

A Basic Guide to Welfare Benefits

Most people in the UK are likely to be entitled to some kind of Welfare Benefit at one time or other, but many of them miss out because they don't know what they can claim. By 'Welfare Benefit' we mean any benefits provided by the Government (a state benefit), or on behalf of the Government.

Some of these Welfare Benefits are paid by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), some by HM Revenue and Customs and others are paid by your local council.

If you have come from another country to live here, you may not be able to claim all of these benefits – this will depend on your immigration conditions. If you are British, you may be entitled to benefits depending on whether the UK is your main home.

This guide briefly explains the benefits available, and where and who to contact for more information if you think you may be entitled to them. Welfare Benefits are there to support people in need. There are different types of benefit for different needs. The following sections will explain briefly the conditions you must meet to qualify for each benefit.

Income-related benefits

To work out income-related benefits your income and your partner's income (if you have a partner) are looked at, and compared to the minimum amount the government considers you need to live on. The Government set the minimum amount you need to live on each year, and this is known as your 'applicable amount'. Every person has a basic personal allowance based on their age and whether they are single or part of a couple. There are then extra amounts which you can get as well as this basic amount, and these are known as 'premiums'. If you have children or you are disabled, you may qualify for some of these extra premiums.

To be entitled to each income-related benefit, you must also meet other conditions.

Income Support – paid by the DWP

You may be entitled to Income Support if you are:

- 16 or over but under State Pension age, and you have less than £16,000 in savings and investments;
- working less than 16 hours a week, or your partner is working less than 24 hours a week, and:
 - you are a lone parent with a child under five; or
 - you are caring for someone who receives the middle or higher rate care component of Disability Living Allowance or Attendance Allowance;
- receiving Statutory Sick Pay;
- receiving Incapacity Benefit and the care component of Disability Living Allowance;
- caring for a partner or child under 19 who is temporarily ill; or
- a student.

If you receive Income Support, you are also likely to be entitled to help with housing costs such as mortgage payments, rent payments, Council Tax, ground rent or service charges.

For more information on Income Support you should visit the DWP website or contact the DWP directly. You can find their contact details in the section 'More help and information', at the end of this guide.

Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance – paid by the DWP

You may be entitled to income-based Jobseeker's Allowance if you are:

- able to work, and looking for work;
- under State Pension age, and have less than £16,000 in savings and investments; or
- working less than 16 hours a week, or your partner is working less than 24 hours a week.

If you do have a partner, you may have to make a joint claim.

If you receive income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, you may also get help with housing costs such as mortgage payments, rent payments, Council Tax, ground rent or service charges.

For more information on Job Seekers Allowance you should visit the DWP website or contact the DWP directly. You can find their contact details in the section 'More help and information', at the end of this guide.

Pension Credit – paid by the DWP

You may be entitled to Pension Credit if you are at the State Pension age or over, and you are living in the UK. There are two types of Pension Credit:

Guarantee Credit: This tops up your weekly income if it's below £151.20 (for single people) or £230.85 (for couples).

Savings Credit: You may qualify for this type of Pension Credit if you or your partner (if you have one) are 65 or over, have savings or other retirement income, such as a work pension, but your income is below a certain level.

The qualifying age for Pension Credit is gradually going up to 66 in line with the increase in the State Pension age for women to 65 and the further increase to 66 for men and women.

For more information on Pension Credits you should visit the DWP website or contact the DWP directly. You can find their contact details in the section 'More help and information', at the end of this guide.

Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) – paid by the DWP

This benefit started from 27 October 2008, and replaces Incapacity Benefit. You may be transferred to ESA if you've been claiming other benefits like Income Support or Incapacity Benefit.

ESA offers financial support if you are unable to work and personalised help so that

you can work if you are able to.

You must have a Work Capability Assessment while your ESA claim is being assessed. This is to see to what extent your illness or disability affects your ability to work. You'll then be placed in one of 2 groups if you are entitled to ESA:

- work related activity group, where you'll have regular interview with an adviser
- support group, where you don't have interviews

How much ESA you will get depends on your circumstances like your income, the type of ESA you qualify for and where you are in the assessment process.

