

Parents and guardians given extra time to claim back childcare costs with Universal Credit

Working parents and guardians will be given weeks of extra time to apply to be reimbursed for their childcare costs, the government announced today.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) today revealed that those who claim the childcare element of Universal Credit will have an additional month to report their costs.

Up to 85% of childcare costs can be reimbursed through Universal Credit. Previously those reporting costs had to do so in the same month-long Universal Credit assessment period in which they were incurred.

This extension for reporting costs provides parents with more flexibility and could help claimants with 2 or more children avoid losing out on more than £1,100 per month.

Minister for Employment Mims Davies said:

Sometimes there just aren't enough hours in the day to get everything done, and that's before something unexpected happens like a trip to the hospital or having to stay late at work.

We are determined to support families to balance work-life and parenthood. Allowing an extra month-long assessment period for people to report their childcare costs means people shouldn't have to worry about missing out on crucial payments they are entitled to.

Costs can be reported online, and those in work while in receipt of Universal Credit can apply for up to £646.35 per month if they have one child and up to £1,108.40 for 2 or more children.

The support can be claimed in the month prior to starting work if a person has accepted a job offer.

This improvement follows a number of changes to Universal Credit which aim to make the system simpler and more beneficial than ever before.

Up to 100% advance payments are available for claimants and budgeting support is available for anyone who needs extra help.

The government has removed the 7-day waiting period meaning nobody has to wait to make a claim and people can continue to receive Housing Benefit for 2 weeks while they wait for the first payment.

Meanwhile, in addition to the Universal Credit childcare offer, the government provides a wide range of childcare support for families, including 30 free hours for 3 and 4-year-olds of working parents, 15 free hours for disadvantaged 2-year-olds and for all 3 and 4-year-olds.

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