

Getting in contact with us

Freephone helpline:

0808 808 3555

Open Mon – Fri, 10am – 4pm
and Mon, 5.30pm – 7.30pm

Online:

<http://www.cafamily.org.uk>

<http://www.makingcontact.org>

Contact a Family Northern Ireland

1 Wallace Avenue, Lisburn BT27 4AA

Tel **028 9262 7552**

e-mail nireland.office@cafamily.org.uk

Web <http://www.cafamily.org.uk>

Helpline **0808 808 3555** Freephone for parents and families (Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm and Mon, 5.30-7.30pm)

Chief Executive

Francine Bates OBE

We thank the Children's Fund for supporting the production of this booklet



Language Line
services

Registered Office: 209-211 City Road,
London EC1V 1JN

Registered Charity Number: 284912

Company limited by guarantee

Registered in England and Wales No. 1633333

VAT Registration No. GB 749 3846 82

Other information booklets available

This booklet is one of a series produced for parents and groups concerned with the care of disabled children. A full list of Contact a Family publications is available on request or can be downloaded from our website <http://www.cafamily.org.uk>

- About families with disabled children (UK)
- Fathers (UK)
- Understanding your child's behaviour (UK)
- Living without a diagnosis (UK)
- Grandparents (UK)



A checklist for parents living in Northern Ireland

Order code: NI1

Incorporating **The Lady Hoare Trust**

Introduction

As a parent of a disabled child you are often entitled to a series of benefits and other help. This leaflet contains a selection of the most common, briefly explaining what they are and who is entitled to claim them!

Contact a Family Northern Ireland: 028 92627552
<http://www.cafamily.org.uk/nireland>

Contact a Family UK freephone helpline: 0808 808 3555
(Mon to Fri, 10am-4pm & Mon, 5.30pm-7.30pm)



Disability Living Allowance for your child (DLA)

This is the main benefit for disabled children. It has two parts and either or both parts can be claimed. If your child needs extra care or supervision she or he may qualify for the **care component**. This part has three rates depending on how much extra care your child needs. It can be paid from age three months or from birth if your child's condition is terminal. If your child needs help getting around s/he may qualify for the **mobility component** which has two rates. The higher rate, which can be paid from age three years, is for those with severe mobility problems. If your child gets the higher rate of the mobility component you may qualify for the Motability Scheme to help you hire or buy a car. The lower rate, which can be paid from age five years, is for children who need supervision or guidance when getting around outdoors.

This benefit is not means-tested so it does not matter how much money you have already coming in or in savings.



For a claim pack ring the Benefits Enquiry Line: 0800 220674. For assistance on completing your DLA claim form contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau. The details of your local office can be obtained by phoning Citizens Advice, Regional Office, 46 Donegall Pass, Belfast, BT7 1BS. Telephone: 028 90231120, e-mail: info@citizensadvice.co.uk website: <http://www.citizensadvice.co.uk>

A benefit for carers

Carer's Allowance – This is extra money for you as a carer, because you look after a disabled child. To qualify, your child has to get Disability Living Allowance for care at the middle or highest rate. There is no test of savings, but it may not be payable if you have earnings over a certain limit, or are already on a similar benefit like Incapacity Benefit or State Retirement Pension. Your partner's income does not affect payment of basic Carer's Allowance.

For a claim pack ring the Benefit Enquiry Line 0800 220674.



Money and vouchers for having children

Sure Start Maternity Grant – if you (or your partner if you have one) are on Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Child Tax Credit at a rate above the family element, or Working Tax Credit which includes a disability element then you may get £500 to help with the extra costs of having a baby – contact your local Jobcentre Plus office to apply.

Child Benefit – if you are responsible for a child under 16 or 19 if they remain in full-time non-advanced education or unwaged training (sometimes 20). Ring the Child Benefit (NI) helpline to make a claim 0845 603 2000 or Textphone: 0845 607 6078

Guardian's Allowance – if you look after a child because their parent's are both dead or where one is dead and the whereabouts of the other is unknown, or they are in prison or detained in hospital – contact your local Jobcentre Plus office.