For more information on ESA you should visit the DWP website or contact the DWP directly. You can find their contact details in the section 'More help and information', at the end of this guide.

Universal Credit – paid by the DWP

Universal Credit (UC) is a relatively new benefit introduced to replace 6 other benefits with one single monthly payment if you are out of work or on a low income. It is being introduced throughout the country in stages, but can now be claimed in North and North East Lincolnshire.

Universal Credit replaces:

- Job Seeker's Allowance
- Housing Benefit
- Working Tax Credit
- Child Tax Credit
- Employment & Support Allowance
- Income Support

The amount you'll be paid depends on your circumstances and your income. It can include support:

- for housing
- for children and childcare
- if you're disabled or have a health condition
- if you care for somebody with a disability

There are no limits to the number of hours you can work a week if you get Universal Credit. Your payments will reduce gradually as you earn more.

For more information on UC you should visit the DWP website or contact the DWP directly. You can find their contact details in the section 'More help and information', at the end of this guide.

Working Tax Credit – paid by HM Revenue & Customs

You could get Working Tax Credit if either of the following apply:

- you're aged from 16 to 24 and have a child or a qualifying disability
- you're 25 or over, with or without a child

You must:

- work a certain number of hours a week
- get paid for the work you do (or expect to)
- have an income below a certain level

The basic amount of Working Tax Credit is up to £1,960 a year, but you could get more or less depending on your circumstances and income.

You can apply for Working Tax Credits even if you are on leave or are about to start a new job. You can't claim Universal Credit and Tax Credits at the same time.

For more information on Tax Credits you should visit the DWP website or contact the DWP directly. You can find their contact details in the section 'More help and information', at the end of this guide.

Child Tax Credit – paid by HM Revenue & Customs

You could get Child Tax Credit for each child you're responsible for if they're:

- under 16
- under 20 and in approved education or training

You don't need to be working to claim Child Tax Credit. You get money for each child that qualifies but only one household can get Child Tax Credit for a child. Receiving Child Tax Credit won't affect your Child Benefit.

For more information on Tax Credits you should visit the DWP website or contact the DWP directly. You can find their contact details in the section 'More help and information', at the end of this guide.

Housing Benefit – paid by your local council

Housing Benefit payments are to help with rental costs. You may be entitled to Housing Benefit if you:

- are legally responsible for paying rent for the home you live in;
- are in receipt of other Welfare Benefits or have a low income and;
- have savings and investments of less than £16,000 (unless you receive Pension Credit Guarantee Credit, as different rules apply).

The amount you can get depends on who lives with you, your total income (including other benefit payments), any savings you have and, if you live in privately rented

accommodation, the number of rooms your family require.

If you are in receipt of Universal Credit you will not be entitled to Housing Benefit as there is a housing element already included in those payments.

For more information on Housing Benefit you should visit your council's website or contact them directly. You can find their contact details in the section 'More help and information', at the end of this guide.

Both authorities websites have a Housing Benefit calculator you can use to work out how much benefit you may be able to get.

Council Tax Reduction – paid by your local council

Council Tax Reduction schemes are run by local councils and were introduced to replace Council Tax Benefit, which was abolished in March 2013. The scheme rules are decided by each council so can be different depending on where you live. North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire have slightly different schemes.

Council Tax Reduction is not classed as a benefit, but as a reduction or discount to your Council Tax bill, but has been put in place to help those on a low income.

If you live in North East Lincolnshire the amount of support you receive under the scheme will be worked out using the same rules as under Council Tax Benefit , but there are some groups that are protected and will get more. These are:

- pension age customers
- households with a child under five
- people receiving a disability benefit

If you live in North Lincolnshire the amount of support you receive under the scheme will be worked out using the same rules as under Council Tax Benefit , but the only group that receive protection are pensioners.

For more information on Council Tax Reduction you should visit your council's website or contact them directly. You can find their contact details in the section 'More help and information', at the end of this guide.

Both authorities websites have a CTR calculator you can use to work out how much reduction you may be able to get.

