



A checklist for parents in England, Wales and Scotland

As a parent of a disabled child you are often entitled to a number of benefits and other help. This leaflet briefly explains some of the more common ones and who can claim them.

I would like the following free guides

- Benefits, tax credits and other financial help (UK)
- Disability Living Allowance: a guide to claiming for children (UK)
- Help with council tax bills (England, Scotland and Wales)
- The tax credits guide (UK)
- Money when your child reaches 16
- A Tax Credit guide for self-employed parents
- The winter guide: help with fuel bills and keeping warm (UK)
- Holidays, play and leisure (UK)
- Relationships and caring for a disabled child (UK)
- A guide to dealing with bullying (UK)
- Understanding your child's behaviour
- Fathers (UK)
- Grandparents (UK)
- Siblings (UK)

Name _____

Address _____

_____ Post code _____

e-mail _____

Please return your completed form in an envelope with a stamp affixed to Contact a Family, 209-211 City Road, London EC1V 1JN

Disability and sickness benefits

Disability Living Allowance (DLA)

DLA is the main benefit for disabled children and adults:

- if a child needs extra care or supervision they may qualify for the care component
- if a child needs help getting around they may qualify for the mobility component. The higher rate of the mobility component can give access to the Motability Scheme to help hire, or buy, a car
- it is not means tested.

Benefits Enquiry Line (BEL)

Tel: 0800 882 200

Textphone: 0800 243 355

DLA for adults aged 16–64 is to be replaced by a new benefit called the Personal Independence Payment. This process will start from April 2013. However DLA will be retained for children aged under 16.

Employment and Support Allowance

Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) is a benefit for people over 16 whose capacity for work is limited by their health problems. It was introduced in October 2008 and replaced most new claims for both Incapacity Benefit and Income Support on the basis of incapacity.

There are two types of ESA: contributory ESA and income-related ESA. Some people will receive both types of payment, others may only get one or the other. If your son or daughter claims ESA, any tax credits or benefits you get for them

(other than DLA) will stop. Contact our freephone helpline for more information.

Jobcentre Plus Claim Line

Freephone: 0800 055 6688

Textphone: 0800 023 4888

A benefit for carers

Carer's Allowance

This is extra money for carers who care for someone who gets DLA care component at the middle or highest rate. Eligibility depends on the circumstances and weekly earnings of the carer.

Benefits if you're out of full time work

Contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance

Payable for six months for individuals who are unemployed and have recently paid sufficient national insurance contributions.

Income Support and income-based Jobseeker's Allowance

These are means-tested benefits for people who are not working or working less than 16 hours a week. Some carers qualify if they work more hours than this.



Benefits for working

Working Tax Credit

This is extra money for families with children where someone is working a required number of hours. This is 16 hours a week if you are a lone parent or a couple where one partner works at least 16 hours and the other partner is entitled to Carer's Allowance or is incapacitated. Most other couples with children need to work at least 24 hours to be eligible. The amount you get will depend on your circumstances and annual income, but there is no limit on the amount of savings you can have.

Tax Credits Helpline

Tel: 0345 300 3900

Textphone: 0345 300 3909

Money and vouchers for having children

Sure Start Maternity Grant

A £500 grant for those who have recently given birth, or adopted a child, and are on certain benefits.

Normally you can only get a grant if your baby is your first child, or if all your other children are aged 16 or above. However an exception can sometimes be made if you have a multiple birth (e.g. twins). Seek further advice in these circumstances.

Child Benefit

A payment if you are responsible for a child under 16 or, if they remain in non-advanced education or unwaged training, a young person aged 16–19. From January 2013 households with someone earning £50,000 or more will

see a reduction in child benefit. This will be done by way of a claw back via the tax system. You will lose 1% of your child benefit for every £100 you earn above £50,000 – meaning those earning £60,000 or above will lose all of their Child Benefit.

Healthy Start Scheme

If you are pregnant or have a child under four and receive certain benefits – you can get vouchers for milk, fruit, vegetables and vitamins.

