

## **Benefits**

A benefit is the name for money given by the UK authorities to people with low or no income or for people who have extra care needs because of an illness or disability.

People with refugee status or another form of leave to remain in the UK have the same rights to benefits as UK citizens.

It is important to claim as soon as you are granted status, or you may lose money.

When applying for welfare benefits you will have to show that you are not receiving money from any other source, for example, from National Asylum Support Service (NASS). If you have been supported by NASS you will be asked to show a NASS 35 form. This form is issued by NASS and gives the exact date when they stopped supporting you. You should receive this form at the same time as the letter giving you a positive decision on your asylum application.

You will not be sent a NASS 35 form if you received refugee status or another form of leave to remain in the UK whilst in emergency accommodation and you were never given another home to live in. However, in order to claim benefits you still need to show a NASS letter confirming that NASS refuses to support you because you have had a positive decision on your asylum claim. To get this letter, call NASS on 0845 600 0914 and give them your Immigration and Nationality Directorate and NASS reference numbers.

When you prove your status, the Department for Work and Pensions should begin payments, even if you have not yet received a NASS 35 form.

If you have not received a NASS 35 form and you need one, telephone NASS on 0845 600 09 14.

### **National Insurance (NI) Number**

When you apply for benefits, you will be asked for your national insurance (NI) number. You can apply for a NI number at the same Department for Work and Pensions office. You will be asked for evidence of your identity and should take with you any documents from NASS or Immigration and Nationality Directorate. If you have a passport or birth certificate, you should take that too.

### **These are the benefits available to people on low or no income:**

Income Support	Income-based Job Seeker's Allowance
Housing Benefit	Council Tax Benefit
Child Benefit	Child Tax Credit
Social Fund	Working Tax Credit
Pension Credit	Severe Disablement Allowance

### **These are the benefits paid to people who have extra care needs because of illness or disability, or who look after a severely disabled person:**

- Attendance Allowance
- Disability Living Allowance
- Carer's Allowance

If you have been granted refugee status or another form of leave to remain in the UK, you can claim backdated Income Support, Pension Credit, Council Tax Benefit, and /or tax credits to cover the period that you were excluded from these benefits. Any other support paid to you will be deducted.

You must claim within 28 days (or for tax credits, 3 months) of receiving the Home Office letter granting you indefinite leave to remain as a refugee.

### **Income Support**

Income Support provides money for basic living expenses. People who are entitled to Income Support are:

- People looking after children on their own
- People looking after someone who cannot look after themselves
- People who are not able to work because of health reasons including stress. You will need a medical certificate from your doctor.

To claim Income Support go to the Social Security/Jobcentre Plus office.

### **Pension Credit**

Pension Credit is for people aged 60 and over.

It provides a contribution towards a guaranteed level of income. People with caring responsibilities, severe disability or certain housing costs may be entitled to more than the minimum amount.

For pensioners aged 65 and over Pension Credit may also provide a reward for some of the savings and income they have for their retirement.

To apply for Pension Credit contact the Pension Credit Application Line on 0800 99 1234 or contact your Pension Centre or Social security office.

### **Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit**

If you have been granted refugee status or another form of leave to remain in the UK, you get Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit if you are receiving Income Support or Income-based Job Seeker's Allowance.

You may also claim Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Benefit if you are on low income. You claim these benefits from your local authority, not from the Social Security/Jobcentre Plus Office. You may not receive the full amount to cover your rent. You can check with the council before hand, to find out how much you will receive.

If you are offered a job or training your benefits may be reduced.

### **Child Benefit**

If you have been granted refugee status or another form of leave to remain in the UK, you may claim Child Benefit if you are responsible for a child under 16 years old (or under 19 years old if the child is in school or college for more than 12 hours a week). This benefit is not affected by how much money you have or if you are working.

To claim Child Benefit, obtain a form from any Inland Revenue enquiry centre, Jobcentre Plus Office or the Department for Work and Pensions website.

### **Social Fund**

If you have been granted refugee status or another form of leave to remain in the UK, you may apply for help from the Social Fund if you need it in the emergency, or to buy things for your new home.

The Social Fund can lend you money interest free or give you a grant. You do not have a right to this money. The Social Security/ Jobcentre Plus office decides whether or not to give you this money. It is paid only on emergencies.