Second Adult Rebate – paid by your local council

This is another type of Council Tax discount but you can only claim if:

- you don't live with a partner as a couple
- you aren't a joint tenant or joint owner; and

- you are not entitled to a Council Tax single-person discount because you have someone else living with you such as a friend or young adult (the 'second adult').

The assessment is based on the second adult's income before any deductions, like tax and National Insurance, are taken off. Second Adult Rebate reduces the amount of Council Tax you have to pay by a certain percentage, depending on the income the second adult receives.

For more information on Second Adult Rebate you should visit your council's website or contact them directly. You can find their contact details in the section 'More help and information', at the end of this guide.

Free school meals – paid by your local council

You may get free school meals for your child if you get any of the following:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit)
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on, paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit
- Support under Part IV of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

If you receive Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit, your child will not be entitled to free school meals.

If your child goes to an academy, you may have to apply to the academy for free school meals rather than applying to your council.

Free School Meals are paid by the benefits department in North East Lincolnshire. For more information about claiming you should visit the council's website or contact them directly. You can find their contact details in the section 'More help and information', at the end of this guide.

In North Lincolnshire Free School Meals are paid by another department in the council. You can find out more about claiming in North Lincolnshire by telephoning 01724 297217.

Contribution-based benefits

Entitlement to contribution-based benefits depends on whether you have paid enough National Insurance contributions. How much you need to have paid, and the period in which you need to have paid the contributions, can vary from benefit to benefit. We will look at this in more detail as we examine each of the benefits.

Some of the contribution-based benefits also have an income restriction on them. This means you will only be able to receive the benefit if your income is below a certain amount.

Contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance – paid by the DWP

You may be entitled to contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance if you:

- are 18 or over but below pension age
- not be in full time education
- available for work and actively seeking work, and
- have paid enough Class 1 National Insurance contributions (NICs) in the two tax years before the benefit year you're claiming in.

That means you must have:

- worked for 26 weeks in one of these years earning at least the lower earnings limit for that tax year
- paid class 1 contributions or received National Insurance credits in both of those tax years that amount to 50 times the lower earnings limit. See the table below for these amounts.

£ per week	2012 to 2013	2013 to 2014	2014 to 2015	2015 - 2016
Lower earnings limit primary Class 1	£107	£109	£111	£112

For more information on Job Seekers Allowance you should visit the DWP website or contact the DWP directly. You can find their contact details in the section 'More help and information', at the end of this guide.

Contribution-based Employment and Support Allowance – paid by the DWP

This benefit replaces Incapacity Benefit, and is specifically for people who are sick or disabled. Contribution-based ESA lasts for one year if you're in the work-related activity group. There's no time limit on how long you can claim contribution-based ESA if you're in the support group.

- You must have worked and paid National Insurance in one of the three full tax

- years before you became sick or disabled.
- You may not need to have paid National Insurance if your illness or disability started when you were younger.

For more information on ESA you should visit the DWP website or contact the DWP directly. You can find their contact details in the section 'More help and information', at the end of this guide.

Bereavement Benefits – paid by the DWP

Bereavement benefits were introduced from April 2001 to replace Widow's Benefit for people whose partner died after this date. Women who were already receiving Widow's Benefit before April 2010 will continue to do so, for as long as they meet the qualifying conditions.

If your partner or your civil partner dies, you may be able to get one or more of the following UK bereavement benefits.

- Bereavement Payment – a one-off tax-free payment
- Bereavement Allowance – a weekly benefit which you can receive for up to 52 weeks
- Widowed Parent's Allowance – a weekly benefit for people with children

To receive these bereavement benefits, your husband, wife or civil partner must have paid National Insurance. The National Insurance you have paid is not counted.

You may be able to get these benefits at the full rate if:

- your husband, wife or civil partner died because of an accident at work or from an industrial disease caused by working for an employer, and
- they did not have a full National Insurance contributions record.

You must have been married to or been in a civil partnership with your partner at the time they died.

