

Caring for a child with a disability can be expensive. It is important that every family knows about the benefits they are entitled to, to help them look after their child.

This section looks at the benefits available and how to apply for them. It also provides other useful information which should help you get through the benefits maze.

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GENERAL ADVICE AND INFORMATION

If your child has a disability, you may be able to claim certain benefits depending on your circumstances. These benefits recognise the extra cost in caring for a child with a disability, in terms of clothes, transport and care arrangements.

Remember

It is useful to go to your local advice centre to get professional help on benefits and eligibility. If you are not sure where your nearest advice centre is located please contact SIGN on 0114 266 9476 for a list of advice centres.

Photocopy any forms you complete for future reference, and keep notes of any telephone conversations – it may be helpful to be able to refer back to previous communications.

You have the right to appeal against any decision made – but you must do this within one month of the date the decision was sent to you.

If there isn't enough space on the form to give all the details you would like to give, don't be afraid to add extra sheets.

Disability Living Allowance

DLA for children under the age of 16
You can claim this benefit on behalf of a child who, as a result of a disability, needs frequent care or continual supervision and/or has mobility problems. It is not means tested and is tax free. The claim form is a booklet designed to cover all aspects of the care being given. Don't be put off by its length! You can get help completing DLA forms from advice centre's and from other sources (see *page 8 for help with completing forms*).

The Disability Living Allowance is split into two parts:

Care Component

Can be claimed from 3 months onwards. You will need to show that your child needs significantly more care than a child of the same age without a disability.

There are 3 rates of payment:

- **Low (£17.75 weekly)** – for children who need help with personal care for part of the day.
- **Middle (£44.85 weekly)** – for children who need help with personal care frequently during the day or personal care or supervision during the night.
- **High (£67.00 weekly)** – for children who need continuous help with personal care day and night.
Claim forms should include details of:
 - Toileting needs
 - Help needed at meal times
 - Washing/bathing needs
 - Help needed to take medicine
 - Help needed to get in and out of bed
 - The level of supervision needed to prevent your child harming himself/herself or others.

There are also '**special rules**' for children who are terminally ill, to make it easier to claim.

Mobility Component

This is available to children aged 3 years and over. Severely disabled children aged 3 and 4 years who have difficulty walking, may be able to get the higher rate of DLA for getting around.

There are two rates:

- **Lower (£17.75 weekly)** – for children who are at least 5 years old and who can walk but, due to their disability, need someone to guide them.
- **Higher (£46.75 weekly)** – for those who have very limited or no mobility.
 - For children who are deaf and blind
 - For children whose health would be put at risk by the exertion required to walk.
 - For children with very difficult and dangerous behaviour, and who qualify for the higher rate of personal care.

If you are awarded the higher rate of the mobility component, you are also entitled to Motability, Blue Badge and Exemption from road tax (*contact SIGN for further information or see the 'Getting About' section on the pack*).

To receive a claim pack call the benefits enquiry line **0800 88 22 00 (textphone 0800 24 33 55)** or download a form and/or apply online at www.direct.gov.uk

Alternatively, you can call SIGN on:

0114 266 9476 for an information leaflet with a tear off slip to receive a claim pack.

Reviews, appeals, renewal claims, and advice on existing claims are dealt with at:

Disability Living Allowance Unit

Warbreck House

Warbreck Hill

Blackpool

FY2 0YE

Tel: 08457 123 456

CARERS ALLOWANCE

This weekly benefit of £48.65 is paid to a carer if the child is receiving the middle or higher rate of the care component of Disability Living Allowance.

The carer claiming has to spend at least 35 hours a week looking after the child and only one person can claim Invalid Care Allowance even if two people are in the caring role.

The carer must be over 16 and must have a salary of less than £95 a week, once allowable deductions have been made. Students who study for 21 hours or more a week are not eligible to claim. Allowable deductions from your gross salary include:

- Income Tax
- National Insurance Payments
- Half of your contributions to your pension, including a private pension plan, occupational pension and superannuating scheme.
- The cost of substitute care for the child you care for – such as a registered childminder or nursery, but only up to half your net earnings.

Carers Allowance can be backdated for up to 3 months if the qualifying conditions have been met during that time.

To receive a claim form call **01253 856 123** or you can download a form and/or apply online from the DWP website: www.dwp.gov.uk

INCOME SUPPORT

If your income falls below a certain level you may qualify for Income Support. This counts as a means tested benefit.

If you are receiving Income Support and you have a child claiming care and/or mobility components of Disability Living Allowance, or a child registered as blind, you will also qualify for the additional Disabled Child Premium.

If you receive Carers Allowance, you are entitled to the additional Carers Premium in your income support (*contact a local advice centre for further help*).

