



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

# Information sheet

## Jobseeker's Allowance Other help you may be entitled to

This sheet is about other help you may get when you are getting income-based Jobseeker's Allowance.

It also tells you about other help you may be able to get if you stop getting this benefit. 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 must not be treated as being a current and comprehensive statement of the law.

INF2 (JSA) NI 04/12



An agency of Her Majesty's Government

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills  
www.bis.gov.uk

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

## Use this information sheet to find out about

- help with paying for where you live
- help with extra costs
- health benefits
- help for working people
- paying for gas and electricity
- help for prison visits
- Tax Credits
- other help for people with children or qualifying young persons
- other help for pensioners, people who are sick or disabled, or for carers
- Child Maintenance
- where to get more information
- The Customer Charter.

We use *partner* to mean

- 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.

We use *child* to mean a person aged under 16 who you are getting Child Benefit for.

We use *qualifying young person* to mean a person aged 16, 17, 18 or 19 who you are getting Child Benefit for.

## Help with paying for where you live

If you pay rent or rates you may get help from your local NI Housing Executive (NIHE) /Land & Property Services (LPS) while you are getting income-based Jobseeker's Allowance. This help is called Housing Benefit. Get in touch with your local NIHE District Office/LPS Regional Office to find out more about this. There is a claim form in the Jobseeker's Allowance Claim pack.

If you are not getting income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, you may still get Housing Benefit. Get in touch with your local NIHE District Office/LPS Regional Office to find out more about this.

## Help with extra costs

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.

If you want any more information on the Social Fund, get in touch with your local Social Security or Jobs & Benefits office or your Pension Centre.

## Health benefits

If you get income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, you, your partner, and any children or qualifying young persons you are claiming for, will be entitled to

- free HS dental treatment
- free HS wigs and fabric supports
- free HS sight test
- vouchers towards the cost of glasses and contact lenses
- help with necessary travel cost to hospital if you are going for HS treatment.

Before you are treated, you should tell the doctor, dentist, optician, appliance contractor or hospital receptionist that you are entitled to help. Make sure that you take the letter we sent you proving your entitlement to income-based Jobseeker's Allowance. If you do not show this letter you may be charged for treatment.

If you are not getting income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, for example if you are getting contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance, Incapacity Benefit or Working Tax Credit you may still be able to get help with health benefits.

If you are not sure if you are getting income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance, ask at your local Social Security or Jobs & Benefits office.

If you want to know more about this, get leaflet **HC11** *Are you entitled to help with health costs?* And form **HC1** *Help with health costs* from any Social Security or Jobs & Benefits office.

## Help for working people

If you stop getting Jobseeker's Allowance you may still be entitled to some help. If you do not have much money coming in you might be able to get

- Housing Benefit Extended Payment
- Mortgage Interest Run On
- Working Tax Credit
- Child Tax Credit
- help with health benefits
- help for children or qualifying young persons at school. But not school meals.

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

## Helping people back to work

Schemes to help people back to work

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

### Housing Benefit Extended Payments

This provides help with rent and rates for 4 weeks after your Jobseeker's Allowance has stopped. If you satisfy the conditions for this payment you will not have to apply for it. Your local NIHE District Office/ LPS Regional Office will consider making an award on the information they have.

### Mortgage Interest Run On

If you or your partner start full-time work that you expect to last for 5 weeks or more, we might be able to keep on paying your housing costs for 4 weeks after your income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support 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 mortgage interest before starting work **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-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support or income-related Employment and Support Allowance for 26 weeks or more before starting work, **or**
- be a member of a couple who have been getting income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support or income-related Employment and Support Allowance for 26 weeks or more before starting work.

If you or your partner start getting Pension Credit, your mortgage interest run on will stop straight away.

To find out more, please contact your local Social Security or Jobs & Benefits office.

## **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 or qualifying young persons
- £250 for lone parents and couples with children or qualifying young persons.

## Paying for gas and electricity

The income-based Jobseeker's Allowance you get includes money for gas and electricity.

### 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-based Jobseeker's Allowance 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 local gas and electricity suppliers can give you advice about keeping your costs down.
- The Domestic Energy Efficiency Scheme gives government grants to cover the cost of making your home warmer.

The Warm Home Scheme offers a host of insulation and heating measures to make homes warmer, healthier, and more energy efficient.

To find out if you qualify you can ring free on 0800 988 0559, or visit the website at [www.warm-homes.com](http://www.warm-homes.com)

## 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.

If you have already paid for the visit, you may be able to get the money back if you claim within 4 weeks of the visit. You will not get a refund if you claim after this.

To find out more about claiming, contact your Social Security or Jobs & Benefits office.

