

A guide to Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit

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We have a range of services for people with disabilities, including guidance in Braille, audio and large print. Most of our forms are also available in large print. Please contact us on any of our phone helplines if you need these services.

1 Introduction

There are two tax credits:

- **Child Tax Credit** and
- **Working Tax Credit**.

More information about **Child Tax Credit** is on page 5 and **Working Tax Credit** on page 8.

This guide explains in detail what they are, who is eligible and how to claim.

If you are responsible for children or are working as an employee or a self-employed person, you should find out more about them. Comprehensive guidance notes are provided with the claim form.

Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit do not affect Child Benefit payments, which we pay separately.

Child Tax Credit supports families with children. This can include children until their 16th birthday and young persons aged from 16 but under 20 years old. You can claim whether or not you are in work.

The amount you get is based on your income. As a rough guide, you may get an award of Child Tax Credits if you have:

- one child and a household income of up to about £26,000
- two children and a household income of up to about £32,200.

It's important to know that these figures are a guide only. Depending on your circumstances you may still qualify if your household income is higher. For example if you are claiming for more than two children or have a child with a disability. See the table on page 7.

Working Tax Credit is for working people on a low income and is based on the hours you work and get paid for, or expect to get paid for. You can claim whether you're an employee or a self-employed person. Unpaid work doesn't count for Working Tax Credit. You may also be able to get help with childcare costs.

Who is eligible?

Phone the helpline on **0345 300 3900** if you need any more help.

To qualify for tax credits, you must be aged 16 or over and usually live in the UK – that is, England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The UK does not include the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man. Short absences of up to 8 weeks or, in some cases 12 weeks, will not affect your eligibility.

For Child Tax Credit you must have a right to reside in the UK. For more information about these rules go to www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits and follow the link for *Tax credits - who qualifies?* and then *New arrivals to the UK and tax credits*.

Some people may be eligible even if they do not live in the UK. Phone the helpline for more information if you live outside the UK but you (or your partner if you have one), are a national of another country in the European Economic Area (EEA – see next page) or of Switzerland and you either:

- work in the UK
- are a Crown servant posted overseas or their accompanying partner, or
- live in the EEA or Switzerland, and are getting:
 - UK State Pension
 - contributions-based Employment and Support Allowance
 - Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit
 - Widow's Benefit/Bereavement Benefit
 - Incapacity Benefit, or
 - Severe Disablement Allowance.

The EEA consists of the following countries:

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

For more information for people arriving to live or work in the UK and the exceptions go to www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits and follow the link for *Tax credits - who qualifies?* and then *New arrivals to the UK and tax credits*.

Or, phone the helpline on **0345 300 3900** if you need any more help.

You may not be entitled to tax credits if you are subject to immigration control but there are some exceptions. More information can be found on our website or by phoning the helpline. Immigration control means any of the following apply:

- the Home Office gives you permission to stay in the UK (known as ‘leave to enter or remain’), but this permission is given to you on the grounds that you don’t claim benefits, tax credits or housing help paid by the UK government (known as ‘no recourse to public funds’)
- you need permission to stay in the UK, again known as ‘leave to enter or remain’, but you don’t have it
- you have been refused permission to stay in the UK, but you have appealed against that decision, and your appeal hasn’t been decided yet
- you have been given permission to stay in the UK, but on the condition that someone else, like a friend or relative, pays for your upkeep and provides you with somewhere to live.

Joint claims

You must make a joint claim as a couple if you are:

- married, or
- in a civil partnership

unless you are legally separated or your separation is likely to be permanent.

If you live with a partner as though you are married or in a civil partnership, make a joint claim. You should still make a joint claim even if you are apart for short periods, for example, your partner is working away from home, on holiday or in hospital.

Single claims

If you do not have a partner, you should make a single claim based on your individual circumstances.

How are tax credits paid?

Tax credits are normally paid in arrears, directly into a bank, building society or Post Office card account.

If you already have an account, give the details on the claim form. If you do not have an account, any bank, building society or the Post Office can advise you on the accounts they offer. You can still apply for tax credits but you will need to give us the details of an account as soon as you have opened one.

See also the notes on page 9 about the **couple element** of Working Tax Credit.

2 Child Tax Credit

What is Child Tax Credit?

Full-time, non-advanced education will usually be in a school or college, averaging more than 12 hours supervised study a week (in term time) studying for qualifications such as:

- 'A' levels
- Scottish Highers
- NVQ at level 3.

Education does not count as full-time, non-advanced education if it is:

- provided by your child's employer as part of their job
- provided through any office they hold, for example, if your child has an official role such as a scout leader or councillor and the education is provided as part of that role.

The following are approved training programmes:

England

- Entry to Employment
- Foundation Learning Programme
- Programme Led Apprenticeships
- Access to Apprenticeships.

Scotland

- Get Ready for Work
- Skillseekers.

Wales

- Skill Build
- Skill Build +
- Foundation Modern Apprenticeships
- Traineeships.

Northern Ireland

- Jobskills
- Training for Success: including Programme Led Apprenticeships.

Training does not count as approved training if it is provided by means of a contract of employment.

Child Tax Credit is a payment to support families with children. You can claim it if you, or your partner, are responsible for at least one child or qualifying young person who usually lives with you.

If they also live with another family for part of the time, you and that other family must decide jointly who wishes to claim for that child or qualifying young person. If you cannot agree who should get tax credits for them we will have to decide which of you has the main responsibility. We will then pay the tax credits to the person who has the main responsibility.

Deciding who has the main responsibility depends on the facts. The number of days the child or qualifying young person lives with you is important, but this is not the only factor to consider. If you are unsure what to look at, you should phone the helpline.

If another family makes a claim for the same child or qualifying young person, you may be asked to provide details of why you think you have the main responsibility for them. We will consider these, together with the details provided by the other claimant, and if you cannot agree between yourselves who should claim for that child or qualifying young person, we will decide who has the main responsibility for them.

If you do not agree with our decision, you have the right to appeal. Our leaflet *WTC/AP What to do if you think our decision is wrong* contains more information on this. To get this go to www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits then select *Leaflets on tax credits* and *WTC/AP*. You can also get a copy by phoning the helpline.

You do not have to be working to claim Child Tax Credit.

You can usually claim Child Tax Credit for a child who lives with you until 31 August after their 16th birthday. After this you can still claim for a qualifying young person as long as they are under 20 and they enrolled, accepted or started full-time, non-advanced education or approved training before age 19.

If the qualifying young person is aged 16 or 17, and has left full-time, non-advanced education or approved training, you may be able to get Child Tax Credit for them for up to 20 weeks after they left. To qualify for these extra weeks, they need to have registered with any of the following:

- a careers service, Connexions or similar organisation (in Northern Ireland, the Department for Employment and Learning or an Education and Library Board)
- the Ministry of Defence, if they're waiting to join the armed forces
- any corresponding body in another member state.

You can't claim Child Tax Credit for a child or qualifying young person if any of the following apply:

- they are aged 16 or over and are getting Income Support, Incapacity Benefit, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance or tax credits in their own right
- they are aged 16 or over, have left full-time, non-advanced education or approved training and are in paid work for 24 hours or more a week
- they are serving a custodial sentence of more than four months imposed by a court.

Special rules apply where children are placed with you by the local authority and you are getting public funds for looking after them. For more information phone the helpline on 0345 300 3900. You should also phone the helpline if a child or qualifying young person has come from abroad and is staying with you for educational purposes.

How is Child Tax Credit made up?

Child Tax Credit contains several elements. The maximum value of each is listed below but the amount you get depends on your income.

Element	Annual amount for 2012-13 (£)
Family element (one per family)	545
Child element (paid for each child/qualifying young person)	2,690
Disabled child element (paid in addition to the child element)	2,950
Severely disabled child element (paid in addition to the child and disability elements)	1,190

You may get a disabled child element for each child or qualifying young person you are responsible for if:

- Disability Living Allowance (DLA) is being paid for him or her, or
- the child or qualifying young person is registered blind or has been taken off the blind register in the 28 weeks before your date of claim.

You may get a severely disabled child element for each child or qualifying young person you are responsible for if DLA (Highest Rate Care Component) is being paid for them.

How much can I get?

Child Tax Credit will be paid in addition to Child Benefit.

The table opposite provides a guide to how much you could get for the tax year 6 April 2012 to 5 April 2013 if you do not qualify for Working Tax Credit.

Child Tax Credit only (£)			
Annual income (£)	One child/ qualifying young person	Two children/ qualifying young persons	Three children/ qualifying young persons
No income	3,240	5,930	8,620
5,000	3,240	5,930	8,620
8,000	3,240	5,930	8,620
10,000	3,240	5,930	8,620
15,000	3,240	5,930	8,620
20,000	1,545	4,235	6,925
25,000	0	2,185	4,875
30,000	0	135	2,825
35,000	0	0	775
40,000	0	0	0
45,000	0	0	0

If your child has a disability, the amount you can get will be higher.

Using this table, if your income is £15,000 a year and you have two children but are not eligible for Working Tax Credit, you could get an annual Child Tax Credit award of £5,930, equivalent to £113.99 a week.

