



Quids for kids

A guide to help with childcare costs



London Borough
of Hounslow

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Help with childcare costs

Families can struggle with the expense of childcare and raising young children and many families do not claim financial help because they are not aware of what is available or they assume they will not be eligible.

Hounslow Family Information Service have produced this guide explaining all the major types of financial help available towards the cost of childcare and how to claim.

The guide has been broken down into sections covering:

1. All parents
2. Parents looking for work or in work/working
3. Parents in education or training
4. Lone parents
5. Parents of sick or disabled children

Each section provides a summary of the help available to parents, the eligibility criteria and how to claim.

Registered childcare

To qualify for help with childcare costs, childcare must be registered. This means that it must be registered with and inspected by Ofsted.

Registered childcare includes childminders, day nurseries, pre-school playgroups, holiday playschemes, before and after school care and some home child carers e.g. nannies, who are on Ofsted's voluntary childcare register.

Unregistered childcare such as babysitters, friends or relatives (who are not registered childminders) and unregistered nannies are not eligible for help with childcare costs.

The Family Information Service offers free, comprehensive and impartial information and advice on services for families with children and young people. Safeguarding children is paramount and parents should ensure the suitability of childcare providers.

To receive up to date lists of registered childcare provision in the London Borough of Hounslow, or for any other child family/related enquiry, please contact Hounslow Family Information Service.

Information includes:

- Childcare and education
- Activities for children and young people
- Local and national family support, health and parenting services
- Financial help for families
- Services for children with special educational needs or a disability
- Family Services Directory

Please note: Eligibility to claim any of the benefits and grants listed in this guide, and how much you will receive, will depend on individual circumstances. Every effort has been taken to ensure the accuracy of the information in this guide, however we cannot guarantee that the information contained is entirely accurate at the time of reading as many changes to existing benefits were still being announced/passed through parliament. Please contact the relevant organisations directly to double check monetary amounts and eligibility criteria.

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1. All Parents

Child Benefit

What is it?

Child benefit is a tax free payment that you can claim for the children you are responsible for. You do not have to be working to qualify and the benefit is not affected by any savings you have. If you qualify, you will receive £20.30 per week for the eldest or only child and £13.40 per week for each additional child.

Can I claim it?

You may be able to get Child Benefit if any of the following apply:

- your child is under 16
- your child is over 16 and in education or training that qualifies for Child Benefit
- your child is 16 or 17, has left education or training that qualifies for Child Benefit and is registered for work, education or training with an approved body

How do I claim it?

To claim Child Benefit you will need to fill in a Child Benefit claim form and send it to the Child Benefit Office along with your child's birth or adoption certificate. You cannot make a claim over the phone or online.

Contact points:

- Child Benefit Office
PO BOX 1
NE88 1AA
- Helpline: **08453 021 444**
- Web: **www.hmrc.gov.uk/childbenefits**

Notes

- Your Child Benefit can only be backdated for up to three months from the date the Child Benefit Office receives your claim, so it's best to make your claim straight away to avoid losing money.
- With effect from April 2013, higher rate tax payers will not be eligible to claim Child Benefit.
- With effect from April 2013, child benefit rates will remain frozen for 3 years

Child Tax Credit

What is it?

Child Tax Credit is a payment from the government in place to support families with children, if their household income is below certain thresholds. Child Tax Credit is also paid to those who are not in work. The credit is broken down into elements with a family element that most families who are eligible will receive, and a child element payable for each child. You may get extra help if your child has a disability. (See page 18 for information on the disabled element of Child Tax Credit).

Can I claim it?

Child Tax Credit is paid to you if you are responsible for at least one child or young person who normally lives with you, aged 0-16 or 16-20 if they are in full time further education. This does not include university or higher education – see parents in education section.

The Child Tax Credit you receive will depend on your household income and how many children you have. Currently families earning less than £58000 or £66350 if they have a baby under one are eligible for some help. (Changes will be taking place in April 2011 - please see notes section)
Child Tax Credit is not intended to cover childcare costs, although parents may choose to use it for this purpose.

Please see table below for a breakdown of the elements which make up the Child Tax Credit. Please note that these amounts are the **maximum** amounts available and will be reduced depending on your income. (A taper is applied to all income over £6420).

Element	Maximum amount per year - April 2010	Maximum amount per year - April 2011
Family Element	£545	£545
Baby Element (up to a child's 1st birthday)	£545	Withdrawn - see notes section
Child Element (per child)	£2300	£2555
Disabled Child Element	£2715	£2800
Severely Disabled Child Element	£1095	£1130

How do I claim it?

