

# Welfare benefits

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### Key points

- Welfare benefits are a vital source of support for disabled children and their families.
- Disabled children who are under 16 and who have care needs or difficulties moving around can claim Disability Living Allowance (DLA).
- Disabled children who are 16 or over and who need support with daily living or mobility can claim Personal Independence Payment (PIP).
- Parents and carers of disabled children who are receiving DLA or PIP may as a result become entitled to additional benefits or their existing benefits may increase.
- A range of other sources of support are available for disabled children and their carers, some of which are dependent on receipt of DLA or PIP.

## Introduction

- 12.1 Looking after a disabled child can be expensive. Welfare benefits provide important financial support for families facing the extra costs associated with disability. Almost all parents of disabled children are likely to come into contact with the social security system at some stage. However, despite attempts by successive governments to simplify the system, it remains dauntingly complex. This complexity can be a barrier for parents of disabled children seeking to access benefits to which they and their children are entitled.
- 12.2 Recent welfare reforms have had a major impact on disabled children. Most significant are the establishment of two new benefits: Personal Independence Payment (PIP), which replaces Disability Living Allowance (DLA) as the main benefit for disabled persons aged 16 and over; and Universal Credit, which replaces a number of means tested benefits with a single monthly payment. Other welfare reforms, such as the benefit cap, the introduction of size criteria in the social rented sector (commonly called the 'bedroom tax') and the two child rule for tax credits also affect disabled children, though some may benefit from exemptions.
- 12.3 The two main benefits catering for the needs of disabled children are DLA (for disabled children aged under 16) and PIP (for disabled children and adults aged 16 or over). These consist of tax-free

payments administered by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), which are not means tested and do not depend on National Insurance contributions. Receipt of DLA or PIP is not only important in its own right, but also acts as a passport to eligibility for or increases in other benefits, such as Carer's Allowance, Income Support, tax credits, Housing Benefit, Universal Credit and schemes such as the blue badge and motability schemes. Parents and carers may therefore become entitled to additional benefits or an increase in their existing benefits as a result of caring for or looking after a child who receives DLA or PIP.

There is normally a right of appeal against a decision to refuse, change or withdraw a social security benefit. In most cases, there are two stages to the procedure. First, an application must be made to the decision maker (usually the DWP) to reconsider its decision. This is called a 'mandatory reconsideration.' If the decision is upheld, an appeal can then be made to an independent tribunal, the First-tier Tribunal (Social Entitlement Chamber). The time limit is normally one month, although it can be extended with good reason. The Tribunal will invite the claimant and/or their appointee to attend a hearing, where it can consider new evidence and come to its own conclusion on whether they are eligible for benefit and at what level. In DLA and PIP cases the Tribunal can lower the award as well as increase it, so it is important to get advice before appealing.

- 12.4 There is not space in this book to cover the eligibility conditions for all potentially available welfare benefits in full. These are in any event better set out in other annual publications, such as those produced by the Child Poverty Action Group and Disability Rights UK.<sup>1</sup> This chapter seeks only to highlight the benefits which are most likely to be relevant for disabled children and their families and provide a brief summary of the relevant criteria. Most of the benefits below are also subject to restrictions based on immigration status and some have minimum residence and presence requirements: these are also beyond the scope of this book.<sup>2</sup>

1 Child Poverty Action Group, *Welfare Benefits and Tax Credits Handbook*, 2018/2019; Disability Rights UK, *Disability Rights Handbook*, 2018/2019.

2 See Child Poverty Action Group, *Benefits for Migrants Handbook*, 2017.

## Benefits for disabled children

### Disability Living Allowance

- 12.5 DLA is a benefit for disabled children who are aged under 16 and have care needs or difficulty moving around. It is not means tested: provided a child meets the eligibility conditions, DLA will be payable regardless of the family's income or whether National Insurance contributions have been made. It is ignored as income for the purposes of income tax, means tested benefits and tax credits.
- 12.6 DLA consists of two parts: 1) the care component and 2) the mobility component. A child may be eligible for either component or both. The care component is available for children aged up to 16 who have care needs which meet the criteria and are substantially greater than those of a child of the same age who is not disabled.<sup>3</sup> It is paid at three different rates: the lowest rate, the middle rate and the highest rate.<sup>4</sup> The mobility component is available for children aged over three who have difficulty walking and is paid at two rates: a lower rate and a higher rate.<sup>5</sup>
- 12.7 The box below summarises the eligibility conditions for DLA. These are concerned not with the nature of the child's disability or medical condition, but with its impact on his or her care and mobility needs. To qualify for either component, a child must satisfy the conditions throughout the three months prior to the date of claim and be likely to continue to satisfy them for a further six months.<sup>6</sup>
- 12.8 A claim can be made on the child's behalf by an adult with whom the child is living (called an 'appointee'), usually the child's parent. The claim must be made in writing by completing the approved claim form DLA1A Child. This is a long form which asks a series of questions about the child's mobility problems and supervision and attention needs. The claim is then assessed by the DWP, taking into account any evidence from the child's medical and other professionals named on the form.