# Tax Credits

## Child Tax Credit

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

Child Tax Credit will provide support for:

- a child or qualifying young person until 1st September following their 16th birthday, **or**
- a qualifying young person aged 16, 17, 18 or 19 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.

Since 2004 income-based Jobseeker's Allowance has not included money for children or qualifying young persons. 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 or 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.

Working Tax Credit is available to self-employed people and employees.

## To find out more about Tax Credits

To find out more about Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit visit **[www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk)**

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

If you would rather phone, call the Northern Ireland HM Revenue & Customs Helpline on 0845 300 3900.

If you have speech or hearing difficulties you can contact them using a textphone on 0845 300 3909.

All lines are open from 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday, 8am to 4pm Saturday. Lines are closed Sundays, Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

## Other help for people with children or qualifying young persons

### 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.

You can get Healthy Start vouchers if you are getting income-based Jobseeker's Allowance. Healthy Start vouchers will be sent to you by post every 4 weeks by the Department of Health.

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.

### Help with childcare charges

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

### Children or qualifying young persons at school

Ask the Education and Library Board about

- free school meals.  
Your children or qualifying young persons can get free school meals if you are getting income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- free milk
- fares to school
- help with school clothing
- extra money for keeping qualifying young persons on at school.

## Separated parents - child maintenance

Child maintenance is regular, reliable financial support that helps towards a child's everyday living costs. The parent who does not have the main day-to-day care of their child pays it to the parent or person, such as a grandparent or guardian, who does. But it can be about more than just money.

Recent changes in the law mean that money you receive for child maintenance won't affect any state benefits you are entitled to. But you should contact your Social Security or Jobs & Benefits office to check.

For more information call Child Maintenance Options, a free, impartial service, on **0800 988 0988**. Or visit the website at **[www.cmoptions.org](http://www.cmoptions.org)**

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

### Employment and Support Allowance

Employment and Support Allowance is a social security benefit for people who have an illness or a disability.

You may be able to get Employment and Support Allowance if you have an illness or disability, and you

- are unemployed, **or**
- are self-employed, **or**
- work for an employer but you cannot get Statutory Sick Pay, **or**
- have been getting Statutory Sick Pay but it has now stopped.

Statutory Sick Pay is money employers pay to employees who are away from work for 4 days or more in a row because of their illness or disability.

### 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-based Jobseeker's Allowance. We call this a *disability premium*. But, in some cases the rules are different. For example, if you live in a care or nursing home. Contact your Social Security or Jobs & Benefits office if this may affect you.

### **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-based Jobseeker's Allowance. Getting Attendance Allowance may mean you get extra income-based Jobseeker's Allowance. We call this a *higher pensioner premium*. However, in some cases the rules are different. For example, if you live in a care or nursing home. Contact your Social Security or Jobs & Benefits office if this may affect you.

### **Severe Disablement Allowance**

If you already get Severe Disablement Allowance, you will continue to do so as long as you meet the qualifying conditions.

### **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, and
- spend at least 35 hours a week caring for a person.

The person you care for 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 £31.00 a week.

To find out more, contact your Social Security or Jobs & Benefits office.

### **Pension Credit**

- The minimum age you can get Pension Credit is rising linked to the changes to women's State Pension age. For more information, visit **[www.nidirect.gov.uk](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk)**
- Pension Credit provides a contribution towards a guaranteed minimum income of £132.60 for single pensioners and £202.40 for couples.
- People with caring responsibilities, severe disability or certain housing costs may be entitled to more.
- People aged 65 and over, who have made modest arrangements for their retirement, may also be rewarded.
- Pension Credit has no upper savings limit, and savings of £10,000 or less will be ignored.
- Pension Credit has no restriction on the number of hours you can work, although the amount you earn may affect the amount of Pension Credit you receive.

## Help from the Social Services Dept of your Health & Social Services Board

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).

### If you want more information

For more information about your claim, or for general advice, get in touch with us. Our phone number and address are in the phone book under **GOVERNMENT**. Alternatively, you can contact any Social Security or Jobs & Benefits office, Community Benefit Office or the Benefit Shop, Royal Avenue, Belfast, or go to [www.nidirect.gov.uk](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk)

If you prefer you can contact an Advice Centre.

### The Customer Charter

We want to offer you the best possible service.

The Customer Charter sets out clearly the range and standards of service you can expect from our Social Security or Jobs & Benefits office. It also tells you how to make a suggestion or complaint about our service. Copies of the Customer Charter are on display in Social Security or Jobs & Benefits offices. Please take a copy. It is also available on our website at [www.dsdni.gov.uk](http://www.dsdni.gov.uk)