Some of the entitlements attached to Income Support include:

- Free NHS prescriptions, eyesight and dental treatment.
- Free school meals
- A claim to the social fund
- Cold weather payments if you receive the Disabled Child Premium or have a child under 5 years old.
- Housing Benefit
- Free milk and vitamins for pregnant women and people with children under the age of four.

Healthy Start

Free milk, fruit, vegetables and vitamins
You qualify if you or your family:

- Have a child under 4 years old
- Receive Income Support of income based Jobseekers Allowance, or Child Tax Credit, (but NOT Working Tax Credit unless your family is receiving working tax credit run-on only) and have an annual family income of below £15,575.
- Or you are pregnant and under 18

you will receive vouchers which you can spend on milk, fresh fruit and vegetables and infant formula milk. Pregnant women, women with children under 1, and children from 6 months to 4 years can also get free vitamins.

To apply fill out a healthy start application leaflet HS01 available at GP surgeries or phone Healthy start issuing leaflet on: **0845 607 6823** or apply on-line at : www.healthystart.nhs.uk

The Social Fund offers the following grants and loans:

Community Care Grants are given to:

- help a family under exceptional stress.
- Help look after someone who is ill or disabled

To receive a Community Care Grant you must be getting Income Support, Income-based Job Seekers Allowance or Pension Credit. To apply for the grant contact your local jobcentre plus.

Sure Start Maternity Grant

A Sure Start Maternity grant is a one-off payment of £500 to help with the costs of having a new baby. It is paid from the Social Fund as a lump sum, and you do not have to pay it back.

You are eligible for a Sure Start Maternity grant if you or your partner are getting:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit at a higher rate than family element or
- Working Tax credit where a disability element is included in the award
-

You can claim from 11 weeks before your baby is due until 3 months after the baby is born

You can apply for a maternity grant on form SF100 available from your local jobcentre plus office.

Crisis Loans

Crisis Loans are to help people who cannot meet their immediate short term expenses in an emergency, or following a disaster where there is a serious risk to health and safety of the family. You do not have to be on any benefit to apply for this loan. To apply for the loan contact jobcentre plus for form SF401

Budgeting Loans

A budgeting loan is an interest free loan of an amount between £100 and £1,500 designed to help people spread the cost of more expensive items over a longer period. Examples of what a loan can be used for include: buying furniture or household equipment, clothing and footwear, travelling expenses and advance rent payment.

Budgeting Loans are available only to people who have been getting the following benefits for at least 26 weeks: Income Support or Income-based Job Seekers Allowance or Pension Credit. To apply for a loan contact jobcentre plus for form SF500

For each of these loans/ grants forms for downloading and further information can be obtained from the website www.direct.gov.uk . Further information will also be available at your local jobcentre plus or Advice Centre.

CHILD TAX CREDIT (CTC) AND WORKING TAX CREDIT (WTC)

Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit are benefits for families with children and people on low / middle incomes. All families with children, with an income of up to £58,175 a year, (up to 66,350 for a child under 1) will be able to claim some CTC whether or not they are working. Child Benefit will continue to be paid as is not affected by tax credits.

You can claim Child Tax Credit if you are responsible for:

- A child under 16 up to 31 August after their 16th birthday
- A young person under 19 (or 20 in certain circumstances) in full time education or on specified programme or on approved training.

To check whether you are eligible for Working Tax Credit as a parent details are given at www.direct.gov.uk click on 'money, tax and benefits' or order a claim pack by phoning the tax credit helpline on: **0845 300 3900 (open daily 8.00am – 8.00pm)**

To make a claim online go to www.taxcredits.inlandrevenue.gov.uk .

DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT

If you have a child with a disability living in your property you may qualify for a Disabled Facilities Grant towards the cost of providing adaptations to enable the child to continue to live there.

The range of adaptations vary depending on your child's disability and the layout of your home. However, it may include such adaptations as a stairlift, level access shower, ramp, internal alterations (widening of doors).

For more information on the grant go to www.direct.gov.uk. Click on 'disabled people' then put 'disabled facilities grant' in to the search box.

To make an application or for further information contact Social Services on:

Tel: 0114 273 4908

THE FAMILY FUND

A registered charity allocating grants for specific requests made by families with a severely disabled child under 18. The Fund considers applications from families with a gross income from employment of under £23,000.

Each child's situation is different and 'severe disability' depends on many things. These include the child's age, how much their abilities are already affected, and how much attention they need.

Requests can be for taxi fares, laundry equipment, driving lessons, clothes, telephones, bedding, holidays, decorating, etc. A representative will visit the family to discuss the best way to help. A family can apply to the Fund once every 12 months.