3 Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act (SSCBA) 1992 s72(1A).

4 As at April 2019, the lowest rate is £23.20, the middle rate is £58.70 and the highest rate is £87.65.

5 SSCBA 1992 s73. As at April 2019, the lower rate is £23.20 and the higher rate is £61.20.

6 SSCBA 1992 ss72(2) and 73(9).

## Disability conditions for DLA<sup>7</sup>

### Care component

To qualify for the **lowest rate** of the care component, a child must be so severely disabled, physically or mentally, that the child requires attention from another person for a significant<sup>8</sup> proportion of the day in connection with the child's bodily functions.<sup>9</sup>

To qualify for the **middle rate** of the care component, a child must satisfy one of the daytime disability conditions (see below) or one of the night-time disability conditions.<sup>10</sup>

To qualify for the **highest rate** of the care component, a child must satisfy one of the daytime disability conditions and one of the night-time disability conditions or be terminally ill.<sup>11</sup>

The daytime disability conditions are satisfied where a child requires:

- frequent attention throughout the day in connection with the child's bodily functions;
- continual<sup>12</sup> supervision<sup>13</sup> throughout the day in order to avoid substantial danger to the child or others.<sup>14</sup>

The night-time disability conditions are satisfied where a child requires:

- prolonged or repeated attention in connection with the child's bodily functions;<sup>15</sup>
- in order to avoid substantial danger to the child or others, the child requires another person to be awake for a prolonged

7 SSCBA 1992 ss72 and 73; Social Security (Disability Living Allowance) Regulations 1991 SI No 2890.

8 A significant proportion of the day is not defined and may be for a single period or over a number of periods: R(DLA)2/03 *Ramsden v Secretary of State for Work and Pensions* [2003] EWCA Civ 32.

9 Bodily functions means anything to do with the body and how it works, for example: breathing, hearing, seeing, eating, drinking, walking, sitting, sleeping, getting in and out of bed, dressing and undressing, going to the toilet, washing, communicating, help with medication etc.

10 Special rules apply for children undergoing renal dialysis.

11 A child is terminally ill if he or she has a progressive disease and is reasonably expected to die within six months.

12 Continual supervision means frequent or regular, but not non-stop.

13 Supervision means there is a need for someone to be around to prevent accident or injury.

14 Substantial means either likely or would have severe consequences or both.

15 Prolonged attention means more than around 20 minutes.

period or at frequent<sup>16</sup> intervals for the purpose of watching over the child.

### **Mobility component**

To qualify for the **lower rate** of the mobility component, a child must be aged five or over and be so severely disabled, physically or mentally, that the child cannot get around outdoors without guidance or supervision from another person most of the time. The supervision or guidance must be substantially higher than other children of the same age in 'normal' physical and mental health.

To qualify for the **higher rate** of the mobility component, a child must be aged three or over and satisfy one of the following conditions:

- the child has no legs or feet (from birth or thorough amputation);
- the child has a disability from a physical cause<sup>17</sup> that means he or she is unable or virtually unable to walk;<sup>18</sup>
- the child is both deaf and blind, or is blind or has a severe visual impairment;<sup>19</sup>
- the child is entitled to the highest rate care component of DLA (see below) and is severely mentally impaired with extremely disruptive and dangerous behavioural problems.<sup>20</sup>

## **Personal Independence Payment**

- 12.9 Disabled children who are 16 or over and need help taking part in everyday life or find it difficult to move around may qualify for PIP. Like DLA, PIP is not means tested and is ignored as income for the purposes of income tax, means tested benefits and tax credits.

16 Frequent means several times not once or twice: R(A)2/80.

17 This would include severe learning difficulties which have a physical cause, eg Down syndrome or autism – *DM v Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (DLA)* [2010] UKUT 375 (AAC).

18 A child will be virtually unable to walk if he or she cannot make progress on foot without severe discomfort or the exertion required to walk would constitute danger to life or would be likely to lead to a serious deterioration in health.

