



HM Revenue  
& Customs

# Child Benefit: coming to or leaving the UK

Keep these notes for future reference

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## About these notes

Read these notes carefully and keep them in a safe place. You may need to look at them again.

### Introduction

These notes tell you about special Child Benefit rules if you're either permanently or temporarily:

- coming to the UK from abroad
- leaving the UK

### Definitions

Abroad means anywhere outside the UK.

UK is England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (but not the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man).

European Economic Area (EEA) countries are:

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Cyprus, Republic of Ireland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.

Permanent absence means an absence abroad that's likely to last more than 52 weeks.

Temporary absence means an absence abroad that's unlikely to last more than 52 weeks.

## Coming to the UK

You can apply for Child Benefit if you, and the child or children you're responsible for, usually live in the UK. Short absences abroad, such as a 2 week holiday or to visit relatives for a period of less than 8 weeks, will not affect your right to Child Benefit (go to page 9 for more details).

There are also some extra rules about:

- presence
- ordinary residence
- right to reside
- immigration control

These rules may affect your right to get Child Benefit. Go to pages 3 and 4 for the rules.

If you or your children do not live in the UK but live in an EEA country or Switzerland (go to page 1 for the list of EEA countries), you may still be able to get Child Benefit if you satisfy specific conditions.

For more information read 'The European Economic Area' on page 6.

## Presence, ordinary residence and right to reside

You must be present, ordinarily resident and have a right to reside in the UK to get Child Benefit.

### Meaning of presence

Normally, you have to be physically present in the UK every day during the period of a Child Benefit award. There are rules that allow your right to Child Benefit to continue during short temporary absences. For more information read 'Going abroad temporarily' on page 9.

### Meaning of ordinary residence

You're ordinarily resident if you:

- normally live in the UK, apart from going abroad temporarily - for more information read page 9
- have chosen to live and settle in the UK as part of the regular order of your life for the time being

Some examples to help show whether or not you're ordinarily resident are:

- you're in the UK for a holiday - a likely sign you're not ordinarily resident
- you plan to leave the UK in the near future - this may show that you have not settled here and are not ordinarily resident
- your partner, if you have one, and your children have also come to live in the UK - this may show that you and your family plan to stay in the UK and you're ordinarily resident
- your presence in the UK is part of a regular pattern of living in the UK over a number of years or it's the start of such a pattern - this may show that you're ordinarily resident
- you've already lived here for a number of years - we would normally accept that you're ordinarily resident

You can be ordinarily resident in more than one country.

Having a home in another country does not mean you cannot also be ordinarily resident in the UK.

If you're not sure if you're ordinarily resident, tell us about your circumstances and we'll let you know.

## People deported to the UK

If you're here because you've been deported, expelled or legally and compulsorily removed from another country, we treat you as ordinarily resident for the purposes of Child Benefit.

## Meaning of right to reside

You have a right to reside in the UK if one of the following apply:

- you're a UK or Irish national
- you have a right to reside in the Common Travel Area (this includes the UK, Republic of Ireland, Channel Islands and Isle of Man)
- you have permission to enter or remain in the UK
- you have Settled status (not Pre-settled status) under the Home Office EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS)

You may also have a right to reside in the UK if you:

- have Pre-settled status under the EUSS or an EUSS family permit and either you:
  - are in work that's genuine and effective
  - can prove you have, or will be, earning £242\* (gross) a week or more for at least 3 continuous months - if this does not apply, you'll be asked to prove that the work is genuine and effective
  - are a jobseeker - you can continue to claim Child Benefit but only for a short period
  - are self-sufficient and have comprehensive sickness insurance for yourself and any family members in the UK or are ordinarily resident in the UK
  - are a student, with sufficient resources to support yourself financially, and have comprehensive sickness insurance for yourself and any family members in the UK or are ordinarily resident in the UK
- are a family member of an EEA or Swiss national who has a right to reside - this means you are:
  - a spouse or civil partner
  - a dependent descendant of the spouse or civil partner who is under 21
  - a dependent relative of the spouse or civil partner in the ascending line (for example, parents or grandparents)

\*Please note the £242 minimum weekly gross amount may increase in April each year.

