

CHILD BENEFIT

1. Overview

You get Child Benefit if you're responsible for a child under 16 (or under 20 if they stay in approved education or training).

Only one person can get Child Benefit for a child.

You must report any change of circumstances to the Child Benefit Office.

You may have to pay a tax charge if you or your partner's individual income is over £50,000.

You can choose not to get Child Benefit payments, but you should still fill in the claim form because:

- it will help you get National Insurance credits which count towards your State Pension
- it will ensure your child is registered to get a National Insurance number when they are 16 years old

2. Eligibility

Only one person can get Child Benefit for a child.

You normally qualify for Child Benefit if you're responsible for a child under 16 (or under 20 if they stay in approved education or training) and you live in the UK.

You'll usually be responsible for a child if you live with them or you're paying at least the same amount as Child Benefit (or the equivalent in kind) towards looking after them.

Contributions can include:

- money
- clothes
- birthday and Christmas presents
- food
- pocket money

Child Benefit continues for 20 weeks if 16 or 17 year olds leave education or training and register with the armed services or a government-sponsored careers service.

Eligibility rules are different if your child:

- goes into hospital or care
- lives with someone else

Adoptions and fostering

Apply for Child Benefit as soon as any child you're adopting comes to live with you - you don't have to wait until the adoption process is complete.

The nationality of the child doesn't affect whether you're entitled to Child Benefit or not.

You might be able to get Child Benefit for a period before the adoption - contact the Child Benefit Office to find out.

If you foster a child, you'll get Child Benefit if the local council isn't paying anything towards the child's accommodation or maintenance.

Looking after someone else's child

You may be able to get Child Benefit if you've got an informal arrangement to look after a friend or relative's child.

You might not qualify if your local council is paying towards the child's accommodation or maintenance - contact the Child Benefit Office to find out.

Two people can't get Child Benefit for the same child - if you want to make a claim, you must agree it with the person who's currently claiming. HMRC will decide who receives the Child Benefit if you can't agree.

You may also be entitled to [Guardian's Allowance](#) if you're responsible for a child who has lost one or both of their parents.

Living abroad

You may be able to get Child Benefit if you go to live in certain countries or if you're a Crown servant.

If you've moved to the UK

You may be able to get Child Benefit if your main home is in the UK and you have permission to live in the UK.

If your child starts work or gets benefits in their own right

You'll stop receiving Child Benefit immediately if your child:

- starts paid work for 24 hours or more a week and is no longer in approved education or training
- starts an apprenticeship in England
- starts getting certain benefits in their own right, eg Income Support, Employment and Support Allowance or tax credits

Child Benefit tax charge

You'll still be eligible for Child Benefit even if you choose to stop receiving it because you or your partner has an income over £50,000. Stopping your Child Benefit payments does not affect your entitlement - you can always change your mind and restart them.

Contact the Child Benefit Office if you're not sure about your eligibility.

4. How to claim

Child Benefit claim form CH2

Fill in a [Child Benefit claim form CH2](#) and send it to the Child Benefit Office with your child's original birth or adoption certificate.

Child Benefit Office (GB)
Washington
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE88 1ZD

When to claim

It can take up to 12 weeks to process a new Child Benefit claim (or longer if you're new to the UK).

Claim Child Benefit as soon as your child is born or comes to live with you.

Child Benefit can be backdated for up to 3 months - make your claim as soon as possible.

If you don't have the birth or adoption certificate, you should still send in your claim form - send the certificate later on when you've got it.

You don't need the birth or adoption certificate if you've claimed Child Benefit before and are making a new claim for the same child.

You can order a new birth or adoption certificate if you've lost the original.

Claiming Child Benefit for someone else

You may be able to manage someone else's Child Benefit claim.

5. Further information

Change in circumstances

You must report changes to the Child Benefit Office. These include changes to:

- your family life, e.g. getting married
- your child's life, e.g. leaving education or training

Complaints

You can complain to the Child Benefit Office if you're unhappy with the way you've been treated.

Appeals

You can appeal to the Social Security and Child Support Tribunal if you disagree with a decision. You must usually ask for 'mandatory reconsideration' before you appeal.

If you need any further support or information please contact DIAL on 01736 759500 or you can refer directly to the link below:

www.disabilityrightsuk.org

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