

Income, Support and Finance

Domiciliary Care Allowance

The Domiciliary Care Allowance (DCA) is a monthly payment to the parent or guardian of a child aged under 16 with a severe disability. This is a child requiring ongoing continual care and attention, substantially over and above the care and attention usually required by a child of the same age.

The condition must be likely to last for at least 1 year.

DCA is based upon **care needs**, a formal diagnosis is not essential.

The DCA is not means tested, not subject to PRSI criteria, not subject to the working hours of the parent. The child must live at home with the person claiming the allowance for at least 5 days per week. A half payment option is available where the child is at home less than 5 days per week. If you qualify for Domiciliary Care Allowance you automatically qualify for the Carer's Support Grant, paid in June each year.

The application form (DomCare1) and assistance completing the form is available on request from the Department of Employment Social and Family Protection (DEASP) or local Citizens Information Centre, or online.

Refusal of DCA because of lack of information

As a parent or guardian you cherish your child's abilities and achievements. It can be difficult to have to describe in detail what your child cannot do and the extra care needed. However, the DEASP say that the **most common reason for refusal** of an application for DCA is **lack of information**. It is important to describe, clearly and in detail, **the extra care** that you provide for your child.

The DCA application form is long and detailed, particularly Part 4 – "Tell us about your child's care needs". Allow time to read the form carefully,

complete each section and gather the additional information you want to include with your application form.

It can be useful for your own records to keep a copy of the completed application form and any additional information included with the application.

Completing Part 4 – “Tell us about your child’s care needs

First complete the tick box ✓ questions.

Then use the additional space provided to give more information about your answers and **describe the extra help** your child needs most of the time. Be as detailed as possible.

Include Extra Information

Extra information can include reports from community health doctors or consultants, an Assessment of Need report (AON), the child’s Individual Education Plan (IEP), a letter from the child’s teacher, Special Needs Assistant or child-minder, or a family impact statement. If your child is attending any therapies include the therapist’s reports with your application.

If your child has a pervasive development disorder, for example Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), the medical professional or specialist dealing with your child can complete an additional medical form which can be submitted with your application. This form is called DomCare 3.

A **daily care diary** can be a useful way to record and demonstrate extra care needs. Begin the diary in the morning and continue right through to night time, including any waking during the night. Ask yourself – “would I be helping another child of a similar age to do this?” For example if a child requires assistance with the toilet, record each instance in detail. Use the diary to record all care needs over a few days and include it with your application.

Refusal and Appeals

If your application is refused you will be notified of your right to appeal. Ask for a review first as this takes half of the time an appeal does.

Stage 1 is a desk review, carried out in-house by the DEASP. You can submit additional information for this review. Stage 2 is an oral appeal. The oral appeal is independent of the Department and is carried out by a senior civil servant. You will meet with the appeals officer. The meeting is an opportunity for you to put your case across. There is a high success rate for reviews and appeals to the decision to refuse an application for DCA.

Useful Contacts

If you need help to complete the application form you can contact your local Social Welfare Office or Citizens Information Centre.

[Domiciliary Care Allowance](#)

[Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection](#)

[Citizens Information Services](#)

[Inclusion Ireland](#)