



# A checklist for parents in England, Wales and Scotland

As a parent of a disabled child you are often entitled to a number of benefits and other help. This leaflet explains some of the more common ones and who can claim them.

## Disability and sickness benefits

### Disability Living Allowance (DLA)

DLA is the main benefit for disabled children:

- if a child needs extra care or supervision they may qualify for the care component
- if a child needs help getting around they may qualify for the mobility component. The higher rate of the mobility component can give access to the Motability Scheme to help hire, or buy, a car
- it is not means-tested.

### Disability Benefits Helpline:

08457 123 456

Textphone: 08457 224 433

### Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

DLA for adults aged 16-64 is being replaced by a new benefit called the Personal Independence Payment (PIP). Like DLA it is not means-tested and it also has two types of payment – known as a mobility component and a daily living component.



PIP has already replaced new claims for DLA by disabled adults, and from October 2013 the process of moving existing adult DLA claimants onto PIP will begin. If your child is already getting DLA and turns 16 after 27 October they will be invited to claim PIP shortly after their 16th birthday. DLA will be retained as a separate benefit for children aged under 16.

### Employment and Support Allowance

Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) is a benefit for people over 16 whose capacity for work is limited by their health problems.

There are two types of ESA: contributory ESA and income-related ESA. Some people will receive both types of payment, others may only get one or the other. Since most young disabled people have not worked and paid national insurance contributions they usually can only get income-related ESA. If your son or daughter claims ESA, any tax credits or benefits you get for them (other than DLA) will stop. Contact our freephone helpline for more information.

### Jobcentre Plus Claim Line

Freephone: 0800 055 6688

Textphone: 0800 023 4888

## A benefit for carers

### Carer's Allowance

This is extra money for carers who care for someone who gets either DLA care component at the middle or highest rate or PIP daily living component at any rate. Eligibility depends on the circumstances and weekly earnings of the carer.



## Benefits if you're out of full time work

### **Contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance**

Payable for six months for individuals who are unemployed and have recently paid sufficient national insurance contributions.

### **Income Support and income-based Jobseeker's Allowance**

These are means-tested benefits for people who are not working, or working less than 16 hours a week. Some carers qualify if they work more hours than this.

## Benefits for working

### **Working Tax Credit**

This is extra money for families with children where someone is working a required number of hours. This is 16 hours a week if you are a lone parent, or you are a couple and one partner works at least 16 hours and the other partner is entitled to Carer's Allowance or is incapacitated. Most other couples with children need to work at least 24 hours to be eligible. The amount you get will depend on your circumstances and annual income, but there is no limit on the amount of savings you can have.

**Tax Credits Helpline:** 0345 300 3900  
**Textphone:** 0345 300 3909

## Money and vouchers for having children

### **Child Tax Credit**

This can be claimed by anyone with a dependent child. The amount you get is based on your family circumstances and your annual income (unlike other means-tested benefits there is no limit on the amount of savings you can have). Your award may be higher if you have a child on DLA or PIP, or who is registered blind.

**Tax Credits Helpline:** 0345 300 3900  
**Textphone:** 0345 300 3909

### **Child Benefit**

A payment if you are responsible for a child under 16 or, if they remain in non-advanced education or unwaged training, a young person aged 16-19. Households with someone earning £50,000 or more will see a reduction in Child Benefit. This is done by way of a claw back through the tax system. You lose one per cent of your Child Benefit for every £100 you earn above £50,000 – meaning those earning £60,000 or above repay all of their Child Benefit.

### **Sure Start Maternity Grant**

A £500 grant for those who have recently given birth or adopted a child, and are on certain benefits.

Normally you can only get a grant if your baby is your first child, or if all your other children are aged 16 or above. However, an exception can sometimes be made if you have a multiple birth (for example, twins). Seek further advice in these circumstances.

## Healthy Start Scheme

If you are pregnant or have a child under four – you may be able to get vouchers for milk, fruit, vegetables and vitamins. You also need to be receiving certain benefits to qualify (unless you are under 18 and pregnant).

**Healthy Start Helpline:** 0845 607 6823

**Textphone:** 0845 607 6078

[www.healthystart.nhs.uk](http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk)

## At school

### Free school meals

If your child is registered at a maintained school, the education authority must provide a free midday meal if you claim certain benefits.

