



Benefits Series

Benefits for Babies

Date: April 2018 | Information updated annually

Please see our website for up-to date information: www.downs-syndrome.org.uk

If you have questions or concerns, contact the DSA Helpline's Benefits Adviser:

- Monday - Friday 10am-4pm
 - Telephone: 0333 1212 300
 - Email info@downs-syndrome.org.uk
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It can feel overwhelming being advised to claim certain benefits so soon after giving birth. With this in mind I have prepared a brief guide to potential benefit entitlement in the first year.

Child Benefit

Administered by HMRC and payable as long as **one** parent is not earning over £60,000 (not both your incomes added together). You can still claim the benefit if you wish and pay it back through your increased tax. If the highest earning parent earns less than £50,000, child benefit will still be paid in full. Earning between £50,000 and £60,000 will affect the benefit on a sliding scale – so one parent earning £55,000 would only be entitled to half the child benefit.

You should receive an information pack just after your baby is born and this should contain a claim form. If not, ring the Child Benefit Helpline and ask for a CH2 form - 0300 200 3100. It can be backdated for 3 months only so claim soon after your baby is born. You can also apply online through the government website www.gov.uk.

Child Benefit is currently £20.70 for your first child and £13.70 for all other children (2018/19)

Universal Credit (or Child Tax Credit for existing claimants)

Universal credit is a single earnings top up benefit that has replaced

- child tax credit,
- housing benefit,
- income related employment and support allowance,
- income based job seekers allowance,
- income support and
- working tax credits.

Since 6 April 2017, support provided through Child Tax Credit and Universal Credit has been limited to two children. You will not be able to claim any additional child element for a child born on or after 6 April 2017 if you already receive the child element for two or more children. There are some exceptions to this rule.

To find out more information about Universal credit , you can call the universal credit helpline on 0800 328 9344 .

There is no standard rate for Universal credit as it depends on your circumstances.

Disability Living Allowance

You will more than likely hear about Disability Living Allowance (DLA) care component. DLA can be awarded from 3 months of age, however claiming immediately is not always necessary as it is awarded on the extra care needs a child has and not the diagnosis.

DLA is administered by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). It is not means tested. It is made up of the *care component* and the *mobility component*. The mobility component is not payable until 3 years of age. The care component can be paid from 3 months of age depending on the extra needs your child has.

The care component has 3 rates:

- Higher rate (for extra day **and** night needs)
- Middle rate (for extra day **or** night needs)
- The lower rate is for someone who needs care for around an hour a day whether for a single period or lots of brief single periods.

The DWP will not award benefit purely because of a diagnosis, your baby has to have needs that are over and above the needs normally expected for a child of the same age.

To qualify for DLA at 3 months, a baby must have needs over and above those normally needed at this age. This means that it is babies with extra medical needs that will qualify at this time. Examples include tube feeding your baby or administering regular prescribed medication, maybe for their heart or kidneys.

If your baby has no medical issues, they will probably qualify at a later time when they start to show a delay in development. Maybe speech therapy and physiotherapy activities are needed for their development. This need varies with each child. If you are unsure, please call us.

If you are awarded DLA for your child and you also receive Universal credit or Child tax credit, make sure you tell the relevant department as soon as you can as you should be entitled to an extra premium or addition .

The DLA higher rate care component is £85.60, middle rate £57.30, lower Rate £22.65 (2018/19) Phone 0800 121 4600 for a claim pack or you can download one from www.gov.uk.

Carers Allowance

You can claim this once your maternity leave ends and if your child is awarded DLA care component at either the middle or higher rate. It is means tested, but only for the carer of the child.

If you decide to work part time, you are able to earn up to £120 per week (after tax, national insurance contributions and **half** of any pension payment). The other parent's income will not affect the carers allowance. If you are receiving benefit yourself, you will receive a carers premium added on to this existing benefit.

To find out more and make a claim you need to contact Carers Allowance Unit on 0800 731 0297

Carers Allowance is £64.60 weekly, the Carers premium is £36.00 weekly and the carers amount under Universal credit is £156.45 monthly (2018/19)

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