



S O C I A L
S E C U R I T Y
A G E N C Y

Information sheet

Income Support Other help you may be entitled to

This information sheet is about other help you may get when you are getting Income Support. It also tells you about other help you may be able to get if you stop getting Income Support. If you start work, please read the section Help for working people.

This information sheet gives general guidance on the rights and responsibilities of customers. It should not be treated as being a current and comprehensive statement of the law.

INF2(IS) NI 04/12



An agency of the

Department of
Social Development
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Use this information sheet to find out about

- help with paying for where you live
- help from the Social Fund
- health benefits
- help for working people
- helping people back to work
- paying for fuel
- help for prison visits
- Tax Credits
- other help for people with children
- other help for people who are sick or disabled, or for carers
- where to get more information

Help with paying for where you live

If you pay rent or rates you may get help from your local Northern Ireland Housing Executive or Land & Property Services while you are getting Income Support. This help is called Housing Benefit. Get in touch with your local Northern Ireland Housing Executive District Office or Land & Property Services Regional Office to find out more about this.

If you are not getting Income Support, you may still get Housing Benefit. Get in touch with your local Northern Ireland Housing Executive District Office or Land & Property Services Regional Office to find out more about this.

Help from the Social Fund

If you are living on a low income and receive a qualifying benefit or entitlement, you may be able to get help from the Social Fund with important costs that are hard to meet out of your regular income.

Community Care Grants and Budgeting Loans

These can be paid to help cover the cost of one-off expenses including household items, clothing and footwear and certain travelling expenses. Community Care Grants do not have to be paid back. Budgeting Loans have to be paid back but they are interest free.

Crisis Loans

This can be paid in certain circumstances if

- you need immediate help with something, **and**
- there is a serious risk to you or your family, **and**
- you cannot get help from elsewhere.

You do not need to be getting any benefit or entitlement to get a Crisis Loan. Crisis Loans have to be paid back but they are interest free.

Cold Weather Payment

This can help with extra heating costs during periods of very cold weather. It does not have to be paid back.

Sure Start Maternity Grant

This can help with costs such as buying things a new baby needs immediately. It does not have to be paid back.

Funeral Payments

This is a one-off payment that can help with funeral costs. Payment depends on your circumstances, not the circumstances of the person who has died. Funeral Payments have to be paid back from the estate of the person who has died, if they left one.

To find out more, ask for a leaflet about the Social Fund from your local Social Security or Jobs & Benefits office. Or visit www.nidirect.gov.uk

Health benefits

If you get Income Support, you, your partner, and any children you are claiming for, will be entitled to

- free HS dental treatment
- free HS wigs and fabric supports
- vouchers towards the cost of glasses and contact lenses
- repayment of necessary travel cost to receive HS treatment under the care of a consultant.

You will also be entitled to free HS sight tests. For the majority of people this will be once every 2 years although in some circumstances this could be more frequent.

For more information, please refer to leaflets **HC11 Are you entitled to help with health costs?** **HC12 Charges and optical voucher values** and form **HC1 Help with health costs** from any Social Security or Jobs & Benefits office.

You can also get more information about this from the website www.nidirect.gov.uk or by contacting the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety Health Service Charges Advice Line – **0800 587 8982**.

We use *partner* to mean

- a person you are married to, or a person you live with as if you are married to them, **or**
- a civil partner or a person you live with as if you are civil partners.

Help for working people

If you stop getting Income Support you may still be entitled to some help. If you do not have much money coming in you might be able to get

- Working Tax Credit
- Child Tax Credit
- Housing Benefit
- help with health benefits
- help for children at school. But not school meals.

If you want to know more about any of these things, get in touch with your local Social Security or Jobs & Benefits office.

Helping people back to work

Schemes to help people back to work

- Housing Benefit
- Job Grant
- Mortgage Interest Run On.

Housing Benefit

This provides help with rent for 4 weeks after your Income Support has stopped. If you satisfy the conditions for this payment, you will not have to apply for it.

Job Grant

Job Grant is a work-related payment that aims to bridge the gap between a final payment of benefit and first receipt of wages. If you or your partner start full-time work, we may be able to pay you a Job Grant. The amount we pay will depend on your circumstances at that time.

Job Grant can be paid at one of two rates:

- £100 for single people or couples without children
- £250 for lone parents and couples with children.

