

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Help with childcare costs

Introduction

This leaflet gives general guidance on the help you can get with childcare costs.

Can I get help towards the cost of childcare?

- If you pay childcare costs for one child, we can ignore up to the first £175 of your earnings when we work out your entitlement to Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit.
- If you pay childcare costs for two or more children, we can ignore up to the first £300 of your earnings when we work out your entitlement to Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit.

How old must my children be?

You can get help towards childcare costs up to the first Sunday in the September after your child's 15th birthday. However, if your child is disabled, you can get help with the childcare costs up to the first Sunday in the September after his or her 16th birthday.

Can anyone receive this help?

No, in order to qualify for this help you must be:

- a couple where both of you work 16 hours or more a week;
- a lone parent working for 16 hours or more a week; or
- a couple where one of you is working 16 hours or more a week and the other is *'incapacitated'* or in hospital or prison.

You may also qualify for help with your childcare costs if you are temporarily absent from work through illness, or on maternity, paternity or adoption leave. Please contact us for more information.

Note:

You and your partner are considered to be **a couple** if you are both 16 or over and

- married and living in the same household; or
- not married but living together as husband and wife; or
- of the same sex, registered as civil partners and living in the same household; or
- of the same sex, not registered as civil partners but living together as if you were civil partners.

You (or your partner) are treated as **incapacitated if you**

- get the Incapacity benefit;
- get severe disablement allowance;
- get attendance allowance, disability allowance (or equivalent payable under the war pensions or industrial injuries scheme) ;
- get a work related or a support component included in your Employment and Support Allowance
- have an invalid carriage or similar vehicle;
- have a disability premium included in your Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit ; or
- have been treated as incapable for work for a continuous period of 196 days or more (any breaks of 12 weeks or less are ignored).

Are there any other conditions I need to meet to qualify for the help?

Yes, in order to qualify for the help, the childcare must be provided by:

- a registered childminder or other registered childcare provider (such as a nursery or after-school club for children under eight);
- a childminding scheme for which registration is not needed (for example, one run by a school or local authority);
- child care providers approved by the HM Revenue and Customs for the purposes of Working Tax Credit;
- any other scheme which a school or local authority provides out of school hours (such as an out-of-hours or holiday play scheme) for children aged eight or more; or
- A foster parent for a child other than the one fostered.

You may also qualify for help if the childcare is provided in the child's home by someone not related to the child who is registered as a domiciliary care worker or approved under the Home Care Providers scheme.

Please contact us for more information.

How will I receive the help with the cost of childcare?

If you qualify for help with your childcare costs, the help we can provide (up to £300) will be taken off the earnings figure we use to work out your entitlement to Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit. This means you will receive more benefit.

What do I need to do to apply for help towards my childcare costs?

- If you are already claiming Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit and have not told us about your childcare costs, you should do so in writing as soon as possible.
- If you are not getting Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit and want to apply, please contact us on **0800 028 2569**. We will need your **name, address and contact phone number**. We will then arrange to complete the claim with you by personal interview in any Customer Centre or One Stop Shop (located in Cwmbran, Pontypool, Blaenavon, Chepstow, Caldicot, Monmouth or Abergavenny).

Do you need any other information?

Yes, we will need to see either:

- a copy of the contract between you and your childcare provider; or
- a letter from your childcare provider. This should include their name and address, the childcare costs you pay each week or month and their registration number.

We can photocopy these documents in any Customer Centre or One Stop Shop. See page 3 for our contact details.

Our Contact details

If you need more help, please contact us.

TORFAEN RESIDENTS should contact TELEPHONE:01495 766430 or 01495 766570 E-MAIL: benefits@torfaen.gov.uk Minicom for those who are deaf or hard of hearing. The number is 01495 767871	MONMOUTHSHIRE RESIDENTS should contact TELEPHONE:01633 644650 or 01633 644655 E-MAIL: benefits@monmouthshire.gov.uk	
OUR ADDRESS- Shared Benefit Service Level 3, Civic Centre Pontypool Torfaen NP4 6YB		
IN PERSON at any of our One Stop shops or Customer Centres		
ABERGAVENNY (open normal office hours) Cross Street, Abergavenny NP7 5HD	CHEPSTOW (open normal office hours) Manor Way, Chepstow NP16 5HZ	CALDICOT (open normal office hours) Woodstock Way, Caldicot NP26 5DB
MONMOUTH (open normal office hours) Priory Street, Monmouth NP25 3XA	PONTYPOOL (open normal office hours) Level One Civic Centre, Pontypool NP4 6YB	CWMBRAN (open normal office hours) 1-2 General Rees Square Cwmbran NP44 7NX
BLAENAVON (Tuesday to Friday 9.30 am to 2.30pm) Blaenavon World Heritage Centre Church Road Blaenavon NP4 9AS		

WELSH TRANSLATION-If you require a copy of this document in Welsh please contact us on the telephone numbers above.

Online services (This service is currently only available for Torfaen residents)

You are now able to access a full range of online services via the Council's website www.torfaen.gov.uk under online services. Using a secure registration process you can now access the following services:

- Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Benefit claim data for your claim,
- Council Tax or Business Rate information for your account including the account balance, payment and instalment details.

The service also allows you to report a change in circumstances, claim a discount or exemption or make a payment towards your account. In addition you can check your potential entitlement to Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Benefit and make a claim for Benefit on-line. The Benefits section will then contact you to obtain the required detail to complete the claim.