Child Tax Credit will be paid directly to the main carer for all the children in the family. If you are part of a couple, you will need to tell us which of you is the main carer for the children. If you are a single parent, this will be paid direct to you. You can choose whether to get payments weekly or every four weeks.

Payments will normally be made into a bank, building society or Post Office® card account.

3 Working Tax Credit

What is Working Tax Credit?

Working Tax Credit is for working people on a low income. You can be employed or self-employed, and you don't have to have children to claim. In all cases you have to be:

- working (whether in employment or self-employment) when you make your claim, or
- starting paid work within seven days of making your claim.

You may get more if you have a disability or are responsible for children and have childcare costs.

Working Tax Credit is paid directly to the person who is working.

The childcare element of Working Tax Credit is paid directly to the main carer of the child or children along with Child Tax Credit.

How is Working Tax Credit made up?

Working Tax Credit contains several elements, including additional amounts for:

- working people with a disability
- people with a severe disability, and
- the costs of registered or approved childcare.

The maximum value of each element is listed below, but the amount you get depends on your income.

Element	Annual amount for 2012-13 (£)
Basic element (one per single claimant or couple)	1,920
Couple element# (paid in addition to basic element but only one couple element allowed per couple)	1,950
Lone parent element (paid in addition to basic element for single customers who are responsible for a child or qualifying young person)	1,950
30 hour element** (paid in addition to other elements but only one 30 hour element allowed per couple)	790
Disability element (paid in addition to other elements)*	2,790
Severe disability element (paid in addition to other elements)*	1,190
Childcare element, maximum eligible cost for families with childcare for one child	£175 a week
Childcare element, maximum eligible cost for families with childcare for two or more children	£300 a week
Percentage of eligible childcare costs covered	70%

*/**/# see Notes on following page

Notes

* If the claim is a joint claim and you are both entitled to any of these elements, the award will include two elements per couple.

If you are in a couple and one of you is subject to immigration control, and you're not claiming for any children, you won't normally be able to get the couple element. But you still need to make a joint claim.

** The 30 hour element is available to those working 30 hours or more per week.

Working hours

You usually need to be working a minimum number of hours a week to claim Working Tax Credit.

If you are responsible for a child or qualifying young person and you are not part of a couple, you can claim Working Tax Credit if you are aged 16 or over and you work at least 16 hours a week.

If you are responsible for a child or qualifying young person and you are part of a couple, you can claim Working Tax Credit if you are both aged 16 or over and:

- you work at least 24 hours a week between you, with one partner working at least 16 hours a week, or
- one partner works at least 16 hours a week and qualifies for the disability element of Working Tax Credit, or
- one partner works at least 16 hours a week and is aged 60 or over, or
- one partner works at least 16 hours a week and the other partner can't work because they are
 - incapacitated (getting certain benefits because of a disability or ill health)
 - in hospital, or
 - in prison either on remand or serving a custodial sentence.

If you are not responsible for a child or qualifying young person you can claim Working Tax Credit if you or your partner (if you have one) are:

- aged 25 or over and work at least 30 hours a week
- aged 16 or over, work at least 16 hours a week and qualify for the disability element of Working Tax Credit, or
- aged over 60 and work at least 16 hours a week.

If you are part of a couple with children, you are eligible for the 30 hour element if you jointly work at least 30 hours a week, provided one of you works at least 16 hours. Couples without children cannot add their hours together to qualify for the 30 hour element.

You must expect the work to:

- continue for at least four weeks after you have made the claim
- be paid so, for example, working as a volunteer does not normally count.

You can still claim Working Tax Credit if you work at a school or college and don't work during school or college holidays.

If you are a foster carer the hours you work as a foster carer may count for tax credits if you receive payment from your local authority. If foster caring is your main source of income or your main job you may get Working Tax Credit.

Also see pages 12 to 15 about the disability elements.

Limitations to entitlement

Entitlement to Working Tax Credit is deliberately wide ranging but some restrictions do apply. Working Tax Credit may not be available to those who are:

- engaged by a charitable organisation, or are volunteers, and get only expenses payments
- working for a local authority, health authority, charitable or voluntary organisation caring for someone who is not a member of their household and where the only payment they get is covered by the Rent a Room scheme
- engaged on a scheme for which a training allowance is being paid unless the training allowance is taxable as part of their employed or self-employed income
- participating in the Intensive Activity Period or Preparation for Employment Programme, unless the payments they get are taxable as part of their employed or self-employed income
- engaged in an activity where a sports award has been made
- participating in an Employment Zone programme unless they only get disregarded discretionary payments or a training premium
- serving a custodial sentence or remanded in custody and is engaged in work while serving the sentence or remanded in custody
- a student only doing work as part of their course, as any grant or loan that is received is for maintenance and does not count as payment for work
- a student nurse, as the NHS Bursary and other grants or loans received do not count as payment for work.

Maternity leave

Most women get Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) or Maternity Allowance (MA) for:

- the 26 weeks of ordinary maternity leave, and
- the first 13 weeks of any additional maternity leave.

This can be followed by up to 13 weeks of unpaid leave.

For the 26 weeks of ordinary maternity leave, and for the first 13 weeks of additional maternity leave, that is, for a total of 39 weeks, whether or not you are getting SMP or MA, you are still treated as being in work and able to claim Working Tax Credit, **provided** you and your partner (if you have one) worked the required number of hours applicable to your circumstances immediately before going on maternity leave. This also applies if you are self-employed.

If you are a first-time mother, you can claim Working Tax Credit from the date of birth of your first child, **provided** you and your partner (if you have one) usually worked the required number of hours applicable to your circumstances as a person responsible for a child immediately before going on maternity leave (see Working hours, page 9).

When the 39 weeks (this includes 26 weeks of ordinary maternity leave and 13 weeks additional maternity leave) are over, you continue to be eligible for Working Tax Credit if you begin work again at that point. Any further additional maternity leave does not count as being in work. You must tell us within **one month** if you do not go back to work after the 39 weeks.

Adoption leave or paternity leave

If you adopt a child you may be eligible for Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP) for:

- the first 26 weeks of ordinary adoption leave, and
- the first 13 weeks of any additional adoption leave.

New parents may be eligible for two weeks ordinary paternity leave and be paid Ordinary Statutory Paternity Pay (OSPP) for those two weeks. From April 2011 new parents may be eligible for up to 26 weeks additional paternity leave and be paid Additional Statutory Paternity Pay (ASPP) if your partner has returned to work.

If you are on ordinary adoption leave, ordinary or additional paternity leave, or on the first 13 weeks of any additional adoption leave, whether or not you are getting SAP, OSPP or ASPP, you will still count as being in work and able to claim Working Tax Credit, **provided** you and your partner (if you have one) worked the required number of hours applicable to your circumstances immediately before going on adoption or paternity leave. This also applies if you are self-employed (see Working hours, page 9).

If you are a first-time parent, you can claim Working Tax Credit from the date of placement for adoption or birth of your first child, **provided** you and your partner (if you have one) worked the required number of hours applicable to your circumstances as a person responsible for a child immediately before your adoption or paternity leave began.

When your time on:

- ordinary adoption leave
- ordinary or additional paternity leave, or
- the first 13 weeks of additional adoption leave

is over, you continue to be eligible for Working Tax Credit if you begin working again at that point. Any further leave does not count as being in work. You must tell us within **one month** if you do not go back to work after this time.

Sick leave

If you are off work for up to 28 weeks because of illness and are getting either:

- Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)
- short-term Incapacity Benefit at the lower rate
- an Employment and Support Allowance
- Income Support paid on the grounds of incapacity for work, or
- National Insurance credits on the grounds of incapacity for work or limited capability for work

then you will still count as being in work and be able to claim Working Tax Credit, **provided** you and your partner (if you have one) worked the required number of hours applicable to your circumstances immediately before you started getting any of these benefits. This also applies if you are self-employed (see Working hours, page 9).

When the 28 weeks of sick leave are over you continue to be eligible for Working Tax Credit if you begin work again at that point. Any further sick leave does not count as being in work. You must tell us within **one month** if you do not go back to work after the 28 weeks.

The disability element

If you meet **all** of the following three conditions, you may be able to get the disability element of Working Tax Credit. If you are claiming as a couple and your partner also meets all three conditions, you may be able to get two disability elements.

Condition 1: You usually work for 16 hours or more a week.

To meet this condition you must be working for 16 hours or more a week.

Condition 2: You have a disability which puts you at a disadvantage in getting a job.

Details of the disabilities which count to meet this condition are set out in the notes that go with the tax credits claim form. They relate to a wide range of things, for example:

- seeing
- hearing
- communicating with people
- getting around
- using your hands
- reaching with your arms
- mental disabilities, and
- exhaustion and pain.

We may ask you to give us the name of a healthcare professional who can confirm how your disability affects you. For example, a doctor, a district or community nurse, or an occupational therapist.

Condition 3: You currently get, or have been getting, a qualifying sickness or disability benefit.

You will meet this condition if **at least one** of the following four descriptions applies to you, or if:

- you were entitled to the disability element of Working Tax Credit within the last eight weeks, **and**
- you had this entitlement because you satisfied one of the descriptions in 2, 3 or 4 on the following pages.