Child Trust Fund – for children born on or after 1 September 2002 you may get a voucher for £250 (or £500 if the parents are on a low income) to set up a CTF account. A claim for Child Benefit will automatically trigger an information pack and voucher to be sent out. For more information visit <http://www.childtrustfund.gov.uk> or ring 0845 302 1470.

Healthy Start Scheme – families getting certain benefits can get vouchers for milk, fruit, vegetables and vitamins – for more information visit <http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk> or ring 0845 607 6823.

Child Tax Credit – this can be claimed by anyone with a dependant child. The amount you get is based on your family circumstances and your annual income (but not your savings). Although means tested, you are guaranteed some Child Tax Credit so long as your income is less than £58,000 (£66,000 if you have a baby under 1). Your award may be higher if you have a child with a disability. This is because an extra amount is added



to the calculation for each child who is on DLA or who is registered blind. If your child gets the highest rate of DLA care component a further amount is also added. This is on top of Child Benefit. If you require any further information about making a claim or your present claim contact: NI Tax Credit Helpline, telephone 0845 603 2000 <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits>

Free school meals – the Education and Library Board (ELB) must provide a midday meal free of charge for pupils if their parents receive Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or Pension Credit (guarantee) and to some pupils whose families are on Child Tax Credit with a low income. This applies to pupils at primary schools, special schools, grant-aided secondary or grammar schools, and further education colleges for pupils who are under 18. Pupils in special schools are also entitled to free school milk. Contact the ELB or school for more information.



Money for working

Working Tax Credit – this is extra money for families with children where at least one parent works 16 hours a week or more (other groups can also claim). The maximum amount you can get will depend on your circumstances and your annual income (but not your savings). It can include help towards certain childcare costs. As it is means-tested, you may get less than the maximum or nothing at all if your income is too high. For further information about making a claim or your present claim contact the NI Tax Credit Helpline, telephone 0845 603 2000 <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits>



Help if you are out of full time work

Contribution based Jobseeker's Allowance can be paid for six months for individuals who are unemployed and have recently paid sufficient national insurance contributions.

Income Support and income-based Jobseeker's Allowance are benefits for people who are not working (this means you are working less than 16 hours a week and your partner, if you have one, is working less than 24 hours). Both can include help with mortgage interest payments. However, these are means-tested benefits – this means you may not qualify if your income and savings are above certain levels.

For contact details of your local Jobcentre look in your local phonebook and find a full list of numbers for each office under Guide to Public Services, Government Offices – Employment & Careers. <http://www.dsdni.gov.uk>



Help if you are sick or disabled

Incapacity Benefit is for people who are unable to work. It is based on your national insurance contributions (except for young disabled adults), there is no test of savings, but some forms of income can affect what you get.

Disability Living Allowance is not affected by savings or income and you do not need to have paid national insurance contributions in order to qualify.

For further information, help and advice about benefits contact the Benefits Enquiry Line: 0800 220 674. If you need to locate your local Social Security Agency office you can contact: Social Security Agency (Headquarters), Lighthouse Building, 1 Cromac Place, Gasworks Business Park, Ormeau Road, Belfast BT7 2JB. Telephone: 028 90829 101 or go to your local phonebook and find a full list of numbers for each specialist department in Guide to Public Services, Government Offices – Benefits & Pensions. <http://www.dsdni.gov.uk>



Help with rent and rates

Housing Benefit – you can get help through Housing Benefit towards rent. It is sometimes known as rent rebate or rent allowance. If you rent your home you can get both rent and rate rebate. If you are an owner occupier you may be able to get a rate rebate. The NI Housing Executive and the Rate Collection Agency administer the scheme for tenants and owner occupiers alike.

Disabled Person's Allowance – this is a reduction in the rateable valuation of a property that has facilities to meet the needs of a disabled person who lives in the property, for example a room used mainly for therapy, an additional bathroom, etc.

