provide medical or nursing care and care homes that provide medical or nursing care. For more information on **care homes and benefits** see www.hertsdirect.org/benefits

Which benefits are not affected by a hospital stay?

The following benefits are **not** normally affected by a stay in hospital: industrial injuries disablement benefit, child tax credit, maternity allowance, statutory sick pay, statutory maternity adoption/paternity pay or shared parental pay.

Which benefits are affected after four weeks?

After four weeks in hospital disability living allowance (DLA), personal independence payment (PIP) and attendance allowance are suspended. Stays in hospital of less than 28 days apart are 'linked' together when working out when the reduction of benefit should start. The day you go in and the day you come out of hospital usually both count as days at home. If you are terminally ill and in a hospice you can usually continue to claim DLA, PIP or attendance allowance.

If you have an existing Motability contract when you are admitted to hospital, the payments under this scheme will stop after 28 days and, in most cases, they will need to arrange for your car to be returned. However, this will depend upon your expected length of stay in hospital and your own preferences. Motability may be able to arrange for you to keep your car if you are expecting to come out of hospital and have benefit reinstated within a reasonable time.

Phone Motability on 0300 456 4566.

If you went into hospital before 9 April 2013, your Motability arrangements can continue until the agreement comes to an end.

If you receive DLA, PIP or attendance allowance, you may also be receiving an extra amount for severe disability as part of income support, income-based jobseeker's allowance, income-related employment and support allowance, housing benefit, council tax support or pension credit. This premium will also stop when your DLA, PIP or attendance allowance is suspended.

However, if you have a partner and both of you had been getting attendance allowance, DLA care at middle or highest rate, or PIP daily living component, you keep the severe disability premium at the single rate, even after the qualifying benefit has been withdrawn.

You should notify the relevant benefit authorities as soon as you come out of hospital so that your DLA/PIP/attendance allowance can be reinstated.

Carer's allowance stops when the person you care for has their DLA, PIP or attendance allowance suspended.

If you are getting a carer element in universal credit, this will also stop.

Which benefits are affected after 12 weeks?

After 12 weeks of a child being in hospital, child benefit can stop unless you are regularly spending some money on the child or contributing at least the amount of child benefit to the cost of supporting the child. If child benefit stops you may no longer be entitled to allowances for him/her

in any income support, income-based JSA or housing benefit or count as a lone parent for income support purposes.

Since 8 July 2015 DLA and PIP are no longer suspended if a child or young person was under 18 when they became an in-patient.

If you are caring for an adult who has been in hospital for 12 weeks, any carer premium that is paid as part of your means-tested benefits will stop. This will be eight weeks after attendance allowance/DLA/PIP is suspended for the person you care for. At this point, if you have been claiming income support as a carer, you may also have to switch to another benefit, like jobseeker's allowance – seek advice.

If the carer is in hospital their carer's allowance will stop after 12 weeks.

Which benefits are affected after thirteen weeks?

Jobseeker's allowance (JSA)

If you are already in receipt of JSA before you go into hospital, you can continue to receive it for up to 13 weeks during a period of sickness or time in hospital. During this time you are also exempt from work search and the work availability requirement so you will need to notify Jobcentre Plus that you are in hospital as soon as possible. After this you will need to claim employment and support allowance instead although you may wish to claim this sooner if you are likely to be unfit for work for a long time – for more information see www.hertsdirect.org/benefits

Which benefits are affected after 6 months?

Universal Credit

Your universal credit is calculated in the normal way until you, your partner or child have been in hospital for more than six months (except for the carer element). If you are part of a couple and one of you is in hospital or is expected to be in hospital for six months or more, you can no longer make a joint-claim for UC and should notify the DWP that you now need to claim as a single person.

If you have a dependent child and their hospital stay exceeds (or is expected to exceed) six months or more, the calculation of your universal credit will no longer include amounts for them. This may also affect your responsibilities in your claimant commitment.

Universal credit housing costs can be paid for temporary absences of up to six months.

