

Benefits and Tourette Syndrome



Tourettes Action does not specialise in benefits and is unable to assist with individuals' cases or help fill in claim forms.

This factsheet outlines a list of benefits which people with TS may be entitled to, and a list of organisations who offer specialist benefit advice and information.

Tourette Syndrome may be recognised as a disability according to the definition of disability under the Equality Act 2010; this will depend on the severity of your condition and how it impacts your life.

The nature of TS can mean that sometimes it is difficult to work regular hours and get a regular income. Whether or not you consider your TS to be a disability, there are benefits available that can help to pay the bills. Here is a list of benefits which people with TS may be entitled to:

Attendance Allowance

Attendance Allowance is a tax-free benefit for people aged 65 or over who need help with personal care because they are physically or mentally disabled.

Access to Work

An Access to Work grant helps pay for practical support so you can do your job. You may be able to apply if you have a disability, health or mental health condition.

Carer's Allowance

Carer's Allowance is a benefit to help people who look after a disabled person. You do not have to be related to, or live with, the person you care for, but you must spend at least 35 hours a week caring for them.

Council Tax Reduction

If you're on low income or benefits you may be entitled to Council Tax Reduction, which will give you money off your Council Tax bill.

Direct payments are local council payments for people who have been assessed as needing help from social services, and who would like to arrange and pay for their own care and support services instead of receiving them directly from the local council. A person must be able to give their consent to getting direct payments and manage them, even if they need daily help to do this.

Disability Living Allowance

Disability Living Allowance is being replaced by Personal Independence Payment (PIP) as of April 2013 for working age claimants. Please see Personal Independence Payment.

Disabled Facilities Grant

This is a local council grant to help towards the cost of adapting your home to enable you to continue to live there. See 'Housing' for further information

Disabled Person Tax Credit

This is a tax credit available to people who are working at least sixteen hours a week and who have an illness or disability which puts them at a disadvantage in getting a job.

Disabled Students' Allowances

Disabled Students' Allowances are grants available to higher education students in England to help meet the extra course costs students can face as a direct result of a disability, mental health condition or specific learning difficulty.

Employment and Support Allowance

Employment and Support Allowance offers you financial support if you're unable to work and/or personalised help so that you can work if you're able to. You can apply for ESA if you are employed, self-employed or unemployed

Housing Benefit

If you need are on a low income and need financial help to pay part of or all of your rent you may be eligible for housing benefit. You can apply for housing benefit whether you are working or unemployed.

Income Support

Income Support is extra money you may be able to get if you have no income or low income, you're working less than 16 hours a week or you haven't signed on as unemployed. You must meet certain specifications to get Income Support.

Disability Premiums (Income Support)

Disability Premium is an extra amount automatically added to your Income Support if you qualify for it. To qualify you must be receiving any of these benefits: DLA, PIP, Disabled Person's Tax Credit, AA, Incapacity Benefit.

Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

Tax free, non-means tested benefit for working age (16-64) disabled people who are either working or unemployed. There are two components to the benefit – a daily living component and a mobility component. As of April 2013, PIP will be replacing Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for working age claimants. There is a timetable for introducing PIP. Tourettes Action have produced a guide to PIP which provides general information about making a claim for PIP.

Statutory Sick Pay

If you're working for an employer under a contract of service (even if you've only just started), you're entitled to Statutory Sick Pay if you're sick for at least four days in a row (weekends and bank holidays are included). You have to be earning a certain amount per week to qualify.

Working Tax Credits

You could get Working Tax Credit if you're aged 16 or over, you work a certain number of hours a week, you get paid for the work you do (or expect to), your income is below a certain level.

For more information on disability benefits see the government website:

www.gov.uk/financial-help-disabled

Contact your local council for further information and to apply for benefits.

Benefit packs can also be claimed by contacting:

Benefit Enquiry Line

Telephone: 0800 88 22 00

Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

Other services and support you may be entitled to:

Needs Assessment

A health and social care assessment with the social services department of your Local Authority is often the first step towards getting the help and support you need. This is known as a 'Needs Assessment'. Services you may need can include healthcare, equipment, help in your home or residential care. If you need other services such as housing or benefits advice, you will be put in touch with the relevant local services. This service is available in England only,

www.gov.uk/apply-needs-assessment-social-services.

Carers Assessment

If you provide a regular and substantial amount of care for someone aged 18 or over, you can ask the social services department of your Local Authority for a carer's assessment. This is an opportunity to discuss with social services what help you need with caring. This service aims to support your own health and well-being as a carer, www.nhs.uk/CarersDirect/guide/assessments/Pages/Carersassessments.aspx.

Respite Care

When you are taking care of somebody you also need to think about caring for yourself. Depending on the type and intensity of care needed, your own health and well-being can be compromised by looking after someone else. For further information on respite care: www.nhs.uk/CarersDirect/yourself/timeoff/Pages/Accessingrespitecare.aspx.

Holidays

There are a number of organisations that provide opportunities for children with special needs or people with disabilities to go on holiday with appropriate support provided. Some, such as Vitalise, provide special weeks for carers to go with the person they care for. A change of scene can be very therapeutic if there is appropriate support available to help you to enjoy it: www.vitalise.org.uk.

Registering as a disabled person

If your disability is 'substantial and permanent', you can register as a disabled person with your Local Authority.

It is not necessary to register to get Local Authority services, but it may help in getting concessions such as reduced fares for public transport. It should also help your Local Authority plan their services.

Your local social services department should be able to help you complete the registration form if necessary.

Library

Useful organisations and resources that can provide information and guidance on benefits:

Gov.uk have a comprehensive website offering information and advice on disability benefits: www.gov.uk/browse/benefits/disability.

Gov.uk have an online "Benefits Advisor"* tool which can be used to estimate what benefits you might be entitled to and how to claim specific benefits: www.gov.uk/benefits-adviser.

Advice Northern Ireland. To find your local independent advice centre in Northern Ireland, visit www.adviceni.net.

Benefits and Work are an independent organisation who provide information about disability and incapacity benefits. Useful information can be accessed on their website, however they are funded by their members so a lot of information can only be obtained with membership: www.benefitsandwork.co.uk.

Citizens Advice Bureau provide information and advice on benefits through their local offices and website: www.citizensadvice.org.uk.

Citizens Advice Scotland: www.cas.org.uk.

Contact A Family provides information of all the main benefits and tax credits available, focusing on those aspects which most affect families with disabled children. www.cafamily.org.uk.

Disability Information Advice Line. There are over 140 local DIALs all staffed by disabled people and all offering telephone advice. If you have a local line it should be listed in your telephone directory under DIAL UK. Alternatively, call the national office on 01302 310 123 or visit their website at www.dialuk.org

Disability Rights UK is an organisation led, run and controlled by disabled people; offering information and advice on benefits: www.disabilityrightsuk.org/index.htm

Law Centres: Contact details of your nearest Law Centre, where you may be able to get free advice and representation at appeals, are available from the Law Centres Federation website at www.lawcentres.org.uk

Shelter offers help with benefits, but generally only in relation to housing or if your home is at risk because of your benefits problems. Shelter helpline 0808 800 4444 or visit their website: www.shelter.org.uk

Turn2us helps people in financial need gain access to welfare benefits, charitable grants and other financial help – online, by phone and face to face through their partner organisations. They have an online Benefits checker: www.turn2us.org.uk/default.aspx

Your Local Authority may employ Welfare Rights Workers who can help with your claim.