

Have you claimed your Scottish Child Payment?

Did you know that only **77% of eligible families** in Edinburgh are claiming the Scottish Child Payment? Don't miss out on valuable support!

The Scottish Child Payment provides **£26.70 per week for each child under 16** to families who qualify. You qualify if you're responsible for a child and receive a qualifying **means-tested benefit** like Universal Credit, Tax Credits, or Income Support, Pension Credit, income-related ESA or income-based JSA.

Claiming is easy. You can **apply online** at <https://bit.ly/SocialSecurityScotlandScottishChildPayment>, or call 0800 182 2222. By claiming the Scottish Child Payment, you'll also gain access to **Best Start Grant payments** which will be paid automatically when you qualify. More info at: www.mygov.scot/best-start-grant-best-start-foods

Scottish Child Payment is over £100 every 4 weeks for children up to the age of 16



If you get Universal Credit, tax credits or other qualifying benefits you could be entitled to Scottish Child Payment.



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Welcome to our Spring edition!

This newsletter includes information on benefits and tips for income maximisation, to keep you informed & empowered.

Our **Advice Team** provides advice and assistance with **benefits, housing and debt** issues & **employability**.

To make an appointment: 0131 442 2100 or chai@chaiedinburgh.org.uk

What's new with Scottish benefits?

Here's a snapshot of recent changes, and additions to the Scottish benefits landscape.

Best Start Foods

Since 24 February 2024, earnings thresholds have been removed. You can qualify for Best Start Foods if you are claiming a qualifying means-tested benefit, **regardless of your actual earnings.**



In other words, you will qualify if you claim Universal Credit or Child Tax or Working Tax Credits, **even if you are in work.**

Best Start Foods provides financial support to help cover the cost of healthy and nutritious food for young children until the age of 3.

Best Start Foods is paid every 4 weeks on a smartcard that you can use in shops. The payments are:

- £21.20 during pregnancy,
- £42.40 for each child from birth to 1 year old,
- and £21.20 for each child aged 1 to 3.

To apply for Best Start Foods, visit:

www.mygov.scot/best-start-grant-best-start-foods/how-to-apply

Contact us for help to claim benefits or for a benefit check to maximise your income!

Carer's Allowance transfer to Carer Support Payment

The DWP and Social Security Scotland (SSS) have started transferring Carer's Allowance awards made to people living in Scotland to Carer Support Payment. The transfers **started on 26 February 2024. No action is required** from current Carer's Allowance claimants during this process.

New messaging service

Social Security Scotland (SSS) has introduced a new text and email update service to let claimants know **how their applications** for Adult Disability Payment (ADP) or Child Disability Payment (CDP) **are progressing.** www.socialsecurity.gov.scot/news-events/news/new-text-and-email-updates-for-applicants

The CDP transfer is complete!

All disabled children and young people in Scotland who receive disability benefits are now paid directly from Social Security Scotland, as the move from Disability Living Allowance (DLA) to the Child Disability Payment (CDP) is **now complete.**

Navigating Universal Credit changes

Do I need to move to UC?

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has **updated the timetable** for transitioning from legacy benefits to Universal Credit (UC) - see the table below.

If you receive a migration notice or letter from the DWP inviting you to claim UC, you need to **apply before the deadline**.

If you need **assistance to make a claim** or wish to **request an extension** of the deadline, don't hesitate to contact us for an appointment!

Type of legacy claim	Date when migration letters will be sent
Income Support	From April 2024
Tax Credits with Housing Benefit	From April 2024
Housing Benefit only	From June 2024
Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) with Child Tax Credit	From July 2024
Pension aged claimants (including mixed aged couples) of Tax Credits	From August 2024
Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)	From September 2024
All other income-related ESA claimants	No start date yet but before December 2025

Changes to job search requirements



From 13 May, **the Universal Credit Administrative Earnings Threshold (AET) will increase** to £892 per month for individual claimants and to £1,437 per month for couples. More individuals will therefore be expected to look for additional work, even though they are already in part-time employment.

To determine if these changes affect you, consider the following:

Are you subject to all work-related requirements, or are you exempt due to limited capability for work or caring commitments for example?

If you are subject to all work-related requirements, compare your earnings to your Conditionality Earnings Threshold (CET), which is based on the hours you're expected to work per week, as outlined in your Claimant Commitment, multiplied by the National Minimum Wage.