To find out if you are eligible or to make a claim -

- Helpline: **0845 300 3900**
- Web: **www.direct.gov.uk/taxcredits**

Notes

- From April 2011, Child Tax Credit will not be paid to families earning more than £40,000.
- From April 2011, the baby element will be removed.
- Currently a claim can be backdated by 3 months from the date your form is received at the tax office. From April 2012, claims will only be backdated by one month from the date received.

Early Education Entitlement

What is it?

In order to support parents and give children the best possible start in life, the government provides free early learning places for 3 & 4 year olds. This is administered through your local authority. From the term after your child's 3rd birthday until they start school he/she is entitled to up to 15 hours per week of early education. This is usually offered during school term time through registered early education providers.

Can I claim it?

Your child does not become eligible for the entitlement until the **term following** their 3rd birthday.

Children who turn 3 between:	Eligible the following:
1 April and 31st August	September
1 September and 31st December	January
1 January and 31st March	April

How do I claim it?

You need to find a place for your child. If you are already using a childcare provider, speak to them directly about accessing the entitlement. If not, contact your local providers to ask about availability – the **Family Information Service** can provide a list of these on request.

Notes

- Please note demand for places in some areas is high so unfortunately there is no guarantee you will get your child into your first choice of provider.
- Many childcare providers have waiting lists so it is advisable you start looking for a place before your child reaches the eligible age.
- For a more detailed guide on the Early Education Entitlement – please contact Hounslow Family Information Service or visit www.hounslow.gov.uk/early_education_entitlement.



2. Looking for work or in work/working

2a. Looking for work

If you are the parent/carer of a disabled child and are looking for work please also refer to Work Focussed Support for carers on page 19

New Deal

What is it?

New Deal is a range of programmes offered through Job Centre Plus to help unemployed people, particularly those who have been unemployed for a long time, to find work.

Through New Deal, intensive support and activities such as training and work experience is provided so that you:

- can become more confident
- get new skills
- become more employable
- can find and stay in work

Depending on your circumstances, you may have to take part in New Deal. If you do have to take part and refuse, you may lose benefits.

There are a number of New Deal programmes which may be available to you, depending on your circumstances, including:

- New Deal for Lone Parents
- New Deal for Partners
- New Deal for Disabled People

The support available with each New Deal programme will vary slightly but will usually include tailoring a package of support, training and actions around your circumstances with the goal of helping you into work. Your advisor can provide advice around childcare issues and will ensure that you are better off in work than you are on benefits. Childcare costs (where necessary) may be paid while you undertake training or work experience. Travel costs can also be paid to and from the training centre (see childcare support offered by Job Centre Plus overleaf).

Can I claim it?

The majority of New Deal programmes are voluntary and different criteria applies to each of the programmes listed above. If you are unemployed and have been for some time, you are likely to be able to apply to join at least one of the above programmes.

How do I claim it?

Speak to your local Job Centre Plus for advice on which New Deal programme would be best for you. See page 20 for contact details.

Notes: The New Deal programme is due to end on 31st March 2011.

Childcare Support offered by Job Centre Plus

What is it?

Registered childcare costs up to a certain limit can be paid for childcare used while a parent attends an interview with an advisor, a childcare provider, an employer or when attending an approved training course.

Can I claim it?

This payment is only available to parents participating in New Deal for Lone Parents and New Deal for Partners or Work Focussed Support for Carers (outlined on page 19).

How do I claim it?

For more information speak to your local Job Centre Plus. See page 20 for contact details.

Job Centre Plus Advisor Business Case

What is it?

Childcare costs while attending education courses and other training which improve an unemployed parent's employability may be paid, up to a certain limit, by the Job Centre Plus. The costs related to the course itself may also be paid.

Can I claim it?

Any such funding is discretionary and would be decided on a case-by-case basis. Childcare used must be registered and the amount payable may be limited.

How do I claim it?

You will need to provide a business case for your proposal. Please note that the funding decision is made at a senior level and can take 6-8 weeks for a result. Therefore any proposal will need to be made well in advance. Speak to your local Job Centre Plus advisor for more information. See page 20 for contact details.

Childcare Assist

What is it?

Registered childcare costs up to a certain limit can be paid for up to 5 days, in the 7 days immediately before a parent starts work.

Can I claim it?

