



# PARENTS CLAIMING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN FURTHER EDUCATION OR TRAINING

October 2023

Child Poverty Action Group works on behalf of the more than one in four children in the UK growing up in poverty. It doesn't have to be like this. We work to understand what causes poverty and the impact it has on children's lives, and how it can be prevented and solved – for good.

We provide training, advice and information to make sure hard-up families get the financial support they need.

## INTRODUCTION

This factsheet explains when a parent, or someone responsible for a child, can continue to claim benefits for a child aged 16 or over. Usually, this is only while the young person remains in non-advanced education.

The main benefits parents may claim for young people are

- universal credit or child tax credit; and
- child benefit.

Many parents will already be getting child tax credit (CTC) for their children. However, if they do not, they will usually have to claim universal credit (UC) to get this support. CTC and UC are means-tested, so parents can only get these if their income is low enough.

## QUALIFYING YOUNG PERSON

A parent can claim benefits for a 'qualifying young person'. This is a term used in the benefits system that refers to someone aged 16 to 19 who is

- doing a full-time course of non-advanced, further education (FE) or an approved training course; and
- under 19; or
- aged 19 and accepted on, enrolled on or started the course when they were under 19.

For UC the maximum age is 31 August after the young person's 19th birthday. For CTC and child benefit (CB) the maximum age at which someone can continue to be a qualifying young person is the day before they turn 20.

FE is study below the level of HNC, and includes NQ National 4 & 5s, NQ Highers and Advanced Highers, SVQ up to level 3 and National Certificates (NCs).

In order to be full-time, the course must be more than 12 hours a week during term time. In counting the 12 hours, include classes and supervised study, but do not include meal breaks or unsupervised study at home or at college.

Young people on approved training courses are treated as being qualifying young people. This applies if they are on a No One Left Behind course, but only if the training is not provided by a contract of employment.

You may be able to get benefit for young people who are home-schooled. Seek advice if this applies.

### EXAMPLES

*Delia is 18 and starts an SVQ level 2 in social care in September 2023, which is 24 hours per week. She turns 19 on 14 November 2023 during her course. She is still a qualifying young person until her course ends in June 2024, and her parents can continue to get UC for her while on her course, and child benefit.*

*Bill is 17 and is on a No One Left Behind course at college. He is treated as being a qualifying young person, and his parents can continue to get UC for him while on his course, and child benefit.*

## WHEN SOMEONE LEAVES FULL-TIME FURTHER EDUCATION OR TRAINING

When a young person finishes one full-time FE course and is accepted on or enrolled on another FE course or on an approved training course, they continue to be a qualifying young person between courses. This also applies if they finish an approved training course and are accepted on or enrolled on another approved training course. Otherwise, when a young person leaves their course of education or training, you may still be able to claim for them for a while. You can claim until the latest of these dates:

- September after age 16: if someone leaves a full-time FE course or approved training course, you can continue to claim benefit for them until 31 August following their 16th birthday.

The next bullet only applies to CB and CTC.

- Extension period: if someone leaves a course aged 16 or 17, and registers with Skills Development Scotland, you can continue to claim benefit for them for a further 20 weeks (unless they reach their 18th birthday before then), from the day after they leave the course. To receive payments within the extension period you must apply within three months of the course finishing.

The next bullet only applies to CB.

- Terminal date: otherwise, you can claim until the next terminal date that falls after the course ends. This is either the last day in February, May, August or November. Benefit stops if they reach their 20th birthday before then. If the young person is doing Highers / Advanced Highers and finishes earlier than a comparable course in England or Wales would finish, the young person is treated as being in education until the date that comparable course would end.