### School uniforms

Education authorities (or children's departments) have discretion to help with the cost of school clothing for pupils in maintained schools. In Wales, a grant is available to pupils entering Year 7 who are eligible for free school meals, or for pupils aged 11 at the start of the school year attending a special school, special needs resource base or pupil referral unit, who are also eligible for free school meals.

### School transport

Education authorities must provide transport or help with the cost if they consider it necessary to help a child get to the nearest suitable school.



## Visiting a child at a special school

Education authorities have discretion to pay some or all of the fares of parents visiting children at a special school a long way from home.

## Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) – Wales and Scotland

A weekly payment for 16 -18 year olds (and some 19 year olds) who stay on at school/college or who undertake certain types of unwaged training. The amount awarded depends on parental income.

## 16-19 bursary – England only

EMA in England was replaced by the 16-19 bursary scheme. There are two types of bursary – a discretionary bursary for which any young person can apply. However, whether you receive a payment is at the discretion of your school or college. There is also a guaranteed bursary of £1,200 per year for certain groups, including those disabled students who receive both DLA and Employment and Support Allowance. This may be paid in kind rather than in cash.

## Help with rent, mortgage and council tax

### Housing Benefit

People on a low income and savings under £16,000 (or over if in receipt of the guarantee element of Pension Credit) can apply for Housing Benefit to help with their rent.

### Help with mortgage interest payments

This is only available as part of Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, income-related Employment and Support Allowance or Pension Credit.

## **Disability Reduction Scheme**

A non means-tested reduction on the council tax bill for people who:

- use a wheelchair indoors, or
- have an extra bathroom or kitchen in the house for a disabled occupier, or
- have set aside a room for a disabled person, for example, using a dining room to store equipment.

## **Council Tax Discount**

Your council tax bill is reduced by 25% (50% in some cases) if there are less than two adults in your household. The presence of children and certain adults (including some carers) can be ignored.

## **Local schemes for support with council tax**

Help for council tax payers on a low income. The help available varies depending on where in the country you live. Each council in England has its own scheme, with national schemes in Scotland and Wales.

## **Discretionary housing payments**

A local authority can make a discretionary payment if you are entitled to some Housing Benefit and need further financial assistance to meet your housing costs.

## **Universal Credit**

The government intends to introduce a new Universal Credit to replace all of the current means-tested benefits paid to people of working age. This means it will replace Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Housing Benefit, Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit.

Universal Credit is currently being tested

in certain pilot areas and the number of these pilots is to increase from October 2013. It is planned that Universal Credit will start to replace new claims for existing benefits at some point during 2014. Between 2014 and 2017 those who are already on the pre-existing benefits will also be moved onto Universal Credit. This timetable may be subject to change so call our freephone helpline for updates.

## **At home**

### **Adapting your home in England and Wales – Disabled Facilities Grant**

These are awarded where works are considered essential to enable better access and movement at home or to make it safe for a disabled occupant. The maximum grant payable is £30,000 in England and £36,000 in Wales.

### **Scotland – Scheme of Assistance**

In Scotland, mandatory grants are available for work deemed essential to meet the needs of a disabled person. A grant must cover at least 80 per cent of approved costs, with the other 20 per cent being means-tested. A mandatory grant cannot be made to cover the costs of an extension to create additional living space.

### **Insulating your home and cutting energy bills**

For details of government backed schemes to help you make your home more energy efficient call:

**In England**, the Energy Savings Trust on 0300 123 1234

**In Scotland**, Home Energy Scotland on 0808 808 2282

**In Wales**, NEST on 0808 808 2244



## **Furniture reuse schemes**

These schemes provide low-cost second hand and reconditioned furniture and white goods for families on a low income.

## **TV Licence**

If you, or someone you live with is registered blind or severely sight impaired, you qualify for a 50 per cent reduction on the cost of your TV licence. If the person who is registered blind is not the current licence holder, you will need to transfer the licence into their name first.

**Tel:** 0300 790 6130

## **Transport**

### **Free road tax for your car**

You can get a 100 per cent rebate if you qualify for, or have a child aged three or over, who qualifies for either Disability Living Allowance mobility component at the higher rate or PIP mobility component at the enhanced rate. A 50 per cent rebate is made where someone qualifies for PIP mobility component at the standard rate.