1 You are getting one of the following qualifying benefits:

- Attendance Allowance
- Disability Living Allowance
- Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit (with Constant Attendance Allowance for you)
- a vehicle provided under the Invalid Vehicle Scheme, or
- War Disablement Pension (with Constant Attendance Allowance or Mobility Supplement for you).

2 You have received a sickness or disability benefit for at least one day in the last six months. The benefits that count are:

- Council Tax Benefit
- Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), where you have got this allowance for 28 weeks or more or you have got Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) followed by ESA for a combined period of 28 weeks or more (see Note 1)
- Incapacity Benefit at the short-term higher rate or the long-term rate
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance*
- Income Support*
- Housing Benefit*
- Severe Disablement Allowance.

*This must include a Disability Premium or a Higher Pensioner Premium for you.

Note 1: The 28 weeks does not need to be a single continuous period.
You can add together:

- any periods that you got ESA, as long as they were no more than 12 weeks apart
- any periods that you got SSP, as long as they were no more than eight weeks apart
- any periods that you got SSP with periods that you got ESA, as long as they were no more than 12 weeks apart.

3 You have been ‘training for work’ for at least one day in the last eight weeks.

‘Training for work’ means attending government-run training such as that provided by the Work Programme, Work Based Learning for Adults (Training for Work in Scotland) or a course that you attended for 16 hours or more a week to learn an occupational or vocational skill.

In the eight weeks before you started training for work you must have been getting one of the following:

- Incapacity Benefit paid at the short-term higher rate or long-term rate
- Severe Disablement Allowance
- contribution-based Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) for 28 weeks or more
- Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) followed by contribution-based ESA for a combined period of 28 weeks or more (see Note 2).

Note 2: The 28 weeks does not need to be a single continuous period.
You can add together:

- any periods that you got contribution-based ESA, as long as they were no more than 12 weeks apart
- any periods that you got SSP, as long as they were no more than eight weeks apart
- any periods that you got SSP with periods that you got contribution-based ESA, as long as they were no more than 12 weeks apart and you met the contribution conditions for contribution-based ESA on the days that you got SSP.

4 All of the following four points (4.1 to 4.4) apply to you.

4.1 You have been getting at least one of the benefits in box A or box B for 20 weeks or more (see Note 3), and you got this benefit within the last eight weeks.

A

- Statutory Sick Pay
- Occupational Sick Pay
- Incapacity Benefit at the short-term lower rate
- Income Support paid because of incapacity for work
- National Insurance credits awarded because of incapacity for work

B

- Employment and Support Allowance
- National Insurance credits awarded on the grounds of limited capability for work

Note 3: The 20 weeks does not need to be a single continuous period.

You can add together:

- any separate periods that you got the benefits or credits in box A, as long as they were no longer than eight weeks apart
- any separate periods that you got the benefits or credits in box B, as long as they were no longer than 12 weeks apart.

4.2 Your disability is likely to last for at least six months or the rest of your life.

4.3 Your gross earnings (before tax and National Insurance contributions are taken off) are at least 20 per cent less than they were before you had the disability.

4.4 Your gross earnings (before tax and National Insurance contributions are taken off) are at least £15 a week less than they were before you had the disability.

For more information go to www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits then select *tax credits forms and help sheets* and TC956. You can also get a copy by phoning the helpline.

The severe disability element

If you or your partner (if you are claiming as a couple) get Disability Living Allowance (highest rate care component) or Attendance Allowance (higher rate), you can get the severe disability element.

You do not have to be working to qualify for the severe disability element as long as your partner does. If you both qualify, you will get two severe disability elements.

Help with the costs of childcare

You may be able to get more Working Tax Credit to help with the cost of registered or approved childcare. This is the childcare element of Working Tax Credit. The childcare element can help with up to 70 per cent of your childcare costs up to a maximum cost of £175 a week for one child and £300 a week for two or more children. This means that the childcare element is worth up to:

- £122.50 a week (70 per cent of £175) for families with one child, and
- £210.00 a week (70 per cent of £300) for families with two or more children.

The amount you get will depend on your income and will be paid directly to the main carer along with Child Tax Credit.

To claim the childcare element you must be 16 or over.

If you are a lone parent, you must work 16 hours a week or more.

If you are in a couple, both of you must work 16 hours a week or more.

Only one partner needs to work 16 hours a week or more if the other is:

- incapacitated
- in hospital, or
- in prison either on remand or serving a custodial sentence.

You will be treated as incapacitated if you get:

- Disability Living Allowance
- Attendance Allowance
- Severe Disablement Allowance
- Incapacity Benefit at the short-term higher rate or long-term rate
- Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit (with Constant Attendance Allowance for you)
- War Disablement Pension (with Constant Attendance Allowance or mobility supplement for you)
- Council Tax Benefit or Housing Benefit with a disability premium or higher pensioner premium for you
- a vehicle under the Invalid Vehicle Scheme, or
- contribution-based Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) if you got
 - this allowance for 28 weeks or more, or
 - Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) followed by contribution-based ESA for a combined period of 28 weeks or more.

The 28 weeks doesn't need to be a single continuous period. You can add together any periods that you got:

- contribution-based ESA as long as they were no more than 12 weeks apart
- SSP, as long as they were no more than eight weeks apart
- SSP with periods that you got contribution-based ESA, as long as they were no more than 12 weeks apart and you met the contribution conditions for contribution-based ESA on the days that you got SSP.

You can claim the childcare element for any child up to:

- the Saturday following 1 September after their 15th birthday, or
- the Saturday following 1 September after their 16th birthday if
 - the child is on the blind register or came off it in the last 28 weeks, or
 - you get Disability Living Allowance for that child.

If you are on paid maternity, adoption or paternity leave and are still treated as being in work, you can claim the costs for registered or approved childcare you pay for:

- the child you have taken leave to look after, and
- any other children you are responsible for.

This will enable you to settle a new baby or child into childcare before returning to work.

You can claim Working Tax Credit, including the childcare element from the birth or adoption of the child, as long as you (and your partner, if you have one) usually worked at least 16 or 24 hours a week, depending on your circumstances, before the maternity, adoption or paternity leave began (see Working hours, page 9).

What do you mean by registered or approved childcare?

In England

To get help with childcare costs in England, the childcare you use must be provided by one of the following:

- a childcare provider registered with Ofsted, such as a childminder, playscheme, childcare club or nursery
- a nanny who provides care in the child's own home – as long as they are registered with Ofsted

- activity-based care, such as a sports club – as long as the provider is registered with Ofsted
- childcare provided by a school to a child aged either **three or four years old**, as long as both of the following apply
 - it is provided under the direction of the school’s proprietor (either the governing body or the person responsible for managing the school), and
 - it takes place on the school premises or other premises that may be inspected as part of an inspection of a school by Ofsted or by the equivalent inspection body appointed by the Secretary of State to inspect certain independent schools (for example, the Independent Schools Inspectorate, Bridge Schools Inspectorate or the Schools Inspection Service)
- childcare provided by a school to a child aged between **5 and 15 years old** (or 16 if disabled) if all of the following apply
 - it is provided out of school hours
 - it is provided under the direction of the school’s proprietor (either the governing body or the person responsible for managing the school)
 - the care is provided on the school premises or on other premises that may be inspected as part of an inspection of a school by Ofsted, or by the equivalent inspection body appointed by the Secretary of State to inspect certain independent schools. An example of ‘other premises’ could be a village hall used by the school for its out of school hours childcare activities
- an approved foster carer registered with Ofsted – but the childcare must be for a child who is not the carer’s foster child
- a care worker or nurse from an agency registered for providing care in the home under the Domiciliary Care Agencies Regulations 2002, for example, a domiciliary care worker.

For more information about childcare in England go to www.direct.gov.uk and look for *childcare* within the *Search* facility.

In Wales

To get help with childcare costs in Wales, your childcare provider must be one of the following:

- registered with the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales
- a school that provides childcare outside of school hours and on the school premises
- a local authority that provides childcare outside of school hours
- a care worker or nurse from an agency registered for providing care in the home under the Domiciliary Care Agencies (Wales) Regulations 2004, for example, a domiciliary care worker
- someone approved by the Approval of Childcare Providers (Wales) Scheme 2007 who provides childcare in the child’s home, or if several children are being looked after, in one of the children’s homes
- an approved foster carer but the childcare must be for a child who is not the carer’s foster child. The foster carer must be:
 - registered with the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales if your child is under age eight, or
 - approved under the Approval of Child Care Providers (Wales) Scheme if the care is in your child’s home and your child is under age 16.

For more information about childcare in Wales go to www.wales.gov.uk/topics/childrenyoungpeople/parenting/childcare

In Scotland

To get help with childcare costs in Scotland, your childcare provider must be one of the following:

- registered with Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland

- a childcare club registered with Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland to provide childcare outside of school hours
- a person from a registered childcare agency, sitter service or nanny agency providing childcare in your child's home.