If none of these apply to you, you may not have a right to reside. If your circumstances change and none of these apply to you anymore, you may lose your right to reside and you must tell us about these changes straightaway.

If you're not sure if you have a right to reside, tell us about your circumstances and we'll let you know.

## **EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS)**

Pre-settled status (Limited Leave to Remain) under the EUSS is not, on its own, a right to reside for the purposes of Child Benefit. If you have Pre-settled status, you'll need to satisfy the conditions set out in section 'Meaning of right to reside'. If you have Settled status (Indefinite Leave to Remain) under the EUSS you'll be able to claim Child Benefit on the same basis as UK nationals, provided you meet all the eligibility requirements.

The deadline to apply to the EUSS has passed, but you may be able to make a late application. Go to [www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families](https://www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families)

## **Crown servants working abroad**

Special rules apply if you or your partner, if you have one, work abroad as a crown servant. By crown servant we mean a UK civil servant or member of His Majesty's armed forces who works abroad for the UK government.

You can claim Child Benefit if you're a crown servant working anywhere outside the UK - whether or not your child goes abroad with you or stays in the UK.

Before you were posted abroad you must have been either living in or posted to the UK.

While you're serving abroad, we will normally pay Child Benefit into an account in the UK.

## The European Economic Area

If you're a UK national you may be able to get Child Benefit for your children if they were living in an EEA country or Switzerland on or before the 31st December 2020 and you satisfy the conditions in the section 'Presence, ordinary residence and right to reside' on pages 3 and 4.

There are special rules if you are an EEA or Swiss national resident in the UK before the 1st January 2021, and:

- you're in the UK but your child lives in an EEA country or Switzerland
- both you and your child live in an EEA country or Switzerland

You may still be entitled to Child Benefit if you:

- are employed or self-employed and pay UK National Insurance contributions
- get UK contribution based Jobseeker's Allowance, UK contributory Employment and Support Allowance, UK State Pension or UK Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit

## Immigration control

You may not be able to get Child Benefit if you're subject to immigration control.

Before the 1st January 2021 EEA nationals were not subject to immigration control. From the 1st January 2021 EEA nationals require a status under the EU Settlement Scheme, go to page 5 for more information.




## Meaning of 'subject to immigration control'

You're subject to immigration control if:

- the Home Office has granted you permission to stay in the UK - known as 'leave to enter or remain' - on the condition you have no recourse to public funds
- you need permission to stay in the UK but do not have it or your permission to stay in the UK has expired, or been revoked or curtailed by the Home Office
- you've been refused permission to stay in the UK, appealed this and are still waiting for a decision

If you're subject to immigration control, you may still be entitled to receive Child Benefit if you're a:

- national of, or have come to live in the UK from, a country that has a social security agreement with the UK covering Child Benefit
- family member of an EEA or Swiss national who has a right to reside in the UK (go to page 4)

 For more information, go to

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/reciprocal-agreements](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reciprocal-agreements)

You are not subject to immigration control for Child Benefit purposes if you:

- are a national of the UK or a national of the Common Travel Area (which includes the Republic of Ireland, Channel Islands and Isle of Man)
- have been given leave to enter the UK, without restriction on your access to public funds
- have been given leave to stay in the UK for a limited period with recourse to public funds
- have been given leave to stay in the UK for an indefinite period
- have been told by the Home Office that you can stay in the UK as a refugee

If you're not sure whether you are subject to immigration control, contact us.

