D.L.A SELF HELP GUIDE

How to fill in your Disability Living Allowance form step-by-step

CHECK AND SEND SERVICE

Thursday
10:30 – 12:00

We have quick review slots available on Thursdays to look over your form and suggest any minor changes before you send it. Please note, this is not a full form-filling service, but a chance to check your answers together and make any final adjustments.

First – how DLA actually works VERY IMPORTANT

DLA is:

NOT about the diagnosis alone

IS about how the condition affects daily care and supervision needs

There are 2 parts:

1. Care Component

Based on help needed with:

- Personal care (washing, dressing, eating)
- Supervision to stay safe
- Help during the day or night

2. Mobility Component

Based on:

- Walking ability
- Needing guidance or supervision outdoors

The most important rule: "More help than same-age child"

You must explain if the child needs:

- More help
- More supervision
- More attention

> **compared to another child of the same age**

Key words THESE HELP YOUR CLAIM

Use these words in your answers:

Supervision	Someone watching to keep them safe
Attention	Help with personal care
Prompting	Encouragement or reminders
Assistance	Physical help

Writing tip VERY IMPORTANT

For EVERY answer, use this structure:

> "Because of their **[condition]**, they need more help than a child of the same age. They need **[type of help]**. If they don't get this help, **[what happens]**. This happens **[how often]**."

How to answer each question

For EVERY activity, explain:

- What condition affects them
- What difficulties they have
- What help they need
- What happens without help
- How often it happens

> **Always give a real example.**

Care needs (daytime)

Preparing and eating food

What this means:

- Can they eat independently?
- Do they understand hunger or food safety?

They may struggle if they:

- Forget to eat
- Choke or eat unsafely
- Cannot use utensils

Help includes:

- Feeding
- Cutting food
- Prompting
- Supervision

Examples

"They need supervision when eating due to choking risk."

"They will not eat unless prompted."

Washing, bathing and personal care

What this means:

- Washing body
- Brushing teeth
- Using the bathroom

They may struggle if they:

- Cannot wash properly
- Are unsafe in the bath
- Resist personal care

Help includes:

- Physical help
- Supervision
- Prompting

Examples

"They need full assistance to wash due to sensory difficulties."

"Because of their cerebral palsy, they need significantly more help than a child of the same age with washing and bathing. They have limited mobility, poor balance, and weakness in their arms and legs, which means they cannot stand securely or wash their body properly."

Dressing and undressing

What this means:

- Choosing appropriate clothes
- Putting on clothes

They may struggle if they:

- Cannot dress themselves properly
- Choose inappropriate clothing
- Refuse due to distress

Help includes:

- Physical assistance
- Prompting
- Reassurance

Examples

"Due to my sons physical limitations They cannot dress without help, they are not able to lift their arms above their head independently and is not able to do up buttons, zips or Velcro fastening as they can not grip this and this is a source of frustration for my son."

"Because of their autism and sensory difficulties, they need much more help than a child of the same age with washing and bathing. They are unable to wash themselves properly and resist water due to sensory sensitivity."

Supervision for safety

> **This is VERY important in DLA.**

They may need supervision if they:

- Are unaware of danger
- Run off suddenly
- Put themselves at risk
- Harm themselves

Examples

"Because of their epilepsy, they need more supervision than a child of the same age to stay safe. They are at risk of sudden seizures, which can happen without warning.

They need constant supervision, particularly when walking, bathing, or using stairs, as they could fall and seriously injure themselves during a seizure.

Without supervision, they would be at risk of significant harm, including head injury or drowning if a seizure occurred in the bath.

This need for supervision is ongoing and unpredictable. A child of the same age would not require this level of monitoring, but they cannot be left safely alone."

Managing behaviour or emotional needs

They may need support if they:

- Have meltdowns
- Become distressed
- Cannot regulate emotions

Help includes:

- Calming techniques
- Constant reassurance
- Preventing harm

Example

"Because of their anxiety and past trauma, they need more emotional support than a child of the same age. They experience intense distress, particularly in unfamiliar situations or when routines change.

They need frequent reassurance, prompting, and a trusted adult to help them feel safe and manage their emotions.

Without this support, they become extremely distressed, may refuse to engage, and can have panic reactions such as crying, hiding, or becoming non-verbal. This happens most days.