You can also claim help with your childcare costs in Scotland if you use:

- an approved foster carer, or
- a kinship carer

but the childcare must be for a child who is not the carer's foster or kinship child, and the foster carer or kinship carer must be registered with Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland as a childminder or a day care provider. For more information about childcare in Scotland, go to www.scottishchildcare.gov.uk

In Northern Ireland

To get help with childcare costs in Northern Ireland, your childcare provider must be one of the following:

- registered with a Health and Social Services Trust
- a school that provides out-of-school-hours childcare, on the school premises
- a person approved under the Approval of Home Child Care Providers (Northern Ireland) 2006 Scheme providing childcare in the child's home
- an Education and Library Board that provides out-of-school-hours childcare
- an approved foster carer – but the childcare must be for a child who is not the carer's foster child, and the foster carer must be
 - registered with a Health and Social Services Trust if your child is under age 12, or
 - approved under the Approval of Home Child Care Providers (Northern Ireland) 2006 Scheme if the care is in your child's home and your child is under age 16.

For more information about childcare in Northern Ireland go to www.nidirect.gov.uk and search for *Early Years Teams*.

Crown servants working abroad

If you are a civil servant or a member of the armed forces posted overseas, and your child has gone with you, you may get help with childcare costs if your childcare provider is approved by a Ministry of Defence accreditation scheme abroad.

Childcare provided by a relative

You can't get the childcare element of Working Tax Credit if your childcare is provided by a relative even if they are registered or approved.

The exception to this is when your child is cared for by a relative who is one of the following:

- a registered childminder who cares for your child, away from your child's own home, or
- a childcare provider approved under a Home Child Care Providers Scheme in Wales or Northern Ireland, who cares for your child away from your child's own home – but they must also care for at least one other child who is not related to them.

The relationship can be by blood, half-blood, marriage, civil partnership or affinity. 'Affinity' means a person with a strong relationship to the child, for example, someone in a parental position regarding their partner's children, and includes step-parents.

Relative means :

- parent
- grandparent
- aunt or uncle
- brother or sister or
- step parent.

If you have any questions about the meaning of 'relative', please phone the Tax Credit Helpline.

You cannot claim the costs of childcare if it is not registered or approved. Your provider should be able to tell you whether or not they are registered or approved. Some providers have to renew their registration each year. Ask to see their registration or approval certificate to check that it is still valid.

In order to claim the childcare element you must work out your average weekly childcare costs. For more information about how to do this, read our leaflet *WTC5 Help with the costs of childcare*.

You can find this by going to www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits then select *Leaflets on tax credits* and then *WTC5*.

How much Working Tax Credit can I get?

Working Tax Credit is paid in addition to any Child Tax Credit you may be entitled to. Some people will be paid both Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit.

The amount of your Working Tax Credit award is based on your circumstances (for example, how many hours you work or whether you are disabled) and your income. The table below provides a guide to how much you could get for the tax year 2012–13.

Working Tax Credit, for those without children (£)		
Annual income (£)	Single person aged 25 or over, working 30 hours or more a week	Couple (working adults aged 25 or over) working 30 hours or more a week
9,485*	1,460	3,415
10,000	1,250	3,206
11,000	840	2,795
12,000	430	2,387
13,000	15	1,975
14,000	0	1,565
15,000	0	1,155
16,000	0	745
17,000	0	332
18,000	0	0
19,000	0	0

* Someone aged 25 or over, working 30 hours a week on National Minimum Wage (based on October 2011 rates) would earn £9,485 a year.

The table below shows how much money you could get for the 2012–13 tax year if you are in work and responsible for at least one child or qualifying young person.

Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit (£)			
Annual income (£)	One child/qualifying young person	Two children/qualifying young persons	Three children/qualifying young persons
5,000*	7,115	9,805	12,495
9,485**	6,650	9,340	12,030
10,000	6,440	9,130	11,820
15,000	4,390	7,080	9,770
20,000	2,230	5,030	7,720
25,000	290	2,980	5,670
30,000	0	930	3,620
35,000	0	0	1,570
40,000	0	0	0
45,000	0	0	0

*Those with incomes of £5,000 a year are assumed to work part-time (working between 16 and 29 hours a week).

**In families with an income of £9,485 a year or more, at least one adult is assumed to be working 30 or more hours a week (consistent with a minimum adult wage of £6.08 based on October 2011 rates for those aged 21 and over).

Note: If you have a child with a disability you may be entitled to more.

Using these tables, for example, if you are claiming as a lone parent or a couple with two children and working 30 hours or more a week, with an income of £10,000 a year, you could get an annual tax credits award of £9,130.

The maximum amounts may be higher if you are entitled to the disability or childcare elements of Working Tax Credit.

4 Income and capital

The amount of tax credits you will get depends on your circumstances, for example:

- how many children or qualifying young persons you have
- how many hours you work each week
- whether you are disabled, and
- how much you pay for registered childcare.

It also depends on the level of your income. If you are part of a couple, it depends on your joint income.

As Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit are annual tax credits, we will look at your income for a tax year to work out your award, usually the last complete tax year before the year of the tax credits claim.

What income will I have to report in my claim?

Broadly, you will have to report in the tax credits claim form income which is taken into account for Income Tax purposes. There are important exceptions to this general rule and some are outlined below.

We take into account the gross amount of your income, that is, your income before tax and National Insurance contributions have been taken off. Similarly, if you make contributions from your earnings to buy shares in your employer's company under a Share Incentive Plan (SIP), then those contributions must be added back to your gross pay.

However, contributions to any HMRC registered pension scheme (such as a personal pension plan or retirement annuity) and payments under the Gift Aid scheme should be deducted when you work out your income for a tax credits claim. If you made personal pension or retirement annuity contributions, Gift Aid payments or a trading loss, please see *TC825 Working sheet for tax credits relief for Gift Aid donations, pension contributions and trading losses*. You can find this at www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits then select *Tax credits forms and help sheets* then *TC825*. This will help you to work out the income to enter in your tax credits claim.

You should not normally deduct any contributions to an occupational pension scheme or payments under a payroll giving or Give As You Earn (GAYE) scheme as your employer will have already deducted these payments from your gross pay.

We take the full amount of the following types of income into account when we work out how much tax credits to pay:

- Salary and wages, including
 - commission
 - bonuses
 - tips
 - gratuities
 - profit-related pay
 - holiday pay
 - Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) and
 - some benefits in kind which may be provided by your employer (for example, car and car fuel, allowances for the use of your own car on business, vouchers and credit tokens).

Although Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP), Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP) and Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP) are taxable, you should take off up to £100 for each week of payment from your income for tax credits

purposes. For example, if you only got £80 SMP in any week, you should only deduct £80 for each week, from your income.

You should include any earnings from employment outside the UK.

- Taxable profits from self-employment, including any from outside the UK.
- The following taxable social security benefits:
 - Carer's Allowance
 - Bereavement Allowance
 - contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance
 - contribution-based Employment and Support Allowance
 - Income Support paid to a couple and the person getting it was on strike
 - Incapacity Benefit paid after the first 28 weeks of incapacity (at the short-term higher and long-term rates, including any child dependency increases paid with these benefits)

but **not** benefits which are **not** taxable, such as:

- Child Benefit
- Attendance Allowance
- Disability Living Allowance
- Council Tax Benefit or Housing Benefit
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, or
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance.
- The Adult Dependant's Grant paid to students with a spouse, unmarried partner or a dependent adult and in Scotland, any Childs Dependant's Grant.
- Miscellaneous income that is taxable such as copyright royalties paid to someone who is not a professional author or composer, which is taxable under Part 5 of the Income Tax (Trading and Other Income) Act 2005.

We also take the following types of income into account but you should deduct the first £300 from the combined total (see Note 1 below):

- State Retirement Pensions (including Widowed Parent's Allowance, Widowed Mother's Allowance, Widow's Pension and Industrial Death Benefit) and occupational or personal pensions - but **not** war pensions, whether paid on grounds of wounds or disability or paid to widows.
- Most income from savings and investments (for instance, interest from bank and building society accounts, dividends from UK companies, payments from trusts or the estate of a deceased person in administration) – but **not** income from certain tax exempt investments, such as, Individual Savings Accounts (ISAs), Personal Equity Plans (PEPs) or non-taxable National Savings products.
- Rental income from property - but **not** income which is exempt from Income Tax under the Rent a Room scheme (briefly, if you let furnished accommodation in your own home for up to £4,250 a year).
- Foreign income, for example, from investments or property overseas and social security payments from overseas governments, before any overseas tax was taken off but deducting any bank charges or commission when converting foreign currency to pounds. We want to know about **all** foreign income, whether or not it was received and taxed in the UK, unless you were unable to send the income to the UK because of exchange controls in the country of origin.

Note 1: Apart from income from employment, self-employment, taxable social security benefits, student dependant's grant and miscellaneous income, you only need to report other income if it is more than £300 a year in total. If it is, you only need to enter the amount over £300 in the tax credits claim form. If you make a claim as a couple, the £300 limit applies to your joint income, not to each of you separately.

The Tax Credit Helpline will be able to give you more information about what types of income count for tax credits purposes.

What about capital?

We will not normally take capital (that is, deposits in current and savings accounts at banks and building societies, most lump sum payments and the value of property, shares and other investments) into account when we work out your entitlement to tax credits.

However, in some cases where the Income Tax rules treat capital as income and tax it as such, you will be expected to include the taxable amount as income in your tax credits claim. This can happen if, for example, you hold shares in a UK company and the company gives you a stock dividend (new shares) instead of a cash dividend. This is part of what we call 'notional income'.