Information about the grant is available from the website at:

www.familyfund.org.uk

Application forms are available from SIGN Information Service on 266 9476 or Family Fund Trust direct: PO Box 50, York, YO1 9ZX

Tel: 0845 130 4542

Email: info@familyfund.org.uk

DIRECT PAYMENTS

Direct Payments are a way of arranging services for disabled children and their families. A person with parental responsibility for a disabled child is given money to pay for services instead of the local authority arranging them on their behalf. The local authority will decide whether a child is eligible by carrying out an assessment on the needs of the child and their family.

As a parent you can use direct payments to employ a person to support and care for your child as an overnight or day carer, sitter or to support your child at a community activity, for example, a youth club. Or you can use direct payments to buy into a local service, for example, a residential short breaks unit, a sitter service, a placement at a day nursery or after-school club. You cannot buy into a service run by the local council.

The Department of Health have produced 'a parent's guide to direct payments' which takes you step by step through the process of recruiting and employing someone to support and care for your child.

For a copy of the guide contact **SIGN** on **0114 266 9476**.

Penderels Trust

The Penderels Trust is a registered charity providing a wide range of services to enable people who qualify for direct payments to live independently in the community.

Services offered include:

- Advice and support with all aspects of independent living
- Advice on managing Direct Payments or Independent Living Fund monies
- Pay as You Earn (PAYE)
- Employing Personal Assistants
- Training / Advocacy / Peer Support

Or contact the local office:

Penderels Trust

Unit 2

Meadow Court

1 Hayland St

Sheffield

S9 1BY

Tel: **0114 243 8111**

HELP FROM CHARITIES AND TRUSTS

Some charities and trusts have been set up to help families in need and / or with a disabled child by offering small grants.

Grants can be received to purchase household equipment, medical equipment, mobility equipment, travel expenses, holidays and more.

The Sheffield Carers centre has a database of funders. For further information contact their helpline on **0114 272 8362**

The SIGN service also has information on charities and grants contact them on **0114 266 9476**.

FROM BIRTH

Family Fund Grants

Child Benefit

Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit

Social Fund for carers in receipt of Income Support

VAT Relief on goods for disabled children and young people

Local Authority Respite Care for carers of disabled children

FROM 3 MONTHS

Disability Living Allowance (DLA): Care Component – higher, middle or lower. *Payments made to parents*

Carers Allowance if receiving DLA Care middle or higher rate

FROM 2 YEARS

Local Authority Blue Badge Parking Permit Scheme

FROM 3 YEARS

Higher rate DLA Mobility Component

Motability Scheme if receiving DLA Mobility higher rate

FROM 5 YEARS

Disability Living Allowance (DLA): Mobility Component – lower, *payments made to parents*

FROM 16 YEARS

Income Support

Incapacity Benefit

Disability Living Allowance (DLA): *payments made direct to young person*

Independent Living Fund (information and claim form on this benefit available from Social Care dept or www.direct.gov.uk)

Where to get help

CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAUS

You can get benefits advice and help with completing application forms at any Citizens Advice Bureau 'CABs' or local Advice Centre.

To find a CAB's or advice centres near you contact **SIGN** on **0114 266 9476** or look online at **www.asksid.net**.

FACTSHEETS AND GUIDES

Contact a Family have produced a factsheet called 'Benefits, Tax Credits and other Financial Assistance'. You can download a free copy from the website: www.cafamily.org.uk or call the helpline and they will post a copy to you:

0808 808 3555.

Various **national disability organisations** produce factsheets and guides on how to complete DLA forms. They are specific to the disability of the child. For a list of national organisation for any disability contact **SIGN** on **0114 266 9476**.

Help with Debt

Can provide help and support to families experiencing debt problems. Home visits available. **Paul Wright** on **0114 250 1144** or email:

paul.wright@debtsupportunit.org.uk
or admin@debtsupportunit.org.uk

HELP ON THE INTERNET

www.direct.gov.uk - a government run website that gives details on DLA and other benefits

www.dialuk.info - website for DIAL in Doncaster—has lots of information on DLA and benefits

www.dwp.gov.uk - Department for Work and Pensions website that gives details on all benefits and how to apply for them

www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk - information on benefits for people of working age and details of local Jobcentre Plus offices.

APPEALS

If you do not agree with a decision about a benefit claim you can usually appeal.

A booklet is available from your local benefits office entitled 'If you think your decision is wrong', which explains how to appeal against a decision and includes a form to make an appeal. You can also look at this at www.direct.gov.uk 'click on 'money, tax and benefits.' And then put 'appeals in to the search engine.

There is often a deadline of one month to ask for a decision to be explained, reconsidered or to appeal.

Your local CAB or advice centre can help with appeals.

This Factsheet is available in other formats upon request, please call 0114 266 9476 for more details.

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