



Heroes Centre Ltd

Heroes Centre Ltd
Bentley Lane Industrial Park
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Universal Credit childcare costs

If you pay for childcare while you go to work, Universal Credit can pay some of your childcare costs. This includes holiday clubs, after-school clubs and breakfast clubs. If you live with a partner, you both need to be working, unless your partner cannot look after your children.

How childcare costs payments work on Universal Credit

You have to pay for your childcare costs yourself. Then you report them to Universal Credit, and Universal Credit pays some of the money back.

You will only get the money back with Universal Credit after the childcare actually happens.

If you pay for childcare after it's been provided, we pay back your costs in the same month that you report them.

You can claim back up to 3 months of past childcare costs at a time - but if you're claiming for more than one month you might not get all the money back.

You can also claim back up to 3 months of future childcare costs at a time. We pay these costs back month by month - not in one lump sum.

Payments for childcare costs are included in your total monthly Universal Credit payment. That total payment can go up or down, depending on how much you earn from work. So, if you earn more than usual one month, your total Universal Credit payment might go down, including the amount you get for childcare costs.



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How much you can get

You can get up to 85% of childcare costs paid back to you. The maximum amount a month is:

- £950.92 for one child
- £1,630.15 for 2 or more children

Get help with the upfront cost of childcare

You normally need to pay for the childcare first. If you cannot pay that upfront cost, you might be able to get help with that.

Flexible Support Fund

You may be able to get help from the Flexible Support Fund if you have to pay upfront childcare costs and one of the following applies:

- you're starting work
- you're increasing the hours you work, for example you've moved from part-time work to full-time work

Use your online account or contact your work coach to ask about help from the Flexible Support Fund.

Your work coach will decide if you're eligible for help from the Flexible Support Fund. They'll consider things like:

- whether the childcare provider was registered
- whether the amount being charged is reasonable for the local area
- whether you could have got help with childcare payments from elsewhere

Your work coach will complete some forms with you. They'll give you form FSF3 that has a section you'll need to ask your childcare provider to complete.

You do not have to pay back money from the Flexible Support Fund.



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You can then claim up to 85% of those childcare costs to be paid with your Universal Credit. That could give you money towards the next month's childcare costs.

Who is eligible for Universal Credit childcare costs

You need to be either:

- in paid work
- starting a job in the next month

If you live with a partner, you both need to be in paid work, unless your partner cannot look after your children.

It does not matter how many hours you work – there is no minimum.

It must be paid work, so you're not eligible if you are volunteering and only getting money for expenses.

If you're on sick leave, you may also be eligible if you're getting Statutory Sick Pay

If you're on maternity, paternity or adoption leave, you may also be eligible if you're getting one of:

- Statutory Maternity Pay
- Statutory Paternity Pay
- Statutory Shared Parental Pay
- Statutory Adoption Pay
- Maternity Allowance

You can claim childcare costs for all the children you're responsible for, until the 31 August after their 16th birthday.



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If your partner does not work but cannot look after your children

You can still claim childcare costs if your partner:

- has a health condition or disability which means they have limited capability for work (LCW) or limited capability for work related activity (LCWRA)
- cares for a severely disabled person (and is eligible for Carer's Allowance)
- has to be away from home temporarily, for example in hospital

What childcare costs can cover

Your childcare must be with 'registered' childcare providers.

Usually that means they registered with OFSTED, the Care Inspectorate in Scotland, or the Care and Social Services Inspectorate in Wales.

That could include nurseries, preschools, after-school clubs, breakfast clubs, childminders, nannies and holiday clubs.

Universal Credit will cover 'reasonable' childcare costs that help you work or get into work. That could include:

- a 'settling-in period' before you start work, so your child can get used to being in childcare
- childcare while you travel to work
- childcare in the month after you lose a job

Childcare for changing work patterns or zero-hours contracts can also be considered 'reasonable'.

For example, if you have to pay childcare costs so that you are available to work your usual hours, and then you actually get less work hours than you expected, that's considered 'reasonable'.



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How to report your childcare costs

You usually report your childcare costs in your online Universal Credit account. You can do this when you first make a claim, or at any point in your claim.

Report them as soon as you pay for them. If you leave it for longer than 2 months, you might not get the money back.

Evidence for your childcare costs

You will need to have proof of your childcare provider and payments.

As proof of your provider, you need a contract, invoice or letter from them showing all of these:

- their name, registration number, address and phone number
- the names of your children that they look after
- the type of childcare, for example after-school or nursery care

You only need to do this once per provider.

We might also ask to see proof of your payment showing:

- the dates of childcare you paid for
- how much you paid
- the date you made the payment

You can provide a paid invoice showing all of this, or a combination of:

- bank statements
- receipts from the provider
- invoices from the provider