Which benefits are affected after 52 weeks?

Most benefits continue in payment after 52 weeks. However, the following adjustments may still be made.

Income support

Any disability, enhanced disability or higher pensioner premium will stop.

Income-related ESA

If you are single and getting income-related ESA then any premiums and components will stop after 52 weeks in hospital. Couples should seek further advice.

Any benefit you get towards housing costs in income support or income-related ESA for interest on mortgages or service charges will usually stop but may continue to be paid in some circumstances if you are unlikely to be in hospital for substantially longer than 52 weeks.

If you have any non-dependent deductions being made to your means-tested benefit these will stop if a non-dependant who normally lives with you is still in hospital.

Contributory ESA

- **Work related activity group:**

Contributory ESA can only be paid for one year for all claimants in the 'work-related activity' group (regardless of whether or not you are in hospital). After that you may be eligible to transfer to income-related ESA. If you are in hospital long-term or your health has deteriorated you should seek advice about whether you can be moved to the 'support group'.

- **Support group:**

If you are in the support group you can continue to receive contributory ESA while in hospital and claims are not limited to one year. However, after 52 weeks in hospital you are not paid the extra component.

See our ESA factsheet on www.hertsdirect.org/benefits

Housing benefit

You can get housing benefit for up to 52 weeks if you are unlikely to be away for longer than this, (or, in exceptional circumstances, unlikely to be away for substantially longer). You must intend to return. However, if you are still getting housing benefit, your enhanced disability premium is no longer included from this point.

If you have a child in hospital, your entitlement to the disabled child and enhanced disability premium should not be affected if your child has been a patient for more than 52 weeks, as long as they continue to count as a member of your family.

If you have any non-dependent deductions being made to your housing benefit these will stop if a non-dependant who normally lives with you is still in hospital.

Council tax reduction

While the rules are broadly likely to follow those for housing benefit, you may still be able to argue that you remain entitled to council tax reduction as long as your home remains your 'sole or main residence'. See your local council's website for more details of the specific scheme in your area.

Increases for dependants in non-means tested benefits

If you get an increase in your non-means tested benefit for an adult or child dependant, these may stop. However, you can ask the DWP to pay the increase to the dependant or another person as long as they can show that they will use the money for the benefit of that dependant.

Couples

For income support, JSA, ESA, pension credit and housing benefit, you still count as a couple while you and your partner are only temporarily apart. However, you no longer count as a couple if you are likely to be separated for more than 52 weeks or, in exceptional circumstances, such as a stay in hospital, substantially more than 52 weeks. If you are claiming universal credit you no longer count as a couple after six months.

What should I do if I am already claiming a benefit?

Remember, as the claimant, it is your responsibility to notify changes in your circumstances. You should therefore write to, or call, all the offices that deal with your benefits (eg Jobcentre Plus, Disability Benefits Centre, Pension Service or local authority) before you go into hospital if possible. You should give details of the date of admission and the likely length of your stay. If you don't do this, you could be overpaid benefit, and may be asked to pay it back. If you go into hospital unexpectedly, you should notify the relevant offices as soon as you are able to or get someone else to contact them on your behalf.

If you get income support, JSA, ESA or incapacity benefit, telephone the Jobcentre Plus contact centre on: 0345 604 3719.

If you are already sending 'fit notes' (previously known as sick notes) to Jobcentre Plus to show you are too sick to work, you should continue to do so while you are in hospital. The ward sister can arrange for a medical certificate if you need one.

Remember you cannot continue to claim JSA after thirteen weeks in hospital. You should get a medical certificate and claim ESA instead on 0800 055 6688.

If you are already getting universal credit you should notify the Universal Credit Service Centre on 0345 600 0723 if you go into hospital.

If you get pension credit, phone the Pension Service on 0345 606 0265.

If you get carer's allowance, phone the Carer's Allowance Unit on 0345 608 4321.

If you get housing benefit or council tax support, tell your local council about your stay in hospital even if you have a partner who will still be living at home.

