

## Registered or approved childcare

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### Registered or approved childcare

To be eligible for help with childcare costs through Universal Credit, a claimant must use a registered or approved childcare provider, such as:

- nurseries
- child minders
- day care services
- school-bases care
- certain after school provision
- holiday play schemes
- play provision

These are examples and not a complete list.

A childcare provider can choose whether or not to register with a childminding agency designated under the Childcare Act 2006. To check whether provider is registered, contact the relevant national inspection authority as follows:

- England - [OFSTED](#)
- Wales – [Care Inspectorate Wales](#)
- Scotland – [Care Inspectorate](#)
- Northern Ireland – [Family Support Northern Ireland](#)

Once it has been confirmed that the person providing childcare is registered with one of these agencies, Universal Credit can reimburse childcare costs up to 85% subject to the maximum limit.

Some childcare providers, such as private schools, are not required to be registered with the relevant local authority - however childcare costs can still be claimed from Universal Credit. These are known as approved providers.

Some other types of childcare, such as after-school clubs on school premises, may not be registered with the relevant national inspection authority but are allowable when authorised by the governing body of a school.

Activity clubs such as ballet lessons, football clubs or tuition classes may be Ofsted registered and will need a separate decision to determine whether these are reasonable and relevant childcare.

Informal childcare, such as a friend or family member looking after a child, is excluded. See 'Child is looked after by the claimant, claimant's partner or a relative' below.

## **What registered or approved childcare means in each part of Great Britain**

### **Childcare in England**

The childcare provider must be registered with the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills ([OFSTED](#)).

If a claimant uses childcare provided by a school, it must be:

- provided by or under the direction of the person responsible for managing the school, or a local authority
- on school premises that may be inspected as part of a school inspection
- out of school hours (activity clubs - for example ballet lessons, do not count as after school care)

### **Childcare in Wales**

The childcare must be provided by:

- a provider registered with the [Care Inspectorate Wales](#)
- a school on the school premises or by a local authority
- a domiciliary care worker (also called a home carer) providing childcare in the child's home and registered under the Domiciliary Care Agencies (Wales) Regulations 2004
- someone approved under the Childcare at Home Voluntary Approval Scheme providing childcare in a child's home - or if several children are being looked after, in one of the children's homes

The upper age limit for the compulsory registration of childcare provision in Wales has been extended from 8 to 12 years.

The changes mean providers of childcare for children up to the age of 12 years old, operating for more than two hours a day, must be registered with the Care Inspectorate for Wales.

### **Childcare in Scotland**

The child minding or day care must be provided by:

- a provider registered with the [Care Inspectorate](#)
- someone registered with the Care Inspectorate to provide childcare in a child's home

### **Childcare in Northern Ireland**

The childcare provider must be registered with the [Family Support NI](#). They are responsible for the registration, inspection, monitoring and support of child-minders and day care providers.

### **Claimant is a Crown servant working abroad accompanied by their children**

If the claimant is a Crown servant (for example, a civil servant or a member of the armed forces posted overseas) they may be eligible for help with their childcare costs through Universal Credit. The childcare provider must be approved by a Ministry of Defence accreditation scheme abroad.

### **Child is looked after by the claimant, the claimant's partner or a relative**

Childcare costs cannot be paid for childcare provided by a claimant or a claimant's partner.

However, a claimant may be eligible for support with childcare costs through Universal Credit if the childcare is provided by a relative who is either:

- a registered child minder who cares for a child outside of the child's own home
- a childcare provider approved under the Childcare at Home Voluntary Approval Scheme in Wales who cares for a child outside the child's own home - but they must also care for at least one other child who is not related to them

### **Excluded childcare**

Excluded childcare includes any that is not registered with the appropriate regulator (OFSTED or its Scottish, Welsh or Northern Ireland equivalent) or approved under a voluntary approval scheme.

Certain other childcare arrangements are also excluded. A claimant is not eligible for help with childcare costs through Universal Credit where care is provided by a:

- close relative of the child in the child's home - for example, the child's parents
- foster parent
- friend or family member looking after a child on an informal basis

The reference to 'close relation' refers to the relationship with the child and not the claimant - for example, the child's grandparents would not be deemed close relatives

### **Childcare agencies**

Childcare costs can be paid to a Childminder registered to an agency. In this circumstance the name of that agency is required to verify the agency is OFSTED registered.