Contact: The Rate Collection Agency, Housing Benefit Central Unit, Londonderry House, 21-27 Chichester Street, Belfast, BT1 4JJ or telephone Freephone 0800 587 7477. <http://www.rca.nics.gov.uk>



Or, if you do not own your own home, contact: NI Housing Executive, Headquarters, The Housing Centre, 2 Adelaide Street, Belfast, BT2 8PB, telephone 028 9024 0588. <http://www.nihe.gov.uk>

NHS costs, glasses, hospital fares, free prescriptions

There are a range of health benefits which help people with the costs of prescriptions, buying glasses, going to hospital for treatment (including accompanying a child), certain dental costs, etc. The criteria are different for each benefit, for example prescription charges are free for children and some young adults, people over 60, people in receipt of certain benefits, people with certain health conditions, etc. For more information about health benefits see leaflets HC11 and HC12 which you can obtain from the Department of Health publications orderline: 08701 555 455.



Other benefits

Seek specialist help if:

- You are sick or disabled as a result of an accident or illness at work, or after service in the armed forces.
- Your spouse or civil partner has died as there are special benefits for bereavement.
- You have taken in an orphaned child or one whose parents are in prison.
- You are 60 or over, there are a range of pensions and pension credits that you may be entitled to.
- You are disabled and 65 or over, you might get Attendance Allowance.

For a full benefits check ring the Contact a Family helpline and ask to be referred to a benefits specialist.



Free road tax for your car

You may qualify for free road tax if you have a child three or over who qualifies for Disability Living Allowance mobility component at the higher rate. There is no test of income or savings. For further advice contact: Belfast Disability Benefit Centre (Disability Living Allowance), Castle Court, 1 Royal Avenue, Belfast BT1 1SL. Telephone 028 9090 6182.

Driving Licence at 16

If you are in receipt of Disability Living Allowance at the higher rate and are at least 16 years old, you may apply for a provisional car licence. For further information contact: DVLNI, Driver Licensing Division, County Hall, Castlerock Road, Coleraine BT51 3TB. Telephone 0845 402 4000. <http://www.dvlni.gov.uk>



A Blue Badge for your car

A Blue Badge allows you some parking concessions and is given to those on Disability Living Allowance mobility component at higher rate and others with severe difficulties walking. There is no test of income or savings. To obtain an application form and information leaflet contact: Disabled Persons Badge Scheme Central Office, Castle Barracks, Wellington Place, Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh BT74 7HN. Telephone: 028 66343700. <http://www.roadnsi.gov.uk>

Travel concessions

All children aged up to 16 years are entitled to travel at half price on public transport in Northern Ireland. From age 16 years and over, half price travel is available to anyone with a learning disability or on any rate of the mobility component of DLA or who is partially sighted. Free travel is available to anyone who is registered blind – as well as



people over 65 and those getting a war disablement pension. To receive these travel concessions from age 16 you have to apply for a SmartPass (Tel: 0845 600 0049). Children under 16 don't have to apply for a pass unless they're applying for free travel because they're registered blind.

One off cost grants

There are several sources of help with one off lump sums.

Social fund – loans and grants for those on Income Support and other low income benefits.

Family Fund – grants for those whose income is under certain levels and whose child is severely disabled.

Charities – there are hundreds of funds for certain occupations, disabilities or those in certain geographical areas. Ring the Contact a Family helpline for a list of possible charities you could approach.



Practical help with your home

Disabled Facilities Grant – if you need to adapt your home to make it easier for you and your child to manage, you are entitled to a Disabled Facilities Grant. The grant is no longer means-tested for families with disabled children and young disabled people. Only works recommended by your Occupational Therapist will be considered for grant aid. For more information about grants for adaptations to your home ask for Contact a Family factsheet 'Aids, Equipment and Adaptations'. Additionally you can contact the local Housing Executive Grant office for a preliminary enquiry form and leaflets about the grant schemes (contact details under section headed 'help with rent and rates').

Warm Homes Scheme grant – some families, for example those on a low income benefit or with a householder on a disability benefit, who live in private rented housing or own their own home may be able to get a grant of £750 towards insulating their home. For more information ring: 0800 181 667.



TV licence discount – if you or someone you live with is registered blind, you qualify to receive a 50% concession on the cost of your TV Licence. If the person who is registered blind is not the current licence holder for your address, you first need to transfer the licence into their name. To do this call: 0870 241 6468.

Practical help with your child

For help with your child's health needs, e.g. occupational therapy, physiotherapy, speech therapy – ask your GP or health visitor.