What does 'notional income' mean?

Besides capital that is treated as income under the Income Tax rules, notional income also includes income that you can be treated as having which you may not in fact have. For example:

- Trust income payable to one person but which the Income Tax rules treat as the income of another person - the tax credit rules also treat the income as belonging to that other person (for example, investment income of a minor child where trust funds have been provided by a parent and the amount exceeds £100).
- Income you may have deprived yourself of for the purpose of getting a tax credit or more tax credits.
- Income that would be available to you if you applied for it, for example a social security benefit. There are some exceptions, for example – a deferred state or personal pension or retirement annuity, or – compensation for personal injury.
- If you work or provide a service for free or less than the going rate, you are treated as getting the going rate for the job if the person you are working for or to whom you are providing the service has the means to pay. This does not apply if you are working as a volunteer (for example, helping out in a charity shop or a Citizens Advice Bureau) or you are on an employment or training programme.

Are maintenance payments taken into account when calculating tax credits?

No. We don't take maintenance payments, such as child support or payments under a divorce settlement into account. You will be able to have full use of any maintenance that you get in addition to your tax credits.

I am a student. Will my loan or grant be taken into account if I claim Child Tax Credit?

We don't take student loans or grants to meet the cost of tuition fees, childcare, or the Parent's Learning Allowance into account. But you should tell us if you get an Adult Dependant's Grant for a spouse, unmarried partner or a dependent adult and in Scotland, any Childs Dependant's Grant.

If you are a student nurse or a health profession trainee and you get a bursary under the NHS Bursary Scheme, you do not need to tell us about these payments in your claim.

When you have finished your studies and start work, repayments of student loans are not deductible from income in tax credits claims.

Where can I find details of my income?

If you were employed in the tax year 2011–12, details of your earnings will be shown on:

- the P60 tax certificate given to you by your employer after the end of that tax year, or a P45 if you left before 5 April 2012
- your monthly pay slips, or
- the P9D or P11D certificates (if you got relevant benefits in kind) given to you by your employer.

Benefits in kind from your employer

Your employer will give you the details you need on a form P9D or P11D, you will need to deduct the cash equivalent from the total on your P60 and P45 and use this figure.

The notes with the tax credits claim form will tell you exactly which benefits to tell us about.

For more information, or if you have not sent us a tax return, please see the notes that come with the claim form.

If you are self-employed, you should tell us the taxable profit calculated in your Self Assessment tax return for 2011–12. However, if you are a farmer, market gardener or a creative artist, averaging relief for fluctuating profits is not allowed in tax credits claims; further details are provided in the notes that go with the tax credits claim form (TC600). If you have not yet sent us your Self Assessment tax return for 2011–12, you must estimate your profits for that year.

If your business made a loss in that tax year, for tax credits purposes you can set that loss against:

- other income you may have for that year
- any income of your spouse or civil partner for that year, or
- any income of your personal partner (but not your business partner) for that year.

If this does not use up the entire loss, the balance (that is, the unused part of the loss after deducting the amounts set against other income of that year) may be carried forward to set against the profits of the **same** business in a future tax year. For example, if your business made a loss in 2010–11 and there is some loss remaining after the deduction from other income of 2010–11, the unused part of the 2010–11 loss may be brought forward and deducted from the profits of the same business in the tax year 2011–12.

If you made a trading loss, please see TC825 *Working sheet for tax credit relief for Gift Aid donations, pension contributions and trading losses*.

You can find this at www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits then select *Tax credits forms and help sheets* then TC825. This will help you to work out the income to enter in your tax credits claim.

If you got taxable social security benefits in 2011–12, the Department for Work and Pensions (in Northern Ireland, the Department for Social Development) should have sent you a record of the taxable amount of benefit.

If you got other types of income, you should refer to the statements, passbooks or to tax deduction certificates provided by the payer of the income and which you should be keeping for tax purposes.

5 How is my award worked out?

You can see some examples of how we calculate tax credits awards on pages 34 to 41.

The amount of tax credits which you and your partner, if you have one will get is calculated by dividing (separately) each of the elements of Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit which your family is entitled to by the number of days in the tax year and rounding up to the nearest penny to give a daily rate. These daily rates are then multiplied by the number of days in the relevant period and added together to give your family's maximum entitlement.

We then look at your income and your partner's, if you have one to work out whether you will get tax credits in full or at a reduced rate. We will send you an award notice which tells you how much tax credit you will get and when payments will start.

If you, or your partner if you have one, get Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, income-related Employment and Support Allowance or Pension Credit you will automatically get the full amount of tax credits that you qualify for.

If you are entitled to Child Tax Credit only, you will get the full amount of that tax credit until your annual income reaches £15,860.

If you are entitled to Working Tax Credit, whether on its own or in addition to Child Tax Credit, and your family's annual income is below £6,420, you will get the maximum amount of all the elements that you qualify for. If your income is over that threshold, the maximum amount is reduced by 41 pence for every pound of income over the threshold (**rounded down** to the nearest penny).

If you have income over the threshold of £6,420, your maximum amount will be reduced in the following order:

- Working Tax Credit apart from the childcare element
- the childcare element of Working Tax Credit
- the child elements of Child Tax Credit, and finally
- the family element of Child Tax Credit.

What happens once I am getting tax credits?

Tax credits awards will initially be based on your current circumstances and your income for the previous tax year.

If your circumstances do not change and there are no significant changes in your income during the year, the initial award will run until the end of the tax year (5 April).

At the end of the tax year, we will send you a further notice that tells you the information we hold about your claim, in particular the circumstances and income upon which we based the award and the amount of tax credits paid over the year. **You should check this notice carefully.**

You must then either:

- confirm that the details are correct, or
- correct them if there are changes that you have not previously told us about.

You also need to tell us about your income for the year just ended. You can do this by either:

- phoning the helpline, or
- completing the notice and returning it in the envelope provided.

When we have all the details, we will:

- check whether the award we paid you for the year just ended was right, and
- work out your award for the following year, as the notice will also act as your claim for the next award.

If your circumstances and income stayed the same throughout the year which has just ended, or if your income in that year was not more than £10,000 higher than the year before that, you should have got the right amount of tax credits for that year.

If your income goes down by £2,500 or less throughout the year, the amounts of tax credits you get will not be affected.

Note: As your current year payments are provisional and based on your previous years income, you should let us know of any changes to your income as they happen. Waiting until you return your notice at the end of the year will lead to an overpayment in some cases.

If you only get the family element of Child Tax Credit, or have been getting the full amount of Child Tax Credit you qualify for because you have been getting Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, income-related Employment and Support Allowance or Pension Credit for the whole of the period of your award, you don't have to do anything if your income remains within a certain range specified in the end-of-year notice, provided your circumstances have not changed. The end-of-year notice will tell you whether you need to return it or not.

If you do not have to return the notice, you will be treated as having automatically made a new claim for the next award.

What happens if my circumstances or income change?

There are some changes that could affect the level of your tax credits award. They include:

You can tell us about any of these changes by:

- phoning the Tax Credit Helpline on **0345 300 3900** or
- writing to us at: Tax Credit Office (Change of Circumstances) Preston PR1 0SB.

- changes in the adults in the household, for example if you and your partner stop living together or if you have been living on your own and you begin living with someone as a couple
- changes affecting the elements of tax credits for which you are eligible, such as
 - the birth or death of a child
 - a child or qualifying young person leaving the household or stopping full-time, non-advanced education or approved training
 - stopping using registered or approved childcare
 - changing your usual weekly working hours, or
 - moving abroad
- you or your partner begin to qualify for a disability element of Working Tax Credit
- you or your partner no longer have a disability which puts you at a disadvantage in getting a job
- a child you are responsible for is registered as blind or is taken off the blind register
- DLA starts or stops being paid for a child you are responsible for
- the highest rate care component of DLA starts or stops being paid for you, your partner, or a child you are responsible for
- the higher rate of Attendance Allowance starts or stops being paid for you or your partner
- changes in income between the previous year and the current year.

You should keep:

- a record of any changes in circumstances, and
- your new award notice after you have told us about a change of circumstances.

Changes in circumstances

You need to tell us about any changes in your circumstances. If you don't, you may be overpaid tax credits or you may not get the full amount you are entitled to. You may also have to pay a penalty of up to £300.

If a change increases your tax credits, the increase can only be backdated by up to one month. For example, if you had a baby on 12 June but you didn't report this until 12 October, your tax credits would only increase from 12 September.

You must tell us within **one month** if you made a:

- **single claim** but you are now married, in a civil partnership, or living with someone as if you are married or in a civil partnership
- **joint claim** (as part of a couple) but are now separated, or one of you dies.

If any of these changes happen your claim legally ends and you will need to set up a new one.

You must also tell us within **one month**:

- If you or your partner leave the UK permanently or go abroad for more than eight weeks (12 weeks if you go or remain abroad because you are ill or because a member of your family is ill or has died).
- If you and your partner lose your right to reside in the UK. For more information go to www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits and follow the link for *Tax credits - who qualifies?* and then *New arrivals to the UK and tax credits*. You can also see our factsheet *WTC/FS5 Tax credits - coming to the United Kingdom*. You can get a copy online, by going to <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/leaflets/wtc-fs5.pdf> or by phoning our helpline.
- If you or your partner stop working.
- If you or your partner stop working more than the relevant minimum of 16 or 30 hours a week (for couples with children 24 hours a week is the combined minimum and one of you must work at least 16 hours a week).
- If you are laid off.
- If you have been on strike for more than 10 days.

