

Additional amount for children

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Additional amount for children

Since 6 April 2017, the additional amount for children is no longer paid for a third or subsequent child or qualifying young person born on or after 6 April 2017 unless an exception applies. See April 17 changes – when the additional amount for children is limited to 2 children.

Universal Credit will include this additional amount for eligible children until either of the following occur:

- the end of August following each child's 16th birthday
- the end of August after each child's 19th birthday if they are still living at home and taking a non-advanced course at school or college or taking part in approved training

Premium for the first child

The additional amount for children or qualifying young person is paid as part of the Universal Credit maximum amount. There are 2 different amounts:

- a higher amount for the first child or qualifying young person if the child was born before 6 April 2017
- a standard amount for any subsequent children or qualifying young persons or for all children born after 6 April 2017

See Rates for Universal Credit.

The higher amount will **only** be paid if the first child or qualifying young person is born before 6 April 2017. The standard rate will be paid for all children born after 6 April 2017 regardless of whether they are the first child.

April 17 changes: the additional amount for children is now provided for a maximum of 2 children

Claimants are able to receive an additional amount for any children born before 6 April 2017 regardless of when the claim to Universal Credit was made. However, if a third or subsequent child or is born on or after 6 April 2017, they will not receive an additional amount for that child unless an exception applies. See Exceptions to the additional amount for a maximum of 2 children.

Universal Credit will continue to pay an additional amount for any child born before 6 April 2017.

If a single parent claiming Child Tax Credits forms a couple with a single parent already receiving Universal Credit, the Child Tax Credit claimant and their children will be added to the Universal Credit claim.

The newly formed household will be able to receive a child amount for any children before 6 April 2017. However, they won't be entitled to an additional amount for any third or subsequent child born on or after 6 April 2017 unless an exception applies. Children may need to be re-ordered in the new household, see 'How to 'order' Children or Qualifying Young Person(s) where an exception may apply' below.

Exceptions to the additional amounts for a maximum of 2 children

A number of exceptions apply to the two-child maximum. This is because some parents are not in the same position as others to make the same choices about the number of children in their family.

Exceptions will apply to a third or subsequent child or qualifying young person who:

- are born as part of a multiple birth, for example twins (the claimant will not receive the additional amount for the first child born as part of a multiple birth if they already have 2 children recorded on the claim, however they will receive the additional amount for every other child born as part of the multiple birth)

- is likely to be born as a result of non-consensual conception or at a time when the claimant was subject to ongoing control or coercion by the other parent of the child

To determine which child or qualifying young person is the third or subsequent in the household, they are ordered according to a set of rules. See How to 'order' children or qualifying young person(s) where an exception may apply below.

From 28 November 2018 claimants will be able to get the child amount for any child or qualifying young person who:

- is adopted from local authority care
- is living with the claimant as part of either:
 - a formal caring arrangement (such as a child arrangement order or special guardianship) or was in such an arrangement until their 16th birthday and has continued living with the claimant, or
 - an informal caring arrangement (often known as kinship care (in England), friends and family care or connected persons' care) where it is likely they would otherwise be likely to be looked after by the local authority
- is born to a child aged under 16, for whom the claimant is also responsible

Children or QYPs in caring arrangements, or who are adopted from local authority care, will be discounted when ordering the children in the household. These children will not affect any amounts the claimant may be able to get for any other children in the household.

Evidence required to verify an exception

If a claimant adds any children or qualifying young persons to an existing Universal Credit claim and that child meets one of the exception criteria, they must provide relevant evidence. Further details of what evidence is required can be found in the sections below.

If evidence of an exception is not provided within 14 days from the date requested (change of circumstances) or 1 month from the date requested (new claim including any declarations made within the first assessment period) the exception cannot be applied.

In cases where a claimant has already declared an exception with HMRC (for example, when claiming Child Tax Credit), DWP will receive confirmation. Once confirmed, the exception will be applied without asking for evidence again.

Multiple births

The multiple birth exception applies to all third or subsequent children or qualifying young persons in a household who are born to a claimant as part of a multiple birth, apart from one child in that birth (the first in the order).

Example:

A claimant has 2 children on their claim, they then have twins. The additional amount for children will only be paid for one child in that multiple birth (meaning that in total the claimant will be entitled to an amount for 3 out of their 4 children).

A claimant currently has 2 children on their claim then has triplets. The additional amount for children will only be paid for 2 of the children in that multiple birth (meaning that in total the claimant will be entitled to an amount for 4 out of their 5 children).

If the first child of the multiple birth is either the first or second child in the household, the additional child amount of Universal Credit will also be awarded for that child (the first born of the multiple birth).

The claimant must provide the birth certificates of all of the children in the multiple birth as evidence for the exception.