To qualify, parents must be participating in the New Deal for Lone parents or New Deal for Partners and have received a firm job offer for a minimum of 8 hours per week.

How do I claim it?

For more information speak to your local Job Centre Plus. See page 20 for contact details.

Childcare Subsidy

What is it?

Registered childcare costs up to a certain limit can be paid for parents who are returning to work for less than 16 hours per week. This work must be an agreed step with their Job Centre Plus advisor to eventually move on to finding work of 16 hours or more per week. The subsidy can be paid for up to 1 year.

Can I claim it?

To qualify, parents must:

- be participating in the New Deal for Lone Parents or New Deal for Partners
- have a firm job offer of less than 16 hours per week
- have been in receipt of a qualifying benefit such as Jobseeker's Allowance or Income Support

How do I claim it?

For more information speak to your local Job Centre Plus. See page 20 for contact details.

2b. Parents in work/working

Childcare Element of Working Tax Credit

What is it?

Working Tax Credit is an in-work credit that tops up a family's household income if it is below a certain level. Working Tax Credit includes an element that can help with the costs of registered childcare for working parents known as the childcare element. The amount of the childcare element that parents receive will depend on their family income and circumstances.

The childcare element of the Working Tax Credit can pay for up to 80% of your registered childcare costs, which means that you can claim up to a maximum of 80p for every £1 that you spend on registered childcare, up to a certain limit. The maximum you can claim back is up to 80% of £175 per week (80% = £140) for one child and up to 80% of £300 (80% = £240) per week for two or more children. Please note that these amounts are going to be reduced in April 2011. See the Notes section overleaf for more detail.

The maximum amount you are eligible for is calculated, and then reduced in line with any income you earn above a lower threshold. Therefore the lower your income, the more tax credit you will receive.

As the childcare element takes into account your childcare costs when working out your income, those with childcare costs close to or above the upper limits (£175 per week for one child or £240 per week for two or more children) may be entitled to some credits, even if on a relatively modest income. Therefore it is always best to call the tax credits helpline or use the online tax credit calculator below to establish if you may be eligible for some assistance.

The childcare element of WTC is paid directly into the bank account of the child's main carer.

Can I claim it?

To qualify:

- you must be using registered childcare. See Introduction for more information on what constitutes registered childcare
- if you are a lone parent, you must work at least 16 hours per week
- if you are part of a couple you must both work at least 16 hours per week (exceptions apply if you or your partner are getting Disability Allowance, Incapacity Benefit / Employment and Support Allowance, or if in hospital or prison).

How do I claim it?

To find out if you are eligible or to make a claim call the Tax Credits Helpline on **0845 300 3900** (open 8am – 8pm) or visit **www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits**

You must also inform the Tax Credit Helpline of any changes in your circumstances such as:

- you stop using childcare;
- you change your childcare provider;
- your childcare costs change e.g. your child starts school and only needs after school care or your provider increases their prices;
- your earnings change significantly or you stop working

Notes

The Government has announced that the maximum amount of childcare costs that can be paid will fall from 80 to 70% in April 2011. Therefore, if you have one child: you can currently claim 80% of costs up to £175 a week, which works out at £140. From next April that will fall to £122.50 a week (70% of £175). If you have two or more children: you can currently claim 80% of costs up to £300 a week, which works out at £240. From next April that will fall to £210 a week (70% of £300). From April 2012, couples with children will have to work 24 hours between them with at least one working 16 hours to be entitled to Working Tax Credit.

Childcare Vouchers

What are they?

Childcare vouchers are a way for working parents to get help with the costs of childcare. The major benefit of using vouchers is that each parent is able to pay their childcare provider up to £55 a week which is free from tax and national insurance contributions. This may not sound like much but can equate to around a thousand pounds in savings over the year, and this can be double if you have a partner and they also use them.

Can I claim them?

Childcare vouchers are an employer-supported benefit. This means that your employer must either run a scheme, or be prepared to consider one, in order for you to benefit. You must also be using registered childcare – see the introduction section for an explanation of what constitutes registered childcare.

How do I claim them?

In order to receive childcare vouchers, you would need to enter into a 'salary sacrifice' agreement with your employer. This effectively means that you agree to sacrifice up to a maximum of £55 per week from your salary, in return for this amount in a voucher of the same value. You would then give this to your childcare provider as part payment, who will in turn redeem this with the voucher provider.

