

Child Benefit information for parents and carers

Before your son or daughter can legally leave school, you should automatically receive a letter asking about their future plans. If you do not receive this letter, you should contact the Child Benefit Office to make an enquiry about your entitlement to Child Benefit.



What is Child Benefit?

Child Benefit is a tax-free monthly payment to anyone bringing up a child or young person.

Child Benefit is not affected by income or savings so most people who are bringing up a child or young person qualify for it.

If you're entitled to Child Benefit for a child or young person that is not your own, you may also be entitled to Guardian's Allowance for them if both of their parents have died or in some circumstances where only one parent has died.

Who is eligible?

You may be eligible for Child Benefit if you're bringing up a child or young person who is:

- Under 16
- Aged between 16 and 19 - up to 20 in some cases - and is in relevant education or training
- Aged 16 or 17, has left full-time education or approved training and registered with Connexions for work, education or training
- 19 and in full-time further education, or approved training which they applied for, enrolled in or started before their 19th birthday

You do not need to be the parent of the child or young person to qualify, but you must be responsible for them. The child or young person does not need to live with you, but if they live with someone else you can only get Child Benefit if:

- You pay money to bring up the child
- The amount you pay is the same as, or more than the weekly rate of Child Benefit you get for them
- The person the child lives with is not getting Child Benefit for them

Who is not eligible?

You may not be eligible for Child Benefit if any of the following apply.

A child or young person you are bringing up:

- Starts to be looked after by a local authority and stops living with you
- Is detained in secure or non-secure accommodation
- Marries or lives with a partner
- Receives certain other benefits (Tax Credit, Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance or Incapacity Benefit) in their own right

Or if:

- You start to get a fostering allowance or money from a local authority towards the cost of a child's accommodation and maintenance, for a child that the local authority have placed with you
- Your entry to the UK is subject to immigration control and you do not satisfy the special conditions that allow Child Benefit to be paid
- You don't have the right to reside in the UK

When the young person leaves education or training

When your child is 16 and leaves school, Child Benefit will usually stop on the first Monday in September.

If your child leaves school or relevant education or training after the 31st August following their 16th birthday, there are four different dates on which Child Benefit could cease. Child Benefit will usually be paid from the date your child leaves relevant education or training until the week that includes the earliest of these dates:

- The last day of February
- 31st May
- 31st August
- 30th November

Payments will usually stop on the following Monday.

If the young person reaches age 20 before one of the dates shown, Child Benefit payments will be stopped straight away. If the young person is entered for exams that are to be taken during the next term after they have left education, Child Benefit may continue to be paid. If the exams are re-sits this may not apply.

Child Benefit may be extended for up to 20 weeks if your child leaves relevant education or training and they're still under 18. You must inform the Child Benefit Office if this happens or you may miss out.

Child Benefit may be payable again if the young person returns to full-time further education or approved training.

The extension will end if your child turns 18, starts paid work for 24 or more hours a week, starts training that's not 'relevant' training to qualify for Child Benefit, gets Income Support, Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Incapacity Benefit or tax credits in their own right, or starts advanced education.

It does not matter how many jobs or training places your child starts or leaves if they are within the extension period, they must register at their local Connexions Centre and make a claim for Extended Child Benefit.

For further information

Child Benefit Office
PO Box 1
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE88 1AA

Telephone **0845 302 1444** between 8am and 8pm, seven days a week, except Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

Click onto **www.hmrc.gov.uk/childbenefit**.

All Connexions information products can be supplied in large print, audio, Braille or languages other than English. If you require this service or would like more information please contact your local Connexions Centre.