19 The level of blindness must be less than 3/60 on the Snellen scale, while using appropriate corrective lenses, or between 3/60 and 6/60 but with a complete loss of peripheral vision and a central visual field of no more than ten degrees.

20 The behaviour must be such that he or she regularly requires someone else to intervene and is so unpredictable that another person has to be present and watching over them whenever they are awake.

- 12.10 While DLA and PIP share similar features, their structure and eligibility conditions differ significantly. The fact that a child has been receiving DLA up until the age of 16, does not necessarily mean he or she will be entitled to PIP from his or her sixteenth birthday. Conversely, a child who has not been receiving DLA may nonetheless qualify for PIP. The transition from DLA to PIP at age 16 is accordingly a challenging process for parents with disabled children, and one that needs to be navigated with care. The DWP should invite any child who is receiving DLA to make a new claim for PIP before his or her sixteenth birthday.
- 12.11 Eligibility for PIP depends on scoring sufficient points in a standard assessment questionnaire (see box below). This test is intended to assess the effect of the child's physical or mental health condition on the child's ability to undertake specific daily living and mobility activities. The assessment consists of a list of 12 activities, which are divided into lists of descriptors with different scores according to varying degrees of difficulty. A child will score points if he or she is not able to complete a described task safely, to an acceptable standard, repeatedly and in a reasonable time.<sup>21</sup>
- 12.12 Like DLA, PIP has two components: 1) the daily living component and 2) the mobility component. Each component has two rates: a standard rate and an enhanced rate.<sup>22</sup> A child will receive the standard rate if the child scores at least eight points in relation to a component and the enhanced rate if they score at least 12 points.
- 12.13 PIP can be claimed by the child's carer as an appointee or, if he or she has capacity, by a child in his or her own right. A claim can be made by telephone, after which the claimant or the appointee will be requested to complete an assessment questionnaire. A face-to-face assessment is then carried out by an independent healthcare professional employed by a DWP contractor, currently either Independent Assessment Services or Capita. Prior to the assessment, it is helpful where possible to provide evidence from the child's healthcare professional or other persons involved in the child's care.
- 12.14 PIP is normally awarded for a fixed period, for example one, two or five years. A renewal claim can be made up to six months before the expiry of the award period. The DWP does have a power to make an indefinite award where it would be inappropriate not to do so, for example because the child's condition is unlikely to improve. The

21 Social Security (Personal Independence Payment) Regulations 2013 reg 7 SI No 377.

22 As at April 2019, these are as follows: daily living – standard rate £58.79, enhanced rate £87.65; mobility – standard rate £23.20, enhanced rate £61.20.

DWP may in any event review a claimant's eligibility at any time during the period of award.

## The PIP descriptors

**Table 1: Activities of Daily Living**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Descriptors</b>	<b>Points</b>
1. Preparing food.	a. Can prepare and cook a simple meal unaided.	0
	b. Needs to use an aid or appliance to be able to either prepare or cook a simple meal.	2
	c. Cannot cook a simple meal using a conventional cooker but is able to do so using a microwave.	2
	d. Needs prompting to be able to either prepare or cook a simple meal.	4
	e. Needs supervision or assistance to either prepare or cook a simple meal.	8
	f. Cannot prepare and cook food.	2
2. Taking nutrition.	a. Can take nutrition unaided.	0
	b. Needs – (i) to use an aid or appliance to be able to take nutrition; or (ii) supervision to be able to take nutrition; or (iii) assistance to be able to cut up food.	2
	c. Needs a therapeutic source to be able to take nutrition.	2
	d. Needs prompting to be able to take nutrition.	4
	e. Needs assistance to be able to manage a therapeutic source to take nutrition.	6
	f. Cannot convey food and drink to their mouth and needs another person to do so.	10

