

Benefits for families

There are several different benefits for families to help with the extra costs of children. These include benefits for women who are pregnant or who have just had their baby, benefits for the partners of women who have given birth, benefits for people who adopt, and benefits, tax credits and other help which you may be able to get when you have responsibility for a child or young person. ^(1.)

The benefits system provides practical help and financial support if you are unemployed and looking for work. It also provides you with additional income when your earnings are low, if you are bringing up children, are retired, care for someone, are ill or have a disability. But with so many different types of benefits and the constant number of changes being made, how can you make sure you're receiving what you're entitled to?

- ⇒ Take 5 minutes to calculate what benefits you're entitled to, using the benefits calculator at www.moneysavingexpert.com.
- ⇒ The Department for Work and Pensions has produced an online guide which can help you check if you qualify for certain benefits. It can also give you an estimate of how much you may be able to get. It covers the main benefits including: Attendance Allowance, Carer's Allowance, Child Benefit, Child Tax Credit, Disability Living Allowance, Housing Benefit, Income Support and Jobseeker's Allowance. To see the online guide, visit www.gov.uk. ^(2.)
- ⇒ If you are on a low income, you may be able to get other help with the costs of bringing up your children. For example, your children may be entitled to free school meals or help with the costs of school uniform. If you are pregnant or you have young children, you may be able to get vouchers to help with the costs of milk, fruit or vegetables. For more information visit your local Citizens Advice Bureau or see the 'help with health, education and legal costs' section of their website www.citizensadvice.org.uk. ^(3.)
- ⇒ Turn2us is a charity that helps people in financial need to access welfare benefits, charitable grants and other financial help – online, by phone and face to face through its partner organisations. The website features a free and easy to use benefits calculator, grants search and other information and resources. Visit www.turn2us.org.uk or call the free and confidential helpline on 0800 802 2000
- ⇒ The Phoenix Children's Centre in New Milton runs an In Touch drop-in, with advice on housing benefit and finances. The drop-in runs every Wednesday from 10.30am-11.30pm. Places must be booked. Call 01425 612113 for more information.

Top Tips

- If you inform one department of a change in your circumstances do not assume that they will pass on this information to any other department. You must inform all the offices you get benefits from.
- Make sure you read and understand all the letters you receive from any benefits office.
- When you phone a benefits office, the HMRC, or the Council, always write down the name of person you spoke to, the date, the time, and what was agreed in case the problem is not sorted out straight away.
- Get a receipt when you hand in forms or evidence and keep it safe. If you are asked for the same information again you will be able to prove that you have already supplied it.
- If you do receive a letter asking for information you have already supplied, don't assume that the benefits office will realise their mistake and continue processing your claim. You must respond, if only to show them your receipt, otherwise they may close your claim.

1. Benefits for families and children's. Citizen's advice. 2014. <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/benefits/children-and-young-people/benefits-for-families-and-children/> 2. What benefits can I get. Citizens advice. 2014. <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/resources-and-tools/navigation-tools/search/?q=what+benefits> 3. Help with health, education and legal costs. Citizen's advice. 2014 <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/resources-and-tools/navigation-tools/search/?q=benefits+help+on+a+low+income>

Money matters

Benefits and Welfare rights

Benefits Calculator

Take 5 minutes to calculate what benefits you're entitled to using the benefits calculator at www.moneysavingexpert.com.

Online benefit guide

Department for Work and Pension's online guide can help you check if you qualify for certain benefits. It can also give you an estimate of how much you may be able to get. To see the online guide, visit www.gov.uk.

Free school meals and help with school uniform costs

For more information visit your local Citizen's Advice Bureau or see the 'help with health, education and legal costs' section on its website. www.citizensadvice.org.uk.

Family Link

Family link offers help and advice to families across the Priestlands Pyramid, which consists of 12 schools. To download the Priestlands Family Link brochure visit www.priestlands.hants.sch.uk/family-link.

New Forest Disability Information Service

Providing free, impartial, confidential information and advice to those of any age affected by disability. Related issues include: caring, access, blue badge, welfare benefit applications, volunteering opportunities, equipment, holidays, training, education and transport throughout the New Forest and surrounding area.

NFDIS Head Office, 6 Osborne Road, New Milton, BH25 6AD
Helpline: 01425 628750, email: info@newforestdis.org.uk.

Advice Guide

Practical, reliable and up-to-date information from the Citizens Advice Bureau at www.citizensadvice.org.uk.

Benefit Entitlement Guide

Free debt advice from a debt charity
www.debtadvicefoundation.org/debt-tools/benefit-entitlement.

Benefit advice and information for single parent families

www.gingerbread.org.uk