

Disability Living Allowance (DLA)

You may claim Disability Living Allowance (DLA) via your local ***Department of Work Pensions (DWP) Benefit Enquiry Line 0800 882200***. All claims are now administered in Blackpool.

This benefit is not means tested against any income or savings.

These forms should be filled in very carefully and if possible, with the help of a volunteer from the ***Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)***, or somebody that is familiar with the forms and reasons for the questions being asked.

In filling in these forms, one has to forget pride and ego and thinking what we can occasionally manage to do at a good time on a good day after you have had a very good rest and after which you then have to rest again. We have to, instead, document tasks that we can no longer perform, most of the time due to our reduced capabilities.

This is what the organisation is trying to ascertain. Therefore, in not detailing one's difficulties, one is being dishonest with oneself as well as with the organisation, that exists and functions to assist us.

When filling in the forms, be very honest and realistic.

It may well help you to fill these forms in with a good friend that knows how much you suffer. They will very quickly correct your incorrect answers.

By the way, do not feel guilty about this being very stressful or even distressing. We all feel like this as we complete these forms as we are facing up to the realities of our lives as a whole. Including myself, I can not think of anybody that finds this an unemotional experience that can also cloud straight thinking.

Expect this, but know that this will pass.

In filling in these forms, I know that I initially was not being honest with myself.

This was explained to me, very succinctly by my local Social Services, as follows:

If a question on the forms asked if I was able to walk 50 yards, and I answered yes, as on a good day, or even on a bad day, I could. But, in walking that distance, I would then need to rest before or afterwards, as it totally sapped me of energy. Then, in fact **I was not being honest, in that I couldn't actually walk 50 yards, as there would be an effect on my symptoms and energy levels.** The same applies to personal care, washing up and other household chores, or any activity questioned on.

When it came to filling out my forms at the time of renewal, I carefully read all the notes that accompany the forms. Guess what!? In the notes themselves, it states:

“We know that illnesses or disabilities can affect people more on one day than another – they have good days and bad days. We know that your illness or disability may vary over a period of time or in different conditions. Please try to tell us as much as you can about how your illness or disability affects you, and how it varies.”

If you sometimes need to rest or you sometimes suffer various symptoms when you do an activity, then the honest answer is that you can not do that activity as part of a normal day. This is what the forms are trying to ascertain by their questions.

If out of pride or ego, you answer that you can do a specific activity, even though it causes pain and fatigue, then you are being less than honest with yourself and the **DWP**, if you do not put that on the form.

If you, like me, find all this form filling stressful, try not to delay it, but fill in a few pages or answer a few questions each day. Delay can cost you much needed benefit money.

Citizens Advice Bureau

Please see Citizens Advice Bureau Directory Appendix

Department of Work Pensions (DWP)

Benefit Enquiry Line

Tel: 0800 882 200.

Web Site:

www.dwp.gov.uk

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