If you were housed by NASS and are moving into a new home you can apply for a Community Care Grant to pay for furniture and other items.

To claim a Social Fund loan or Community Care grant, go to the Social Security/ Jobcentre Plus office. If you are refused a Social Fund payment you can ask for a review of the decision.

The Social Fund can also help people who get certain income related benefits or tax credits.

**Sure Start Maternity Grants** can help with the costs of things for a new baby and do not have to be paid back.

**Funeral Payments** help towards the costs of a funeral. They depend on your circumstances, not those of the person who has died.

To apply for a Sure Start Maternity Grant or a Funeral Payment, contact your local Social Security or Jobcentre Plus office.

### **Disability and Carer's Benefits**

If you have been granted refugee status or another form of leave to remain in the UK, you may claim if:

- You have a severe disability and are under 65 years old and have been in the UK for six months. You can claim Disability Living Allowance (DLA) if as a result of a severe disability you have extra personal care needs or mobility needs.
- You have a severe disability and are over 65 years old and have been in the UK over six months. You can claim Attendance Allowance (AA) if as a result of a severe disability you have extra personal care needs.
- You cannot work or have low earnings because you spend 35 hours a week or more caring for a disabled or elderly person who receives either Disability Allowance or Attendance Allowance or Constant Attendance Allowance. You can claim Carer's Allowance.

To claim disability benefits, contact your nearest office of the Department for Work and Pensions.

### **Attendance Allowance**

If you have been granted refugee status or another form of leave to remain in the UK, you may claim Attendance Allowance if you have extra personal care needs because of your severe disability. You must be aged 65 or over and:

- Not living permanently in hospital or living in accommodation provided by or funded by a local authority.
- You must have lived in the UK for six out of the last twelve months, actually be resident in the UK when you claim, and normally live in the UK. Different rules apply if you are terminally ill.

To claim Attendance Allowance, go to the Department for Work and Pensions.

### **Carer's Allowance**

If you have been granted refugee status or another form of leave to remain in the UK, you may claim Carer's Allowance if you are aged 16 or more and:

- You spend at least 35 hours a week caring for a person with a disability who is getting Attendance Allowance or middle or highest rate care component of Disability Living Allowance, or certain rates of Constant Attendance Allowance
- You are not earning more than per £77.00 per week from 7 April 2003, after allowance expenses
- You have been in Great Britain for not less than 26 per week in the 12 months before the day you make a claim
- You are not in full-time education

To claim Carer's Allowance, go to the Department for Work and Pensions.

### **Working Tax Credit**

If you have been granted refugee status or another form of leave to remain in the UK, you may claim Working Tax Credit:

You have a child under 16 years old (19 if at school), work at least 16 hours a week and have less than £8,000 savings.

This benefit is not claimed through an agency – ask your employer for more information.

Disabled Persons Tax Credit is an allowance for people who are working but who are low paid and who have a mental or physical disability.

If you think you qualify, ask your employer for more information.

### **Child Tax Credit**

If you have been granted refugee status or another form of leave to remain on the UK, you may claim Child Tax Credit if you or your partner are aged 16 or over and:

- You are responsible for at least one child aged under 16 or a qualifying young person up to the age of 19 who is in full-time education
- You are responsible for a child aged under 18 who finished full time education in the last 20 weeks and who has registered with the Careers Service
- You have gross income less than £50,000 a year.

Ring the tax credit helpline on 0845 300 3900 or visit the Inland Revenue website for further information on Child Tax Credit. The helpline can send you an application pack and guidance noted on how to complete the form.

### **Income-Based Job Seeker's Allowance**

Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA) is a benefit for unemployed people who are capable of work and actively seeking full-time employment.

Entitlement to Income-Based JSA depends on a person's income and capital (savings or property). The income and capital rules are the same as for Income Support, except for the treatment of part-time earnings.

<http://languages.homepoint.communitiesscotland.gov.uk>

**You can claim Job Seeker's Allowance if:**

- You are unemployed and aged 18 years old and you are capable of work
- You are actively seeking full-time work
- You are in work for which you receive no wages. Some part-time workers may also be able to claim Job Seeker's Allowance (depending on how many hours you work)

To claim this benefit or find out more information, go to your nearest Jobcentre Plus office.