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# Attendance Allowance

## West Sussex Coastal Health Inequalities

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Key takeaways

- Around 24,000 (12.3%) of the population aged 66+ are claiming Attendance Allowance in West Sussex as of May 24. Nationally, the proportion of people in claiming Attendance Allowance was higher (13.7%).
- The proportion of people claiming Attendance Allowance in coastal West Sussex (13.8%) was higher than both the county (12.3%) and non-coastal areas within West Sussex (11.9%)
- 83.2% of people claiming Attendance Allowance in England were among pensioners aged 75+ (based on age of main claimant) as of May 24.
- The main disabling conditions (as recorded on peoples’ AA claim), relate to musculoskeletal conditions (such as arthritis, lower back pain) and dementia.

Background

What is attendance allowance?

Attendance allowance was introduced in 1971 and is a tax free, non-means tested benefit for people State Pension aged and over<sup>1</sup> who have required personal care (e.g., support with day-to-day living such as getting washed and dressed) or supervision due to a physical or mental health condition or disability for a minimum of six months (Age UK, 2024; Department for Work & Pensions, 2023, Kennedy et al., 2016).

Alongside reaching state pension age and requiring personal care or supervision, people need to have lived in Great Britain for two out of the

<sup>1</sup> Under the Pensions Act 2011, from December 2018, the State Pension age for both men and women increased to reach 66 years by October 2020 (House of Commons Library, 2023).

past three years, which is known as the ‘past presence’ test and not receive other disability benefits such as Personal Independence Payment, the ‘care component’ of Disability Living Allowance or Adult Disability Payment (Citizens Advice, 2024; Disability Rights UK, 2024)

Rates of attendance allowance

Attendance allowance is paid every four weeks and there are two different ‘rates’ that people could be eligible for depending on the level of care and supervision they need (GOV.UK, 2024). People who are nearing end of life (e.g., been diagnosed with a life-limiting illness) automatically qualify for the higher rate (Citizens Advice, 2024).

Table 1: Rate of attendance allowance 2024/25

Rate	Amount per week 2024/25	Eligibility
Lower rate	£72.65	Requires frequent help or supervision during the day or night
Higher rate	£108.55	Requires frequent help or supervision during the day and night (or a life-limiting illness)

Source. GOV UK - Attendance Allowance rates

## Why does it matter?

### 1. **Attendance Allowance can provide additional financial security.**

Attendance Allowance is tax-free and will not impact the amount claimants receive for other benefits (Citizens Advice, 2024). In addition, people can claim for Attendance Allowance based on the help they require, not what they are already receiving, and there are no restrictions on what the weekly amount ‘must’ be used for (Age UK, 2024). A survey of over 550 Attendance Allowance claimants by Age UK (2016) found the most common items of spending included practical help at home (e.g., cleaning, shopping and gardening), transport to appointments, heating, food and disability equipment.

### 2. **Attendance Allowance can act as a ‘key’ to unlocking other benefits.**

Claimants of Attendance Allowance could also be eligible to apply for extra Pension Credit, Housing Benefit, Carers’ Allowance or a reduction in Council Tax (GOV.UK, 2024).

## What data is available?

The DWP publishes quarterly data capturing<sup>2</sup>:

- 1) The number of people claiming Attendance Allowance payments (excludes people with an entitlement who do not receive a payment e.g., where payments are suspended)
- 2) The number of **all** people claiming Attendance Allowance regardless of payment status. This includes where payments are suspended, for example if the claimant is in hospital.

This data is broken down by geography (e.g. census output areas, local authorities) and claim characteristics (e.g. age, award type, duration of current claim etc).

## Methods

Small area (lower super output area, LSOA) data on the number of people in receipt of Attendance Allowance was sourced from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP). LSOAs represent an average population of approximately 1,500 people. These statistics are released on a quarterly basis, with current data available to May 2024. The next release is scheduled for February 2025 (Stat-Xplore, 2024).

This briefing reports the number of people claiming Attendance Allowance, as at the last day of each quarter. Proportions are shown of the total ‘pensioner’ population aged 66 and above (Age UK, 2024). This is the current State Pension age for men and women in England. The data excludes those who have had their payment suspended, for example if they are in hospital (Citizens Advice, n.d.).

## Results

In West Sussex, there were around 24,000 people claiming Attendance Allowance as of May 2024. This equates to around 12.3% of the population aged 66+. Nationally, the proportion of people in claiming Attendance Allowance was higher (13.7%).

