

## *News in Brief*

Welcome to another edition of News in Brief. Below is a round-up of the latest benefit news that we hope you will find useful for your work.

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### **Universal Credit childcare costs element**

In the Spring Budget, the government announced that the childcare costs element of Universal Credit would be increased in ‘the summer’. It has now been announced that the changes will take place from 28 June. From this date, the maximum childcare costs element will increase from £646 to up to £951 for one child and from £1,108 to up to £1,630 for two or more children (85% of costs up to this maximum are payable).

Alongside this increase, there will be more help available to some parents and carers when moving into work or increasing hours, as stated in the press release:

‘The Government will help eligible parents cover the costs for the first month’s childcare when they enter work or significantly increase their hours, removing one of the most significant barriers to parents working and helping to grow the economy. Those parents will also receive up to 85% of their childcare costs back before their next month’s bills are due – meaning they should have money to pay one month in advance going forward.’

For more information, visit: [www.gov.uk/government/news/massive-boost-to-childcare-payments-marks-first-step-in-largest-ever-expansion-of-childcare](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/massive-boost-to-childcare-payments-marks-first-step-in-largest-ever-expansion-of-childcare)

### **Proving entitlement to Child Benefit**

HMRC has launched a new service that enables parents and carers to quickly prove their entitlement to Child Benefit. This proof is often required for other claims, such as Council Tax Support. The information is now available to print or save as a document through the HMRC app, or by using the online government gateway service.

For more information, visit:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/la-welfare-direct-bulletins-2023/la-welfare-direct-42023#reminder-new-online-service-for-parents-and-carers-to-prove-they-are-entitled-to-child-benefit](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/la-welfare-direct-bulletins-2023/la-welfare-direct-42023#reminder-new-online-service-for-parents-and-carers-to-prove-they-are-entitled-to-child-benefit)

## **Disability cost of living payments**

The DWP have confirmed that the £150 disability cost of living payment will be issued between 20 June and 4 July 2023. To be eligible, you must have been entitled to a relevant disability benefit on 1 April 2023 (this includes those later found to be entitled on that date). Payment is automatic.

The qualifying benefits are:

- Disability Living Allowance
- Personal Independence Payment
- Attendance Allowance
- Scottish Disability Benefits (Adult Disability Payment and Child Disability Payment)
- Armed Forces Independence Payment
- Constant Attendance Allowance
- War Pension Mobility Supplement

For more information, visit: [www.gov.uk/guidance/cost-of-living-payment#disability-cost-of-living-payment](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/cost-of-living-payment#disability-cost-of-living-payment)

## **Neonatal Care Act receives Royal Assent**

After being announced in 2020, the Neonatal Care Act has received Royal Assent – another stage on its way to being brought into force. Under current plans, the Neonatal Care Act makes provision for:

- Statutory entitlement to leave for at least one week for employed parents and carers with a child who has been receiving or is receiving neonatal care – subject to certain conditions
- Statutory entitlement to pay for eligible parents and carers – subject to certain conditions
- Employment protections.

We will keep you updated as plans progress. For more information, visit: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2023/20/enacted>

## Digital welfare – call for evidence

A researcher from the Data Justice Lab at Cardiff University is asking for evidence about the DWP's use of 'digital and data-centric technologies/systems/tools' which affect your work or your clients. If you think you could help – please see the details below.

'Primarily our research explores the interconnections between social justice and the increasing use of data-driven technology across all areas of social life. Right now, we are conducting research into the DWP's increasing use of technology to support decision-making about people's benefits. One area of particular concern for us is the deployment of algorithmic risk models and predictive analytics for the purpose of fraud detection and prevention, particularly by the DWP's Risk Review Team, which seems to be affecting some claimants more than others and is leading to an increase in benefit fraud investigations and checks as well as Universal Credit sanctions/suspensions. Something else we are also very interested in is the digitisation of UC more generally and how claimants are experiencing this; we know there have been issues with the automated assessment period for instance, and mixed feelings about using the online Journal to self-manage claims.

I'd be interested in any kind of stories or anecdotal evidence that you may have come across. We are trying to strengthen the impact evidence base in order to better understand the ramifications of a digital welfare state.'

If you can help please email [brandJ1@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:brandJ1@cardiff.ac.uk)