Healthy Start Helpline

Tel: 0845 607 6823

Textphone: 0845 607 6078

www.healthystart.nhs.uk

Child Tax Credit

This can be claimed by anyone with a dependent child. The amount you get is based on your family circumstances and your annual income (unlike other means-tested benefits there is no limit on the amount of savings you can have). Your award may be higher if you have a child on DLA or registered blind.

Tax Credits Helpline

Tel: 0345 300 3900

Textphone: 0345 300 3909

At school

Free school meals

If your child is registered at a maintained school, the education authority must provide a free midday meal if you claim certain benefits.

School uniforms

Education authorities (or children's departments) have discretion to help with the cost of school clothing for pupils in maintained schools. In Wales, a grant is



available to pupils entering Year 7 who are eligible for free school meals, or for pupils aged 11 at the start of the school year attending a special school, special needs resource base or pupil referral unit, who are also eligible for free school meals.

School transport

Education authorities must provide transport or help with the cost if they consider it necessary to help children get to the nearest suitable school.

Visiting a child at a special school

Education authorities have discretion to pay some or all of the fares of parents visiting children at a special school a long way from home.

Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) – Wales and Scotland

A weekly payment for 16–18 year olds (and some 19 year olds) who stay on at school/college or who undertake certain types of unwaged training. The amount awarded depends on parental income.

16–19 bursary – England only

EMA in England was replaced by the 16–65 bursary scheme. There are two types of bursary – a discretionary bursary for which any young person can apply. However whether you receive a payment is at the discretion of your school or

college. There is also a guaranteed bursary of £1,200 per year for certain groups, including those disabled students who receive both DLA and Employment and Support Allowance.

Help with rent, mortgage and council tax/rates

Housing Benefit

People on a low income and savings under £16,000 (or over if in receipt of the guarantee element of Pension Credit) can apply for Housing Benefit to help with their rent.

Help with mortgage interest payments

This is only available as part of Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, income-related Employment and Support Allowance or Pension Credit.

Disability Reduction Scheme

A non means-tested reduction on the council tax bill for people who:

- use a wheelchair indoors, or
- have an extra bathroom or kitchen in the house for a disabled occupier, or
- have set aside a room for a disabled person, for example, using a dining room to store equipment.

Council Tax Discount

Your council tax bill is reduced by 25% (50% in some cases) if there are less than two adults in your household. The presence of children and certain adults (including some carers) can be ignored.

Second Adult Rebate

A discount on the bill for some council tax payers who live with an adult (other than their partner) who is on a low income.

Council Tax Benefit

Help for council tax payers on a low income. From April 2013 the government plans to replace the current national system of council tax benefit with local schemes that may differ from local authority to authority.

Discretionary housing payments

A local authority can make a discretionary payment if you are entitled to some Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit and need further financial assistance to meet your housing costs.

At home

Adapting your home in England and Wales – Disabled Facilities Grant

These are awarded where works are considered essential to enable better access and movement at home or to make it safe for a disabled occupant. The maximum grant payable is £30,000 in England and £36,000 in Wales.



Scotland – Scheme of Assistance

In Scotland, mandatory grants are available for work deemed essential to meet the needs of a disabled person. A grant must cover at least 80% of approved costs, with the other 20% being means-tested. However, you

will receive 100% of costs if you or a household member receives certain means tested benefits. A mandatory grant cannot be made to cover the costs of an extension to create additional living space.

Council tenants and Scottish Homes tenants should approach their landlords. Housing associations should arrange to have the work carried out for tenants assessed as needing the adaptation.



Insulating your home and cutting energy bills

In England, there is a Warm Front Scheme providing grants towards insulation and heating improvements. In Wales, help with heating measures is available from the NEST Fuel poverty scheme. In Scotland, assistance is available from the Energy Assistance Package.

England Tel: 0800 316 2805

Scotland Tel: 0800 512 012

Wales Tel: 0808 808 2244

Energy Efficiency – some energy suppliers have offers which reduce the cost of installing energy efficient measures. Some also have utility trusts for their customers who have arrears.

Furniture reuse schemes

These schemes provide low cost second hand and reconditioned furniture and white goods for families on a low income.

