

Applying for benefits



Whatever kind of benefit you're applying for, always make sure you follow these rules.

- ❑ DO claim as soon as possible. It can take a while for benefit claims to be processed, so the sooner you apply, the sooner you'll get your money. Some benefits can be backdated but others cannot and you could lose out on money you are entitled to.
- ❑ DO take someone with you to any interviews if you feel you need support.
- ❑ DO hand over your application form in person if possible and ask for a receipt.
- ❑ DO keep photocopies of all the forms you send in, in case your application gets lost.
- ❑ DO keep a note of the name of anyone you speak to about your benefit claim, the date you spoke to them and what they said
- ❑ DO keep the relevant benefit agencies informed if your circumstances change in any way, for example if you move, get a job or start a training course.
- ❑ DO take with you your national insurance number, proof of your identity (such as a birth certificate or passport) and proof of your income (such as your benefit book or wage slips) when you apply for benefits.
- ❑ DON'T be afraid to ask for help. Staff at the DWP and Jobcentres are there to help you. You can also get free advice from a housing aid centre or Citizens Advice Bureau if you're at all unsure about anything.
- ❑ DON'T assume that you won't be eligible for a particular benefit. It's always worth getting advice.
- ❑ DON'T give up because the forms look long and complicated. Ask someone at your local Citizens Advice Bureau to help you fill the forms in.
- ❑ DON'T be tempted to lie about anything on the form. If you are found out you will have to pay back any money that you have received that you were not entitled to. If you deliberately lie in order to claim benefit, you could be prosecuted.