3. Managing therapy or monitoring a health condition.	a. Either – (i) does not receive medication or therapy or need to monitor a health condition; or (ii) can manage medication or therapy or monitor a health condition unaided.	0
	b. Needs any one or more of the following – (i) to use an aid or appliance to be able to manage medication; (ii) supervision, prompting or assistance to be able to manage medication. (iii) supervision, prompting or assistance to be able to monitor a health condition.	1
	c. Needs supervision, prompting or assistance to be able to manage therapy that takes no more than 3.5 hours a week.	2
	d. Needs supervision, prompting or assistance to be able to manage therapy that takes more than 3.5 but no more than 7 hours a week.	4
	e. Needs supervision, prompting or assistance to be able to manage therapy that takes more than 7 but no more than 14 hours a week.	6
	f. Needs supervision, prompting or assistance to be able to manage therapy that takes more than 14 hours a week.	8
4. Washing and bathing.	a. Can wash and bathe unaided.	0
	b. Needs to use an aid or appliance to be able to wash or bathe.	2
	c. Needs supervision or prompting to be able to wash or bathe.	2
	d. Needs assistance to be able to wash either their hair or body below the waist.	2
	e. Needs assistance to be able to get in or out of a bath or shower.	3
	f. Needs assistance to be able to wash their body between the shoulders and waist.	4
	g. Cannot wash and bathe at all and needs another person to wash their entire body.	8

5. Managing toilet needs or incontinence.	a. Can manage toilet needs or incontinence unaided.	0
	b. Needs to use an aid or appliance to be able to manage toilet needs or incontinence.	2
	c. Needs supervision or prompting to be able to manage toilet needs.	2
	d. Needs assistance to be able to manage toilet needs.	4
	e. Needs assistance to be able to manage incontinence of either bladder or bowel.	6
	f. Needs assistance to be able to manage incontinence of both bladder and bowel.	8
6. Dressing and undressing.	a. Can dress and undress unaided.	0
	b. Needs to use an aid or appliance to be able to dress or undress.	2
	c. Needs either - (i) prompting to be able to dress, undress or determine appropriate circumstances for remaining clothed; or (ii) prompting or assistance to be able to select appropriate clothing.	2
	d. Needs assistance to be able to dress or undress their lower body.	2
	e. Needs assistance to be able to dress or undress their upper body.	4
	f. Cannot dress or undress at all.	8
7. Communicating verbally.	a. Can express and understand verbal information unaided.	0
	b. Needs to use an aid or appliance to be able to speak or hear.	2
	c. Needs communication support to be able to express or understand complex verbal information.	4
	d. Needs communication support to be able to express or understand basic verbal information.	8

	e. Cannot express or understand verbal information at all even with communication support.	12
8. Reading and understanding signs, symbols and words.	a. Can read and understand basic and complex written information either unaided or using spectacles or contact lenses.	0
	b. Needs to use an aid or appliance, other than spectacles or contact lenses, to be able to read or understand either basic or complex written information.	2
	c. Needs prompting to be able to read or understand complex written information.	2
	d. Needs prompting to be able to read or understand basic written information.	4
	e. Cannot read or understand signs, symbols or words at all.	8
9. Engaging with other people face to face.	a. Can engage with other people unaided.	0
	b. Needs prompting to be able to engage with other people.	2
	c. Needs social support to be able to engage with other people.	4
	d. Cannot engage with other people due to such engagement causing either – (i) overwhelming psychological distress to the claimant; or (ii) the claimant to exhibit behaviour which would result in a substantial risk of harm to the claimant or another person.	8
10. Making budgeting decisions.	a. Can manage complex budgeting decisions unaided.	0
	b. Needs prompting or assistance to be able to make complex budgeting decisions.	2
	c. Needs prompting or assistance to be able to make simple budgeting decisions.	4
	d. Cannot make any budgeting decisions at all.	6

**Table 2: Mobility**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Descriptors</b>	<b>Points</b>
1. Planning and following journeys	a. Can plan and follow the route of a journey unaided.	0
	b. Needs prompting to be able to undertake any journey to avoid overwhelming psychological distress to the claimant.	4
	c. For reasons other than psychological distress, cannot plan the route of a journey.	8
	d. For reasons other than psychological distress, cannot follow the route of an unfamiliar journey without another person, assistance dog or orientation aid.	10
	e. Cannot undertake any journey because it would cause overwhelming psychological distress to the claimant.	10
	f. For reasons other than psychological distress, cannot follow the route of a familiar journey without another person, an assistance dog or an orientation aid.	12
2. Moving around.	a. Can stand and then move more than 200 metres, either aided or unaided.	0
	b. Can stand and then move more than 50 metres but no more than 200 metres, either aided or unaided.	4
	c. Can stand and then move unaided more than 20 metres but no more than 50 metres.	8
	d. Can stand and then move using an aid or appliance more than 20 metres but no more than 50 metres.	10
	e. Can stand and then move more than 1 metre but no more than 20 metres, either aided or unaided.	12
	f. Cannot, either aided or unaided, – (i) stand; or (ii) move more than 1 metre.	12

## Benefits for parents and carers

- 12.15 A decision to grant DLA or PIP to a disabled child is likely to affect the benefits that may be received by those caring or looking after the child. This is because DLA and PIP act as ‘passports’ for the purposes of calculating entitlement for other benefits and support provided by central and local government. This section summarises the main benefits that may be claimed by a parent or carer of a disabled child.