TV Licence

If you, or someone you live with is registered blind, you qualify to receive a 50% concession on the cost of your TV licence. If the person who is registered blind is not the current licence holder, you will need to transfer the licence into their name first.

Tel: 0300 790 6130

Transport

Free road tax for your car

This is available if you qualify for, or have a child aged three or over, who qualifies for Disability Living Allowance mobility component at the higher rate.

A Blue Badge for your car

This allows some parking concessions for those on DLA mobility component at the higher rate and others with severe walking problems who are aged two or above. You may also qualify if your child is under three and has a condition which means they either need to be accompanied by bulky equipment or kept near a vehicle at all times.

Help with bus travel

In some areas, an essential, named escort can get free travel alongside a disabled person.

In Scotland, ask about the travel 'Entitlement Card' for free bus travel if you are disabled, or reduced fares if you are aged 16–18.

Disabled Person's Railcard

Buying this railcard entitles disabled people up to a third off most train fares.

Tel: 0845 605 0525

Textphone: 0845 601 0132

Other help

NHS costs, glasses, hospital fares, free prescriptions

There are a range of benefits for prescription costs, glasses, going to hospital for treatment (including accompanying a child) and certain dental costs. The criteria are different for each.

Direct payments

Cash payments given to you instead of services that would otherwise be provided by your local authority. With this money, you can employ your own care assistant or buy in services from private care companies.

Cinema Exhibitor's Association card

Free tickets for a person to accompany a child to the cinema, if they receive DLA or are registered blind. Also, many local attractions offer discount schemes and queue jump passes for disabled people and their carers. Ask when you book.

Tel: 0845 123 1292

Textphone: 0845 123 1297

Practical help with your child

Contact a Family produces a number of detailed guides, which include practical information such as:

- extra help at school
- practical help at home and short breaks
- specialist equipment
- health services such as physiotherapy or speech therapy.

Visit our website www.cafamily.org.uk or call our freephone helpline on 0808 808 3555 for more information.

Emotional support

Phone our Contact a Family freephone helpline for details of support groups and counselling services.

Grants and loans

There are several sources of help from grant making organisations.

- **Social Fund** – loans and grants for those on certain benefits.
- **Family Fund** – grants for families on certain benefits, whose child is severely disabled and aged 17 or under.
- **Charities** – there are thousands of funds for certain occupations, disabilities or those in certain geographical areas. For more information and a list of charities, ring our freephone helpline.

Other benefits

Ring the Contact a Family freephone helpline on 0808 808 3555 if you have a child with a disability and:

- you are sick or disabled as a result of an accident or illness at work, or after service in the armed forces
- your spouse (including common law spouse in Scotland) or civil partner has died – there are special benefits for bereavement
- you care for an orphaned child or one whose parents are in prison
- you are 60 or over. There are a range of pensions and pension credits that you may be entitled to
- you are disabled and 65 or over. You might get Attendance Allowance.

Also some larger families, or those with particular disabilities, may be able to get help with metered water charges.

Getting in contact with us

Free helpline for parents and families

0808 808 3555

Open Mon-Fri, 9.30am-5pm

Access to over 170 languages

www.cafamily.org.uk

www.makingcontact.org

Contact a Family Head Office:

209–211 City Road, London EC1V 1JN

Tel **020 7608 8700**

Fax **020 7608 8701**

Email **info@cafamily.org.uk**

Web **www.cafamily.org.uk**



Language Line
SERVICES

Contact a Family is now on social networking sites.

Join us at:

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<http://twitter.com/contactafamily>

www.youtube.com/cafamily

Download podcasts at:

www.cafamily.org.uk

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Although great care has been taken in the
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responsibility for any errors or omissions.

Further information

Contact a Family is a charity which provides support, advice and information for families with disabled children. We offer:

- **freephone helpline**
- **guides and other publications**
- **information on specific conditions and rare disorders**
- **local offices, all of which provide newsletters, workshops and local information**
- **advice for parents starting or joining local or national support groups**
- **an online linking service for families**
- **family workers providing home visiting services**
- **volunteer parent representatives offering local support and information**

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