Statistical Bulletin
Child Benefit Statistics: Annual Release, August 2020 Main Commentary

Published 31 March 2020

Contents:
1. Overview
2. Main Headlines
3. Changes Since Previous Publication
4. Overall Trends in Time Series
5. Families Who Have Opted Out of Receiving Child Benefit Payment
6. Number of Families Receiving Child Benefit Payments
7. Number of Children Who Are Subject to Child Benefit Payments
8. Number of Children Who Are Subject to Child Benefit Payments by Age
9. Number of Children Who Are Subject to Child Benefit Payments by Country and English Region
10. Number of Children Who Are Subject to Child Benefit Payments by Local Authority
11. Receipt of Child Benefit by Ethnicity
12. Receipt of Child Benefit by Disability
13. Receipt of Child Benefit by Gender
14. Receipt of Child Benefit by Age
15. Receipt of Child Benefit by Country of Birth
16. Receipt of Child Benefit by Nationality
17. Receipt of Child Benefit by Type of Claimant
18. Receipt of Child Benefit by Claimant Employment Status
19. Receipt of Child Benefit by Claimant Income

1. Overview

This publication includes details of the number of families claiming Child Benefit as of 2nd August 2020, the number and ages of children within those families and their geographical breakdowns by Local Authority and Country and English Region as shown, as well as by Local Authority and Parliamentary Constituency (Westminster and Scottish) in the United Kingdom.

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2. Main Headlines

As at **2nd August 2020** there were:

7.21 million

families in receipt of Child Benefit, this is a fall of approximately 71,000 when compared to a year earlier.

12.52 million

children in Child Benefit payment families. This is a fall of approximately 136,000 when compared to a year earlier.

Number of families and children in receipt of Child Benefit

Number of families in receipt of Child Benefit by region

Families
North East
Northern Ireland
Wales
Scotland
North West
South West
East Midlands
West Midlands
Yorkshire and The Humber
East of England
London
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Figure 5.1 shows that the East of England, London and the South East have the highest number of families that have opted out of receiving Child Benefit.

5.2 Number of Children in Families That Have Opted Out of Receiving Child Benefit by Individual Age

Figure 5.2: The number of children in families that have opted out of receiving Child Benefit by individual age , August 2020

The lower number of children at ages 7 or younger is likely to be because families subject to the HICBC (either the potential recipient or recipient's partner earns more than £50,000) will have the option of registering and then opting out of receiving payment or not register to begin with. These figures suggest that these families may have chosen not to register for Child Benefit after learning about the HICBC. For children aged above 16, there are likely to be fewer families that have opted out of receiving Child Benefit with children due to the eligibility criteria for this particular age group, which is seen also in children for whom Child Benefit is received.

5.3 Proportion and Number of Child Benefit Families That Have Opted Out of Receiving Child Benefit Payment by Gender of Registered Claimant

Figure 5.3: The proportion and number of Child Benefit families that have opted out of receiving Child Benefit payment by gender of registered claimant, August 2020

In August 2020, 92% of families that had chosen to opt out of receiving Child Benefit were registered as having a female claimant and 19% were recorded as having a male claimant. The total number of families that have opted out of receiving child benefits increased by 42,000 when compared to the previous year.

Note: As the claimant gender is derived from the title provided on the Child Benefit application form, there are instances where we are unable to determine the gender of our claimants as the title is not gender-specific.

6. Technical Note

A NATIONAL STATISTICS PUBLICATION

National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference.

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods, and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

For general enquiries about National Statistics, contact the National Statistics Public Enquiry Service on:

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- **overseas** : +44 (0)633 653 599
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Customer Contact Centre,
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You can also find National Statistics on the internet at government statistics

7. What is Child Benefit?

Child Benefit is a payment that you can claim for your child. It is usually paid every four weeks but in some cases can be paid weekly. The payment is not taxed by anyone who qualifies.

As of January 2013, claimants may be liable to a tax charge called the High Income Child Benefit Charge (HICBC). Being liable for this charge does not affect a child's entitlement but any Child Benefit recipient is liable to repay some or all of their Child Benefit back if they or their partner has an individual income of more than £50,000 per year. For every additional £100 over the £50,000 threshold that an individual earns, the tax charge due increases by 1%. This means that any recipient whose income (or partner's income) is £60,000 or higher will be liable to repay their entire Child Benefit entitlement. Alternatively, claimants affected by the HICBC have the option to opt-out of receiving Child Benefit, thereby ceasing their payments.

Child Benefit is paid to those responsible for children (aged under 16) or qualifying young people. The latter includes those:

a. in full-time non-advanced education or (from April 2006) on certain approved vocational training courses and who are under 19, or are aged 19 and have been on the same course since their 19th birthdays. (Note: those reaching 19 up to 9 April 2006 ceased to qualify on their 19th birthday); or

b. entered for future external examinations, or are in the period between leaving education (or exams finishing) and the week containing the first Monday in September (or similar dates after Easter and in January, February, if earlier), and are not in work (there are slight variations for Scotland); or

c. aged under 18 who have moved directly from full-time education to being registered for work or training with the Careers service or with Connexions.

You can get Child Benefit even if your child doesn't live with you. However, if they live with someone else, you can only get Child Benefit if:

a. you pay towards the upkeep of your child

b. what you pay is at least the same as the amount of Child Benefit you get for your child

c. the person bringing up your child is not getting Child Benefit for them - if you and another person both claim Child Benefit for the same child, only one of you can get it

You can also claim Child Benefit for a child even if you're not their parent, but you have to be responsible for them to qualify.

