

USEFUL INFORMATION – AS OF MARCH 2025

DISABILITY LIVING ALLOWANCE (DLA)

Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for children may help with the extra costs of looking after a child who:

- is under 16
- has difficulties walking or needs more looking after than a child of the same age who doesn't have a disability

They will need to meet all the [eligibility requirements](#). Usually, to qualify for Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for children the child must:

- be under 16
- need extra looking after or have walking difficulties
- be in Great Britain, another European Economic Area (EEA) country or Switzerland when you claim - there are some exceptions, e.g., family members of the Armed Forces
- have lived in Great Britain for 2 of the last 3 years, if over 3 years old
- be [habitually resident](#) in the UK, Ireland, Isle of Man or the Channel Islands
- not be subject to [immigration control](#)

You can claim DLA for children if you're in or out of work. The DLA Care rate is between £28.70 and £108.55 a week and depends on the level of help the child needs. The DLA Motability rate is between £28.70 and £75.75 per week.

❖ **This scheme changed in the summer of 2023 to Child Disability Payments.**

MOTORBILITY ALLOWANCE

The Motability Scheme enables disabled people to lease a new car, scooter or powered wheelchair by exchanging their [mobility allowance](#). The Motability Scheme can help you lease a car if your child is aged 3 or over and is entitled to either the: standard rate of £28.70 or higher rate of £75.75 per week. Higher rate of the mobility component of [Disability Living Allowance](#), Enhanced mobility component of [Personal Independence Payment](#)

More information about the scheme is on the [Motability website](#).

CARERS ALLOWANCE

You could get £81.90 a week if you care for someone at least 35 hours a week and they get [certain benefits](#).

You don't have to be related to, or live with, the person you care for. You won't be paid extra if you care for more than one person.

REDUCTIONS IN COUNCIL TAX

Disabled Band Reduction Scheme

You may be eligible for the scheme if you live in a larger property than you would need if you or another occupant weren't disabled.

You'll have to show that you've either:

- have an extra bathroom, kitchen or other room that you need for the disabled person
- extra space inside the property for using a wheelchair

If you qualify, your bill will be reduced to the next lowest Council Tax band. For example, if your property is in Band D, you'll pay the Band C rate. If your home is already in the lowest band (Band A), you'll get a 17% discount on your Council Tax bill instead.

The property must be the main home of at least 1 disabled person. This can be an adult or a child - it doesn't have to be the person responsible for paying the Council Tax.

DIRECT PAYMENTS FOR CHILDREN

Direct payments are payments for people who have been assessed as needing help such as a personal assistant to help with daily course or support to access the community safely from social care, but who have decided they would like to arrange and pay for their own care and support instead of receiving it direct from us.

Direct payments do not replace your current income. They do not affect any other benefits you may be receiving.

To get direct payments, you need to contact Social Services and ask for assessment of your child's needs. Direct payments are normally available for:

- Disabled people aged 16 years-old or over.
- Carers aged 16 years-old or over, including people with parental responsibility for a disabled child

Direct payments are made directly into your bank or building society.

You can ask to receive direct payments or, except in some limited circumstances, we will offer you the choice of direct payments in place of the services you currently receive. The amount you get will depend on the assessment of your needs. If you are applying for services for the first time, your social worker will discuss the direct payments option with you when they assess your child's care needs.

You may be able to use direct payments to pay for occasional short breaks in residential accommodation. You cannot use direct payments to pay for a service from a close relative with whom you live, or from the spouse or partner of that close relative.

DISABLED FACILITY GRANT

Homeowners, tenants, occupiers of house boats and park homes, and landlords can apply for this mandatory grant towards the cost of adapting a home to meet the needs of a disabled person. Applications will only be considered where an occupational therapy assessment has been received. The maximum cost of works covered by the grant is up to £30,000 and depending on the disabled person's financial circumstances, there may be a contribution to make. Where the grant approved is more than £6000, the Council may secure a recoverable charge on the property of up to £10,000. This is registered as a local land charge and will stay in force for 10 years.

The works can include:

- Access to and from the home, including the gardens. For example, ramps, pathways and hand-rails.
- Making the home safe for the disabled occupant, and others living there.
- Access to rooms used as a family room, bedroom, kitchen or bathroom. This can include widening, re-positioning or re-siting doors. Tracking, stair lifts and through floor lifts.
- Adaptations to toilets, and bathing and washing facilities. For example, wet rooms and specialised toilets.
- Kitchen alterations to enable the disabled occupant to prepare snacks during the day, and sometimes specialised cookers, ovens, work surfaces and sink units.

- Improving heating to the rooms and areas normally used by the disabled occupant.
- Controlling sources of power, heat and light by altering the position of, or providing extra, controls.

There may be other works which can be included, and we will always advise you.

ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL BLUE BAGGE SCHEME

Special rules for children under three: -

A parent of a child under three years of age may apply for a badge for their child if the child has a specific medical condition which means that they:

- Must always be accompanied by bulky medical equipment which cannot be carried around without great difficulty; and/or
- Need to be kept near a vehicle at all times, so that they can, if necessary, be treated in the vehicle, or quickly driven to a place where they can be treated, such as a hospital.

These eligibility rules changed in June 2019 to include children and adults with hidden disabilities such as autism. You need to show proof of diagnosis in your application process.

For information on some of the medical conditions not eligible for a badge see the [guidance notes](#) on the Essex County Council website.

NAPPY SERVICE

If your child is still in nappies by the age of 4, you can ask your Health Visitor for details of the Free Nappy Service.

WATER BILLS

If you are on a water meter you may be able to cap your bills. Qualifying benefits include council tax benefit and housing benefit but NOT Disability Living Allowance.

Various medical conditions do apply, and a doctor's letters must be provided in evidence. If you feel you fit the criteria required, then you should speak directly to the company supplying your home as shown on your water bill account paperwork.

Make sure you mention that you are applying for AQUACARE

HEATING BILLS

Some companies offer a winter rebate scheme to their customers in receipt of certain benefits. You will need to contact their customer services department for more information.

Households buying both gas and electricity can also apply for a rebate.

CINEMA CARD

If your child receives DLA (Disability Living Allowance) you can apply for a card which allows a carer to go FREE to the cinema when they accompany the cardholder. All you pay for is the child's ticket cost. The photo ID card costs £6.00 per year. The card can be used in 90% of UK cinemas.

For more information about this card contact Cinema Exhibitors' Association Card – 08451231292 or via their web site – www.ceacard.co.uk.

LIBRARY CONCESSION

If your child receives DLA, they are entitled to get DVDs from the library for free. The current cost of a DVD is £2.55 for a week's hire – so this could save quite a bit if your child likes to take more than one home at a time. All you need to do is take along proof of their entitlement, address and their current library card. Also, if you're a bit late returning them, you're not charged a late return fee. Go to: www.essex.gov.uk/libraries

If there is any other information you hear about and would like to pass on to us for this sheet, please let us know and send to – info@steppingstonesplayandlearn.org