

## What's Happening with Winter Fuel Payments?

As we head into the colder months, it's important to understand the changes to Winter Fuel Payments (WFP) for those **over pension age**. This annual support of £200-300 helps eligible households with their heating costs during the winter, but it is now restricted to those receiving **means-tested benefits**, such as: Pension Credit, Universal Credit, Income-based JSA, Income-related ESA or Income Support, which you must be receiving during the qualifying week of **16 to 22 September 2024**.



If you're not already receiving Pension Credit, you can still make a **new claim** for it by **21 December 2024** to receive Winter Fuel Payments and ask for a backdate to the qualifying week.

For those **under** pension age, you may qualify instead for an automatic payment of the annual Winter **Heating Payment worth £58.75**. Get in touch for a benefit check or for help with your fuel bills or fuel arrears.

### In this issue, we cover:

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## Welcome to our Autumn 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](mailto:chai@chaiedinburgh.org.uk)

# Back to School Checklist for Parents

As the new school year kicks in, make sure you've taken advantage of all the support available for your family. We've put together this **Back to School Checklist** to help ensure you've applied for everything you're eligible for, from school meals to grants for uniforms and more.

## School Meals and Uniform Grants

Every year, parents need to apply for **free school meals** and **clothing grants** through their local council.

You can apply on the City of Edinburgh Council's website: [www.edinburgh.gov.uk/schoolgrants](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/schoolgrants).

You're likely to qualify if you receive certain benefits such as Universal Credit, Income Support, or Tax Credits. Even if you're working, there's an income threshold to qualify. For more detailed information on the eligibility criteria, visit: [www.mygov.scot/school-meals](http://www.mygov.scot/school-meals).

If you don't qualify for free school uniforms through the council, you can still seek support from charitable organisations like the **Edinburgh School Uniform Bank** and **Kids Love Clothes**. Our advisers can assist you in applying for these resources, so don't hesitate to reach out!

## The School Age Payment

If your child was born between **1 March 2019** and **28 February 2020**, you could be eligible for the **Best Start Grant School Age Payment**. This is a one-off payment of **£314.45** per child to help with the costs of preparing for school, such as buying uniforms, school supplies, and other essentials.



Parents or guardians who receive Universal Credit, Tax Credits, or other means-tested benefits can qualify. If you're already receiving the **Scottish Child Payment**, this will be paid automatically when your child is old enough to start primary school.

However, some parents will need to apply, such as:

- Those who receive **Housing Benefit** but not the Scottish Child Payment.
- Young parents under 18 or 18- to 19-year-olds who are dependent on someone else but don't receive qualifying benefits.
- Anyone who has opted out of automatic awards.

**Important:** You must apply before **28 February 2025**, even if you're deferring your child's school entry to August 2025.

You can apply by calling **0800 182 2222** or online at [www.mygov.scot/best-start-grant-best-start-foods/how-to-apply](http://www.mygov.scot/best-start-grant-best-start-foods/how-to-apply).



### Best Start Foods: Widening Access

The **Best Start Foods** programme provides a prepaid card to help families buy healthy food for children if you qualify for means-tested benefits. Earlier this year, the eligibility rules were expanded, allowing **thousands more families** in Scotland to apply, including those with limited or no access to public funds due to immigration status.

Families who don't qualify for public funds but meet certain conditions can receive payments equivalent to Best Start Foods if:

- They are responsible for at least one child under 3 years old.
- Their **family income** is **£1,763.18 or less per month** after tax for single adults or **£2,086.00 or less per month** for couples.
- They live in Scotland.

To apply for Best Start Foods: **0800 182 2222** or [www.mygov.scot/best-start-grant-best-start-foods](http://www.mygov.scot/best-start-grant-best-start-foods)

### For Children Turning 16: Don't Forget to Report!

When your child turns 16, you can continue to receive benefits like **Child Benefit**, and the Child Element of **Tax Credits** or **Universal Credit** if they remain in **non-advanced education** (below HNC level). Every August, until your child turns 20, you need to report to the relevant office to continue receiving these benefits:

- For **Child Benefit**, call **0300 200 3100**.
- For **Tax Credits**, call **0345 300 3900**.
- For **Universal Credit**, report your child's education status online at [www.gov.uk/sign-in-universal-credit](http://www.gov.uk/sign-in-universal-credit) or call **0800 328 5644**.