If you get DLA, phone the Blackpool Benefits Centre on 0345 7123 456 or write to them at Warbreck House, Warbreck Hill, Blackpool, FY2 0YE with the date of your admission.

If you get attendance allowance, phone 0345 605 6055 or write to them at the above address.

If you get PIP, phone 0345 850 3322 or write to the address at the top of your award letter.

What should I do if I am employed?

If you are off sick for less than seven days, send a self-certificate (SC2) to your employer. You can get this from the hospital. If you are off sick for more than seven days, send a medical certificate to your employer.

Usually, your employer will pay you statutory sick pay (SSP) for the first 28 weeks of sickness (see www.hertsdirect.org/benefits). The amount of SSP you get is not affected by going into hospital. If your employer refuses to pay, your local Citizens Advice Bureau can advise you. In addition to SSP you may be entitled to contractual sick pay from your employer, so check your employment contract.

You may be able to claim working tax credit, income support, housing benefit or council tax support in addition to your statutory sick pay. However, you should notify the Tax Credit Office if you are off sick for more than 28 weeks as you will no longer be eligible for WTC, even though you may still be an employee (unless you have a partner working more than the required number of hours i.e. 16, 24, or 30 hours). Ring the Tax Credit Helpline on 0345 300 3900.

If you are getting universal credit you should notify the Universal Credit Service Centre on 0345 600 0723 if you go into hospital.

Can I apply for benefits whilst I am in hospital?

You may be able to apply for a range of benefits whilst in hospital. In particular, if you are unable to get statutory sick pay (SSP) because you were either not working before you became ill, or you have left your job, or if your SSP or JSA has ended, you may be able to get employment and support allowance (ESA).

To claim ESA phone the Jobcentre Plus contact centre on 0800 055 6688. You will need to send a 'fit note' to the Jobcentre Plus office with the claim form. While you are in hospital you will be treated as being unable to work and therefore will not be required to attend a medical.

You can apply for attendance allowance, DLA or PIP whilst you are in hospital but it cannot actually be paid to you until you are discharged. Claim lines below:

DLA	0345 7123 456
Attendance allowance	0345 605 6055
Personal independence payment	0800 917 2222.

If you get SSP and need additional money, for example, to cover mortgage interest payments you can claim income support to top up your SSP.

You are currently not able to make a new claim for universal credit whilst in hospital although this will change in the future.

Other benefits may also be available depending on your circumstances – seek advice. Your hospital social worker might be able to help you.

What happens if I'm allowed to leave hospital and go home for a few days?

If you go home for a few days, even just for a weekend, any benefits like attendance allowance, DLA or PIP, that are awarded but have been suspended because you are in hospital, can be paid at the full amount for any days that you are at home. You must inform the relevant offices which

deal with your benefits of any date that you go home and the date that you return to hospital. You may need to send confirmation from the hospital of the dates you are at home.

If these benefits are reinstated and you have a carer, they may be able to get carer's allowance when you come home if they are caring for you for at least 35 hours a week.

Can I get help with fares to and from hospital?

If you are on income support, income-based jobseeker's allowance, income-related employment and support allowance, universal credit or pension credit (guarantee credit) you can get help towards the costs of fares to and from a hospital. You can also get help with fares to any other premises you have been referred to for NHS treatment. The hospital or other premises should refund your fares if you give them proof of your benefit entitlement, for example, a letter showing how your benefit is worked out

Some people getting child tax credit or working tax credit can get help with fares to hospital – see the leaflet **help with health costs** available on www.hertsdirect.org/benefits

You may also get help with fares to hospital if you have a low income. Phone the Help with Health Costs line on 0300 330 1343 and ask for form HC1. If you have already paid the fare ask for form HC5 to claim a refund. If your income is low enough you will get a certificate, lasting up to six months, saying that you can get help with fares (it may also cover prescriptions, dental treatment, and help with glasses).