At May 2024, the proportion of people claiming Attendance Allowance in coastal West Sussex (13.8%) was higher than both the county (12.3%) and non-coastal areas within West Sussex (11.9%). Across the coastal towns, Selsey had the highest proportion of people claiming Attendance

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<sup>2</sup> [Stat-Xplore - Home](#)

Allowance (16.2%), and both Littlehampton and Shoreham-by-Sea had the lowest proportion (13.4%). Worthing has the highest number of people claiming Attendance Allowance ( $n = 3,620$ ).

When compared to non-coastal West Sussex, all coastal towns in the county had a higher proportion of people in receipt of Attendance Allowance payments (see Table 2).

### Small areas

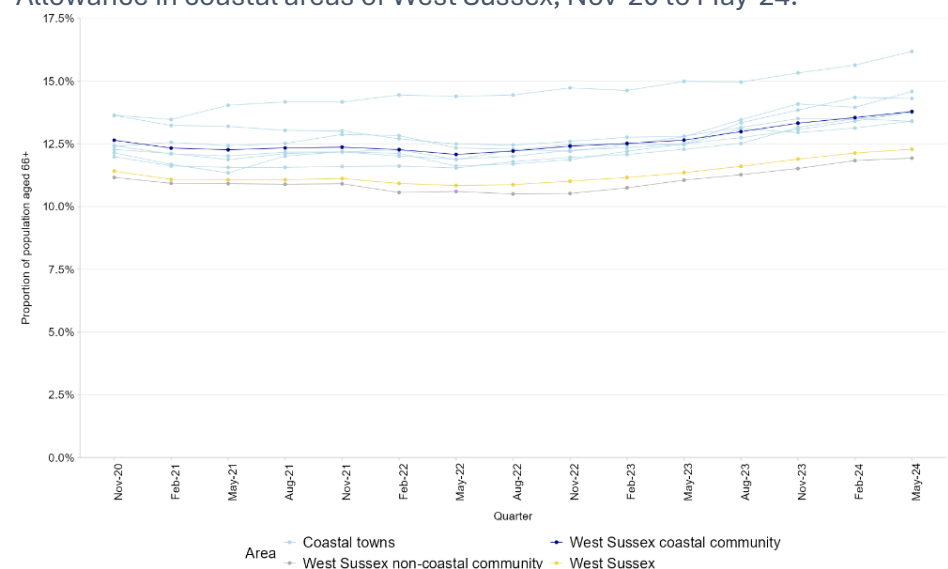
The proportion of people claiming Attendance Allowance (among 66+ population) is plotted for small areas (LSOA) in West Sussex in Figure 2. These were split into 5 equal groups (quintiles). Small areas shown in red are among the 20% of areas in West Sussex with the highest proportion of people claiming Attendance Allowance.

Many of these areas fall within West Sussex, with 30.6% of coastal LSOAs amongst areas with the highest proportion (top 20%) of people claiming Attendance Allowance. In non-coastal West Sussex, 17.8% fell within this quintile. More than a quarter of the pensioner population in some small coastal areas within Worthing were claiming Attendance Allowance ( $n = 3$ ).

### Trends

Over time, the number of people claiming Attendance Allowance has increased in coastal West Sussex (Figure 1; indicated by the dark-blue line). In November 2020, there were around 10,420 (rounded to nearest 10) people claiming Attendance Allowance, rising to 11,480 by May 2024. This is an increase of one percentage point, rising from 12.6% to 13.7%.

Figure 1: Proportion of the population aged 66+ claiming Attendance Allowance in coastal areas of West Sussex; Nov-20 to May-24.



Source: DWP pension credit (from Stat-Xplore); ONS small area population estimates (from NOMIS)  
Data from November 2020 onwards due to the increase of SPA to 66 for both men and women to October 2020.