For more information on Bereavement Benefits you should visit the DWP website or contact the DWP directly. You can find their contact details in the section 'More help and information', at the end of this guide.

State Pensions – paid by the DWP

The Basic State Pension is a regular payment that most people will be entitled to when they reach State Pension age.

To get it you must have paid or been credited with National Insurance contributions. The Additional State Pension is an extra amount of money you could get with your basic State Pension and is based on your National Insurance contributions. How much you get depends on your earning and whether you've claimed certain benefits. There is no fixed amount like the basic State Pension.

You can work out your State Pension age and how much State Pension you could get using online calculators at www.gov.uk/calculate-state-pension

There are more changes due for State Pensions and your entitlement is dependent upon when you were born. For more detailed information on State Pensions you should visit the DWP website or contact the DWP directly. You can find their contact details in the section 'More help and information', at the end of this guide.

Universal benefits

These benefits are not restricted by your income or by the amount of National Insurance you have paid. They are called 'universal benefits' because they are generally available to everyone. However, it is more accurate to say that they are available to everyone who meets the various qualifying conditions these benefits have. As long as you meet an individual benefit qualifying condition, you will receive that benefit no matter what your income is or how much National Insurance you pay.

Attendance Allowance – paid by the DWP

Attendance Allowance is for help with personal care because you're physically or mentally disabled and you're aged 65 or over. It is paid at 2 different rates and how much you get depends on the level of care that you need because of your disability. Other benefits that you get can increase if you get Attendance Allowance.

You must be able to show that you have needed the help for six months before you claim, but this benefit can be paid straight away if you have been diagnosed with a terminal illness (you have been told you only have a certain amount of time to live).

If you stay in hospital for more than 4 weeks, Attendance Allowance will stop. Shorter periods you have stayed in hospital can be linked together if there is less than 28 days between them.

For more information on Attendance Allowance you should visit the DWP website or contact the DWP directly. You can find their contact details in the section 'More help and information', at the end of this guide.

Disability Living Allowance – paid by the DWP

Disability Allowance is a tax-free benefit for disabled people who need help with mobility or care costs. You can make a new claim for Disability Living Allowance if:

- you have a physical or mental disability, or both;
- your disability is severe enough for you to need help caring for yourself or you have problems walking, or both; and
- you are under 16.

Disability Allowance is being phased out for adults and replaced with Personal Independence Payments (PIP). You can read more about PIP further on in this guide.

Disability Living Allowance has two parts, called 'components'.
Disability Living Allowance – care component:

The care component has three rates:

- Higher rate
- Middle rate
- Lower rate

Disability Living Allowance – mobility component:

The mobility component has two rates:

- Higher rate
- Lower rate

You might also qualify for Carer's Allowance if you spend at least 35 hours a week caring for a child who gets the middle or highest care rate of DLA.

For more information on Disability Living Allowance you should visit the DWP website or contact the DWP directly. You can find their contact details in the section 'More help and information', at the end of this guide.

Personal Independence Payments (PIP) – paid by the DWP

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is replacing Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for people with a long-term health condition or disability aged 16 to 64. PIP is a tax free benefit and you can get it whether you're in or out of work.

To be eligible, you must:

- be aged 16 to 64
- have a long term health condition or disability and difficulties with activities related to 'daily living' and / or mobility
- be in Great Britain when you claim - there are some exceptions, e.g. members and family members of the Armed Forces
- have been in Great Britain for at least 2 of the last 3 years
- be habitually resident in the UK, Ireland, Isle of Man or the Channel Islands
- not be subject to immigration (unless you're a sponsored immigrant)

You'll need an assessment to work out the level of help you get and your rate will be regularly reassessed to make sure you're getting the right support. The rate you will get depends on how your condition affects you, not the condition itself.

PIP is made up of 2 components. Whether you get one or both of these depends on how your condition affects you.

The daily living component and the mobility component both have 2 rates:

- Standard
- Enhanced

You'll get the enhanced daily living component if you're not expected to live more than 6 months. The rate of mobility component depends on your needs.

You might also qualify for Carer's Allowance if you spend at least 35 hours a week caring for someone who gets the middle or highest care rate of DLA.