Children living long-term in non-parental caring arrangements

This exception will apply to all children or QYPs who are either:

- being cared for by friend or family carers (this cannot be the parent of the child) as an alternative to being taken into local authority care (this may be a formal or informal arrangement)
- born to a child aged under 16 for whom the claimant is also responsible

Children cared for by friends and family carers

Friends and family care is an arrangement whereby a child or qualifying young person who cannot be cared for by their parent(s) goes to live with a relative or a friend for an extended period of time, not just at weekends or for two weeks in the holidays.

This can be grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles or other relatives, godparents, step-grandparents or other adults who have a relationship with or connection to the child.

These can be:

- informal arrangements made by their parents with a close relative - for example, because a parent has died
- formal arrangements, such as where a Guardianship Order is in place

If an informal caring arrangement is to be considered for an exception, there must be a likelihood that the child would otherwise have to be looked-after by a local authority. In these circumstances, the friend or family carer must provide evidence from a social worker to support this.

The exceptions do not apply when a claimant is the parent or step-parent of the child. The exception will apply if a claimant has any of the arrangements listed in the

paragraph below. See evidence required for Children living long term in non-parental caring arrangements.

Child of a child

If a child or qualifying young person under 16 (for whom the claimant is responsible) becomes the parent of a child, the new child will be exempt if they are also within the claimant's household.

This exception will remain in place until the young parent leaves the household or turns 16 and is able to claim in their own right.

Evidence required for children living long-term in non-parental caring arrangements

For evidence of formal arrangements, the claimant must provide one of the following:

- entitlement to Guardian's Allowance
- Special Guardianship Order
- Child Arrangement Order
- appointment as a guardian

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- Kinship Care Order
- permanence order which gives legal parental responsibilities or rights

For evidence of informal arrangements, the claimant must provide the form 'Support for a child who is informally living with you where it is likely that they would otherwise be looked after by a local authority'. This can be downloaded from GOV.UK and must be signed by a local authority social worker.

If claiming for the child of a child, the claimant must provide the child's birth certificate.

Adoption

This exception applies to any child or qualifying young person who is adopted by a claimant from local authority care. The exception will not apply if:

- either the claimant or the claimant's partner is the biological parent of the child or qualifying young person
- either the claimant or the claimant's partner was the child's step-parent immediately prior to adoption
- the child is adopted from abroad

This is to ensure that the exception only applies when the child or qualifying young person would otherwise be in local authority care.

The claimant must provide one of the following to verify this exception:

- an adoption certificate

- if the adoption has not yet been formally completed, written evidence from a social worker which includes the date the child was placed with them and the name of the child and adoptive parent(s)

Children likely to have been born as a result of non-consensual conception or coercive and controlling behaviour

This includes the third or subsequent children likely to have been conceived:

- as a result of non-consensual conception
- at a time when the claimant was in a coercive or controlling relationship with the other parent of the child

In order to claim this exception, the claimant must no longer be living with the other biological parent.

A claimant who was subject to coercion or control by the other biological parent at the time the child was conceived is to be treated as not having consented to the sexual intercourse that led to the conception.

It is very important to have this exception in place to ensure that a claimant in these circumstances gets the support they need in a not overly intrusive manner.

The claimant must provide either of the following evidence:

- evidence of a conviction or Criminal Injury Compensation scheme decision relating to the child
- form 'Support for a child conceived without your consent, including rape or while you were in a coercive or controlling relationship' which can be downloaded from GOV.UK

The claimant must take the above form to their chosen third party professional body to be completed. Detailed instructions on how to complete the forms and guidance for third party professional bodies can be found on GOV.UK.

Third party professional bodies include:

- health care professionals including GPs, other doctors and nurses, midwives and health visitors
- registered social workers
- approved specified organisations such as specialist rape charities recognised by the Secretary of State (Universal Credit) or by the Treasury (Child Tax Credit)

DWP staff will not question the claimant about the incident other than to take the claim and receive the supporting evidence and information. Any data or information received will be handled in accordance with the rules that DWP already use for holding and using extremely sensitive data.

How to 'order' children or qualifying young person's where an exception may apply

To decide if a child or qualifying young person is the third or subsequent child, all the children in the household are automatically ordered according to the following rules:

- if any children are in non-parental caring arrangements (including a child of a child) or adopted when they would otherwise be in local authority care, these children will be disregarded when ordering and the additional amount for a child will be payable for them regardless of the order they joined the household
- each remaining child is ordered according to their date of birth from the earliest to the latest date

Definition of a child or qualifying young person

A child is someone under the age of 16.

A qualifying young person is someone aged over 16 in the following situations:

- from their 16th birthday until 31 August following that birthday whether or not they are in full time education or training
- up to 31 August following their 19th birthday if they are enrolled in or have been accepted for approved training or a course of non-advanced education which averages over 12 hours per week during the term.

The education or training must have started before they reach 19 or they must have been enrolled or accepted to undertake that education or training before then.