A child of the same age would usually manage changes better and would not need this level of emotional support."

Communication

What this means:

- Understanding others
- Expressing needs

They may struggle if they:

- Cannot communicate clearly
- Get frustrated
- Misunderstand instructions

Help includes:

- Interpreting their needs
- Support with communication

Example

"Because of their autism, they need more help than a child of the same age with communication. They are non-verbal and cannot express their needs using speech.

They need constant support from an adult to understand and communicate their needs. Without this help, they become distressed and unable to communicate basic needs like hunger or pain.

This happens throughout the day. A child of the same age would usually be able to speak, but they cannot do this without support."

Night-time needs VERY IMPORTANT

DLA also looks at help needed during the night.

This includes:

- Waking frequently
- Needing care or supervision
- Risk during the night

Examples

“They wake multiple times and need care throughout the night.”

“They need supervision due to safety risks while awake at night.”

Mobility needs

Walking

Consider:

- Distance they can walk
- Pain, fatigue or difficulty
- Safety when walking

Guidance or supervision outdoors

This applies if they:

- Cannot go out safely
- Get lost or confused
- Have behavioural risks

Examples

"They cannot go out without supervision due to lack of danger awareness."

"They need guidance at all times outdoors."

Think about it

For every question, ask yourself:

> **“What would happen if they had no help?”**

Then write that.

Comparison to other children VERY IMPORTANT

Always explain:

- What a child of the same age can usually do
- What this child cannot do or needs help with

Example

“A child of the same age can dress independently, but my child needs full help, due to their physical limitations caused by their brain injury.”

Final tips MOST IMPORTANT PART

Do:

- Give real-life examples
- Explain worst days
- Be detailed and honest
- Mention supervision and safety
- Compare to same-age children

Don’t:

- Just tick boxes without explaining
- Underplay difficulties
- Focus only on diagnosis

Evidence HELPS A LOT

Useful evidence includes:

- GP or consultant letters
- School reports
- SEN/EHCP plans
- Therapist reports
- Letters from carers or family

> **You can send evidence later, don't delay your form**

Simple way to think about DLA

It is not about the condition

It is about the extra care and supervision needed compared to other children

Always ask:

"What would happen if they had no help?"

Keeping a diary VERY HELPFUL

Why keeping a diary is important

A diary is useful evidence to help the DWP understand how your condition affects your child day to day, including:

- Daily living activities
- Mobility and getting around

> **You are the best person to explain your child's difficulties.**

Writing a diary

Your diary should record:

- What they struggle with
- What help they need
- What could happen without help
- How often this happens

What the diary should show

The diary should clearly show how they cannot do activities reliably, meaning:

- Not safely
- Not to a good standard
- Not often enough
- Takes too long

If this applies, you should say they cannot do it.

Keeping a diary: what to include IMPORTANT

You may score points if:

- They need aids or equipment
- They need prompting or reminders
- They need help from another person
- Tasks take them a long time
- They can only manage at certain times
- They have good and bad days
- They are unsafe on your own
- They need supervision

You can clearly show that their needs are different to the average child of the same age,

> **If any of these apply, include them in the diary.**

D.L.A daily diary

Date / Time	Activity	What I struggled with	Help Needed	What happened without help

DLA glossary QUICK GUIDE

Key rule - More help than same-age child

DLA is based on whether a child needs:

- More help
- More supervision
- More attention

> **Compared to another child of the same age**

Types of help

Supervision	Someone watching the child to keep them safe
Attention	Help with personal care (washing, dressing, eating)
Assistance	Physical help (lifting, washing, dressing, feeding)
Prompting	Reminders or encouragement to do tasks

DLA glossary, continued

Care terms

Personal Care	Everyday activities like washing, dressing, eating
Continual Supervision	Regular or constant watching to prevent danger
Frequent Attention	Needing help regularly throughout the day
Night-Time Needs	Help or supervision needed during the night

Safety terms

Risk of Harm	Possibility of injury without supervision
Lack of Danger Awareness	Not understanding risks (e.g. roads, hot water)
Self-Injury	Hurting themselves (accidentally or during distress)

Mobility terms

Guidance	Help to find the way or follow a route
Supervision Outdoors	Someone needed to keep the child safe when outside
Walking Ability	How far and safely the child can walk