

(22) Parents: Entitlement to benefits

Entitlement to benefits will depend on how well a child's seizures are controlled, and whether a child has any other physical or learning disabilities. Once a child reaches the age of 16, they may be able to apply for certain benefits in their own right and should be encouraged to do so. This may result in the loss of some benefits paid to parents.

Important: always seek advice from a professional welfare rights service before applying for any benefits.

The following may be able to help:

- ✧ Citizen Advice Direct – 0808 800 9060
- ✧ Your local Citizens Advice Bureau, go to www.cas.org.uk to find your nearest office
- ✧ Your local welfare rights office
- ✧ UPDATE (Disability Information Scotland) – www.update.org.uk 0131 669 1600
- ✧ Or contact us to speak to our own Welfare Rights Officers on 0141 427 4911

Disability Living Allowance (DLA)

This benefit is still available for children under 16. Once your child reaches 16, they will need to apply for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) which is replacing DLA for adults aged 16-65. DLA has a care and a mobility component taking into account what is needed to keep a child looked after and safe and helping them with their mobility. A child with frequent and unpredictable seizures, for example, may need a constant travel companion.

Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

PIP is replacing Disability Living Allowance for adults aged 16-65. Any new claimant will have to apply for PIP which has a standard and an enhanced rate. How much your adult child gets will depend on how their epilepsy is affecting them on a day to day basis. For more information on this and other benefits check out the GOV.UK website.

Direct payments, Individual budgets and self-directed support

This is money from the social work department. It allows a parent to directly buy and pay for services which would normally be organised by the social work department.

Some parents prefer direct payment because this gives them more control. It does, however, mean extra work as parents will have to organise the services themselves. Your family's social worker or any of the above agencies will be able to advise further.

Carer's Allowance

Parents may be entitled to carer's allowance if for example they look after a child who gets the middle or higher rate of Disability Living Allowance care component for at least 35 hours per week. Other criteria also apply.

Free Scotland-wide bus pass

Any child of fare paying age, aged over 5 and under 16, who is in receipt of the middle or higher rate of DLA and has had at least one seizure in the last 12 months, will be entitled to a free Scotland-wide bus pass. The child may also be entitled to a Companion card which allows an adult to travel with them free of charge. For more information on this, please phone our helpline 0808 800 2200.

Any child aged 16 and over will automatically be entitled to a free bus pass irrespective of any benefits they may get, as long as they've had one seizure in the last 12 months.

Free prescriptions

In Scotland, prescriptions are free for everyone.

Blue badge scheme

Under this scheme a parent may get a range of parking concessions, which will allow them to park closer to the places they need to go to.

A child over the age of 2 and in receipt of the higher rate of the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance is automatically entitled to a blue badge. There are other eligibility criteria, which can be checked out on the Scottish Government's website <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Transport/Road/BlueBadgeScheme>.

Your local council can give you more information on this scheme and how to apply.

Disabled Person's Railcard

A child with epilepsy may be entitled to a Disabled Person's Railcard if aged 5 to 15, but usual child discounts of 50% tend to be better value. The card will, however, allow another adult to travel with the child for a third less of the full fare.

Other benefits and financial help

Other financial help may be available, depending on circumstances. Always seek advice from a professional welfare rights service.