It is advisable to check with your childcare provider that they are prepared to accept childcare vouchers, as they would need to register with them in order to be paid. While there is no cost for them to do this, there is no obligation for them to register, so you should check that they are happy to do so before setting this up. The Family Information Service can provide you with a more detailed guide on childcare vouchers. See the useful contacts section for contact details, or download this directly from www.hounslow.gov.uk/childcare_costs

Notes

The Government have announced changes to childcare vouchers which come into effect in April 2011. The purpose of the change is to even out the amount of tax saving available for all employees regardless of the tax rate that the individual pays. Employees who already participate in an employer scheme on or before 5 April 2011 are not affected by these changes unless they leave the scheme or employment. Anyone joining a childcare voucher scheme after this date will receive the same level of saving, regardless of whether they are a higher or lower rate taxpayer.

In-Work Credit

What is it?

A fixed, tax-free payment of £60 per week (in London) for up to 1 year, payable on top of your earnings. It aims to provide short-term additional income to lone parents who have started work and must be claimed before you begin employment.

Can I claim it?

You may get In Work Credit if you:

- are bringing up children on your own
- have at least 1 child living with you under the age of 16
- are starting work of at least 16 hours per week
- expect the work to last 5 weeks or more

You must also have been claiming one or a combination of the following benefits for at least 52 weeks (short breaks of no more than five days are allowed):

- Income Support
- Jobseeker's Allowance
- Employment and Support Allowance (if you lost entitlement to Income Support due to the age of your youngest child and were not able to claim Jobseeker's Allowance because you were ill)

How do I claim it?

The claim form can be obtained from your local Job Centre Plus and must be completed and returned at least 5 weeks before starting work. See page 20 for contact details of your local Job Centre Plus.

3. Parents in Education or Training

This section covers information for parents who are in education or training. You may be studying on a course at college or university or doing some vocational training while at work.

Financial help for childcare costs while you are studying is mainly available through your training provider or Student Finance England (see additional contacts section).

The type of funding available will depend on what level of qualification you are studying for - Further Education or Higher Education.

Further Education

This is the term used to describe level 1, 2 and 3 courses. These could be A Levels, Access courses, NVQs or BTECs. Further education can also be used in reference for courses that help a parent to learn basic skills such as literacy, numeracy or computer skills.

Higher Education

These are courses that lead to qualifications at Level 4 and above. Examples of these qualifications are undergraduate courses such as BA or BSc or postgraduate courses such as an MA, MBA, PhD or MPhil. They also include HNDs, HNCs and DipHEs.

If you are unsure about the level of course you are doing, please check with your training provider.

Care to Learn

What is it?

Care to Learn is a support scheme which helps teenage parents who are under the age of 20 at the beginning of their course. The scheme provides financial support towards the cost of registered childcare (up to £175 a week) and travel costs so that young parents can continue with education or training.

Care to learn is available for courses up to and including level 3. There are no requirements around the course length or number of hours, however, the course must be a publicly funded programme of learning in England. This includes teenage parents continuing with compulsory education.

Can I claim it?

To qualify, you must:

- Live and study in England
- Be aged under 20 when you start the course
- Be undertaking a publicly funded learning or training programme
- Be using Ofsted registered childcare
- Be responsible for your own children

How do I claim it?

Care to learn is administered by the Young People's Learning Agency (YLPA). To apply for the scheme, young parents should talk to their college or Connexions advisor or call the Learner Support Helpline.

- Learner Support Helpline: **0800 121 8989**
- **www.direct.gov.uk/caretolearn**
- Hounslow Connexions: **020 8577 5478**

Notes

- Childcare costs are paid directly to the childcare provider.
- Travel costs are paid directly to the training provider which will then be reimbursed to the student.
- Courses which are solely distance learning, e-learning or higher education are not eligible for this funding.
- For courses lasting more than one academic year, parents will need to make a new application each year.
- Care to Learn does not affect any of your own or your family's benefits and you do not have to be on benefits to make a claim.

Adult Learning Grant

What is it?

The Adult Learning Grant is an income assessed grant in place to help you study and get the qualifications you need for the career you want. The Adult Learning Grant gives you up to £30 a week during term time equating to around £1000 a year towards childcare costs, travel costs, study materials and any other costs you might have associated with your learning.

Can I claim it?

The parent must be aged 19 or over and studying on a full time course which will lead to their first full level 2 or 3 qualification (includes BTEC, NVQ, GCSE and A Level).

Parents who are receiving out of work benefits or Income support will not be eligible.