Failure to report this change could result in your benefits being stopped, so make sure to update their status for the new academic year.

### Help for Parents! Need help with applications? We're here to assist! Get in touch today!

- **In Schools:** Contact your school or call CHAI on 0131 442 2100 / [chai@chaiedinburgh.org.uk](mailto:chai@chaiedinburgh.org.uk)
- **In Early Years Centres:** Email [maximise@children1st.org.uk](mailto:maximise@children1st.org.uk) or call 0131 442 2100
- **New Baby?** Ask your Health Visitor for a referral to our Growing Families Project.

# The New Carer Support Payment

Scotland is introducing the new Carer Support Payment (CSP) to replace Carer's Allowance (CA). Current recipients don't need to apply—your award will transfer automatically.

You'll receive an introduction letter followed by an award letter, with the process taking 13 to 17 weeks. Payments will stay the same at £81.90 per week and follow your current schedule.

## Basic Eligibility Criteria (Same as Carer's Allowance)

To qualify for CSP, you must:

- Be 16 or older.
- Care for someone for at least 35 hours per week.
- Ensure the person you care for receives a qualifying disability benefit.
- Earn no more than £151 per week.

## Who Can Apply for the First Time?

Some people who were previously ineligible for Carer's Allowance can now claim CSP due to two key rule changes:

### ***Students Are Now Eligible:***

Full-time students aged 20+ and part-time students aged 16+ can now qualify for CSP.

Students aged 16 to 19 in full-time advanced education (e.g., college or university) may also qualify, while non-advanced students (below HNC level) generally cannot unless they meet special circumstances such as being without parental support or responsible for a child.



### ***Shorter Past Presence Test:***

You now only need to have lived in the UK for 26 weeks out of the last year, compared to the previous 2-year requirement. The test is waived if the person you care for is terminally ill.

### ***Backdating Rules:***

If you were previously unable to claim Carer's Allowance due to the old education or past presence rules, you can apply for CSP within 13 weeks of the payment becoming available and will be eligible for backdated payments.

This expanded eligibility means more carers can now receive support, especially those balancing care with education.

## Important Tips

- Keep reporting changes to the DWP during your transfer.
- Check your earnings, as fluctuations may prompt reviews.

Get in touch if you need any assistance!





COMMUNITY HELP & ADVICE INITIATIVE

# COMMUNITY OPEN DAY

Worried about rent or debt?

Need help with benefits?

Need support with your  
education &  
career ambitions?

**Come to our  
Open Day!**



**Friday 4th of October 2024**

28 Westfield Avenue

EH11 2QH

1pm to 3pm

Come & find out about  
our advice services,  
meet our staff & network with  
other people who use our services!

Refreshments available!

We can't wait to meet you!

[chai@chaiedinburgh.org.uk](mailto:chai@chaiedinburgh.org.uk)

0131 442 2100

Scottish Charity SC027594

# UC Managed Migration—Key Steps to Take

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is in the process of transitioning people from older benefits, such as Tax Credits and Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), to Universal Credit (UC). This transition, known as "managed migration," involves sending out notices to individuals currently receiving legacy benefits.

If you receive a migration notice, it's important to take action quickly.



## Key Points to Remember:

- You have **three months** from the date your migration notice is sent to switch to Universal Credit.
- Once this deadline passes, **your legacy benefits will stop** and you could **lose transitional protection**, which is extra money added to your benefit to make sure you keep getting the same amount as your legacy benefit.
- You may also ask for an **extension of the deadline** if you need more time.

Before transitioning, it's a good idea to review your current benefits to ensure you're receiving everything you're entitled to. This is especially important if you qualify for additional support because of your health or disability, such as the **Severe Disability Premium**. If you've missed out on certain benefits, you may be eligible for backdated payments, so check your entitlements carefully.

Make an appointment for a full benefit check to find out more!



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• NHS Lothian  
• Parental Employability Support Fund  
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