Awards are also subject to residence criteria being satisfied. Under UK domestic law a family is eligible to receive Child Benefit if they are present and ordinarily resident in the UK. Citizens of European Economic Area countries are able to claim Child Benefit as long as they meet the requirements of the right to reside test, which amongst other requirements means that they must generally be in employment, in self-employment, be self-sufficient, or be a student.

There will be no change to the rights and status of EU citizens living in the UK before January 2021. Families can apply for settled status to continue living in the UK after June 2021.

There are two separate amounts, with a higher amount for your eldest (or only) child and a lower amount for each of your other children.

For further information about who can claim please refer to the HMRC website

8. What Does This Publication Tell Me?

This publication includes details of the number of families claiming Child Benefit as at 31st August 2020, the number and ages of children within those families and their geographical location. Population counts at Country and English Region level are shown, as well as by Local Authority and Parliamentary Constituency (Westminster and Scottish) in the United Kingdom. This publication also contains details of the number of families that had opted out of receiving Child Benefit as at August 2020, the number and ages of children within those families and their geographical location. Again population counts broken down by Country and English Region, Local Authority and Parliamentary Constituency are provided.

The statistics are as close to real-time as possible and represent the complete picture as at the 31st August, including back-dated awards pertaining to new-entrants. As these statistics are classified as National Statistics the exact date of publication is pre-announced at least a month in advance with the month published a year ahead in the previous publication.

This publication includes detailed analysis of the Child Benefit population as at 31st August 2020, as well as headline time series figures for each August back to 2003, this is because HM Revenue & Customs took over the responsibility for Child Benefit from April 2003.

Previously and up until April 2003, Child Benefit was administered by the Department of Social Security (now the Department for Work and Pensions).

We also publish detailed small area statistics for Great Britain, at Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA) for England and Wales, and Data Zone for Scotland. These statistics are based on the same source data and totals for higher level geographies will match up. The statistics are available with the National Statistics release of these statistics. Currently the small area data is not labelled as National Statistics and appears on the HMRC website and on the Neighbourhood Statistics website.

Further geographical statistics, down to Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA) in England and Wales, Data Zones in Scotland and Output Area in Northern Ireland are available from the following sites:

- Office for National Statistics: Neighbourhood Statistics
- Scottish Government: Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics
- Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA): Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service

9. Who Might Be Interested?

The statistics contained in this publication will be of interest for anyone that is looking for the latest possible data on Child Benefit. Specifically, there are statistics on the number of children, by age band, in each geographical area. These statistics may be of interest to academics, think tanks as well as Local Government and might be used for comparison to comparable Tax Credits statistics.

Although the number of families that have opted out and the children within those families are included within this publication, we are unable to provide figures on those that have chosen not to claim Child Benefit due to the introduction of the HICBC. This means that the Child Benefit population (up to 16) may not continue to be as useful a proxy for the child population as a whole in future years.

10. User Engagement

Bespoke analysis of Child Benefit data is possible although there may be a charge depending on the level of complexity and the resources required to produce. If you would like to discuss your requirements, to comment on the current publications, or for further information about the Child Benefit statistics please use the contact information found at the beginning of this publication.

We are committed to improving the official statistics we publish. We want to encourage and promote user engagement, so we can improve our statistical outputs. We would welcome any views you have using the contact information at the beginning of this publication.

11. National Statistics Review

We carried out a formal review of our National Statistics publications, covering both Tax Credits (provisional and finalised) and Child Benefit in 2011.

The Child Benefit Statistics User Consultation ran from 11 July to 30 September 2011 and covered Child Benefit National Statistics and Official Statistics using an on-line survey.

Following feedback from the consultation, we introduced a new category from the 2012 publication (for August 2011 data) to show the number of families in receipt of CB for four children and five or more children.

12. Disclosure Control

To avoid the possible disclosure of information about individual families, values have been suppressed when underlying counts are low and are represented with an entry of "-" where they have been withheld in line with HMRC's Dominance and Disclosure policy.

13. Rounding

The figures have been independently rounded to the nearest 5. This can lead to components as shown not summing to totals as shown.

14. Age Bands of Data on Children

For most tables in this publication, figures showing the age of children for whom Child Benefit is claimed have been grouped into four age bands. Figures at a local authority level showing the number of children by single year of age are available in Table 7, with Table 9 tabulating this for opt-outs.

15. Revisions and other changes to the statistics

A minor error has been corrected from last year's publication (August 2019) regarding column headings for Table 2 in the Main Tables document. The column heading 'Five or more children' has now been divided into two new columns, 'Five to Nine Children' and 'Ten or more children' for data from August 2019 to provide more detailed breakdowns.

16. Technical Annex – Child Benefit Take-up Rate

The Child Benefit take-up rate is defined as follows:

$$\text{The Child Benefit take-up rate is defined as follows:} \quad \frac{C_A}{E_A + (EWR_{Male} - BD_A) + (EWR_{Female,16-18} \times AF_{16})}$$

Where

C_A	is the is the administrative caseload (the estimated number of children and young people who are registered for Child Benefit irrespective of whether their parents have opted out of Child Benefit payments as part of the High Income Child Benefit Charge). This includes children and young people who are resident in the UK and who are British or approved training who are eligible to be registered for Child Benefit, but who are not registered, based on the PIXS (Family Resources Survey).
EWR_{Male}	is the number of male children aged 16 and over who appear to have an eligible child for which they have not claimed and have made a claim which is backdated to cover the PIXS reference date
$EWR_{Female,16-18}$	is the number of female children and young people present within families combining a 16-18 year old, also based on the PIXS
AF_{16}	is an adjustment factor to the number of young people aged 16-19 in full-time education, based on the LFS

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