If you are working, your earnings cannot exceed £19,513 if you are single or £30,810 if you are married or living with someone as if you are married.

How do I claim it?

To find out more about applying for the grant, parents should contact the student support or welfare officer at their college or call the Learner Support Helpline.

- Learner Support Helpline: **0800 121 8989**
- **www.direct.gov.uk/alg**

Notes

The grant is paid for up to 2 years but can be extended for a further year in some circumstances.

Discretionary Support Fund

What is it?

Discretionary support funds are available in 6th forms and colleges to help students with their learning costs. Funds are prioritised for those who face financial hardship if they continue to study. If awarded, funding can be used for childcare costs, accommodation costs (for those that study further than the maximum distance from home), essential course-related costs or other emergencies.

Can I claim it?

Training providers and colleges will set their own criteria, management procedures, amounts available and funds allocated and these may differ from one institution to the next. Colleges/training providers will have priority group categories such as:

- Students economically disadvantaged (on low incomes or benefits)
- Students aged 19 or over who don't have a level 2 qualifications.
- Students who have been in care or on probation.

How do I claim it?

Contact your training provider's student support/welfare officer.

Notes

- The discretionary support fund is intended to meet special needs and circumstances which cannot be met by other forms of help.

***The following support is available for Higher Learning Students only.**

*Childcare Grant & Parents Learning Allowance

What is it?

The childcare grant offers help with childcare costs for students who have dependant children, are on a low income and are studying a full time higher education course. The grant can be used for childcare costs for children up to the age of 15 or 17 if the child has a disability or special need.

The childcare grant can pay up to 85% of your childcare costs however the maximum grant award is £148.75 per week for 1 child and £255 per week for 2 or more children. Payment is usually made to parents in 3 instalments across the year usually at the start of each term.

Can I claim it?

Eligibility is dependant on the following:

- Amount of household income
- The course is a full time higher education course
- You are using registered childcare

*Parents Learning Allowance

In addition to the childcare grant, you may be eligible for the Parents Learning Allowance. This can be used for books, equipment and travel or for additional help with childcare costs if other support does not cover all childcare costs. A maximum amount of £1508 can be paid but this is dependant on your individual circumstances.

How do I claim it?

For further details or to make a claim for the childcare grant, parents learning allowance or both contact:

Student Finance England on **0845 300 50 90**

You can also apply on line at **www.studentfinance.direct.gov.uk**

Notes

Parents who receive the childcare element of Working Tax Credit cannot also receive the childcare grant.

*Access to learning fund

What is it?

This fund is for those in hardships and in need of extra financial support. Universities and colleges administer this fund and you can apply if you are a full time or part time higher education student. Your training provider will assess you individual circumstances and you may receive help for course costs, living costs and childcare costs. You may also be considered for help if an unexpected financial emergency arises or you think you may have to give up your course due to your financial situation.

Can I claim it?

The fund is available (assessed on individual need by the training provider*) for:

- Full time higher education students
- Full time postgraduate students
- Part time undergraduates and postgraduates as long as the course lasts at least one year and takes no more than twice as long to complete as an equivalent full time course.

*Priority will be given to students:

- with children – especially lone parents
- students of low income families
- care leavers
- final year students
- disabled students

How do I claim it?

All applications need to be made through your training provider's student services department once you have started the course. You will need to provide any correspondence you have received from Student Finance England showing how much you have been awarded through the standard finance package. You will also need to show additional evidence of your financial situation such as bank statements etc.

Notes

- Any funding received through this fund is in addition to the standard student finance package and is not meant as a substitute.
- It is expected that you will have applied for all other forms of financial support such as student loans, childcare grants and bursaries before you make an application for the Access to Learning Fund.

Career Development Loan

What is it?

This is a bank loan that parents can use to help pay for course related costs such as childcare as well as a range of other expenses. Parents can borrow between £300-£10,000 from a participating bank to pay for the course and related fees and this can cover up to 2 years of study while the parent is on the course and one year's fees for practical experience (if this is part of the course).

The amount offered depends on the individual lending banks criteria and the parent's financial circumstances.

Can I claim it?

You need to be:

- Aged 18 or over
- Settled in the UK or have been in the UK for at least 3 years before starting the course
- Meet the criteria of the individual lending bank.

How do I claim it?

