



HM REVENUE AND CUSTOMS
KAI Benefits & Credits

Child Benefit Statistics

Small Area Data

at Lower Layer Super
Output Area, Scottish Data Zone
and Electoral ward

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This and previous issues can be found on the HM Revenue & Customs website:

<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/statistics/child-benefit.htm>

The next issue, for August 2013, will be published on 28th February 2014.

Introduction

What is Child Benefit?

Child Benefit is a tax-free payment that you can claim for your child. It is usually paid every four weeks but in some cases can be paid weekly. The payment can be claimed by anyone who qualifies, whatever their income or savings.

Child Benefit is paid to those responsible for children (aged under 16) or qualifying young people. The latter includes:

- a) those in full-time non-advanced education or (from April 2006) on certain approved vocational training courses and who are under 19, or are aged 19 and have been on the same course since their 19th birthdays. (Note: those reaching 19 up to 9 April 2006 ceased to qualify on their 19th birthdays);
- b) those entered for future external examinations, or are in the period between leaving education (or exams finishing) and the week containing the first Monday in September (or similar dates after Easter and in early January, if earlier), and are not in work (there are slight variations for Scotland);
- c) those aged under 18 who have moved directly from full-time education to being registered for work or training with the Careers service or with Connexions.

You can get Child Benefit even if your child doesn't live with you. However, if they live with someone else, you can only get Child Benefit if:

- a) you pay towards the upkeep of your child
- b) what you pay is at least the same as the amount of Child Benefit you get for your child
- c) the person bringing up your child is not getting Child Benefit for them - if you and another person both claim Child Benefit for the same child, only one of you can get it

You can also claim Child Benefit for a child even if you're not their parent, but you have to be responsible for them to qualify.

Awards are also subject to residence criteria being satisfied.

There are two separate amounts, with a higher amount for your eldest (or only) child and a lower amount for each of your other children.

For further information about who can claim please refer to the HMRC website:

<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/childbenefit/start/who-qualifies/index.htm>

What does this publication tell me?

This publication includes details of the number of families claiming Child Benefit as at 31st August of the year in question, the number and ages of children within those families and their geographical location. Summary population counts at Country and English Region level are shown for Great Britain, as well as by Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA) and Scottish Data Zone. Following feedback to the recent Child Benefit User Consultation we have published statistics for 2012 by Electoral wards for the United Kingdom. The higher level geographical counts are replicated from the main geographical National Statistics publications.

The statistics are as close to real-time as possible and represent the complete picture as at the 31st August, including back-dated awards.

Previously and up until April 2003, Child Benefit was administered by the Department of Social Security (now the Department for Work and Pensions), statistics for previous years are available on the DWP website:

<http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/index.php?page=cb>

This and previous geographical statistics, down to LSOA in England and Wales, Data Zones in Scotland and Output Areas in Northern Ireland are available from the following sites, although some may be more up to date than others:

- [Office for National Statistics: Neighbourhood Statistics](#)
- [Scottish Government: Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics](#)
- [Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency \(NISRA\): Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service](#)

LSOA's and Data Zones

The standard geography used to report small area data in England and Wales is the LSOA. These are built from groups of Output Areas used in the 2001 Census. More information on the creation of these boundaries can be found on the NeSS website here:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/geography/ons-geography/index.html>

Similarly for Scotland the key small area geography is called the Data Zone and as with LSOA's in England and Wales they nest within Local Authority boundaries. More information can be found at the Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics website here:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/02/20697/52626>

The LSOA's are grouped first by local authority and then by LSOA or Data Zone code for each region in England, for Wales and for Scotland. The order of the local authorities is as used in the Neighbourhood Statistics website.

Electoral wards

Child Benefit Statistics for August 2012 are presented by electoral wards for the United Kingdom, using the ward boundaries available from the National Statistics Postcode Look-up Directory for May 2012.

National Statistics Review

We carried out a formal review of our National Statistics publications, covering both Tax Credits (provisional and finalised) and Child Benefit in 2011.

The Child Benefit Statistics User Consultation ran from 11 July to 30 September 2011 and covered Child Benefit National Statistics and Official Statistics using an on-line survey. A summary of the results from the consultation have been published on the HMRC website: <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/statistics/child-benefit-stats.htm>

Following feedback from the consultation, we have published small area statistics by Electoral wards for the UK.

Who might be interested?