For more information on Personal Independence Payments you should visit the DWP website or contact the DWP directly. You can find their contact details in the section 'More help and information', at the end of this guide.

Carer's Allowance – paid by the DWP

Carer's Allowance is a benefit paid to help you look after someone with substantial caring needs.

You don't have to be related to, or live with, the person you care for, but you must be 16 or over and spend at least 35 hours a week caring for them.

Carer's Allowance is a taxable benefit and can also affect your other benefits.

You might be able to get Carer's Allowance if all of the following apply:

- you're 16 or over
- you spend at least 35 hours a week caring for someone
- have been in England, Scotland or Wales for at least 2 of the last 3 years
- you normally live in England, Scotland or Wales, or you live abroad as a member of the armed forces
- you're not in full-time education or studying for 21 hours a week or more
- you earn no more than £110 a week (after taxes, care costs while you're at work and 50% of what you pay into your pension) - don't count your pension as income

For more information on Carer's Allowance you should visit the DWP website or contact the DWP directly. You can find their contact details in the section 'More help and information', at the end of this guide.

Child Benefit

You can claim Child Benefit if you're responsible for a child under 16 (or under 20 if they stay in approved education or training), but only one person can get Child Benefit for a child. You should claim Child Benefit as soon as your child is born or comes to live with you.

Child Benefit is usually tax free but you may have to pay a tax charge if your 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

There are 2 Child Benefit rates:

- Eldest or only child rate
- Rate for any additional children

You could also get Guardian's Allowance if you're bringing up someone else's child because one or both parents have died. It's paid on top of Child Benefit.

For more information on Child Benefit or Guardian's Allowance you should visit the DWP website or contact the DWP directly. You can find their contact details in the section 'More help and information', at the end of this guide.

Sure Start Maternity Grants –paid by the DWP

This grant is a one-off payment to help towards the costs of a new baby. You don't have to pay the grant back and it won't affect your other benefits or tax credits.

You can claim the grant if you are expecting your first child or you're expecting a multiple birth (for example, twins or triplets) and you already have children. You may also be able to get a grant if you're adopting or becoming a surrogate parent.

To receive the grant, you must be receiving one of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credit (at a rate which is more than the basic family element)
- Working Tax Credit (including the disability or severe-disability element)
- Pension Credit
- Universal Credit

You must claim the grant within 11 weeks of the baby's due date or within 3 months after the baby's birth.

For more information on Maternity Grants you should visit the DWP website or contact the DWP directly. You can find their contact details in the section 'More help and information', at the end of this guide.

Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit – paid by the DWP

You may be able to claim Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit if you are ill or disabled:

- from an accident or disease caused by work (but not if you were self-employed)
- while you were on an approved employment training scheme or course

The level of your disability will affect the amount of benefit you may get. This will be assessed by a 'medical advisor' on a scale of 1 to 100%, and the higher the percentage the higher the amount you will receive.

Normally you must be assessed as 14% disabled or more to get the benefit.

For more information on Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit you should visit the DWP website or contact the DWP directly. You can find their contact details in the section 'More help and information', at the end of this guide.

Guardian's Allowance

You can usually get Guardian's Allowance as long as:

- you're bringing up someone else's child or children and both their parents have died; and
- you qualify for Child Benefit for the child or children you're bringing up.

You can't get Guardian's Allowance unless one of the parents who died:

- was born in the UK;
- was from the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland;
- was a family member of someone from the EEA or Switzerland; or
- had been in the UK for at least 52 weeks during any two-year period since they were 16 years old.

If you adopt a child you may still get Guardian's Allowance, as long as you were getting it before you adopted the child.

For more information on Guardian's Allowance you should visit the DWP website or contact the DWP directly. You can find their contact details in the section 'More help and information', at the end of this guide.

Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) – paid by your employer

If you're working for an employer under a contract (even if you've only just started), you're entitled to Statutory Sick Pay for up to 28 weeks if:

- you're sick for at least four days in a row (including weekends and bank holidays and days that you do not normally work)
- you're earning at least £112 before tax a week; and
- you tell your employer you're sick before their deadline - or within 7 days if they don't have one

If you have more than one job, you may get SSP from each employer.