Contact the professional and career development loan helpline (Next Step):

- Helpline: **0800 100 900**
- Web: **www.nextstep.direct.gov.uk**

Notes

- A career development loan may affect entitlements to other benefits therefore it is advisable to check with your JCP advisor before agreeing to a loan.
- YPLA (young persons learning agency) will pay the interest on the loan while you study and for one month after the course finishes. You are then responsible for repayments. Interest will be charged at a competitive rate. (Please check this with your lending bank).

Other Support Funds for parents in education or training Adult Education subsidised childcare

What is it?

Subsidised childcare may be available at crèches in some Adult Education Centres and outreach venues however funding and places are limited.

Can I claim it?

Priority is given to learners in receipt of means tested benefits studying for a qualification.

How do I claim it?

Contact Hounslow Adult Education

- Tel: **020 8583 6000**
- Email: **courses@hounslow.gov.uk**

NHS childcare Allowance

What is it?

This is an allowance paid to parents who study on a health professional course.

Can I claim it?

To qualify you need to be

- Either an existing or new NHS bursary funded student.
- Using registered childcare.
- Not claiming the childcare element of working tax credit.

How do I claim it?

Contact NHS student grant helpline:

- Tel: **0845 358 6655**
- Web: **www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/students**

Training Providers' on site nurseries

Further education colleges and other education providers may offer free or subsidised childcare places at their own nurseries for lower income families. These nurseries often have long waiting lists so you need to check prior to enrolment if your child can access a place.

Charitable organisations

Limited funding may be available through charitable organisations and trusts. There are a range of educational grants available through Family Action's grants programme. Applicants must be studying at a college or university that is affiliated to EGAS (educational grants advisory service). Grants are primarily targeted at families and individuals with low incomes, particularly those living on benefits. Preference will be given to those studying courses likely to lead to improved employment prospects. Grants are available to those who are British nationals by birth (this means those who at birth had British Citizenship) **OR** asylum seekers, refugees and those with leave to remain studying ESOL or ILETS courses. Grants are available to people living across the UK. While there are no set limits, in general grants are made for £200 to £300.

To find out whether you are eligible to apply for a Family Action Educational Grant or another grant making trust, contact

Tel: **020 7241 7459**

Web: **www.family-action.org.uk**



4. Benefits for Lone Parents

If you are a lone parent in work, please also refer to In-work Credit on page 10 and Working Tax Credit on page 8

Child Maintenance

What is it?

Regular financial support paid by the non-resident parent to the parent with care to help with the child's everyday living costs. It can be arranged through the Child Support Agency, the courts or a private arrangement with the other parent. A parent's financial responsibility for their child does not stop if their relationship with the other parent ends.

Can I claim it?

Child maintenance is for separated parents, to ensure that the parent with main responsibility for the child is provided with regular financial support from the other parent.

How do I claim it?

You have two options, the first is a private arrangement agreed between both parents, however if this is not possible then the Child Support Agency will help you to create an agreement. Please visit www.cmoptions.org for lots of useful advice and information, or call **0800 988 0988**.



5. Benefits for parents of a disabled child

Disability Living Allowance (DLA)

What is it?

DLA is the main form of financial support to cover the additional costs of a child living with a disability. The benefit can be awarded if the child has extra care or supervision needs or has problems walking or going out without guidance or supervision. Parents can decide how DLA is used, including to pay for childcare costs. It is made up of 2 components: care and mobility, with different rates paid for each depending on the extent of the disability.

Can I claim it?

An application for DLA can be made on behalf of a child. Extra support due to the disability must have been required for 3 months prior to the application being made and for at least 6 months after. A child must be at least 3 months old when a claim is made for care component and at least 3 years old for the mobility component. The claim form will ask about the types of extra support that is needed and the answers will be used to determine eligibility and also at which rate DLA will be paid.

How do I claim it?

Claim forms can be downloaded from www.direct.gov.uk or requested from the Benefit Enquiry Line by calling **0800 88 22 00**. To have the best chance of a successful DLA claim, parents are advised to get independent help when completing the form. Parents in Touch are a local charity that can offer support in completing these forms, or you may make an appointment with your local Citizens Advice Bureau. See the useful contacts section on page 20 for more information.

Notes: You may also be able to get Carer's Allowance if you spend at least 35 hours a week caring for a child who receives DLA at the middle or highest rate for care. If you feel you may be eligible you can contact the Benefit Enquiry Line on the number above or visit www.direct.gov.uk. DLA will be changing into the Personal Independence Payment from 2013 and criteria and assessment is currently being consulted on. There will be a larger qualifying period and there will only be 2 rates of care component. It is not yet clear whether the changes will effect children under the age of 16.

