

## **Make sure Greenwich families don't miss out!**

Many families miss out on education benefits (such as free school meals, clothing grants and journey grants), tax credits and social security benefits because they do not know they can claim.

Royal Greenwich's updated 'Benefits for children at school' leaflet summarises the main sources of help available for families and includes information about recent and forthcoming benefit changes, such as the rollout of Universal Credit in June 2018. The leaflet is now available on the Royal Greenwich website: [www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/benefits](http://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/benefits)

Attached to your weekly bulletin, you should also receive a copy of an article summarising the main sources of help for parents.

Greenwich council's Welfare Rights Service is keen to ensure that local families are claiming their full entitlement and are encouraging residents to call their telephone helpline on 020 8921 6375 for a free benefit check.

Please encourage local families to contact the service on 020 8921 6375 to check they are not missing out on extra help. Alternatively if you need benefits advice about a family you are working with, please call the Advisers and staff helpline on 020 8921 6376.

If your school produces a newsletter which is distributed to parents and you would be interested in including a benefits feature, the service would be happy to contribute the text. Just contact Sandra Pierre on 020 8921 6378 or email [sandra.pierre@royalgreenwich.gov.uk](mailto:sandra.pierre@royalgreenwich.gov.uk)

If your school has a website and you would like to add some information, and links to the appropriate sections on the Royal Borough's website, Sandra can also advise on that – please do get in touch.

# Benefits for families with children at school

The Royal Borough of Greenwich wants to make sure that local families are claiming all the help available to them. You may be able to claim a range of education benefits, tax credits and social security benefits depending on your circumstances.

## Education Benefits – include:

- Free school meals:
  - All children in the infants (reception, year 1 and 2) automatically get free school meals.
  - Children in year 3 or above can also get free school meals if you receive certain benefits including Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Universal Credit or Child Tax Credit (CTC) only and your annual income is £16,190 or less.

**If you are in low paid work:** remember to check if you can get free school meals or other benefits, such as Housing Benefit or Council Tax Support if you or your partner are in low paid work, but do not work sufficient hours to qualify for Working Tax Credit (WTC).

- School Clothing Grants – payable if you live in the borough and get one of the benefits listed above or CTC (at a rate higher than the basic family element) or WTC. Grants are available when your child enters reception year or year 3 (£40), year 7 (£100) and year 9 (£70).

- Help with school trips and free school milk.

If your child attends an academy school, you will need to check with the academy what, if any financial assistance they may be able to offer.

For more information about education benefits or to claim, contact the school or call the Royal Borough's Pupil Benefits Team on 020 8921 2570.

**If your child is staying on in full-time education or unwaged training after their GCSEs** – you can continue to get Child Benefit and Child Tax Credit payments for them until they reach age 20 or until their education or training ends (whichever is sooner). But, you must remember to tell the Tax Credits office (0345 300 3900) and the Child Benefit Centre (0300 200 3100) that they are still in education or training, otherwise your payments will stop.

Your child may be able to get extra financial help from the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund. This helps young people facing financial hardship to stay in full or part-time education or unwaged training. Contact the school, college or training provider to claim. Go to the GOV.UK website for more information: [www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund](http://www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund).

**Benefits and tax credits** – there is a range of benefits and tax credits that families may be able to claim depending on their circumstances. For example, there is:

- Child Tax Credit (CTC) if you have dependent children under 20 – this is for both working and non-working families.
- Working Tax Credit (WTC) if you are in low paid work for at least 16 hours a week. Couples must work at least 24 hours a week between them to qualify (with one person working at least 16 hours). You may also be able to get help towards the cost of childcare while you work. Contact Greenwich Families Information and Outreach Service on 020 8921 6921 for free information and advice about services and activities for families with children – including childcare options.
  - Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support to help with your rent and council tax depending on your circumstances. For more information contact Royal Greenwich's Advice and Benefits Service on 020 8921 4900 (or 18001 020 8921 4900 for textphone users) or go to [www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/apply](http://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/apply) to apply online.

form or to download the updated 'Benefits for children at school' leaflet.

**If your child has additional support needs** – you may be able to get Disability Living Allowance and other linked benefits. Many families miss out on this because they do not know they can claim.

**For more information or to check if you are missing out on benefits or tax credits**

If you live in the Royal Borough of Greenwich and would like to check if you are missing out on extra help, call the Welfare Rights Service Helpline for a free benefits check on 020 8921 6375 (or 18001 020 921 6375 for textphone users). Or visit the Royal Borough website at [www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/benefits](http://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/benefits) to contact the service using an online enquiry