For more information on Statutory Sick Pay you should visit the DWP website or contact the DWP directly. You can find their contact details in the section 'More help and information', at the end of this guide.

Statutory Maternity Leave and Pay (SMP) – paid by your employer

You qualify for Statutory Maternity Leave if:

- you're an employee not a 'worker' (for a definition of this see the DWP website)
- you give your employer the correct notice

It doesn't matter how long you've been with your employer, how many hours you work or how much you get paid.

To qualify for Statutory Maternity Pay you must:

- earn on average at least £112 a week
- give the correct notice to your employer
- give proof you're pregnant
- have worked for your employer continuously for at least 26 weeks up to the 'qualifying week' - the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth.

Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) is paid for up to 39 weeks. You get:

- 90% of your average weekly earnings (before tax) for the first 6 weeks
- £139.58 or 90% of your average weekly earnings (whichever is lower) for the next 33 weeks

SMP is paid in the same way as your wages (e.g. monthly or weekly). Tax and National Insurance will be deducted.

If you do not qualify for SMP, your employer must give you a form. If you can't get SMP from any of your employers (if you have more than one), you may be able to get Maternity Allowance (MA) instead.

You can still get Statutory Maternity Leave and SMP if your baby:

- is born early
- is stillborn after the start of your 24th week of pregnancy
- dies after being born

For more information on Statutory Maternity Pay and Leave you should visit the DWP website or contact the DWP directly. You can find their contact details in the section 'More help and information', at the end of this guide.

Statutory Paternity Pay and Leave (SPP) – paid by your employer

To qualify for Statutory Paternity Pay you must be taking time off to look after the child and be one of the following:

- the father
- the husband or partner of the mother (or adopter)
- the child's adopter
- the intended parent (if you're having a baby through a surrogacy arrangement)

There are extra conditions you need to meet to qualify for leave and pay or additional leave or pay.

You must also:

- have worked for your employer continuously for at least 26 weeks by the end of the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth (known as the 'qualifying week')
- be employed by your employer up to the date of birth
- earn at least £112 a week (before tax)
- give the correct notice

The 'qualifying week' is different if you adopt.

Your employer will pay Statutory Paternity Pay to you in the same way and at the same time as your normal wages. It is treated as normal pay so they'll also take tax and National Insurance as usual.

To claim Statutory Paternity Pay you must tell your employer when you plan to take leave by the 15th week before your baby is due, or within seven days of your wife, partner or civil partner being told by the adoption agency that they've been matched with a child.

You can change the date your Statutory Paternity Leave starts, as long as you give 28 days' notice.

Your employer might ask you for self-certificate form SC3 'Becoming a parent' that confirms you are entitled to the pay.

You can still get Paternity Leave or pay if your baby is:

- stillborn from 24 weeks of pregnancy
- born alive at any point during the pregnancy

For more information on Statutory Paternity Pay and Leave you should visit the DWP website or contact the DWP directly. You can find their contact details in the section 'More help and information', at the end of this guide.

Statutory Adoption Pay and Leave – paid by your employer

To qualify for Statutory Adoption Pay you must have been:

- matched with a child for adoption by an adoption agency;
- employed by your present employer without a break for at least 26 weeks up to and including the week the adoption agency told you that you had been matched with a child for adoption; and
- earning an average of at least £112 a week (before tax).

Statutory Adoption Pay is paid for up to 39 weeks. The weekly amount is:

- 90% of your average weekly earnings for the first 6 weeks
- £139.58 or 90% of your average weekly earnings (whichever is lower) for the next 33 weeks

You may get more pay if your employer has a company adoption pay scheme, but your employer can't offer you less than the statutory amount.

For more information on Statutory Adoption Pay and Leave you should visit the DWP website or contact the DWP directly. You can find their contact details in the section 'More help and information', at the end of this guide.