Disabled Child Element of Child Tax Credit

What is it?

If your child has a disability you may be able to claim additional support through two specific elements of Child Tax Credit. For more general information on Child Tax Credit see page 4.

Can I claim it?

If you are receiving DLA for your child you may be able to claim for additional support through:

- The disabled child element – for each child in the family claiming DLA or who is registered blind
- The severely disabled child element – for each child in the family claiming the highest rate care component of DLA

How do I claim it?

See page 4 for more information on how to claim Child Tax Credit.

Direct Payments

What is it?

Anyone with parental responsibility for a child with a disability may be able to receive money to pay for services and equipment, including respite care and childcare, instead of having them arranged by the local authority. Direct payments can be made by social services after an assessment process. Direct payments allow parents to shape their own care package, including services and support not routinely offered by the local authority.

Can I claim it?

To be considered, your child must have been assessed by a social worker as qualifying for help that would normally be provided directly. When the needs of your child are assessed, your needs as a parent and the needs of the whole family will be looked at. If your child is assessed to need a service, the amount of money that you will be given through direct payments will be an amount that the council estimate is reasonable in order to buy a service of an equivalent standard to that run by the local authority. If, for example, you were assessed to need ten hours assistance in the home your direct payment should enable you to buy the equivalent care.

How do I claim it?

Contact the London Borough of Hounslow's Direct Payments Team for more information. Visit: www.hounslow.gov.uk/direct_payments or call **020 8583 5736** or **2596**.

Work Focused Support for Carers

What is it?

The scheme aims to support parents who want to combine paid work with their caring responsibilities. This can include benefits advice and also replacement care while taking part in training and attending interviews.

Can I claim it?

The scheme is voluntary and is available to carers who meet the following criteria:

- unable to receive other Job Centre Plus employment support programmes such as New Deal or Pathways to Work, who meet the following criteria:
- aged 18 or over
- not working or working less than 16 hours per week
- responsible for a child with a disability or long-term illness

How do I claim it?

For more information speak to your local Job Centre Plus. See page ___ for contact details.

6. List of Useful contacts

Job Centre Plus

Your local Job Centre Plus can help you in a number of ways. Their main aims are to:

- help people into paid work
- help employers fill their vacancies
- give people of working age the help and support they are entitled to if they cannot work.

You can go and visit either of the 2 job centres that cater for London Borough of Hounslow residents. You can also get lots of relevant information using this website:

www.direct.gov.uk/en/Employment/Jobseekers

Local Job Centre Plus

Hounslow Job Centre Plus

Address: 10 Montague Rd, Hounslow, Middlesex, TW3 1LE

Acton Jobcentre Plus (for Chiswick residents)

Address: Armstrong Road, Acton, London, W3 7JL

Helpline **0845 604 3719** text phone **0845 608 8551**

All Job Centre Plus offices are open from 9am - 5pm Monday - Friday, with the exception of Wednesdays when they open 1 hour later at 10am.

Citizens Advice Bureau

Citizens Advice Bureaux provide free, confidential and independent advice from various locations including in bureaux, GP surgeries, hospitals, colleges, prisons and courts. Advice is available on a wide range of issues including: debt, benefits, housing, legal, discrimination, employment, immigration, consumer and other problems and is available to everyone.

Advice is available via telephone by calling **0844 4994 113** (5p per minute from a land line).

Face-to-face appointments can be scheduled using the number above, or you can just drop-in at your local bureaux (listed below) at the times indicated. Most bureaux can also offer home visits and some also provide email advice.

Local Bureau

Brentford and Chiswick Citizens Advice Bureau

Address: Town Hall, Heathfield Terrace, Chiswick, London, W4 4JN

Drop-in times:

Mondays from 6:30pm - 7:30pm (for people in employment living or working in the borough)

Tuesdays and Fridays from 12:30pm - 1:30pm

Wednesdays and Thursdays from 10am - 12pm

Feltham Citizens Advice Bureau

Address: Peoples Centre, High Street, Feltham, Middlesex, TW13 4AH

Drop-in times: Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 10am to 1pm.

Hounslow Citizens Advice Bureau

Address: 45 Treaty Centre, High Street, Hounslow, Middlesex, TW3 1ES

Drop-in times: Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from 10am to 1pm.

Welfare Benefits and Money Advice

Welfare benefits and money advice is a specialist unit provided by the local authority for residents. They provide information on benefits that residents may be entitled to, debt advice and a range of current leaflets.

