

Factsheet 1 – General changes to Income Support for lone parents from October 2009

What are the changes?

If you are a lone parent with a school age child you may no longer be entitled to Income Support. This is one of several changes to the benefit system to help you develop the skills for work and move into paid work.

How will this affect me?

If your youngest child is aged 10 or over, your Income Support may stop if you are **only claiming** it because you are a lone parent. Instead, with our support, **you will have to look for paid work and make a claim for another benefit.**

Will these changes apply to all lone parents?

These changes will not apply to you if you are entitled to Income Support for **other reasons**. For example, if you:

- have children who are entitled to the middle-rate or highest-rate care component of Disability Living Allowance
- get Carer's Allowance, or
- have a foster child living with you.

There may be other reasons why these changes will not apply to you. If you are not sure, ask your adviser.

When will my Income Support payments stop?

Age of youngest child	When Income Support will end
Youngest child aged 11 or over on or before 31 January 2010	For those existing lone parents whose youngest child is already aged 11 on 26 October 2009 or becomes 11 on or before 31 January 2010, Income Support entitlement will cease from the first day of the benefit week in which the next Work Focused Interview is due on or after 1 February 2010.
Youngest child becomes aged 11 after 31 January 2010	For those existing lone parents whose youngest child is already aged 10 on 26 October 2009 but becomes aged 11 after 31 January 2010, Income Support will cease on the Income Support payday following the date the child becomes aged 11.

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Youngest child is aged 10 **on or before 6 June 2010**

For those existing lone parents whose youngest child is already aged 9 on 26 October 2009 who becomes aged 10 on or before 6 June 2010, Income Support entitlement will cease from the first day of the benefit week in which the next Work Focused Interview is due on or after 7 June 2010.

Youngest child becomes aged 10 **after 6 June 2010**

For those existing lone parents whose youngest child is already aged 9 on 26 October 2009 but becomes aged 10 after 6 June 2010, Income Support entitlement will cease on the Income Support payday following the date the child becomes aged 10.

If, on 26 October 2009, you are already a full-time student or taking part in a full-time course of training as part of New Deal for Lone Parents or similar, you may be able to continue receiving Income Support. Your adviser will be able to tell you more.

How will you let me know when my payments are due to stop?

We will contact you 8 weeks before your Income Support is due to stop to tell you when your last payment is due.

What other benefits will I be able to claim?

If you haven't found paid work or are not able to work when your Income Support ends, you will be able to apply for either Jobseeker's Allowance or Employment and Support Allowance.

- Jobseeker's Allowance is the main benefit for people who are out of work. To receive it, you must be available for and actively looking for work. As a lone parent, with a youngest child aged 12 or under, you have the right to restrict the hours you are available to work to your child's normal school hours. Your adviser will tell you more.
- Employment and Support Allowance helps people with a disability or health condition to move into work. You may get Employment and Support Allowance if your disability or health condition affects your ability to work.

Will my Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit be affected?

There should be no break in your Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit if you move to Jobseeker's Allowance or Employment and Support Allowance. We will tell the council, on your behalf, about any changes to your benefit claims.

What help will Jobcentre Plus give me to find work?

Your adviser can help you with advice on finding a job, training and local childcare, including extra help through New Deal for Lone Parents. When you start work, they will support you for 6 months and help you apply for a wide range of financial help.

Where should I go for more information?

To find out more about getting into work or training, you can:

- visit www.direct.gov.uk
- arrange an appointment with an adviser at your nearest Jobcentre.

jobcentreplus

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