You must also tell us within **one month**:

- If a child or qualifying young person leaves the family and moves to live with someone else. This includes a child or qualifying young person who has been
 - taken into care or fostered to another family, or
 - sentenced to custody or detention for a period of more than four months.
- If a child or qualifying young person dies.
- If a qualifying young person leaves full-time, non-advanced education, or approved training before age 20 years or stops being registered with a careers service, Connexions, Ministry of Defence or similar organisation.
- If a qualifying young person starts to have their training provided under a contract of employment.
- If a qualifying young person starts to get Income Support, Incapacity Benefit, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance, Child Tax Credit or Working Tax Credit in their own right.
- If you told us that your child was continuing in full-time, non-advanced education or approved training after 31 August following their 16th birthday, but then they did not do so.

If you claimed childcare costs you must tell us if:

- your average weekly costs go down by £10 or more (phone the helpline to find out how to calculate your new average weekly costs)
- your costs go down to zero
- your childcare provider stops being registered or approved
- you start getting help with your childcare from a local authority or any government department – such as early years education grant for three to four year olds
- you start getting help with your childcare costs through your employer, such as childcare vouchers or childcare vouchers in return for a reduction in your salary (known as salary sacrifice)
- you no longer qualify for childcare costs as a couple because one of you is now working less than 16 hours a week
- your child has reached age 15 (or 16 if disabled) and you can no longer qualify for childcare support in tax credits for that child.

Changes to your working hours

You must tell us within **one month** if:

- you stop working the relevant minimum of 16 or 30 hours a week (for couples with children 24 hours is the combined minimum with at least one of you working 16 hours a week)
- you work at least 30 hours a week and your hours drop to less than 30 (for couples with children, your joint working hours count towards the 30 hours)
- you stop work, or
- your employer lays you off.

You may get Working Tax Credit for four weeks from the change if:

- your working hours drop to less than the relevant minimum of 16 or 30 hours a week (for couples with children 24 hours is the combined minimum and one of you must work at least 16 hours a week), or
- you stop work completely.

If your employer lays you off and tells you it is temporary you are treated as though you are still working for up to four weeks from the date your employer lays you off. If there is no work for you after that, you are treated as not working. You will be entitled to a 'run on' payment of Working Tax Credit for a further four weeks before your Working Tax Credit stops.

You can only get Working Tax Credit for up to eight weeks after your employer lays you off.

Example 1

John Smith is laid off for four weeks on 8 January. His employer tells him that he can expect to go back to work on 5 February. John calls the Tax Credit Helpline to tell them about this. He also tells them when he expects to go back to work.

On 5 February he goes into work. His employer has no work for John and doesn't know if he will in the future. John calls the Tax Credit Helpline to tell them the layoff is now indefinite. He will continue to get Working Tax Credit up to 5 March.

If your employer lays you off but cannot tell you if you will go back to work or you will lose your job

If during the first four weeks you are laid off your employer says:

- you are now laid off indefinitely, or
- you have lost your job

you will be treated as if you have stopped work from the day they tell you. You will still get Working Tax Credit for four more weeks from that date.

Example 2

Anne Jones is laid off on 8 January. Her employer tells her that she can expect to go back to work on 1 February. Anne calls the Tax Credit Helpline and tells them the layoff is temporary. On 26 January her employer tells her that they do not know if she will be able to go back to work at all. Anne calls the Tax Credit Helpline to tell them the layoff is now indefinite. Anne is treated as though she has stopped work. She will get Working Tax Credit up to 23 February (four weeks from 26 January).

Example 3

On 8 January Anita Roberts is told that her employer has to lay her off indefinitely. Her employer does not know if she will be able to go back to work at all. Anita calls the Tax Credit Helpline to tell them she has been laid off indefinitely. Anita will get Working Tax Credit up to 5 February.

You need to tell us as soon as possible about any changes that may increase your tax credits award such as:

- a new child in the family
- starting to use registered or approved childcare
- if your average weekly childcare costs increase by £10 a week or more (phone the helpline to find out how to calculate your new average weekly costs), or
- an increase in your working hours (or those of your partner) so you can meet the working hours conditions for Working Tax Credit, see page 9.

To get any increase backdated from the date your circumstances change, you must tell us within one month.

Changes in income

Your award will initially be based on your income for the previous tax year.

If your income throughout the current tax year rises by less than £10,000, it will not affect your award and we will still base it on your income for the previous year. So for the current year, you will get the benefit of a rise in income up to that amount without it reducing your tax credits award. The increased level of income is not taken into account until the next year but you should tell us about the increase on or before the 6 April to avoid an overpayment of your provisional payments.

If your income goes down by £2,500 or less throughout the year, the amount of tax credits you get will not be affected.

If your income in the current year is lower than last year's income by more than £2,500, we will ignore the first £2,500 drop. For example, if your income last year was £20,000 and this year you expect it to be £15,000 we will base your tax credits award on an income of £17,500. In this case, you

may be due more tax credits. You can either:

- tell us about this drop during the year – we will then adjust your payments to make sure you get the right amount in-year, or
- wait until we finalise your award at the end of the year and we will pay you any extra tax credits you are due in a lump sum.

We will check at the end of the year what your income was. If you tell us during the year about a fall in your income and it falls by less than you expected, you will have to pay back any tax credits we have overpaid.

If your income increases by more than £10,000, then we will base your final award on your current year's income after ignoring the first £10,000 of the increase. We will, however, use the full amount of income when setting your award for the following year.

What happens if there are changes in my tax credits award?

You should tell us immediately if you think that your income will rise by more than £10,000 in the current tax year. This will help you to avoid building up an overpayment of tax credits which you would have to pay back after we finalise the award at the end of the year.

If your tax credits award goes up because of a change in circumstances which increases your entitlement, and if you have told us about this during the year, we will:

- pay any extra tax credits for up to one month before the adjustment was made in a lump sum, and
- increase your award for the rest of the year.

If your income has fallen by more than £2,500 and you tell us about it during the year, we will pay you any extra tax credits due from the date you tell us about it. If, at the end of the tax year, we find that you were due more tax credits than you were in fact paid because of a change in circumstances or income, we will pay the extra amount as a lump sum. You should tell us immediately if you think that your income will go down in the current tax year. Your award may not go up this year, but you may get more next year.

If your tax credits award goes down because of a change in circumstances which reduces your entitlement or an increase of more than £10,000 in your income, that you have told us about during the year, we will reduce your tax credits award for the whole period so that we pay you the right amount for the year overall.

Alternatively, if we have paid you too much in this tax year (or a previous one) we will automatically reduce your ongoing payments until you pay back the overpaid money.

The amount we reduce your payments by depends on whether you get tax credits in full, or at a reduced rate. We make our decision based on the information you gave us about your income. The higher your income, the more your tax credits payments are reduced.

Check your award notice to find out if you get tax credits at a reduced rate. If you do, it's shown as 'reduction due to your income' in part 2 - 'How we work out your tax credits'.

If there's no reduction shown – because of your low income, the most we will take back from your ongoing payments is 10 per cent.

If you do get a reduction – because of the amount of your income and only get the family element of Child Tax Credit, we'll take back up to 100 per cent of your ongoing payments.

For everyone else we'll take back up to 25 per cent of your ongoing payments.

What if I disagree with the level of my tax credits award or with having to pay a penalty?

If you think that something on your notice is wrong or missing then contact us straight away and we will try to put it right without the need for an appeal.

If we cannot resolve your problem and you are not satisfied, you still have the right to make an appeal. You can also appeal against a penalty charge.

Appeals must be made in writing within 30 days of the date of the award notice.

For more information:

- go to www.hmrc.gov.uk and under *Quick links* select *Complaints & appeals*, or
- phone our helpline and ask for our leaflet WTC/AP *What to do if you think our decision is wrong*.

6 Help and advice

How do I claim or get more information about tax credits?

You can make a claim by filling in and returning the claim form TC600.

To get a claim form or for further advice about Child Tax Credit or Working Tax Credit you can:

- phone the helpline on 0345 300 3900
- textphone the helpline on 0345 300 3909.

For our opening hours go to www.hmrc.gov.uk or phone us.

Backdating your claim

This usually happens automatically and we can normally only backdate your tax credits for up to **one month** from the date we get your claim. To avoid losing money, make sure you claim straight away.

You will need to ask for backdating if:

- you're only claiming Working Tax Credit (you're not claiming for any children), or
- you've been getting Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, income-related Employment and Support Allowance or Pension Credit.

To ask for backdating please attach a separate sheet of paper to your claim form telling us:

- your name, address and National Insurance number
- the date you started work, or
- the start date of your Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, income-related Employment and Support Allowance or Pension Credit.

If you are disabled, working and more than one month ago were awarded:

- a qualifying sickness benefit, or
- a qualifying disability benefit

we may be able to backdate your claim more than one month.