Mortgage Interest Run On

If you or your partner start full-time work, we might be able to keep on paying your housing costs for 4 weeks after your Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or income-related Employment and Support Allowance has stopped. This is called Mortgage Interest Run On (MIRO).

To qualify for MIRO you must have been getting help with your housing costs before starting work **and**

- are starting full-time work that you expect to last for 5 weeks or more, and
- be starting work for, or increasing your hours to, 16 hours or more a week, or
- be claiming for a partner who is starting work for, or increasing their hours to, 24 hours or more a week, or
- have been getting Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or income-related Employment and Support Allowance for 26 weeks or more before starting work, or
- be a member of couple who have been getting Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or income-related Employment and Support Allowance for 26 weeks or more before starting work.

Paying for fuel

The Income Support you get includes money for

- personal expenses, and
- things like fuel bills and service charges you are responsible for.

If you have a bill you cannot pay

Get in touch with the supplier or person you owe the money to. If you cannot make your own arrangement with them, get in touch with the office that pays your benefit straight away. We may be able to help by taking money off your Income

Support each week and paying it to the supplier or person you owe the money to. We call this a *third party deduction*.

Keeping your costs down

Your suppliers can give you advice on how to keep your costs down. Your statement tells you how to get advice.

Poor insulation can cause you to use more fuel to heat your home. If you think your home needs insulating, you may be able to get a grant towards part of the cost of the work if you get Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or Pension Credit. You may also be able to get help to improve your heating system.

For more information contact the Warm Homes Scheme:

Telephone **0800 988 0559**

Or visit the website: **www.nidirect.gov.uk**

Help for prison visits

You may be able to get help with the costs of travelling to visit a close relative in prison. Get form **PV9** from your Social Security or Jobs & Benefits office before you go.

You can get an information leaflet on how to apply from:

- the prisons, including the Visitors' Centres
- local Social Security Agency or Jobs and Benefits offices
- The Assisted Prison Visits Unit by telephoning **028 9052 4843** during office hours

Application forms are available at your local Social Security or Jobs & Benefits office.

Before they can help you, you will need to tell them

- the name of the person you are visiting
- the prison they are in
- your National Insurance number
- your date of birth.

Tax Credits

Child Tax Credit

The Child Tax Credit is a payment to support families with children. It can be claimed by those responsible for one or more child or young person.

Child Tax Credit will provide support for:

- a child until 1st September following his or her 16th birthday or
- a young person aged 16,17 or 18 who:
 - is in full-time, non-advanced education, or
 - has left full-time education but does not have a job or a training place and has registered with the Careers Service, and
 - is not claiming Income Support or Tax Credits in his or her own right, or serving a custodial sentence of four months or more imposed by a court.

From 6 April 2004, new claims to Income Support, have not included allowances or premiums for children. Claims now need to be made for Child Tax Credit through HM Revenue & Customs.

Working Tax Credit

This is a payment to top up the earnings of working people with a low income. You usually need to be working a minimum number of hours a week to claim Working Tax Credit.

If you are aged 16 or over, you can claim Working Tax Credit if you work at least 16 hours a week and

- you qualify for a disability element, or
- you and your partner are aged 60 or over, or
- you are single and are responsible for a child or qualifying young person.

If you are part of a couple and are responsible for a child or qualifying young person, you can claim Working Tax Credit if

- you and your partner work at least 24 hours a week between you, with one of you working at least 16 hours a week, or
- you or your partner work at least 16 hours a week when the other partner is incapacitated, in hospital or in prison, or
- you or your partner work at least 16 hours a week and are disabled or aged 60 or over.

If you do not have children, are not entitled to the disability element or are not over 60, you can claim Working Tax Credit if

- you are aged 25 or over, and
- you work at least 30 hours a week.

To find out more about Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit visit **www.hmrc.gov.uk**

To claim Tax Credits, you have to fill in a claim form. You can only get a Tax Credits claim pack from the Tax Credit Helpline. You can't claim online.

Phone the Tax Credit helpline on **0345 300 3900**.

The textphone number for people with hearing or speech difficulties is **0345 300 3909**.

Lines are open

8.00 am to 8.00 pm, Monday to Friday

8.00 am to 4.00 pm Saturday

Closed Sundays, Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day

Other help for people with children

Pregnant women and children up to 4 years old

Pregnant women and children up to 4 years old can get

- free vitamins. Ask about these at your local health clinic
- free Healthy Start vouchers.