### Child benefit

- 12.16 Child benefit may be claimed for a disabled child in the same way as any other child and is not affected by the receipt of DLA or PIP. It is available for anyone who is responsible for a child aged under 16 or a young person aged 16 to 20 who is in approved education or training (called a ‘qualifying young person’). A person is responsible for a child if the child is living with the person, or if the person is contributing more than the cost of child benefit towards the child’s maintenance. Complex rules apply to separated families with shared care arrangements. Child benefit is ignored for the purposes of income tax, unless claimed by a single person or a couple who are higher rate tax payers.

### Child Tax Credit

- 12.17 Where a claimant is receiving Child Tax Credit for a child who is also in receipt of DLA or PIP, an additional disabled child element is payable. There are two rates: 1) the severely disabled child rate is payable if the child or qualifying young person receives DLA at the highest rate of the care component or PIP at the enhanced rate of the daily living component 2) the disabled child rate is payable if the child or qualifying young person receives any other payment of DLA or PIP or is certified by a consultant ophthalmologist as severely sight impaired or blind.

### Housing Benefit

- 12.18 Where a disabled child in the household is receiving DLA or PIP, this can affect entitlement to Housing Benefit in a number of ways. For example, the household will be exempt from the benefit cap (see below) and may be entitled to an additional room under the size

criteria (see ‘bedroom tax’ below). A disabled child premium will also be added to the maximum amount that may be earned by the household before Housing Benefit is reduced (called the ‘applicable amount’). A carers premium is also included where the claimant or the claimant’s partner is paid or has an underlying entitlement to Carer’s Allowance.

## Income Support

- 12.19 Income Support is a means tested benefit which is only available for certain categories of claimant, for example lone parents with children under the age of five. Those categories include: i) persons who are receiving or have an underlying entitlement to carers allowance; and ii) persons who are responsible for a child who is ‘temporarily ill’. Income Support is not subject to the same work-related requirements as other means tested benefits, such as Jobseeker’s Allowance (JSA) and Employment and Support Allowance (ESA).

## Universal Credit

- 12.20 Universal Credit is a new benefit which is intended to replace other means tested benefits (including Income Support, income-based JSA, income-related ESA, tax credits and Housing Benefit) with a single monthly payment. Introduced under the Welfare Reform Act 2012, it is being rolled out gradually across the UK. Whether or not a claimant is required to claim Universal Credit or a legacy benefit will depend on their post code and household composition.
- 12.21 As with Child Tax Credit, an additional disabled child element is payable for each child or qualifying young person in the household who is in receipt of DLA or PIP. It is set at two different rates: 1) a higher rate is payable for any child who is entitled to the highest rate of the care component of DLA or the enhanced rate of the daily living component of PIP or is certified by a consultant ophthalmologist as severely sight impaired or blind; and 2) a lower rate is payable for any child or young person who is entitled to any other rate of DLA or PIP.
- 12.22 Most claimants of Universal Credit must comply with certain work-related requirements, such as attending training or spending a certain number of hours a week searching for a job. If they fail to meet the requirements, their Universal Credit may be reduced for a period (known as a ‘sanction’). However, a claimant who is caring for a child who receives the middle or highest rate of the care component

of DLA or the enhanced rate of the care component of PIP will be exempt from most work-related requirements.

## Carer's Allowance

- 12.23 Carer's Allowance is a benefit for people who regularly care for a severely disabled child (or adult). To qualify, the carer must be aged 16 or over and must regularly spend at least 35 hours a week caring for a person who receives the care component of DLA at the middle or highest rate or the daily living component of PIP at either rate. The carer does not need to live with or be entitled to Child Benefit for the child. The carer can be in or out of work, but must not earn more than £120 net per week or be in full-time education.
- 12.24 Like DLA and PIP, Carer's Allowance is not means tested and does not depend on payment of National Insurance contributions. However, the interaction between Carer's Allowance and other means tested benefits (such as Income Support, income-based JSA, income-related ESA and Universal Credit) is more complex. Carer's Allowance is counted as income for the purposes of those benefits, but any resulting reduction may be offset by the addition of a carer's premium (or in the case of Universal Credit, a 'carer amount'). Claiming Carer's Allowance may also be worthwhile for other reasons, for example so as to become eligible for Income Support (see below) or National Insurance credits. This means that the decision to claim Carer's Allowance is rarely straightforward and advice should be sought where possible.