The statistics contained in this publication will be of interest for anyone that is looking for the latest possible data on Child Benefit and children. Specifically, there are statistics on the number of children, by age band, in each geographical area. The user consultation showed that these statistics are used mainly by Local Government followed by Central Government and Academics. There are a variety of uses for Child Benefit statistics including identifying specific child populations by age for schools entry analysis or wider issues such as comparing the statistics to comparable Tax Credits statistics and other data sources.

The take-up rate of Child Benefit has held fairly constant over the past few years at around 96%, therefore the child population (up to 16) within Child Benefit is a useful proxy for the child population as a whole.

For more information see the published **take-up statistics** on the HMRC website:

<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/statistics/fin-takeup-stats.htm>

User Engagement

Bespoke analysis of Child Benefit data is possible although there may be a charge depending on the level of complexity and the resources required to produce. If you would like to discuss your requirements, to comment on the current publications, or for further information about the Child Benefit statistics please use the contact information at the beginning of this publication, or from the HMRC website:

<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/statistics/contacts.htm>

We are committed to improving the official statistics we publish. We want to encourage and promote user engagement, so we can improve our statistical outputs.

Although we have captured views through a recent consultation, we would welcome any further views you have using the link to the feedback form below. We will undertake to review user comments on a quarterly basis and use this information to influence the development of our official statistics. We will summarise and publish user comments at regular intervals.

<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/statistics/feedback.htm>

Rounding

The figures have been independently rounded to the nearest 5. This can lead to components as shown not summing to totals as shown.

Age bands of data on children

For most tables in this publication, figures showing the age of children for whom CB is claimed have been grouped into four age bands.

Appendix A: Background Information

Administrative Data

The data refers to the number of families receiving Child Benefit (CB) (and their eligible dependents) and is derived from two 100% scans from the Child Benefit Computer System (CBCS).

The data represents a snapshot at a point in time of all claimants and eligible dependents in Great Britain present on the CBCS at 31st August plus awards for new families and children made by 30th November in the same year and backdated (CB awards can be backdated for up to 3 months). It excludes a small number of cases that are held clerically.

As well as family counts, the number of children in the family and the age and gender of the children are also given. Counts are provided for Countries, English Regions and Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOA) and Scottish Data Zones.

Although the information is collected for administrative purposes, the data is used for a variety of statistical purposes for example, child population estimations, by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), other government departments and relevant stakeholders.

Further information on Child Benefit

Child Benefit (CB) was introduced in 1977. It replaced Family Allowance, which was a benefit payable to families with 2 or more children whereas CB includes all families with 1 child or more.

CB is designed to help with the extra costs of bringing up a child. It is a universal benefit payable to all parents/guardians in the United Kingdom. The benefit is not income related, is not taxable and is not based on National Insurance Contributions.

CB is payable to one parent or guardian of all children under 16 years of age other than children in local authority care, and subject to residence conditions. Detailed current eligibility conditions and rules for claiming CB are available from the HMRC website. There is a higher payment for the eldest child and a lower rate for each subsequent child. From 2006-07 new eligibility rules were introduced for families claiming in respect of young persons aged 16 to 19.

A further addition, Child Benefit (Lone Parent), was paid for the eldest or only child of a lone parent up until 1998. Since then, new lone parents are not entitled to this extra benefit. However, those who were in receipt of the Child Benefit (Lone Parent) before this time may continue to receive it.

CB is administered by HMRC (formerly Inland Revenue). Prior to April 2003 CB in England and Wales was administered by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP).

Data are believed to be of a high standard as they are based on a scan of the computer systems used to administer and pay CB. If anyone attempts to wilfully supply false information, they may be liable to prosecution.

Definitions

Child Benefit is paid to those responsible for children (aged under 16) or qualifying young people. The latter includes:

- a) those in full-time non-advanced education or (from April 2006) on certain approved vocational training courses and who are under 19, or are aged 19 and have been on the same course since their 19th birthdays. (Note: those reaching 19 up to 9 April 2006 ceased to qualify on their 19th birthdays);
- b) those entered for future external examinations, or are in the period between leaving education (or exams finishing) and the week containing the first Monday in September (or similar dates after Easter and in early January, if earlier), and are not in work (there are slight variations for Scotland);
- c) those aged under 18 who have moved directly from full-time education to being registered for work or training with the Careers service or with Connexions.

Full-time non-advanced education: Full-time education is more than 12 hours supervised study a week in normal term-time, not counting breaks for meals and homework.