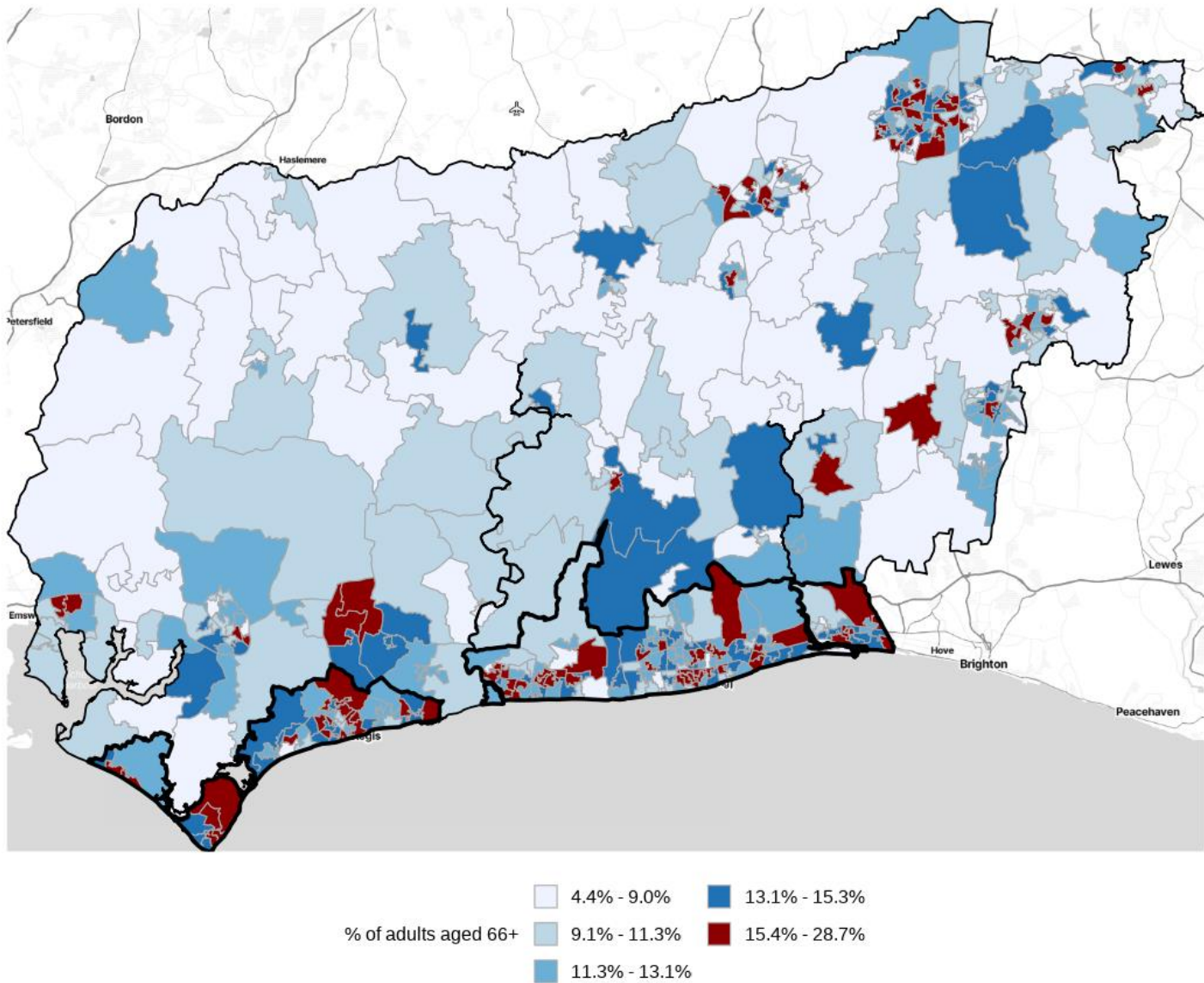
Table 2: Number and proportion of people claiming Attendance Allowance (of population aged 66+), quarterly data; May-24

Notes. Counts in areas that contained missing/suppressed data at LSOA level will be incomplete, these are denoted with an \*. Counts may vary from published data and data taken Stat-Xplore at larger geographies. This is due to suppression and disclosure processes.

