

Financial Support

Have a look through the list below, to see if you may be entitled to extra financial support that will help with the additional costs of raising your child.

Benefits and Tax Credits

There are several benefits and tax credits available that you may be entitled to. Some of these benefits can be paid because your child is disabled, others may be paid to you for other reason for example, you may be getting Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for your child and Carer's Allowance as their carer. Depending on your income and certain other factors, you may also be able to claim benefits such as income support, child tax credit and housing benefit.

Eligibility Criteria

Each benefit and tax credit have its own set of eligibility criteria. This means you need to meet certain conditions to qualify.

To claim contribution-based benefits you need to have paid National Insurance contributions in the past.

To claim means-tested benefits you must be on low income, with savings of less than a certain amount.

To claim tax credits, you must either have children or be in work – and the amount will depend on the household income but not savings.

For non-means tested benefits like Disability Living Allowance, the claimant will need to meet criteria not related to work, income or savings.

When to claim

When you know which benefit or tax credit to claim, phone the appropriate office straight away. It is difficult to get awards backdated.

Some benefits (for example Disability Living Allowance) can't be paid for a period before the date you claimed, no matter what the circumstances. So long as you are not subject to immigration control, you should claim now, even if you are not sure you qualify, as you could miss out if you delay.

How are Benefits paid?

Some benefits are paid as tax credits by HM Revenue and Customs. Different offices of the Department for Work and Pensions pay most other benefits. However, housing and council tax benefits are paid by your local authority.

Benefits and tax credits are usually paid directly into a parent's bank account. Any benefits for your child – such as DLA and child benefit – will be paid to you as their parent. When your child reaches 16 years, they may be able to claim benefits in their own right.

Future changes

Over the next three years the government will be making a few important changes to the benefits system.

Get a Benefits check

Your local Citizens Advice Bureau or welfare rights unit can carry out a full benefit check for you. Or, alternatively you can visit <https://benefits-calculator.turn2us.org.uk/> to use their free and easy-to-use Benefits Calculator and Grants Search tools to check what benefits you might be able to claim and what grants you might be able to apply for.

Grants

We are currently in the process of collating an up-to-date list of charities that offer grants and funding for certain disabilities or geographical areas. However, many areas do not accept applications directly from individual families and you may need a professional such as a GP, teacher or social worker to make the initial application.

Take a look at <https://www.disability-grants.org> this website will help you to save time finding disability grants. It is full of Charities and Trusts provide funding towards the high cost of disability equipment, holidays, housing, days out, in fact anything above and beyond the normal costs of everyday living.

Local Authority Support

A local welfare assistance scheme can help you if you are in urgent need following an emergency or unforeseen event and have no other source of help. The schemes are run by local councils and they vary. You may be able to get vouchers to pay for food, fuel or clothing or bigger basic living items such as beds, cookers and fridges. You can't usually get cash.

Council Tax Discount

Council Tax reductions are offered to people on lower incomes. Whether you qualify for a Council Tax reduction and how much will depend on your family's circumstances, plus your income and savings.

In England each council has its own Council Tax reduction scheme, which means that the amount of help varies depending on the council area where you reside. Scotland and Wales each have their own national Council Tax reduction scheme although you must still apply via your local council.

Council Tax only applies to England, Scotland and Wales. In Northern Ireland people pay rates instead.

If you are on a low income, you may be able to get help with paying your rates through the Rate Relief Scheme or through a rate rebate.

Free School meals

Your child may be able to get free school meals if you get any of the following:

Income Support

income-based Jobseeker's Allowance

income-related Employment and Support Allowance

support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

the guaranteed element of Pension Credit

Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)

Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit

Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

Children who get paid these benefits directly, instead of through a parent or guardian, can also get free school meals.

Your child may also get free school meals if you get any of these benefits and your child is both:
younger than the compulsory age for starting
in full-time education

If your child is eligible for free school meals, they'll remain eligible until they finish the phase of schooling (primary or secondary) they're in on 31 March 2022.

Infant free school meals in England

Your child will be able to get free school meals if they're in a government funded school and in:
reception class

year 1

year 2

Tell your local authority if you also get any of the qualifying benefits. Your child's school can get extra funding if you do.

You can contact your education authority for more information about free school meals. You can also visit <https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals>

School Uniforms

Check if your local council provides help with the cost of school uniform and PE kit.

If your council does not offer help, ask your child's school directly.

You may be able to get a school uniform grant if you live in:

Northern Ireland

Scotland

Wales

Transport and getting around

School transport

Your child may be entitled to free transport if they can't walk to school because of their special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or mobility problem. Any transport your council provides must be suitable to your child's needs.

Find details on free school transport for children with SEND from your local council.

If your child is over 16 and in further education or sixth form, your local council may be able to help with transport costs. Each council has its own policy about this.

Help with parking

You are eligible for the Blue Badge parking concession scheme if your child either:

Receives the higher rate mobility component of Disability Living Allowance (DLA)

Is aged two or above and has severe walking problems

Is under three and has a condition which means they either need to be accompanied by bulky equipment or kept near a vehicle at all times.

Disabled adults on Personal Independence Payments (PIP) also qualify for a Blue badge if they score eight points or more under the pip activity of 'moving around'.

In Scotland and Wales entitlement has also been extended to those adults who score 12 points or more in the PIP activity of 'planning and following a journey'.

Help getting a car

The Motability Scheme helps disabled people hire a car or instead a scooter or powered wheelchair, and Scheme customers might qualify for a driving lessons grant.

You can join the Motability Scheme if your child is awarded the highest rate mobility component of DLA or the enhanced rate of the mobility component of PIP. Your child's award must have 12 months left to run.

Help with Road Tax

You can get 100 per cent rebate on Vehicle Excise Duty if your child is awarded the DLA mobility component at the higher rate or PIP mobility component at the enhanced rate.

A 50 per cent rebate is made when someone qualifies for PIP mobility component at the standard rate.

Help with Bus Travel

All local authorities operate schemes allowing disabled people of any age to apply for a bus pass or voucher for free bus travel. In some areas an essential, named carer accompanying the disabled person is also entitled to free travel.

Disabled persons Railcard

Buying this rail card entitles disabled people and a companion up to a third off most train fares, visit www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk for further information.

Transport to school and college

Local authorities may be able to provide your child with free or partially subsidised transport to their school or college.

By law in England, local authorities have to make free transport arrangements for certain groups of eligible children aged between five and sixteen.

Local authorities must also have arrangements to support young people over sixteen who need help to get to college because of a SEN or disability.

Out and About

Many major attractions and organisations in the UK allow free entry to a parent or carer accompanying a disabled person. Its always worth asking if a discount is available.

The Max Card is a local authority-commissioned card scheme for disabled children (ages 0-19). It offers families discounted access to UK attractions. If your local authority funds the scheme you will be able to access a free card. To find out if you are eligible please take a look at <https://www.mymaxcard.co.uk>.

The CEA Card is a national card scheme developed by the UK Cinema Association for UK cinemas. To apply for the card, you will need to meet one or both of the following criteria, be in receipt of Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance or Personal Independence Payment, be a registered blind person. There is an administration charge of £6.00 for the card, which lasts for a year. For further information you can visit <https://www.ceacard.co.uk/>.