Severe Disablement Allowance – paid by the DWP

Severe Disablement Allowance has been replaced with Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) . The DWP will re-assess your Severe Disablement Allowance claim to see if you're capable of work or eligible for ESA.

You can't make a new claim for Severe Disablement Allowance. But, if you're already getting the allowance - you'll continue to receive it.

Usually your Severe Disablement Allowance is not affected if you:

- do volunteer work
- work and earn up to £20 a week
- work for less than 16 hours a week on average and earn up to £101 a week for 52 weeks
- do 'supported permitted work' and earn up to £101 a week

For more information on Severe Disablement Allowance or ESA you should visit the DWP website or contact the DWP directly. You can find their contact details in the section 'More help and information', at the end of this guide.

Appeals

If you think that you are entitled to a benefit but you are told that you are not, you may be able to appeal against the decision. If you receive a letter which says you are not entitled to a benefit, you can ask your local council, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) or the job centre to explain the decision or reconsider it.

If you're still unhappy with the explanation or decision you are given, you may be able to appeal.

You can ask for an explanation or ask your local council, the DWP or the job centre to reconsider every decision, but you will not be able to appeal against some benefit decisions.

If you want to ask for an explanation or to reconsider the decision, you must do this within one month of receiving our decision.

If you want to appeal against a decision that has been reconsidered, you must also do this within one month of receiving the reconsidered decision.

More help and information

This section will give you contact details of the organisations mentioned in this guide and other organisations who may be able to help with advice and making a claim.

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

Phone: 0800 88 22 00

Website: www.gov.uk

Universal Credit helpline

Telephone: 0345 600 0723

Website: www.gov.uk

Jobcentre Plus

Phone: 01472 245400 or 0800 055 6688 (for new claims)

Phone: 0845 608 8546 (for follow-up calls on Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance, Incapacity Benefit or Employment and Support Allowance)

Website: www.gov.uk

HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC)

Phone: 0845 300 3900 (for information on tax credits)

Website: www.gov.uk

Child Benefit

Phone: 0845 302 1444

Website: www.gov.uk

The Pension Service

Phone: 0845 300 1084 (for information on State Pension)

Phone: 0800 99 1234 (for information on Pension Credit)

Phone: 0845 6060 265 (for general questions)

Website: www.gov.uk

If you live in North East Lincolnshire you can also get help from:

North East Lincolnshire Council

Local Taxation & Benefits Service
Municipal Offices
Town Hall Square
Grimsby
DN31 1HU
Phone: 01472 326287
Website: www.nelincs.gov.uk

Community Advice Service

10-16 Kent Street
Grimsby
North East Lincolnshire
DN32 7DG
Phone: 01472 240256

You can get free advice on welfare benefits, tax credits, debt, employment and housing. You can also get someone to represent you at county court for housing and debt issues, and at tribunals for state benefits. If you are over 60, you can also arrange for someone to visit you at home to give you advice.

Citizens Advice

4 Town Hall Street
Grimsby
North East Lincolnshire
DN31 1HN
Phone: 01472 252500
Website: www.grimsbycab.org.uk

You can get free advice on benefits, tax credits, debt, education, employment, immigration, consumer issues and housing. You can also get someone to represent you at county court for housing and debt issues. If you are over 60, you can also arrange for someone to visit you at home to give you advice.

Age UK North East Lincolnshire

27 Osborne Street
Grimsby
N E Lincolnshire
DN311EY
Phone: 01472 344976 or 0800 009 966
Website: www.ageuk.org.uk

If you live in North Lincolnshire you can get help from:

North Lincolnshire Council

Local Taxation & Benefits Service

Hewson House

Station Road

Brigg

DN20 8YE (for correspondence only)

Telephone: 01724 297000

Website: www.northlincs.gov.uk

Citizens Advice

Scunthorpe

12 Oswald Street

Scunthorpe

North Lincolnshire

DN15 7PT

Phone: 01724 840941

Website: www.scunthorpecab.org.uk

Age UK North Lincolnshire

31 Frances Street

Scunthorpe

North Lincolnshire

DN15 6NS

Phone: 01724 849819

Website: www.ageuk.org.uk