

Child verification Spotlight

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Introduction

Universal Credit includes an additional amount for a child which is payable to the parent who is the lead carer with responsibility for a child or children.

When a claimant declares that a child or other persons are living in their household (either as part of a new claim or a change of circumstances), the 'Verify people who live with you' and 'Record Child Benefit' to-dos will be created.

These to-dos must be completed to enable the additional amount for a child to be put into payment.

If the child has been auto verified by the Life Events Portal (LEV), a record of this will appear in the 'History' of the claim and only the 'Record Child Benefit' to-do will be created for completion.

However, agents should be aware that LEV checks the name, date of birth and parent surname from the birth certificate to complete its actions, and there may be occasions where a child is verified but the claimant is not receiving Child Benefit.

Universal Credit uses the Child Benefit System (CBS) and LEV to determine if the claimant has responsibility for a child in order to avoid delays to payments for children. However, not all children can be verified in this way which is when further evidence will be required.

Note: Child Benefit does **not** have to be in payment for a claimant to be entitled to the additional amount for a child. This is because some parents may choose not to claim Child Benefit even if they are entitled to it.

Action by the Child Benefit Online Team

National Service Case Managers take the initial action when a child is reported on a new claim or a change of circumstances.

On a new claim and a change of circumstances, if the child's identity is auto verified by LEV, the 'Verify people who live with you' to-do is not created. The 'Record Child Benefit' to-do will still be created and is cleared by the National Service Case Manager.

If the child's identity is not auto verified by LEV, the 'Verify people who live with you' to-do is generated, and the National Service Case Manager attempts to trace the child using LEV or CBS by establishing if Child Benefit is in payment.

Child Benefit is in payment

If Child Benefit is in payment for a child or children that the claimant wishes to claim for, National Service Child Benefit Online Team (CBOL) front-end agents will enter details in the 'Verify people who live with you' to-do and complete as verified. This will generate the 'Record Child Benefit' to-do which the CBOL front-end agent will complete with details of the Child Benefit in payment. This automatically adds the Child Benefit to the 'Other Benefits' screen.

Child Benefit **cannot** be added through the 'Other Benefits' tab.

Child Benefit is not in payment, or is partially in payment

If Child Benefit is:

- not in payment for the child or children, or
- is in payment for one or some of the children and not for others (we cannot part-verify so if more than one child is declared, all of them must be verified)

The National Service Case Manager will confirm this in the 'Verify people who live with you' to-do and book a 10-minute Further Evidence Interview so that the claimant may bring in proof of the child or children they are claiming for.

Note: If this involves a new-born child, the National Service Case Manager should consider booking the Further Evidence Interview for a time appropriate to allow the claimant to obtain the required evidence, but this must still be within the relevant assessment period.

The evidence required from the claimant must be recorded in the claimant notes in the interview appointment and in their journal (ensuring that the box is ticked to notify the claimant of the message).

Evidence

The claimant must provide acceptable evidence:

- of the existence of a child (for example, an adoption certificate, full birth certificate or passport)
- that they have responsibility for the child (for example, a letter from Social Services or evidence that they are the main contact for the child's school or doctor (please note that receiving Child Benefit does not necessarily mean that they have main responsibility for the child))

- of the relationship of the child to the claimant (for example, adoption certificate or full birth certificate)
- that they are in full-time non-advanced education if the child is aged 16 or over

The claimant does not need to provide all the above, but the agent must be satisfied that they have responsibility for the child.

Completing 'Agent notes'

National Service Case Managers must record details in 'Agent Notes' of the 'Verify people who live with you' to-do for the action they require Jobcentre staff to take at the Further Evidence Interview. This will include highlighting which children further evidence is required for.

Non-dependants

If the person(s) joining the household is a non-dependant declared correctly at the same time as a child, the 'Verify people who live with you' to-do will be cleared by CBOL front-end agents.

If declared incorrectly (for example, the non-dependant is a joint tenant or partner), the to-do is completed as 'Not verified' and the claimant is asked to re-declare the child without the incorrect non-dependant.

Action by the jobcentre at the Further Evidence Interview

When the claimant attends the Further Evidence Interview, the agent resumes the 'Verify people who live with you' to-do and checks 'Agent notes' completed by National Service Case Managers setting out the action required.

If the 'Agent notes' are insufficient, the agent escalates this by referring CBOL escalation to National CBOL.

The claimant must provide the required acceptable evidence:

- of the existence of a child (for example, an adoption certificate, full birth certificate or passport)
- that they have responsibility for the child (for example, letter from Social Services or evidence that they are main contact for the child's school or doctor - please note that receiving Child Benefit does not necessarily mean they have main responsibility for the child)
- of the relationship of the child to the claimant (for example, adoption certificate or full birth certificate)

For new-born children, acceptable evidence includes:

- full birth certificate
- medical card
- MATB1 previously issued to the claimant as proof of pregnancy with part B completed showing the child's date of birth
- birth details and new-born examination page from the Personal Child Health Record (also known as the 'Red Book')

- discharge letter from the hospital (mother and baby)

This list is not exhaustive.

If a claimant has severe mobility issues and is housebound, they must be referred for a Home Visit.

In certain circumstances where the claimant is unable to provide acceptable evidence, such as when the claimant is fleeing domestic abuse or when documents have been lost or stolen, a 'Refer to decision maker (housing/family unit)' to-do must be raised.

In these circumstances, the 'Verify people who live with you' to-do will remain open.

If the claimant has not been able to provide acceptable evidence, the 'Verify people who live with you' to-do is completed as 'Not verified' and the claimant is asked to re-declare the non-dependant with the incorrect child removed.

Satisfactory evidence provided at the Further Evidence Interview

The agent ensures that they record details of the evidence seen within the to-do and 'Agent notes' but does not copy or upload any evidence to the Service via the 'Verify people who live with you' to-do.

For more information on providing evidence, see Additional amount for children.

The 'Record Child Benefit' to-do

Once the agent has fully completed the 'Verify people who live with you' to-do, the Service will create the 'Record Child Benefit' to-do.

This to-do will automatically be identified and cleared by CBOL and should not be cleared by the jobcentre agent.

Claimants must be advised that when they receive additional Child Benefit for the child, they must notify the case manager via their journal.

Same child identified on more than one claim

If an agent finds that another claimant has claimed or is already receiving the additional amount for a child for the same child, see Additional amount for children.