## Isle of Man

The Isle of Man runs its own Child Benefit system. If you go to live there or move to the UK from the Isle of Man, for more than 8 weeks, you must tell us or contact the Isle of Man authorities at this address:

Child Benefit Team  
Markwell House  
Market Street  
Douglas  
Isle of Man  
IM1 2RZ

- 📞 Go to GOV.IM and search for 'Child Benefit' or phone +44 162 468 5656 (option 2)

## Going abroad

### Going abroad to an EEA country or Switzerland

Tell us immediately if you go abroad to an EEA country or Switzerland. You may get their family benefits if you moved before 1st January 2021 and you:

- are employed or self-employed and pay into that country's social security scheme
- get, from that country either,
  - unemployment benefit
  - benefit for sickness
  - old age pension
  - benefit for an accident that happened when you were at work
  - benefit because you have an industrial disease on the official list

You may get their family benefits even if your child or children stay in the UK. Any UK National Insurance you've paid may help the other country decide if they can pay you their family benefits.

- 📞 For more information, go to [www.gov.uk/claim-benefits-abroad](http://www.gov.uk/claim-benefits-abroad)

The country where the child lives will usually pay the family benefits if:

- you work in one EEA country and pay into that country's social security scheme
- your partner works in a different EEA country and pays into that country's social security scheme

The other country may pay any extra benefit you would have got if the child lived there.

## **Going abroad permanently**

You must tell us straightaway if you, your child, children, or all of you leave the UK permanently or for an absence that's likely to last more than 52 weeks.

If you're going abroad permanently but your child is staying in the UK and living with someone else, the person they're living with should contact us to claim Child Benefit.

## **Going abroad temporarily**

We'll treat you as being abroad temporarily if your absence is not likely to last more than 52 weeks.

If you go abroad temporarily, you may continue to get Child Benefit for:

- up to 8 weeks, whatever the reason for your absence
- the first 12 weeks – if the reason you're abroad is because you, your partner, your child, or your partner's child is receiving treatment for an illness or disability, or has died, or if you or your partner's relative is receiving treatment for an illness or disability or has died – a relative means a brother, sister, parent, grandparent, child or grandchild

If you meet certain conditions you may be able to continue to get Child Benefit for longer if you have a status under the EU Settlement Scheme.

You can make a new claim for Child Benefit while you're abroad temporarily, as long as you're ordinarily resident in the UK.

You must tell us immediately when your absence has exceeded 8 weeks.

## **If your child goes abroad**

If the child, or qualifying young person, that you get Child Benefit for goes abroad temporarily, you may continue to get Child Benefit for them for up to 12 weeks.

You must tell us if your child is leaving the UK for more than 12 weeks.

If your child is temporarily abroad for more than 12 weeks, you may still get Child Benefit if they're only abroad to:


- receive full-time non-advanced education in an EEA country or Switzerland
- make an educational or foreign visit that is approved in writing by their school or college
- get medical treatment for an illness that began before they left the UK

These are likely to apply if you're either:

- a UK national living in the EU before 1st January 2021
- an EEA or Swiss national living in the UK before 1st January 2021 with a valid domestic immigration status such as Settled or Pre-settled status

You will also be able to claim Child Benefit for a child or children living in Ireland if you are a UK or Irish national.

## How to contact us

 For more information or help, go to [www.gov.uk/child-benefit](http://www.gov.uk/child-benefit)

Or, if you're in the UK

Telephone 0300 200 3100


Relay UK 18001 then 0300 200 3100  
(if you cannot hear or speak  
on the phone)

If your preferred language is Welsh 0300 200 1900

If you're overseas

Telephone + 44 161 210 3086

Write to Child Benefit Office  
PO Box 1  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE88 1AA

 For our opening hours, go to [www.gov.uk/contact-hmrc](http://www.gov.uk/contact-hmrc)

When you contact us, tell us your:

- full name
- UK National Insurance number
- daytime phone number

We have a range of services for disabled people.  
These include guidance in Braille, audio and large print.  
Most of our forms are also available in large print.  
Contact our helpline for more information.

These notes are for guidance only and reflect the position at the time of writing. They do not affect any right of appeal.

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