If you think this applies to you, please tell us in your letter the date the benefit was awarded from. See pages 12-15 for a list of qualifying sickness and disability benefits.

Leaving the tax credits system

There are two ways that you can withdraw from tax credits.

- By phoning the helpline on 0345 300 3900 or writing to us to tell us that you don't want to claim. If you do this before 31 July, your claim for the current year will not be renewed. You may have already got provisional payments for the current year which we will ask you to pay back. If you contact us after 31 July, your claim will continue until the end of the tax year but will not be renewed for the next tax year.
- You may get a letter from us telling you that we will not renew your claim for the next year because the level of your income means that you do not currently get or will not get tax credits payments for the next year. If you want to renew your claim, you should contact us by the date shown in the letter. Even though you may not get any payments, you can still renew and continue your claim. If you do, this will protect your claim if your income later falls as you will not need to make a new claim; or if you currently qualify for the disability element of Working Tax Credit you may continue to qualify.

Whether you have asked us to stop your claim or we have written to you to tell you that we will not renew your claim, we will still send you an end of year notice. You should still provide us with any information requested on the notice so that we can finalise your claim for the year just ended.

If your claim is not renewed for the next tax year and your circumstances change, you will need to make a new claim. If you do make a new claim:

- we will only usually backdate your new claim up to one month
- you may not qualify for the disability element of Working Tax Credit (if claimed previously).

In some cases we may have paid you too much tax credits, this is called an overpayment. This may happen if you tell us that you no longer wish to claim tax credits for the new tax year. How we deal with tax credits overpayments is set out in our Code of Practice 26. This can be found on our website. Go to www.hmrc.gov.uk and look for COP26 within the Search facility.

What other help can I get?

If your income is below a certain level you may be entitled to benefits and services, such as help with the costs of health services, provided by other government departments, agencies or local authorities. You may need to use your tax credits award notice as proof of your income for these benefits and services.

For information about these benefits and services, you will need to contact the organisation that provides them.

If you get Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit, your tax credits award may affect the amount of benefits you are entitled to. When you get your award notice, you should contact your local authority's Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit office so that they can reassess your case.

Child Benefit

If you are claiming Child Tax Credit because you are responsible for a child or qualifying young person, you may also be entitled to Child Benefit. If you have not already done so, you should make a claim for Child Benefit.

What is Child Benefit?

Child Benefit is a four-weekly tax-free payment made to anyone bringing up a child or qualifying young person. It is paid for each child or young person that qualifies and isn't affected by income or savings, so most people bringing up a child or young person can get Child Benefit.

You do not need to be the parent of the child or young person to qualify, but you must be responsible for them. The child or young person does not need to live with you, but if they live with someone else you can only get Child Benefit if:

- you pay money to bring up the child
- the amount you pay is the same as, or more than, the weekly rate of Child Benefit you get for them
- the person the child lives with is not getting Child Benefit for them.

Additional qualifying conditions apply once a child reaches age 16.

For more information on other help that might be available go to www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits and select *Leaflets on tax credits* then *WTC6*.

Write to us at:
Child Benefit Office
PO Box 1
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE88 1AA.

When and how to make a claim

Child Benefit can only be backdated for up to three months from the date your claim is received in the Child Benefit Office, so it's best to make your claim straight away to avoid losing money.

You should claim Child Benefit as soon as:

- your child is born
- a child or young person that you are responsible for, comes to live with you
- you adopt a child who is living with you
- you start to contribute to the cost of looking after a child that you are responsible for, unless the person the child lives with is already getting Child Benefit for them. The amount you contribute must be the same as, or more than, the weekly amount of Child Benefit you get for that child.

You can claim in any of the following ways:

- go to www.hmrc.gov.uk/childbenefit
- phone the helpline
 - 0845 302 1444, or
 - if your preferred language is Welsh phone 0300 200 1900
- textphone the helpline on 0845 302 1474.

National Insurance credits for social security benefits

If you are getting Working Tax Credit you may be awarded National Insurance credits to help safeguard your entitlement to some social security benefits, such as the basic State Pension if you are:

- earning below the Lower Earnings Limit for liability to National Insurance contributions (£107 a week in the tax year 2012–13). We can only pay Working Tax Credit to one of you if you are making a joint claim and you are both working. You need to decide which one of you we should pay. You should choose the person who could be entitled to credits to make sure they get any National Insurance credits they may be entitled to, or
- self-employed but only have small earnings (net profit less than £7,605 per annum in the tax year 2012–13) and you have been awarded Small Earnings Exception.

For more advice on National Insurance credits go to www.hmrc.gov.uk and follow the link for *National Insurance* and then *National Insurance credits*.

For more advice on Small Earnings Exception if you are self-employed go to www.hmrc.gov.uk/forms/cf10.pdf

7 Examples of tax credits calculations

The following examples explain how tax credits will help people in differing circumstances. Other than example 10, for easy reference, these calculations do not take account of the rounding procedures and the weekly amounts are calculated assuming a 52-week year.

Example 1

Patricia Taylor is a single parent with one child aged 12 and works less than 30 hours a week. Patricia's gross earnings last tax year were £8,000 (rising to £8,400 in the current year) and apart from Child Benefit (which is disregarded for tax credits purposes) she has no other income. She does not use registered or approved childcare.

Patricia's maximum tax credits entitlement will be a combination of:

- Child Tax Credit - family element (£545) and child element (£2,690), giving £3,235 a year, and
- Working Tax Credit - basic element (£1,920) and lone parent's element (£1,950), giving £3,870 a year.

A total of £7,105.

As her income in the current year is expected to rise by less than £10,000, her tax credits award for the year will be based on last year's income. The income threshold is £6,420. Patricia's award is worked out as follows:

Annual income	£8,000.00	
Less threshold	-£6,420.00	
Excess income	£1,580.00	
Maximum tax credits	£7,105.00	
Less 41% of excess income	-£647.80	
Award	£6,457.20	(£124.18 a week)

Example 2

Rebecca Dobson is a single parent with one child aged four and works more than 30 hours a week. She uses a registered childminder, which costs her £100 a week. Her gross earnings last tax year were £15,000 (rising to £15,750 in the current year). She gets Child Benefit and maintenance from the child's father of £1,200 each year. She also has £5,000 in her building society account which in the previous tax year paid gross interest (that is, before tax) of £150 and she expects the same amount this current year. Her total gross income last tax year was therefore £16,350 (not including Child Benefit, which is disregarded). For the purposes of tax credits we also disregard:

- the maintenance payments, and
- the gross interest, because it is below the £300 limit for reporting in the tax credits claim form.

Therefore, her income for tax credits purposes is only her earnings of £15,000 last year and £15,750 this year.

Rebecca's maximum tax credits entitlement will be a combination of:

- Child Tax Credit - family element (£545) and a child element (£2,690), giving £3,235, and
- Working Tax Credit - basic element (£1,920), a lone parent element (£1,950), a 30 hour element (£790) and 70 per cent of the eligible childcare costs of £100 a week (£5,200 a year), which is £3,640 a year, giving £8,300.

A total of £11,535.

As her income in the current year is expected to rise by less than £10,000, her tax credits award for the year will be based on last year's income. The income threshold is £6,420.

Rebecca's award is worked out as follows:

Annual income	£15,000.00
Less threshold	-£6,420.00
Excess income	£8,580.00
Maximum tax credits	£11,535.00
Less 41% of excess income	-£3,517.80
Award	£8,017.20 (£154.18 a week)

Example 3

Jenny and Mike Smith have one child aged five. Mike works 16 hours a week while Jenny works 8 hours a week. Mike had gross earnings last tax year of £15,000. Jenny's gross earnings were £5,000 and apart from Child Benefit (which is disregarded for tax credits purposes) they have no other income. They do not use registered or approved childcare.

Mike and Jenny's maximum tax credits entitlement will be a combination of:

- Child Tax Credit - family element (£545) and a child element (£2,690), giving £3,235, and
- Working Tax Credit - basic element (£1,920) and couple element (£1,950) giving £3,870.

A total of £7,105.

As Mike and Jenny's income in the current year is expected to rise by less than £10,000, their tax credits award for the year will be based on last year's income. The income threshold is £6,420. Mike and Jenny's award is worked out as follows:

Annual income	£20,000.00
Less threshold	-£6,420.00
Excess income	£13,580.00
Maximum tax credits	£7,105.00
Less 41% of excess income	£5,567.80
Award	£1,537.20 (£29.56 a week)

However, if Mike's hours dropped to below 16 hours a week, Mike and Jenny would not be entitled to Working Tax Credits because as a couple with children they have to work 24 hours a week between them with at least one of them working 16 hours a week.

Example 4

Mike and Claire Jones have one child, aged 10, who is disabled. Mike works more than 30 hours a week while Claire stays at home to look after their child. Mike had gross earnings last tax year of £20,000 (rising to £21,000 in the current year). Claire gets Child Benefit and Disability Living Allowance (DLA) on behalf of the child, both of which are disregarded for tax credits purposes. The couple also have £12,000 in their joint building society account, which last tax year paid gross interest of £360 and they expect the same amount this current year. Their total gross income last tax year was therefore £20,360 (not including Child Benefit and DLA).