If your earnings are above the AET but below your CET, you will not need to seek additional work, unless you have been selected for a pilot scheme. Other work-related requirements (like work preparation or interviews with your work coach) may still apply, however.

If your earnings fall below the AET mentioned above, you will be subject to additional job search requirements.

Get in touch if you need any assistance!

Your bills: TV licences & pre-payment meters

Introducing the TV Licencing's Simple Payment Plan

TV Licensing now offers a Simple Payment Plan designed to provide affordable and flexible payment options for those facing financial difficulties. This plan is especially beneficial for individuals in need of extra help and support. Key features of the Simple Payment Plan include:

Affordable Options: By sticking to the plan, payments average around £3 per week.

Flexible Payment Methods: Individuals can choose between monthly or fortnightly payment plans. Payments can be made via direct debit (monthly), CPA Continuous Payment Authority (fortnightly or monthly), or manual payments at PayPoint, the Post Office, or by credit or debit card.

Missed Payment Handling: If a payment is missed, it can be spread across the remaining plan duration, eliminating the need to double up payments the following month. However, if 3 consecutive payments are missed, individuals will be removed from the plan.



If you're struggling financially and need assistance with your TV Licensing payments, **contact us to learn more or to be referred to the scheme.**

Our money advisers can also help you with budgeting, advice on debt options and arranging payment plans.



Say goodbye to standing charges on prepayment meters!

Following the end of the Energy Price Guarantee in March 2024, the standing charge on prepayment meters has been permanently removed to end the inequality between those paying by prepayment meter and those paying by direct debit.

There will be **no more standing charges** on pre-payment meters going forward! This means that **you won't build up a debt on your meter during the Summer** for example. We welcome this change to ensure fairer access to energy!

Keeping up-to-date with housing law changes

As of April 2024, significant changes are set to impact rent increases and eviction procedures, necessitating awareness and understanding among tenants and landlords alike.

Rent increases and evictions

The current cap on rent increases and moratorium on eviction enforcement both came to an end on 31st March 2024.

The moratorium did not stop landlords applying for orders for eviction, or enforcing them. It only delayed enforcement by up to six months. The delay will no longer apply. Eviction orders granted but delayed by the moratorium will become enforceable.

The cap on rent increases limited landlords by only allowing an increase in rent of up to 3% (or 6% if the landlord was experiencing financial hardship and gained permission from Rent Service Scotland). That also will end, but to limit the impact on private tenants, transitional rent protection measures are now in place. See below.

New rent protection measures

Until 31 March 2025, any private tenant who wishes to dispute a rent increase notice can apply for rent **adjudication**. In such cases, Rent Service Scotland or the First-tier Tribunal will set the rent based on the lowest of the following three figures: (1) the open market rate; (2) the rent requested by the landlord; and (3) a comparator based on the difference between the market rate and current rent.



You can use this **handy calculator** to get an estimate of the amount of rent that may be set if a rent adjudication application is made:

<https://rentcalculator.service.gov.scot/>

We can provide advice on your housing options. Contact us for an appointment!

New Housing (Scotland) Bill

The Scottish Government has introduced the Housing (Scotland) Bill which is designed to prevent homelessness and strengthen tenants' rights.

The proposed measures include long-term rent controls for private tenancies, new rights to keep pets, and strengthened protection against eviction.

For more information, read the Bill here:

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/housing-scotland-bill-session-6/introduced>

We will provide further updates once the Bill becomes law.

What is employability & how can it help you?



At CHAI, we provide employability advice and support through our projects in Early Years Centres. For our other projects, we can also make referrals to other employability agencies across Edinburgh.

But what exactly is employability? Employability extends far beyond CV polishing and job applications. It encompasses a comprehensive approach aimed at equipping individuals with the skills, confidence, and resources necessary to start thinking about going back to work.

Beyond the basics of CV writing and interview preparation, true employability involves **a range of activities:**

- Fostering confidence and identifying relevant training or volunteering opportunities,
- Empowering you to think about your aspirations and employment prospects and how you could acquire new skills and knowledge through work placements, vocational training, workshops, and online courses,
- Helping you identify courses and opportunities or find financing for your educational plans,
- Supporting you to learn English as a foreign language.

Moreover, employability workers **address barriers** that may be stopping you from entering or re-entering the workforce. Whether it's financial constraints, lack of suitable work clothing or personal responsibilities like childcare, employability workers can offer tailored support to overcome such obstacles.

We adopt a **person-centred approach** to help you with your unique situation. Contact us to find out more!



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