To claim Healthy Start vouchers you should fill in the form in the leaflet HS01 *Free milk for pregnant women*. You can get it from your doctor's surgery or Health Clinic, or by phoning the Helpline at the Healthy Start Issuing Unit on **0845 607 6823**.

If you are getting Child Tax Credit you will need to contact HM Revenue & Customs for further information on how to get your Healthy Start vouchers.

The Child Tax Credit is a payment to support families with children. It can be claimed by those responsible for one or more child or young person.

Children at school

Ask the Education and Library Board about

- free school meals
- free milk
- fares to school
- help with school clothing
- extra money for keeping children on at school after they are 16

Your children can get free school meals if you are getting Income Support.

Help with childcare charges

In some cases, people who get Working Tax Credit or Housing Benefit can get help with childcare charges.

Other help for people who are sick or disabled, or for carers

People who are incapable of work

From 27 October 2008, most new claims to Income Support on grounds of incapacity are treated as claims to Employment and Support Allowance. However Income Support on the grounds of incapacity is still available to

- certain sick or disabled people who claim Income Support after 27/10/08 but have a linking claim to Income Support on the grounds of incapacity prior to their current claim
- existing customers who are sick or disabled and in receipt of Income Support prior to 27/10/08 and who continue to receive Income Support after that date
- people who are receiving Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)

If you are incapable of work because of illness or disability you will usually need medical evidence of this.

Severe Disablement Allowance

Severe Disablement Allowance is not available to new customers from 6 April 2001. If you already get Severe Disablement Allowance, you will continue to do so as long as you meet the qualifying conditions.

Attendance Allowance

This is a Social Security benefit for people aged 65 or over who need a lot of help with personal care because of a physical or mental illness or a disability. It is extra money that is paid on top of Income Support. Getting Attendance Allowance may mean you get extra Income Support. We call this a *higher pensioner premium*. But, in some cases the rules are different. For example, if you live in a care home. Contact your Social Security or Jobs & Benefits office if this may affect you.

Disability Living Allowance

This is a Social Security benefit for people under 65 who need a lot of help with personal care because of a physical or mental illness or a disability. It can also be paid to people who need help with getting around because of their illness or disability.

Getting Disability Living Allowance may mean you get extra Income Support. We call this a *disability premium*. But, in some cases the rules are different. For example, if you live in a care home. Contact your Social Security or Jobs & Benefits office if this may affect you.

Help from the Social Services Department of your Health and Social Care Trust

Some people may be entitled to help with things like

- bus and train fares
- home helps
- day centres and social clubs
- meals on wheels
- special housing
- special equipment and adapting your home
- help with care home fees for people entering care
- laundry
- fitting a telephone or television (in special circumstances)
- holidays (in special circumstances).

Carer's Allowance

Carer's Allowance is a benefit to help people who look after someone who is disabled. You don't have to be related to, or live with, the person you care for.

You may be able to get Carer's Allowance if you

- are aged 16 or over
- spend at least 35 hours a week caring for a person

They should be getting one of the following benefits:

- Attendance Allowance
- Disability Living Allowance at the middle or highest rate for personal care
- Constant Attendance Allowance at or above the normal maximum rate with an Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit
- Constant Attendance Allowance at the basic (full day) rate with a War Disablement Pension.

Payment of Carer's Allowance is taken into account in full in the calculation of income-related benefits and Pension Credit.

If you receive Carer's Allowance you will qualify for the carer premium in Income Support and income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, worth up to £32.60 per week.

To find out more, ask for a leaflet about Carer's Allowance from your local Social Security or Jobs & Benefits office.

Or visit **www.nidirect.gov.uk**

Where to get more information

For more information about your Income Support or anything else in this information sheet, you can:

- Get in touch with your local Social Security or Jobs & Benefits office; or
- Get in touch with an advice centre.

You will find the phone number and address in the phone book. Or visit **www.nidirect.gov.uk**

Our Services standards

At the Social Security Agency we aim to provide a high standard of service at all times. Details of the standard of service you can expect from us can be found on our website at **www.dsdni.gov.uk**

You can access our website from many libraries.

For more information please contact your local Social Security or Jobs & Benefits office.