Area	Number of claims	Proportion of population aged 66+			Versus non-coastal West Sussex	Versus West Sussex	Versus England
		%	LCL	UCL			
Bognor Regis BUA	2,677	13.8%	13.3%	14.3%	Higher	Higher	Similar
East Wittering BUASD	324	14.6%	13.2%	16.1%	Higher	Higher	Similar
Littlehampton BUASD	2,250	13.4%	12.9%	13.9%	Higher	Higher	Similar
Selsey BUA	625	16.2%	15.0%	17.4%	Higher	Higher	Higher
Shoreham-by-Sea BUASD	1,644	13.4%	12.8%	14.0%	Higher	Higher	Similar
Southwick BUASD	340	14.3%	13.0%	15.8%	Higher	Higher	Similar
Worthing BUASD	3,620	13.8%	13.3%	14.2%	Higher	Higher	Similar
West Sussex coastal community	11,480	13.8%	13.6%	14.0%	Higher	Higher	Similar
English coastal community	165,621	15.1%	15.0%	15.1%	Higher	Higher	Higher
West Sussex non-coastal community	8,587	11.9%	11.7%	12.2%	Not compared	Similar	Lower
English non-coastal community (excluding London)	671,265*	14.0%	13.9%	14.0%	Higher	Higher	Higher
West Sussex	24,003	12.3%	12.1%	12.4%	Similar	Not compared	Lower
England	1,374,346*	13.7%	13.7%	13.7%	Higher	Higher	Not compared

Source: DWP Stat-Xplore

Figure 2: Proportion of people claiming Attendance Allowance (of population aged 66+) in small areas of West Sussex (2011 Lower Super Output Areas); May 2024



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Other characteristics

Small area (LSOA) breakdowns by other characteristics (e.g. age, award type, duration of current claim etc) are unavailable due to disclosure control processes. The general pattern of claims by different characteristics have been described for England and lower-tier authorities in West Sussex to provide context.

Mean weekly amount

Data is available on the average award amount (in pounds) that is paid to Attendance Allowance claimants each quarter. In May 2024, the average weekly amount for England was £95. Lower-tier authorities in West Sussex tend to have a lower mean amount paid to claimants within the county when compared to England, ranging from £93.30 in Adur to £94.50 in Chichester.

Age

In May 2024, 83.2% of people claiming Attendance Allowance in England were among pensioners aged 75+ (based on age of main claimant). In general, lower-tier authorities in West Sussex tend to have a higher proportion of people over 75 claiming Attendance Allowance when compared to England. More than 85% of people claiming Attendance Allowance were among those aged over 75 in all lower-tier authorities in West Sussex (ranging from 86.7% in Arun to 89.5% in Horsham), besides Crawley (81.8%).

Gender

In May 2024, 61.9% of people claiming Attendance Allowance in England were female. Lower-tier authorities in West Sussex tend to have a higher proportion of claims amongst females than England (ranging from 62.2% in Horsham to 65% in Worthing).

Main disabling condition

Of the approximately 24,000 people in receipt of Attendance Allowance, the main disabling conditions (as record on their claim), relate to musculoskeletal conditions (such as arthritis, lower back pain) and dementia.

Table 2 Main disabling condition of Attendance Allowance claimants in West Sussex (May-24)

Condition identified on Attendance Allowance Claim	Number
Arthritis	5,663
Dementia	3,288
Heart Disease	1,711
Disease Of The Muscles, Bones or Joints	1,251
Respiratory Disorders and Diseases	1,180
Cerebrovascular Disease	1,135
Back Pain - Other / Precise Diagnosis not Specified	1,022
Visual Disorders and Diseases	965
Terminally Ill	947
Parkinsons Disease	854
Malignant Disease	685
Neurological Diseases	633
Cognitive disorder - other / precise diagnosis not specified	378
Trauma to Limbs	344
Diabetes Mellitus	278
Renal Disorders	247
Spondylosis	236
Psychosis	203
Multi System Disorders	135
Psychoneurosis	131
Hearing Disorders	130
Unknown	1,848

Source: DWP (only conditions with more than 100 claimants were included)

### Award type

In May 2024, 62.4% of people claiming Attendance Allowance in England were awarded the 'higher rate' of £108.55. This higher rate is awarded to eligible pensioners who need help or supervision throughout the day and during the night (GOV.UK, 2024).

Lower-tier authorities in West Sussex tend to have a lower proportion of people claiming the higher rate of Attendance Allowance compared to England (ranging from 57.6% in Adur to 61% in Chichester). In addition, lower-tier authorities in West Sussex tend to have a higher proportion of people claiming the 'lower rate' of Attendance Allowance than England (£72.65 per week; ranging from 39% in Chichester to 42.4% in Adur).



## References

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## Appendices

### *Population of population aged above state pension age (66+) in receipt of Attendance Allowance*

Proportion of population aged 66+ in receipt of Attendance Allowance; Nov-2020 to May-24