### **A Blue Badge for your car**

This allows some parking concessions for those on DLA mobility component at the higher rate and others with severe walking problems who are aged two or above. You may also qualify if your child 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 PIP also qualify for a Blue Badge if they score 8 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 with bus travel**

Disabled people are usually entitled to free local off-peak bus travel. In some areas, an essential companion can get free travel alongside the disabled person. Contact your local authority for more details.

## **Disabled Person's Railcard**

Buying this railcard entitles disabled people up to a third off most train fares.

**Tel:** 0845 605 0525

**Textphone:** 0845 601 0132

## **Other help**

### **NHS costs, glasses, hospital fares, free prescriptions**

There are a range of benefits for prescription costs, glasses, going to hospital for treatment (including accompanying a child) and certain dental costs. The criteria are different for each.

### **Personal budgets and direct payments**

A personal budget is an annual amount of money that your council allocate to pay for services to meet your child's needs. You can choose to manage this budget yourself, ask someone to manage the budget for you or ask your council to provide you with the services instead. If you chose to manage the budget yourself you have the option of receiving **direct payments**. These are regular payments that you must use to buy services for your child. You can use direct payments to employ your own care assistant or buy in services from an organisation that provides care.

### **Cinema Exhibitor's Association card**

Free tickets for a person to accompany a child to the cinema if they receive DLA or PIP or are registered blind. Also, many local attractions offer discount schemes

and queue jump passes for disabled people and their carers. Ask when you book.

**Tel:** 0845 123 1292

**Textphone:** 0845 123 1297

## Practical help with your child

Contact a Family produces a number of detailed guides, which include practical information such as:

- extra help at school
- practical help at home and short breaks
- specialist equipment
- health services such as physiotherapy or speech therapy.

Visit our website [www.cafamily.org.uk](http://www.cafamily.org.uk) or call our freephone helpline on 0808 808 3555 for more information.

### Emotional support

Call the Contact a Family freephone helpline for details of support groups and counselling services.

### Grants and loans

There are several sources of help from grant making organisations.

- **Local Authorities** – each area has its own scheme offering financial assistance to families. This may take the form of a grant, loan or assistance in kind. In England each council has its own scheme, in Scotland there is a nationwide system of grants under the Scottish Welfare Fund and in Wales there is a discretionary assistance fund for Wales
- **Budgeting Loans** from Jobcentre Plus for those on certain means -tested benefits
- **Family Fund** – grants for families on

certain benefits, whose child is severely disabled and aged 17 or under.

- **Charities** – there are hundreds of funds for certain occupations, disabilities or those in certain geographical areas. For more information and a list of charities, call our freephone helpline.

## Other benefits

Call the Contact a Family freephone helpline on 0808 808 3555 if you have a child with a disability and:

- you are sick or disabled as a result of an accident or illness at work, or after service in the armed forces
- your spouse (including common law spouse in Scotland) or civil partner has died – there are special benefits for bereavement
- you care for an orphaned child or one whose parents are in prison
- you are 60 or over. There are a range of pensions and pension credits that you may be entitled to
- you are disabled and 65 or over. You might get Attendance Allowance.

Also some larger families, or those with particular disabilities, may be able to get help with metered water charges.



## Getting in contact with us

Free helpline for parents and families

**0808 808 3555**

Open Mon-Fri, 9.30am-5pm

Access to over 170 languages

**www.cafamily.org.uk**  
**www.makingcontact.org**

Contact a Family Head Office:

**209–211 City Road, London EC1V 1JN**

Tel **020 7608 8700**

Fax **020 7608 8701**

Email **info@cafamily.org.uk**

Web **www.cafamily.org.uk**

Contact a Family is now on social networking sites.

Join us at:

**www.facebook.com/contactafamily**

**http://twitter.com/contactafamily**

**www.youtube.com/cafamily**

Download podcasts at:

**www.cafamily.org.uk**



## Further information

Contact a Family is a charity which provides support, advice and information for families with disabled children. We offer:

- **freephone helpline**
- **guides and other publications**
- **information on specific conditions and rare disorders**
- **local offices, all of which provide newsletters, workshops and local information**
- **advice for parents starting or joining local or national support groups**
- **an online linking service for families**
- **family workers providing home visiting services**
- **volunteer parent representatives offering local support and information**

Registered Office: 209–211 City Road,  
London EC1V 1JN  
Registered Charity Number: 284912  
Charity registered in Scotland No. SC039169  
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