A person in receipt of Universal Credit, Employment and Support Allowance or Jobseeker's Allowance in their own right is not a qualifying young person.

Who is responsible for a child or children?

A person will be able to claim an additional amount for a child if they have main responsibility for the care of that child or qualifying young person. This will normally be the person they live with most of the time - but not in all circumstances.

For Universal Credit purposes, the person with the main caring responsibility is known as the lead carer.

If the child or normally lives with two people in separate households, they will be asked to jointly nominate the person who will be the lead carer.

If they cannot agree, a decision maker will decide who the responsible person is. This will be based on who has main caring responsibilities for the child.

Only one benefit unit can receive the additional amount for children for a child or qualifying young person.

A claimant cannot be responsible for a qualifying young person who they are living with as a couple.

Ineligible partners with children

A person is responsible for a child or qualifying young person who normally lives with them regardless of whether they are the child of an ineligible partner. See Ineligible partners.

If the eligible and ineligible partners are living together as a couple, the child is still 'normally living with' the eligible partner and is therefore part of their Universal Credit claim.

The child will be taken into account for the additional amount for children (subject to the 2 child maximum) and housing in the eligible partner's claim.

Verifying a child or qualifying young person's details

Child Benefit Service (CBS) is used to verify existence, residency and responsibility of all children. DWP have an agreement with HMRC which allows certain staff to have access CBS.

The Life Event Portal can be used to verify child details before a claim to Child Benefit is made.

Not being in receipt of Child Benefit does not necessarily mean that a claimant is not entitled to the additional amount for children.

If the child or qualifying young person is not on CBS or the Life Event Portal (for example, in the case of a new-born child), the claimant must provide acceptable evidence:

- of the existence of the child (for example, an adoption certificate, full birth certificate or passport)
- that they have responsibility for the child (for example, a Child Benefit award letter)
- of the relationship of the child to the claimant (for example, adoption certificate or full birth certificate)

The claimant does not need to provide all of the above but the agent must be satisfied the claimant has responsibility for the child.

If the child is disabled, the Customer Information System (Searchlight) must be accessed to confirm that they receive:

- Disability Living Allowance
- Personal Independence Payment
- Adult Disability Payment
- Child Disability Payment (in Scotland)

If this cannot be verified through the Customer Information System (Searchlight), the claimant must provide evidence including:

- Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payment or Child Disability Payment (in Scotland) award letter
- a letter from a doctor or ophthalmologist if the child is blind

These are examples and not a complete list.

If the information on CBS and the Customer Information System (Searchlight) differs to what the claimant has entered on their account, the information already held on both these systems will be used.

When the additional amount for children won't be paid

The additional amount for children will not be paid if the child or QYP is:

- in prison
- the third or subsequent child in a household born on or after 6 April 2017 unless an exception applies (see Exceptions to the additional amounts for a maximum of 2 children)
- looked after by a local authority (see below for exceptions)
- looked after by a foster carer (see foster carers)
- temporarily absent from the household for 6 months or more
- absent from Great Britain for 1 month or more - this can be extended for a further month if the absence is due to the death of a close relative of the child
- living outside the UK
- no longer part of the benefit unit
- aged 16 and not in full-time non-advanced education
- currently part of someone else's benefit claims for:
 - Child Tax Credit
 - Employment and Support Allowance
 - Jobseeker's Allowance

When a child or qualifying young person is looked after by a local authority

For Universal Credit purposes, being 'looked after by a local authority' refers to a child or qualifying young person who is being cared for or housed by a local authority for a reason other than respite care.

The child may be placed with a foster parent or another family member.

The local authority will provide financial support for the child and the responsible person will no longer be eligible for the additional amount for children.

There are two exceptions to when the additional amount for a child is awarded for a child who is looked-after by a local authority. These are:

- during a short break of respite care (if this exceeds 6 months, temporary absence rules will apply)
- when the local authority places the child to live with, or is to continue to live with, their parent or a person who has parental responsibility for them

Disabled Child Addition

Families with one or more disabled children or QYP may be eligible for extra support with the Disabled Child Addition.

In most cases the Disabled Child Addition can only be considered where the additional amount for a child has already been awarded for the child or QYP with the disability.

However, non-payment of the additional amount for children for any third or subsequent children will not prevent payment of the Disabled Child Addition.

Example:

A claimant has 3 disabled children and is only eligible for the additional amount for a child for 2 of the children. The Disabled Child Addition will be paid for all 3 children.