For information about getting extra help for your child at school, including a copy of 'Special Educational Needs – A Guide for Parents' contact: Special Education Branch, Department of Education, Rathgael House, 43 Balloo Road, Bangor, Co Down BT19 7PR. Tel: 028 9127 9279 <http://www.deni.gov.uk>



Direct Payments

These are cash payments given to a person instead of services that would otherwise be provided by their local Health & Social Services Trust. With this cash you can employ your own carers or buy in services from private care companies. For example, you could employ a carer to look after your child and allow you a short break or you could use direct payments to purchase a nursery placement. To get direct payments the needs of your child and family will need to be assessed by your local social services. To request an assessment contact you local Health & Social Services Trust. For further information about direct payments contact the DHSSPSNI, telephone number 028 90520682 or visit the website at <http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk> Additional information can be obtained at the Centre for Independent Living – Belfast, 61 Duncairn Gardens, Belfast, BT15 2GB, telephone 028 90875001, e-mail cilbelfast@nicva.org, website <http://www.cilbelfast.org>



Emotional support

Support groups – informal support through a group is available either locally or nationally, ask Contact a Family for details of groups.

Linking up with other parents – in addition to contacting other parents through support groups you can register on <http://www.makingcontact.org> Contact a Family's online linking scheme.

A listening ear – Contact a Family provides a listening ear for you and the family. We take time to listen to your difficulties and issues and help you to work through them. The helpline can also let you know about any local counselling services in your area.



Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)

16-18 year olds (and some 19 year olds) who stay on at school/college or who undertake certain types of unwaged training may be eligible for a fortnightly payment known as an EMA. The amount awarded depends on household income and no payment is made if annual taxable income exceeds a set figure (£30,810 for the academic year 06-07). EMAs do not affect any of the benefits that you or your child receives. Contact your child's school, college, local job centre or the EMA Customer Services Helpline Team on 0845 604 7646.

For contact details of your local Jobcentre look in your local phonebook and find a full list of numbers for each office under Guide to Public Services, Government Offices – Employment & Careers. <http://www.dsdni.gov.uk>



Other help

If there is any other information that you need, get in touch with the Contact a Family NI office, tel: 028 92627552, e-mail nireland.office@cafamily.org.uk or phone our UK freephone helpline on 0808 808 3555 and we will do our best to help you. Our helpline advisers have access to information on all aspects of the law and rights. In addition they have access to interpreters in over 100 languages if you would prefer to speak in a language other than English.

Further information

Contact a Family produces a number of more detailed free guides about the help available to families with disabled children. You can order them from the Northern Ireland office at 028 92627552, e-mail nireland.office@cafamily.org.uk or by ringing the freephone national helpline 0808 808 3555, e-mail helpline@cafamily.org.uk



I would like the following free leaflets

- Contact a Family Northern Ireland general leaflet
- Finding medical information on the internet (UK)
- Benefits, tax credits and other sources of financial help (UK)
- Tax credits (UK)
- Tax credits overpayments (UK)
- Dealing with debt in N Ireland (NI)
- Holidays, play and leisure (UK)
- List of general charities giving financial help (UK)
- Working and caring for a disabled child (UK)
- A genetic condition in the family (UK)
- Relationships and caring for a disabled child (UK)
- Aids, equipment and adaptations (UK)
- Siblings (UK)
- Grandparents (UK)
- Fathers (UK)
- Living without a diagnosis (UK)
- Concerned about your child (NI)
- About families with disabled children (UK)
- Finding and paying for childcare (UK)
- Understanding your child's behaviour (UK)
- A parents' guide to parent participation (UK)
- When your child has additional needs (UK)
- Growing up pack (UK)
- Education maintenance allowance (UK)
- Family Support Service – a general leaflet about this service (UK)

Your name _____

Your postal address _____

Post code _____

Your email address _____

Registered charity number 284912

Please send this form to:

Contact a Family Northern Ireland
1 Wallace Avenue
Lisburn
BT27 4AA

Design: Creatiscope 020 7831 0440

<http://www.cafamily.org.uk>
<http://www.makingcontact.org>