

# How to get support after having a baby

## Help and support for new parents

Becoming a parent - whether for the first time or welcoming a new addition to your family - can sometimes feel overwhelming, but there's plenty of support available. Your midwife and health visitor are there to help in the early weeks and months, but the good news is there's also a wealth of other support available for parents.

From financial assistance to resources for your mental wellbeing, you'll find a variety of services designed to help you navigate this journey.

Additionally, local community groups offer opportunities to connect with other parents, share experiences, and gain insights into topics like nighttime feedings, what to expect as "normal," and fostering your child's development.

## What benefits might be available?

There are several benefits and entitlements available if you're pregnant or have a baby, especially if you're unemployed or on a low income.

Start by checking your eligibility using the [Entitledto Calculator](#). This quick, 10-minute process will give you an overview of the benefits you could receive and guide you on how to apply.

- [Child Benefit](#) - if you're eligible, you'll get £25.60 a week for your first child and £16.95 a week for each additional child, paid every four weeks
- [Disability Living Allowance \(DLA\) for Children](#) - available to parents or carers of a child under 16 who needs extra care or has mobility issues
- [Universal Credit](#) - can cover some childcare costs if you're working, including holiday, afterschool and breakfast clubs
- [Child Maintenance Service](#) - helps calculate and set up child maintenance payments from the other parent and can assist in locating them if needed

## What further financial support is available?

Having a baby can cost a UK family an average of £6,000 in the first year, so it's important to prepare your finances as best as possible.

There are some excellent baby cost calculators available that can give you an estimate, especially if it's your first time or been a while since your last child.

If you qualify for benefits, be sure to apply to help manage expenses.

- [Household Support Fund](#) - A grant from your local council to help with energy bills, food, and essential costs. They may also offer food vouchers during school holidays.
- [SureStart Maternity Grant](#) - A one-off payment of £500, which doesn't need to be repaid, to help towards your household costs.
- [Government Support with Childcare](#) - Tax-free childcare and free funded hours may be available based on your work situation.
- [Healthy Start Vouchers](#) - If you're over ten weeks pregnant or have a child under four, you may be able to get help with buying healthy food and milk.
- [Free School Meals](#) - Your child may qualify for free school meals if you receive certain benefits, including during school holidays.
- [Retailer Discounts for Parents](#) - Many retailers offer discounts like free meals for children in the holidays, or discounted entry tickets. Check locally for deals.

## Take care of your mental health

The first weeks and months after having a baby can bring a mix of emotions, from joy and love to worry and frustration. If you're feeling overwhelmed, remember you're not alone - reach out to your midwife, doctor, or health visitor for support.

- [COPE \(Centre of Perinatal Excellence\)](#) - if you need support for the emotional challenges of becoming a parent
- [PANDAS Foundation](#) - advice and support for pre-and post-natal depression
- [MIND](#) - learn about mental health issues during and after pregnancy
- [Home Start](#) - local community network of trained volunteers supporting families with young children
- [Action on Postpartum Psychosis](#) - support for women and families affected by Postpartum Psychosis
- [Pregnancy Sickness Support](#) - help for those affected by pregnancy sickness
- [Maternity Action](#) - specialist advice on your maternity rights
- [NHS Therapy and Counselling Services](#) - support available through the NHS for mental health during and after pregnancy

## Other types of support available

Additional support is available through employers and community groups:

- [Maternity/Paternity Leave and Pay](#) - time off work and financial support to care for your new baby
- [Maternity Allowance](#) - financial help for those who don't qualify for standard maternity pay
- [Employer Schemes](#) - flexible working hours, childcare vouchers and employee assistance programmes to help with the transition to parenthood
- [Parental Leave](#) - extra unpaid time off to care for your child, supporting work-life balance
- [Local Citizens Advice Office](#) - Offers advice and support on benefits, legal rights, and local services available to new parents
- [Community Groups](#) - Ask your midwife for local group recommendations

**Remember, if you're unable to keep up with repayments, our team are here and ready to help**