The Disabled Child Addition is payable at 2 rates:

- Higher Rate when the child or qualifying young person:
 - receives the higher rate Disability Living Allowance or Child Disability Payment (in Scotland) care component
 - receives Personal Independence Payment enhanced daily living
 - receives Adult Disability Payment enhanced daily living
 - is blind - a child who is blind might not be in receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment (the claimant will be asked to provide a Certificate of Visual Impairment), Adult Disability Payment
- Lower Rate when the child or qualifying young person receives:
 - Disability Living Allowance or Child Disability Payment (in Scotland) at the middle rate or lower rate care
 - Disability Living Allowance mobility component
 - Personal Independence Payment standard daily living rate
 - Personal Independence Payment standard or enhanced mobility rate
 - Adult Disability Payment standard daily living rate
 - Adult Disability Payment standard or enhanced mobility rate

Child or Qualifying young person is aged 16 and over

A claimant must notify Universal Credit if their child is going to continue in full-time non-advanced education or approved training after the age of 16. This is so they can continue to receive the additional amount for a child and the Disabled Child Addition if appropriate.

Non-advanced education is study up to the standard of the following:

- GCSEs
- A levels or equivalent
- NVQ/SVQ level 1, 2 or 3
- BTEC National Diploma, Ordinary National Certificate and First Diploma
- Scottish Standard Grades
- Scottish Highers

This is not a complete list.

Child or qualifying young person in home education

Universal Credit will include the additional amount for any eligible children in home education until either of the following occur:

- the end of August following each child's 16th birthday
- the end of August after each child's 19th birthday if they are still living at home and in home education taking a non-advanced course or taking part in approved training.

For the Claimant to qualify for the additional amount for children the following should be taken into account:

- the education must have started before the child 16th birthday
- the education must exceed an average of more than 12 hours per week during term time. It must include receiving tuition, engaging in practical work or supervised study or taking examinations.
- the home education must not be a form of further education or contract of employment. It must be approved by the local authority or Secretary of State.

Life skills courses are classed as non-advanced education and are considered for the additional amount for children.

Qualifying young person ends full-time non-advanced education

If a 17-19-year-old has ended a course of non-advanced education (is no longer enrolled on a course and doesn't have a further follow-on year to complete), they are no longer treated as a qualifying young person.

If a 16 year old is not enrolled on a further course of non-advanced education, they are no longer treated as a qualifying young person after 1 September following their 16th birthday.

In both cases, the parent or guardian claiming Universal Credit is no longer entitled to the additional amount for a child for that person.

In the case of 16-year-old:

- if the young person's course ends before the 1 September following their 16th birthday, payment of the additional amount will stop on the first day of the assessment period in which the 1 September falls
- If the young person's course ends after the 1 September following their 16th birthday, payment of the additional amount will stop on the first day of the assessment period in which the course end-date falls

The parent or guardian may continue to receive Child Benefit payments for the young person for a short period unless they claim Universal Credit in their own right. If the young person does claim Universal Credit, Child Benefit payments must be stopped immediately.

An 18 or 19 year old can claim Universal Credit in their own right the day after they complete their non-advanced education course. Even if they intend to take up advanced education, they will not be treated as receiving education until their new course begins.

A 16 or 17 year old will only be able to claim Universal Credit in their own right if they meet one of the lower-age exceptions. See Under 18s.

When a child dies

Where the additional amount for a child is payable and that child dies, it will remain in payment for a 3-month run-on period which includes the assessment period in which the child died and the following 2 assessment periods. This also applies to the Disabled Child Addition if in payment.

If there are any ongoing paid childcare costs, the claimant will continue to receive help with these costs until the end of the second assessment period following the assessment period in which the death occurred. (DN ADM F7090)

The run-on also applies when a new-born child is added to the benefit unit and dies in that same assessment period, and also where the claimant did not add the child to the claim before death, for example if the child died shortly after birth.

The run-on will apply where either the:

- claimant is the child's parent, either with responsibility for the child or a non-resident parent
- child is part of the benefit unit regardless of whether biologically related to the claimant.

If the first or second child in a 3-child family dies, the third child will then become eligible for the additional amount for a child once the run-on ends.

When an agent is notified of the death of a dependent child, they must create and follow the 'Record the death of a child' to-do in the claimant's account on the Universal

Credit Service. This instructs the agent that we do not need to verify the child's death if it has been reported by the claimant.

By completing the to-do, the child will automatically be removed from the claim after the 3-month run-on period and the claimant will receive an automatic journal message to inform them of this.

Note: the 'Record the death of a child' to-do must only be used for deaths reported on 1 October 2021 and after.

The Claimant Commitment and all conditionality must be switched-off for a mandatory period of 6 months (which may be 6 months or the next 6 assessment periods) from the day that the death occurred. See Switching-off work availability and work-related activities.

Agents must offer optional support to the claimant after 3 months with a commitments review to take place after 6 months.

Note: this guidance does not apply to stillborn babies.

Still births

If a claimant suffers a still birth, they do not become responsible for a child. Therefore, the claimant is not entitled to any amount of Universal Credit for the child for any period.

Bereavement run-on does not apply to still born children.