

Passported benefits

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Passported benefits

Passported benefits are benefits or schemes which some people are entitled to because of their entitlement to certain other benefits or tax credits.

Extra support that claimants in receipt of Universal Credit may be entitled to includes:

- help with health costs, including prescriptions and dental treatment
- free school meals and other educational benefits
- Healthy Start vouchers
- legal aid
- help with the costs of using courts or tribunals
- help with prison visiting costs
- help from energy and water suppliers
- warm home discount
- cold weather payments
- sure start maternity grant (Best Start in Scotland)
- funeral payments
- low cost phone packages
- travel discount schemes

This list is not exhaustive, but these are the main benefits. These benefits are also available to claimants on legacy benefits, so they would also be eligible.

There are many other schemes which are delivered locally.

Development work is currently underway on a number of the passported benefits listed in this guidance. As this work is completed information on these schemes will be added to the guidance. For more information on eligibility and how to apply see [GOV.UK](#).

For claimants in Scotland or Wales, the support they could receive may be slightly different. Please visit [GOV.UK](#).

Passported benefits sit outside core Universal Credit policy with eligibility criteria for each passported benefit remaining the responsibility of the Government Department, Devolved Administration or Utility Company that owns it.

Passported benefits information, including examples of earnings thresholds, is included on Full Service award notifications. This information should help to signpost claimants for more information and help practitioners establish eligibility for these benefits.

Help with health costs

Claimants may be entitled to help with health costs if:

- they receive Universal Credit and had no earnings or net earnings of £435 or less during their most recent assessment period
- they receive Universal Credit and have limited capability for work or limited capability for work related activity or are responsible for a child, and had no earnings or net earnings of £935 or less during the most recent assessment period

These thresholds do not currently apply in Wales where anyone on Universal Credit is currently entitled to help with health costs.

If claimants are entitled to help with health costs they will get:

- free NHS prescriptions - Until the prescription form can be amended claimants should tick the “gets income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance” box on the back of the prescription form
- free NHS dental treatment
- free wigs and fabric supports
- free sight tests
- access to optical vouchers to help with the cost of glasses or contact lenses
- travel to an NHS appointment on referral by a primary care practitioner (e.g. doctor, dentist or optician)

How to claim help with health costs

Claimants requesting help with costs will be asked by the healthcare professional to show their Universal Credit statement page at the point the prescription is dispensed.

Most prescription pads/forms do not yet have a tick box for Universal Credit. If a claimant is in this case, the claimant should tick the box for income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance.

If claimants are unsure about their entitlement to support with health costs, for example because they are waiting for a decision on their claim, or to receive their

award letter, they should pay the relevant charge and ask for a refund form at the same time.

For prescription charges, the refund form must be obtained at the time of paying the costs as it will not be issued later. Once the claimant receives their award letter they can claim a refund. The refund must be claimed within 3 months of paying the charge. On the refund form they should tick the box for income-based Jobseeker's Allowance.

If the claimant receives Universal Credit and meets all the criteria to be entitled for help with health costs but didn't get the refund form, they should contact the NHS Business Services Authority who will consider applications for refunds on a case by case basis. It should be emphasised that a refund is not guaranteed.

Penalty charges

Claimants should make sure they are claiming health costs correctly as checks are made on forms they have signed.

If claimants claim help with health costs incorrectly, or are unable prove they are entitled, they may have to pay a penalty charge if they are found to not be entitled to help.

The penalty charge will be five times the charge that you should have paid, up to a maximum of £100. If you fail to pay the penalty charge, the NHS can take action to recover the debt in court. The penalty charge will be increased by fifty per cent if you do not pay within 28 days of the date that the penalty notice is sent.

Healthy Start scheme

Healthy Start is a UK-wide government public health scheme that provides a nutritional safety net for pregnant women, new mums and young children in low income families.

The Healthy Start scheme helps claimants to buy milk, fresh fruit and vegetables, plain frozen fruit and vegetables, and infant formula milk.

Claimants may qualify for Healthy Start vouchers if they are at least 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under the age of 4 and they (and their partner, if they have one) are earning £408 or less per month. Anyone under the age of 18 and pregnant is also eligible, even if they don't receive any benefits.

The claimant receives 1 voucher per week if:

- she is pregnant

- has a child aged between 1 and 4

Two vouchers per week are issued if the child is under 1.

The vouchers can be used in any shop that is registered to take part.

Retailers cannot charge a handling fee for accepting the vouchers. They must give Healthy Start foods to the full value of each voucher and must not give change.

Claimants also get coupons to swap for free Healthy Start branded vitamins suitable for:

- pregnant women
- breastfeeding women
- children aged 6 months to 5 years old

The Healthy start voucher application must be signed by the claimant's:

- midwife
- health visitor
- registered doctor or nurse

For more information see [Healthy Start](#).

Free school meals

In England

Children whose parents or guardians have been awarded Universal Credit, and whose annual net earned income does not exceed the threshold of £7400 (£616.67 pcm), are entitled to free school meals. By receiving free school meals they may also be entitled to other [educational benefits](#).

Claimants already on Universal Credit and getting free school meals at the point the thresholds were introduced (April 2018) will be protected until the end of Universal Credit roll out (March 2022), or their current phase of education, if later (e.g. primary, secondary school).

Regardless of their parents getting Universal Credit, any child in reception year, year 1 and year 2 is entitled to free school meals.

In other countries

Wales does not have a threshold and children whose parents are in receipt of Universal Credit are entitled to free school meals.

Scotland and Northern Ireland have thresholds and these are:

- £7,320pa (£610.00 per month) in Scotland
- £14,000pa (£1,166.67) in Northern Ireland

There is no transitional protection in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Help to Save

This is a new government saving scheme to help working people on low incomes build their savings.

For more information see [Help to Save](#).