Non-advanced is not above the Advanced Level of the General Certificate of Education (GCE A-Level) or the Advanced Higher Grade and Higher Grade of the Scottish Certificate of Education (SCE Advanced Highers/Highers) or SCOTVEC National Certificate/Diploma (ONC/OND) or GNVQ level 3 or equivalent.

Validation and quality assurance processes

Child Benefit data are extracted directly from the Child Benefit Computer System (CBCS) and sent securely and electronically to HMRC. Throughout the transfer process accompanying header and footer records ensure that no records go missing during the extraction process.

When the data are loaded into HMRC's computer environment additional checks are put in place to ensure duplicate records are removed. A further suite of quality assurance takes place to ensure consistent numbers of claimants and children are in receipt of Child Benefit compared with previous data.

Finally the data are cross checked against other administrative sources, notably registrations of newborn children and population estimates compiled by the Office for National Statistics. Quality assurance is carried out at the UK, country, region and local authority level.

Coverage and compilation of the figures

The tables are based on an extract from the Child Benefit Computer System taken on 31st August and supplemented with additional cases as identified from a further extract on 30th November of the same year. This identifies new claims that started between 31st August and 30th November but are in relation to a child born prior to 31st August.

Geographical allocation

In publications prior to August 2007 the postcode on the Child Benefit computer system was used wherever possible and, where missing or invalid, was supplemented with postcodes from the previous year, for August 2007 and subsequent years a new process has been developed.

Due to the increasing demand for low level geographical analysis, greater scrutiny is required when comparing information across different administrative systems. In respect of Child Benefit, as a significant proportion of CB claimants also claim tax credits, it is essential that everything is done to ensure that a family is treated equally within both systems and both sets of small area statistics. From August 2007 we have individually matched the Child Benefit and tax credits data together and in the event that there is a discrepancy we have used the postcode as recorded on the tax credits system in the first instance, and then the postcode as recorded on the Child Benefit system.

At national level this does not have a huge effect, and even down to Local Authority or Parliamentary Constituency level the effect is minimal, but with the increasing demand for very small area statistics, such as Lower-layer Super Output Area (LSOA) and Data Zone (the Scottish equivalent of LSOA), we have done everything we can to ensure that where a family appears in both systems, for the statistics we will be assigning them the same geographical details.

Once the postcode had been identified, the geographical details were obtained from the May 2012 National Statistics Postcode Directory, which reflects geographies and administrative boundaries that were live at the time the data relates to. For August 2012, we have used the National Statistics Postcode Look-up (NSPL) which helps to support the production of area based statistics from postcoded data. Further information on the NSPL can be found on the ONS website:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/geography/products/postcode-directories/-nspp-/index.html>

Appendix B: Rates of Child Benefit, 1992 to 2012

	£ per week		
	Eldest child	Subsequent children	Lone parent ¹
April 1992	9.65	7.80	15.50
April 1993	10.00	8.10	16.05
April 1994	10.20	8.25	16.35
April 1995	10.40	8.45	16.70
April 1996	10.80	8.80	17.10
April 1997	11.05	9.00	17.10
April 1998	11.45	9.30	17.10
April 1999	14.40	9.60	17.10
April 2000	15.00	10.00	17.55
April 2001	15.50	10.35	17.55
April 2002	15.75	10.55	17.55
April 2003	16.05	10.75	17.55
April 2004	16.50	11.05	17.55
April 2005	17.00	11.40	17.55
April 2006	17.45	11.70	17.55
April 2007	18.10	12.10	-
April 2008	18.80	12.55	-
January 2009	20.00	13.20	-
April 2010	20.30	13.40	-
April 2011	20.30	13.40	-
April 2012	20.30	13.40	-

Notes:

¹ This was payable instead of the standard eldest child rate to most people bringing up children on their own until 6 July 1998. From that date it has continued to be payable to recipients at that date. It is also payable to lone parents who were receiving the lone parent rate of family premium in Income Support or Jobseekers' Allowance and move into work; and lone parents ceasing to receive a "specified" benefit (Child's Special Allowance for the eldest dependent child; the higher rate of Industrial Death Benefit for the child; or an increase for the eldest dependent child with either Widowed Mother's Allowance, War Widow's Pension, Retirement Pension, Industrial Disablement Pension - which includes Unemployability Supplement - or Invalid Care Allowance). In April 2007, this transitionally protected rate of Child Benefit for lone parents was extinguished when the standard rate for the first eldest child increased to £18.10 per week.