



Spotlight on terminal illness

We take a closer look at terminal illness.

Terminal illness cover is a feature of life protection policies. If you've been diagnosed with a terminal illness and are in the last months of your life, it allows you to bring forward your life insurance payment.

Early payment of this benefit means you can sort out your financial affairs before you die – rather than leaving the task to family members after your death.

You could use the money to go on holiday with loved ones to make lasting memories or pay bills. There's no restriction on what the money can be used for, that's your choice.

What is a terminal illness?

Medical professionals and insurance companies have different definitions for the word 'terminal' which can cause confusion.

- An illness is classed as terminal by a doctor when there's no known cure and treatment is only provided with a view to extending life or to help relieve symptoms. Even though they may have a terminal condition, a patient may still have a number of years to live. This varies by illness and individual.
- An insurance company's interpretation of 'terminal' is someone who has been told by a doctor that they have a condition which is incurable, it's reached the stage where they have less than 12 months to live and they'll die before the policy ends.

When can a claim be submitted?

A claim can be submitted once you've been diagnosed with a terminal illness by a specialist, and your life expectancy is 12 months or less.

Contacting us too early, before meeting our terminal illness definition, can be frustrating during what is already a very difficult time. If you don't currently meet the definition, it doesn't mean that we won't pay the

Key statistics

In 2017, **24% of our life protection claims** were for terminal illness. We paid **94.2%** of these claims.



In 2017, **97% of our terminal illness claims** were for cancer. The remaining 3% of claims were for other conditions like:

- respiratory failure;
- motor neurone disease, and
- Alzheimer's disease.

Source: Aegon, 2017 Claims Paid report, February 2018

claim, it just means the claim won't be paid at that particular time.

If you submit a claim a little early, we'll look to help you in other ways. We may be able to cancel your Direct Debit payments and deduct any unpaid policy payments from the overall claim value, when it becomes payable. We'll regularly liaise with your consultant – to ensure we pay the claim when the definition is met.

We'll also provide you with details of our 24/7 health and wellbeing service, provided by Health Assured. It's a confidential support and guidance service that can help you and your family through difficult times, by giving you access to qualified and experienced counsellors.



Case study

A 63-year-old male customer began experiencing musculoskeletal pains. He visited his GP, who referred him to his local hospital. Investigations identified small cell lung cancer, which had spread to his spine and pelvis, accounting for the pain.

He began palliative treatment, and was given a life expectancy of two to three years. As we can only pay terminal illness claims when life expectancy is less than 12 months, we were unable to settle his claim. However, we agreed to regularly review his claim with his consultant, and at the same time stop collecting his policy payments - instead they'll be deducted from his overall claims payment when it becomes payable. This removed the need for him to approach us about his claim again and helped to reduce his monthly outgoings while retaining this valuable cover.

How do you tell us about a claim?

Call us and we'll gather some basic information from you about your illness or condition over the phone. We'll give you the choice of completing a claim form over the phone with one of our experienced claims staff or receiving a paper claim form in the post.

When a claim is paid

Once we receive your completed claim form and all of the necessary medical information, we'll be able to assess your claim.

A terminal illness claim can only be paid when our Chief Medical Officer agrees with your consultant, that your life expectancy is less than 12 months, and you're likely to die before your life protection policy ends.

If you'd like any help completing a claim, call us on 03456 00 04 93.

Find out more

Finding out that you or a loved one has a terminal illness can be a worrying time for all involved. Your doctor can provide you with any information and support that you may need. You can also find more information at [NHS choices](#).



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