Their maximum tax credits entitlement will be a combination of:

- Child Tax Credit - family element (£545), a child element (£2,690) and a disabled child element (£2,950), giving £6,185, and
- Working Tax Credit - basic element (£1,920), couple element (£1,950) and a 30 hour element (£790), giving £4,600.

A total of £10,845.

As Mike and Claire's income in the current year is expected to rise by less than £10,000, their tax credits award for the year will be based on last year's income, with £300 of the gross interest being disregarded. This gives last year's income of £20,060. The income threshold is £6,420. Their award is worked out as follows:

Annual income	£20,060.00
Less threshold	-£6,420.00
Excess income	£13,640.00
Maximum tax credits	£10,845.00
Less 41% of excess income	-£5,592.40
Award	£5,252.60 (£101.01 a week)

Example 5

Rashid and Yasmin Ali both work more than 30 hours a week and have three children, all of school age. They do not use registered or approved childcare. Last tax year, Rashid earned £15,000 (rising to £15,750 in the current year) and Yasmin earned £10,000 (rising to £10,500 in the current year). She also got Child Benefit for the children. The couple also have £12,000 in a joint building society account, which last tax year paid gross interest of £360 and they expect the same amount this current year.

Their total gross income last tax year was therefore £25,360 (not including Child Benefit).

Their maximum tax credits entitlement will be a combination of:

- Child Tax Credit - family element (£545) and a child element (£2,690 per child), giving £8,615, and
- Working Tax Credit - basic element (£1,920), couple element (£1,950) and a 30 hour element (£790), giving £4,660.

A total of £13,275.

As Rashid and Yasmin's income in the current year is expected to rise by less than £10,000, their tax credits award for the year will be based on last year's income, with £300 of the gross interest being disregarded. This gives last year's income of £25,060. The income threshold is £6,420. Their award is worked out as follows:

Annual income	£25,060.00	
Less threshold	-£6,420.00	
Excess income	£18,640.00	
Maximum tax credits	£13,275.00	
Less 41% of excess income	-£7,642.40	
Award	£5,632.60	(£108.32 a week)

Example 6

Nick Sinclair is single, aged 25, works more than 30 hours a week and has no children. His gross earnings last tax year were £10,000 (rising to £10,500 in the current year) and he has no other income.

Nick's maximum tax credits entitlement will be a combination of Working Tax Credit - basic element (£1,920) and a 30 hour element (£790), giving £2,710.

As his income in the current year is expected to rise by less than £10,000, his tax credits award for the year will be based on last year's income. The income threshold is £6,420. Nick's award is worked out as follows:

Annual income	£10,000.00	
Less threshold	-£6,420.00	
Excess income	£3,580.00	
Maximum tax credits	£2,710.00	
Less 41% of excess income	-£1,467.80	
Award	£1,242.20	(£23.89 a week)

Example 7

Vicky and Simon Graham have one child aged 12. Vicky works more than 30 hours a week and Simon is unemployed. They do not use registered or approved childcare. Last tax year their gross earnings were £9,500. They have no other income (apart from Child Benefit, which is disregarded).

Their maximum tax credits entitlement will be a combination of:

- Child Tax Credit - family element (£545) and a child element (£2,690), giving £3,235, and
- Working Tax Credit - basic element (£1,920), couple element (£1,950) and a 30 hour element (£790), giving £4,660.

A total of £7,895.

The income threshold is £6,420. Based on last year's income, Vicky and Simon's tax credits award would be as follows:

Annual income	£9,500.00
Less threshold	-£6,420.00
Excess income	£3,080.00
Maximum tax credits	£7,895.00
Less 41% of excess income	-£1,262.80
Award	£6,632.20 (£127.54 a week)

However, at the start of the new tax year, Vicky takes a better paid job and expects to earn £11,500 gross a year. Simon also gets a new job and expects to earn £21,000. This joint rise in income of £23,000 (£2,000 plus £21,000) is £13,000 higher than the £10,000 limit for reporting increases in income. They contact us immediately to have their tax credits award reassessed on the basis of their current year's income.

Their maximum tax credits entitlement based on their circumstances remains the same but the increase in income will reduce their tax credits award. The first £10,000 of the increase in earnings is disregarded, so the revised award will be based on income of £22,500 (that is, £32,500 less £10,000). We will therefore amend Vicky and Simon's award as follows:

Annual income	£22,500.00
Less threshold	-£6,420.00
Excess income	£16,080.00
Maximum tax credits	£7,895.00
Less 41% of excess income	-£6,592.80
Award	£1,302.20 (£25.04 a week)

Example 8

Mark Joyce is single, aged 30, works more than 30 hours a week and has no children. He is deaf and gets Disability Living Allowance (DLA). Mark's gross earnings last tax year were £10,000 (rising to £10,500 in the current year) and, apart from DLA (which is disregarded for tax credits purposes), he has no other income.

His maximum tax credits entitlement will be a combination of Working Tax Credit - basic element (£1,920), a 30 hour element (£790) and disability element (£2,790), giving £5,500.

As his income in the current year is expected to rise by less than £10,000, his tax credits award for the year will be based on last year's income. The income threshold is £6,420. Mark's award is worked out as follows:

Annual income	£10,000.00
Less threshold	-£6,420.00
Excess income	£3,580.00
Maximum tax credits	£5,500.00
Less 41% of excess income	-£1,467.80
Award	£4,032.20 (£77.54 a week)

Example 9

John Smith, aged 51, starts work at the beginning of the new tax year, having spent the previous year on contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA). His new job means that he works more than 30 hours a week and he expects to earn £29,000 gross a year. He and his wife, Margaret, have £5,000 in their joint building society account, which currently pays £150 a year gross interest (this is disregarded as it is below the £300 limit for reporting on the tax credits claim form). Margaret stays at home and the couple have no children or qualifying young persons living with them.

John and Margaret's maximum tax credits entitlement will be a combination of Working Tax Credit - basic element (£1,920), couple element (£1,950) and a 30 hour element (£790), giving £4,660.

Their tax credits award will initially be based on their previous years income and then revised when they tell us their current year's income. The first £10,000 of the increased income is disregarded. So the award will be based on income of £19,000 (that is £29,000 less £10,000). The income threshold is £6,420. John and Margaret's award is worked out as follows:

Annual income	£19,000.00
Less threshold	-£6,420.00
Excess income	£12,580.00
Maximum tax credits	£4,660.00
Less 41% of excess income	-£5,157.80
Award	£0

The following example takes account of the rounding process, and uses an example award from the 2011-12 tax year.

Example 10

Colin and Mary Owen are in their early twenties. They both work more than 30 hours a week and each get a salary of £12,000 a year. On 7 October 2012, their first child is born and Mary gives up work permanently to look after the child. Colin continues to work at the same level of salary. Mary gets Child Benefit but this is disregarded for tax credits purposes. Their tax credits entitlement for the tax year 2012-13 will be based on Colin's salary of £12,000 and Mary's salary for the first six months of the tax year of £6,000, giving a total gross income of £18,000.

Colin and Mary cannot claim tax credits for the first six months of 2012-13 because they are both under 25 and have, at that stage, no children. For the next six months, 7 October 2012 to 5 April 2013, they can claim both Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit.

Their maximum tax credits entitlement will be a combination of:

- Child Tax Credit - family element (£545), and the child element (£2,690) each are divided by the number of days in the tax year (365 days in 2012-13) and rounded up to the nearest penny to give a daily rate. These daily rates are then multiplied by the number of days in the relevant period (in this example 181 days) and added together, giving £1,605.47, and
- Working Tax Credit - basic element (£1,920), the couple element (£1,950) and the 30 hour element (£790) each are divided by the number of days in the tax year and rounded up to the nearest penny to give a daily rate. These daily rates are then multiplied by the number of days in the relevant period and added together, giving £2,314.99.

A total of £3,920.46.

Due to the fall in their income their tax credits award will be based on the current year's income with the first £2,500 of the income decrease disregarded that is, £20,500 divided by 365 (the number of days in the tax year) and multiplied by 181 (the number of days in the relevant period). This gives income of £10,165.75. The income threshold is £6,420 divided by 365 and multiplied by 181 giving £3,183.63. Colin and Mary's award is worked out as follows:

Annual income	£10,165.75
Less threshold	-£3,183.62
Excess income	£6,982.13

Maximum tax credits	£3,920.46
Less 41% of excess income	-£2862.68

Award	£1,057.78 (£20.74 a week from 7 October 2012 to 5 April 2013)
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8 Customer service

Your rights and obligations

Your Charter explains what you can expect from us and what we expect from you. For further information please go to www.hmrc.gov.uk/charter

Customers with particular needs

We offer a range of facilities for customers with particular needs, including:

- wheelchair access to nearly all Enquiry Centres
- help with filling in forms
- help for people with hearing difficulties
 - Text Relay
 - Induction loops.

We can also arrange additional support, such as:

- home visits, if you have limited mobility or caring responsibilities and cannot get to one of our Enquiry Centres
- services of an interpreter
- sign language interpretation
- leaflets in large print, Braille and audio.

These notes are for guidance only and reflect the position at the time of writing. They do not affect the right of appeal. Any subsequent amendments to these notes can be found at www.hmrc.gov.uk

Customer Information Team

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