### *Examples*

*Joe turns 16 in March and leaves school on 21 June 2024. His parents can get UC and CB for him until 31 August. If he registers with Skills Development Scotland, and his parents informs HMRC of this within three months of leaving education, they could get CB beyond 31 August under the extension period rules - for 20 weeks from the Monday after Joe left education - ie, until 10 November 2024.*

*Kerry sits her last Higher exam on 22 May. Her terminal date should be 31 May, but because the comparable exam in England is in June, she is treated as being in education until that date and the terminal date that applies is 31 August. Her parents can get CB until then.*

*Susie has just finished a non-advanced course and has been accepted on a No One Left Behind course starting in the Autumn. Her parents can continue to get universal credit and CB for her between the two courses.*

You can also get child benefit and CTC (but not UC) for a young person who has an interruption to their education. The interruption must be for less than six months or due to physical or mental illness or disability. HMRC must agree that the interruption is reasonable. Other conditions may apply – seek advice.

If your benefit runs out under the rules above, you can reclaim (although note you cannot make a new claim for CTC if your tax credits award has ended) if the young person starts another course of full-time FE or approved training, and still counts as a qualifying young person.

## CLAIMING BENEFITS FOR QUALIFYING YOUNG PEOPLE

### Who can claim

You must be responsible for the young person, for example, they must normally live with you. You do not have to be the young person's parent. You could be a grandparent, brother or sister, or something else.

### When can you not claim

You usually cannot claim benefit for a young person who:

- claims certain benefits for themselves
- is in prison or local authority care

The next two bullets only apply to CB and CTC.

- works 24 hours a week or more, unless this is while they are on the course; during a gap between courses (eg, over the summer), so long as they are enrolled on another course; or until 31 August after their 16th birthday
- lives with their partner

## STUDENT/TRAINEE FUNDING AND BENEFITS

A qualifying young person's student/trainee funding does not affect your award for UC, CTC or CB.

### *Examples*

*Oscar is 18 and at college, receiving a bursary. His parents get UC for him, and the bursary is ignored.*

*Karen is 17 and at school, and gets an education maintenance allowance (EMA). Her parents get CB and CTC for her, and her EMA is ignored.*

## REPORTING CHANGES

You should let the relevant office know about changes to the young person's circumstances, for example, if they start or leave a course, enrol on another course or register with Skills Development Scotland. You should also let the relevant office know if a young person continues in FE after 31 August following their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday, so that your benefit can continue.

For universal credit contact the DWP (Department for Work and Pensions), for tax credits contact the Tax Credit Office, and for child benefit contact the Child Benefit Office (both part of HM Revenue and Customs).

## CHILD POVERTY ACTION GROUP IN SCOTLAND

Advice line for frontline advisers and support workers

0141 552 0552

Monday - Thursday 10 am to 4 pm; Friday 10 am to 12 pm

Email: [advice@cpagscotland.org.uk](mailto:advice@cpagscotland.org.uk)

CPAG in Scotland's advice line is only for advisers. If you are a student or thinking of doing a course of education and are in need of advice, contact your local college/university student welfare services, or your local Citizens Advice Bureau.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

- CPAG in Scotland's Benefits for Students Project go to [cpag.org.uk/scotland/students-and-benefits-project](https://cpag.org.uk/scotland/students-and-benefits-project)
- CPAG in Scotland's free online *Benefits for Students in Scotland Handbook* go to [askcpag.org.uk/publications/Scotland](https://askcpag.org.uk/publications/Scotland)
- View our full range of factsheets online at [cpag.org.uk/scotland/factsheets](https://cpag.org.uk/scotland/factsheets)
- CPAG publishes the *Welfare Benefits and Tax Credits Handbook*, a comprehensive guide to benefits and tax credit for claimants and advisers, online at [askcpag.org.uk](https://askcpag.org.uk) and in print at [cpag.org.uk /shop/publications](https://cpag.org.uk/shop/publications)
- We run a wide range of training courses on students and benefits for workers of different levels of experience. Go to [cpag.org.uk/scotland/training](https://cpag.org.uk/scotland/training) to find out more.
- We also have a free students and benefits elearning course: Scottish student income and universal credit. See this and other elearning courses at [cpag.org.uk/scotland/training/elearning-zone](https://cpag.org.uk/scotland/training/elearning-zone)
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