Show the certificate to the hospital fares officer whenever you claim for fares to and from hospital, whether as an in-patient, or an out-patient. You can claim for taxi fares if you cannot use public transport or the cost of an escort's fares if you cannot travel alone.

What happens when I get discharged from hospital?

Shortly before you leave hospital, contact the offices dealing with your benefits and tell them when you expect to be going home.

Further help and advice

Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB)

Online information:

0344 4111 444

www.adviceguide.org.uk

Information about local CABx and opening times:

www.hertfordshirecab.org.uk

Civil Legal Advice

Free legal advice in England and Wales if you're eligible for legal aid

0345 345 4345

www.gov.uk/civil-legal-advice

How you can contact Hertfordshire County Council

Our website

Visit our website for more information about support for carers and adult social care - apply online for meals on wheels or a Blue Badge and make a referral for care services

www.hertsdirect.org/adults

If you would like more information about benefits and debt you can find a wide range of Money Advice Unit factsheets

www.hertsdirect.org/benefits

Hertfordshire Directory

Find national and local community groups, charities, services and activities

www.hertsdirect.org/directory

HertsHelp

Independent information and advice on local community services and care funding

Telephone: 0300 123 4044

Minicom: 0300 456 2364

Email: info@hertshelp.net

Call us

For information and advice on how to get care and support

Telephone: 0300 123 4042 Text Message: 07797 870591

Textphone: 0300 123 4041

Calls to 0300 cost no more than a national rate call to a 01 or 02 number

If you are worried that you or someone you know is at risk of abuse or neglect

Call us on 0300 123 4042 (24 hours a day)

If you need help to understand

Call 0300 123 4042 if you would like help to understand this information or need it in a different format.

You can also ask to speak to someone in your own language

This information is correct at time of print. It is for guidance only and is not an authoritative statement of the law

Benefit	After 4 weeks	After 12/13 weeks	After 6 months	After 52 weeks
AA, DLA, PIP	AA stops after 4 weeks in hospital DLA and PIP stop after 4 weeks if you were aged 18 or over when you became an in-patient			
Income support Pension credit Employment and support allowance	Severe disability premium / additional amount stops when AA, the care component of DLA or the daily living component of PIP stops – so income support /pension credit/income-related ESA may stop or reduce at this time.	Carer premium/carer's additional amount paid to the carer generally stops 8 weeks after the cared for person's AA, DLA or PIP stops – so the carer's income support/income-related ESA/ pension credit may stop or reduce at this time if AA, DLA or PIP stopped at 4 weeks. Income support as a carer may stop 8 weeks after cared for person's AA, DLA or PIP stops due to them being in hospital.		Means tested benefit: housing costs for mortgage interest and service charges usually stop & couples must usually claim separately. Income support: disability, enhanced disability, higher pensioner premiums will stop. Income-related ESA: single claimants will lose any premiums and components; couples should seek further advice. Contributory ESA: limited to one year for those in the work related activity group whether in or out of hospital; support component stops
Carer's allowance	Stops when cared for person's AA, DLA or PIP stops after 4 weeks in hospital.	Stops after 12 weeks if the carer is in hospital but carer premium can continue for 8 weeks in income support, income-related ESA, pension credit, housing benefit		
JSA		Stops after 13 weeks sickness.		
Housing benefit	Usually no change. However severe disability premium/additional amount stops when AA/DLA care/PIP stops so HB may go down or stop at this time.	If you get the carer premium/carer's additional amount this will stop if the cared for person's AA/DLA/PIP stopped at 4 weeks – HB may stop or be reduced.		HB stops altogether unless likely to return soon after 52 weeks. For couples, the partner at home should claim HB Any deductions made for non-dependants in hospital stop
State pension Incapacity benefit Severe disablement allowance Bereavement benefits				If you have a dependant still living at home, any addition you get with your benefit may stop. However, DWP can pay the increase direct to them or a nominated 3 rd party.

Universal credit	Carer element stops if the cared for person's AA, DLA or PIP stops		Partner & children in hospital - no longer part of UC claim	
------------------	--	--	---	--

