

Support for parents and guardians

Help you may get
when expecting or
adopting a child

Getting the right information and help when you're expecting or adopting a child is essential. This leaflet tells you about the support you might get. It doesn't go into detail, but explains where you can get more information and who to contact. Other organisations may also be able to help you.

Expecting a baby

If you're pregnant you have certain rights about time off work, and pay or benefits. You may get maternity leave and either Statutory Maternity Pay or Maternity Allowance.

Your husband, partner or civil partner may also be entitled to paternity leave and may get Statutory Paternity Pay. Female partners may also be entitled.

If you're adopting a child, you have similar rights. But the adoption agency you use must be properly recognised in UK law.



Find out more at
www.direct.gov.uk/workandfamilies

Any benefits you get now may be affected if you become pregnant. Contact the office that pays your benefit.

You can find useful health advice on pregnancy at
www.direct.gov.uk/baby

There are a number of schemes to help you both in pregnancy and when your child is born. Schemes include Healthy Start vouchers and the Sure Start Maternity Grant.



Find out more at
www.direct.gov.uk/paymentsforparents

When your child is born

Child Benefit

Child Benefit is a tax-free payment you can claim for each child under 16 (or older if they are in education). You may also be entitled if you're adopting or fostering a child.

New mothers should get a Child Benefit claim form in the 'bounty pack' from the hospital, or you can get a copy from the internet.



Find out more at
www.direct.gov.uk/childbenefit

Help for guardians

If you're bringing up someone else's child because both their parents have died, you may get Guardian's Allowance. In some cases you can also get it if one parent has died, and the other is not known, missing or in prison.

To find out more visit www.direct.gov.uk and search for 'Guardian's Allowance'.

Help if you divorce or separate

If your relationship with your partner breaks down, you'll also need to consider arranging child maintenance.



Find out more at
www.cmoptions.org/parents



Phone **0800 988 0988**

Returning to work

As a parent or guardian, if you've worked more than 26 weeks for your employer you have a right to ask them to consider flexible working hours. This could mean changing the number of days or the hours that you work.



Find out more at
www.direct.gov.uk/workandfamilies

If you're on a low income, you may get Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit. Your local council can give you more information about this.

You may also get Working Tax Credit or Child Tax Credit.



Find out more at
www.direct.gov.uk/taxcredits

Childcare

If you're starting or returning to work, getting affordable childcare may be important. Find out what options are available online at www.direct.gov.uk/childcare

Other sources of advice

Directgov has much more information about financial help for parents, from pre-school costs to support if you're a lone parent.



Find out more at
www.direct.gov.uk/supportforparents

We also have basic information leaflets covering:

- Support if you are ill or disabled
- Support for carers
- Support if you are looking for work
- Support after a death
- Support if you're planning retirement.

This information is available in other formats on request.

If you can't use the internet, you can phone for a more detailed leaflet.



Phone **0845 606 5065**
Textphone **0845 604 0210**

Call charges

Calls to the 0800 numbers in this leaflet are free from BT land lines and most mobiles.

Calls to 0845 numbers from BT land lines should cost no more than 7p a minute with a 11p call set-up charge. You may pay more if you use another phone company or a mobile phone. Calls from mobile phones can cost up to 40p a minute, so check the cost of calls with your service provider. Charges were correct as of the date below.

This leaflet is only a guide and does not cover every circumstance. We have done our best to make sure the leaflet is correct as of the date below. Some of the information may be oversimplified or may become inaccurate over time, for example because of changes to the law. We recommend that you get independent advice before making financial decisions based on this leaflet.

DWP aims to provide a high quality of service to all its customers. You can find out more in our Customer Charter at [**www.direct.gov.uk/dwpcarter**](http://www.direct.gov.uk/dwpcarter)