The advice service can be contacted on 020 8583 5016 on the following days:

Mondays and Tuesdays 2pm - 4pm, Wednesdays and Fridays 10pm - 12pm and Thursdays 4pm - 7pm.

Contact a Family

A national charity for families who have a disabled child. They are able to offer advice, information and support on benefits and assistance available for families with a disabled child.

Freephone Helpline: **0808 808 3555** Monday-Friday (during office hours)

Textphone: **0808 808 3556**

Email: **helpline@cafamily.org.uk** Website: **www.cafamily.org.uk**

Family Fund

Provides grants to families with severely disabled or seriously ill children aged 17 and under.

Telephone: **0845 130 4542**

Textphone: **01904 658085**

Email **info@familyfund.org.uk** Website: **www.familyfund.org.uk**

Benefit Enquiry Line

The benefit enquiry line is for people with disabilities, their carers or representatives. They can offer free confidential advice and information on benefits and how to claim these. They specialise in social security benefits, most commonly Disability Living Allowance, Incapability Benefit, Statutory Sick Pay and Income Support.

Helpline: **0800 882200**

Daycare Trust

A registered charity that provides information to callers on a range of childcare issues and can help parents to find and pay for childcare. Their website provides plenty of downloadable information and factsheets about childcare.

Information Line: **0845 872 6251** Mondays, Tuesday, Thursday and Fridays 10am - 1pm and 2pm - 5pm Wednesday 2pm - 5pm only

Email: **info@daycaretrust.org.uk**

Website: **www.daycaretrust.org.uk**

Website: **www.payingforchildcare.org.uk**

Voluntary Ofsted Childcare Register (VOCR)

The VOCR has been set up as a voluntary registration system for those working with children who are not required by law to register with Ofsted. To get onto the register the childcare provider must have met certain basic training requirements and must also have a Criminal Record (CRB) check.

The major benefit of a childcare worker registering on the VOCR, aside from being able to show they have met basic standards, is that through registration, parents whose children use that provider are then eligible for savings through Working Tax Credits and Childcare Vouchers as discussed in this booklet. This is especially relevant for nannies and au pairs, and also for other childcare which is not required to be registered, for example sports camps and private tutors, and can be a valuable way for parents to gain access to financial savings previously only available for more formal types of childcare such as nurseries, childminders and playgroups.

To apply, or for more information, contact Ofsted on **08456 40 40 40**

Website: **www.ofsted.gov.uk**

Gingerbread

A charity that can provide independent, confidential and free information and advice for one-parent families. They are also able to calculate benefit entitlements for lone parents over the phone.

Helpline: **0808 802 0925** Website: **www.gingerbread.org.uk**

Working Families

A charity that aims to help working parents to achieve a good work-life balance. They are able to offer practical advice and assistance on a wide range of issues including childcare options, employment rights (flexible working hours, paternity and maternity leave / pay), benefits, debt and more.

They also publish a wide range of useful publications, most of which can be downloaded for free on their website.

Telephone: **0800 013 0313**

Website: **www.workingfamilies.org.uk**

Direct.gov

This is a website maintained by central government with information on all aspects of life is contained here. The information on the website is regularly updated and everything is explained in an easy manner with details of where to go for more information.

Specifically, the website has information relating to the comprehensive range of benefits available and the criteria required for receiving them. You can find out about childcare options in your area, information and advice for students and those wishing to undertake training, employment issues, getting into work and employment law. There are also specific sections for parents, disabled people, carers and young people. Please visit **www.direct.gov.uk** for information on all the above and more.

Adult Education

Hounslow Adult Education run a wide variety of courses across all areas of the borough and offer concessionary fees for those receiving means tested benefits.

Free courses are available for family learning.

Helpline: **020 8583 6000**

Next Steps

Next steps is a careers advice service that can help you move forward in your work and life.

Helpline: **0800 100 900**

Student Finance England

Student Finance England is a service allowing full-time higher education students from England to apply for finance online. It also lets parents and partners of students support an application online. You can contact Student Finance England for an update on your application for student finance.

Helpline: **0845 300 50 90**

Produced by: Family Information Service
Ashley House (3rd floor)
86-94 High Street
Hounslow
TW3 1NH

 Web: www.hounslow.gov.uk/fis
 Email: fis@hounslow.gov.uk
 Tel: **0800 783 1696**

Notes

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Ashley House (3rd floor)
86-94 High Street, Hounslow TW3 1NH

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020 8583 2299