## The bedroom tax

- 12.25 The size criteria rules (commonly called the 'bedroom tax') restrict the amount of Housing Benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit that a family can receive by reference to family size. The method of calculation differs depending on whether the household is living in private rented accommodation or social housing. In both instances, the criteria prescribe a fixed number of bedrooms depending on the number of persons in the household. Couples are expected to share a room, as are children of the same sex under the age of 16. If the family lives in the private rented sector, the number of bedrooms is then used to calculate the maximum amount of rent that may be claimed (called the 'local housing allowance'). If the family is renting in the social housing sector (for example, council

housing), a charge is deducted if their accommodation is larger than the prescribed number of bedrooms.

12.26 Two exemptions are relevant for disabled children with care needs. A household is entitled to an additional room where a child is receiving the middle or highest rate of the care component of DLA or the daily living component of PIP and either:<sup>23</sup>

- 1) requires an extra room for a carer to stay regularly overnight; or
- 2) is under 16 and cannot reasonably share a bedroom with another child under 16 because of the child's disability.

## The benefit cap

12.27 The benefit cap restricts the total amount of income available from certain state benefits for families who are out of work. The amount of the cap differs depending on whether there are children in the family and whether or not the family lives in London.<sup>24</sup> It covers most means tested benefits, including Universal Credit and Housing Benefit, but it does not include DLA or PIP. Where a child is entitled to DLA or PIP, the benefit cap does not apply, and so many families with disabled children will be exempt from the cap. For very large families or families living in expensive accommodation, typically in the private rented sector or in temporary accommodation following a homelessness application, there may be very high reductions in the amount of Universal Credit or Housing Benefit that they can receive.

## Other forms of support

12.28 A range of other state-sponsored schemes provide benefits for disabled children and their carers. This section summarises some of the main sources of support.

23 Housing Benefit Regulations 2006 SI No 213 B13(5)–(6) and 13D(3)–(3A).

24 As at April 2019, the amounts are: £442.31 per week (£1,916.67 per month or £23,000 per year) for couples and lone parents in Greater London; £384.62 per week (£1,666.67 per month or £20,000 per year) for couples and lone parents outside Greater London; £296.35 per week (£1,284.17 per month or £15,410 per year) for single adults in Greater London; £257.69 per week (£1,116.67 per month or £13,400 per year) for single adults outside Greater London.

## The Blue Badge scheme

- 12.29 The Blue Badge scheme is administered by local authorities and allows disabled people with severe mobility problems to park in certain reserved places.<sup>25</sup> Anyone who is over the age of two and is receiving the higher rate of the mobility component of DLA or PIP can qualify for a Blue Badge. Special rules also apply for children under the age of three who have a medical condition which means they require bulky medical equipment or need to be kept near a vehicle for treatment at all times.

## Motability

- 12.30 Motability is a charity that runs a scheme to help disabled people to lease or buy a car, motorised vehicle or scooter.<sup>26</sup> It is available for anyone who has been receiving or is caring for a child who has been receiving the higher rate of the mobility component of DLA or the enhanced rate of the mobility component of PIP for a period of 12 months.

## The Family Fund

- 12.31 The Family Fund is an independent charity financed by the government which provides grants intended to ease the stress on families arising from the day-to-day care of a disabled or seriously ill child.<sup>27</sup> Anyone who is caring at home for a disabled or seriously ill child under the age of 18 may apply. It is means tested and discretionary but works within general guidelines agreed with the government. There is no strict requirement for the child to be in receipt of DLA or PIP, but the child must be assessed as disabled or seriously ill.

## Discretionary Housing Payments

- 12.32 Families who cannot pay the rent for the accommodation that they need and are entitled to housing benefit can apply for additional assistance in the form of Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs). DHPs are administered by the local authority. Some authorities

25 See: [www.gov.uk/apply-blue-badge](http://www.gov.uk/apply-blue-badge).

26 See: [www.motability.co.uk](http://www.motability.co.uk).

27 See: [www.familyfund.org.uk](http://www.familyfund.org.uk).

will not allow direct applications to the fund, requiring applicants to approach through approved partners. These will usually include local agencies providing services to families with disabled children and the authority's own social workers. Some authorities will allow direct applications. These can usually be found on local authority's website.