

Jobseeker's Allowance

If you have Parkinson's, are unemployed and looking for work, you may have some concerns about how you will manage financially. But there is financial support available, so it's important to find out what you're entitled to.

This information explains what Jobseeker's Allowance is, who qualifies and how to claim it.

What is Jobseeker's Allowance?

Jobseeker's Allowance is a benefit for people who are unemployed or working fewer than 16 hours a week and are looking for work. There are two forms of Jobseeker's Allowance – contribution-based and income-based. Both are taxable.

Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance is currently being phased out and replaced by Universal Credit (see page 2 for details of how this will affect your claim).

Contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance

This is a personal flat-rate allowance. You may be able to claim this if you have paid enough in National Insurance contributions. Contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance can be paid for up to six months, either in one period, or several shorter periods where your entitlement is still based on the same tax years.

The amount you get may be affected by part-time earnings or an occupational or personal pension. Only your earnings are taken into account – any earnings of a partner are ignored. It is not means-tested, so it is not affected by other income or savings you may have.

How much is contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance?

Age	per week
Under 25 years	£57.90
25 years and over	£73.10

If you have an income of more than £50 a week from an occupational or personal pension, the excess will be deducted from your benefit. For example, if your pension is £55 a week, £5 will be deducted. A one-off lump-sum payment does not affect your benefit. If your pension income is below £50 a week, then your contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance will be paid in full.

Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance

Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance is being replaced by Universal Credit.

During 2018, as the phasing out of income-based Jobseeker's Allowance continues, there will be a gradually reducing number of postcodes across the UK where Universal Credit has yet to be introduced and you can still claim income-based Jobseeker's Allowance. The government aims for this process to be complete by the end of 2018, from which time no new claims for income-based Jobseeker's Allowance can be made.

You can check whether you are eligible to claim Universal Credit in your area using the postcode checker at universalcreditinfo.net

Find out more: see our information on [Universal Credit](#).

Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance is means-tested and is based on your income and savings. You may receive this benefit if you have no income, or a low income, and no more than £16,000 in savings. You do not have to have paid National Insurance contributions to get it. You can claim for yourself and your partner (if you have one). You are not entitled to income-based Jobseeker's Allowance if your partner is working 24 hours or more a week.

Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance can top up contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance. Entitlement to income-based Jobseeker's Allowance gives access to other benefits including Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction.

If you are already getting income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, you will at some point be moved over to Universal Credit. The government aims to complete this process by March 2023.

How much is income-based Jobseeker's Allowance?

The amount you get takes into account things like your age, your income and capital (and that of your partner), your disabilities (or your partner's), plus certain housing costs.

Savings over £6,000 (or £10,000 if you live in a care home) will be taken into account and assumed to provide you with a certain amount of income. If your capital (and your partner's) is above £16,000, you will not be entitled to income-based Jobseeker's Allowance.

If your income is less than the basic amount the law says you need to live on, you will receive the difference as income-based Jobseeker's Allowance.

Do I qualify for Jobseeker's Allowance?

You may qualify if you:

- meet the labour market conditions (see below)
- are not working 16 hours or more a week
- are under State Pension age

- are not in full-time education (with limited exceptions)
- live in the UK
- pass the contribution conditions (for contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance)
- pass the income-based conditions (for income-based Jobseeker's Allowance), **and**
- do not have a limited capability for work because of ill health or disability that is expected to last more than 13 weeks (if you do, you should claim Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit instead).

Find out more: see our information on [Employment and Support Allowance](#) and [Universal Credit](#).

The labour market conditions

There are three labour market conditions. You must:

- be available for work
- be actively seeking work, **and**
- have entered into a claimant commitment that remains in force.

If you fail to meet these conditions, your Jobseeker's Allowance will normally stop for a fixed sanction period of between four weeks and three years. You may be eligible for Hardship Payments in the meantime. You can challenge a decision to impose a sanction.

For more information, see Disability Rights UK *Factsheet F70 – Sanctions*, available at www.disabilityrightsuk.org/sanctions or by calling Disability Rights UK on **020 7250 8181**.

Available for work

You must be willing and able to take up any paid employment of at least 40 hours a week immediately. You can restrict your hours of availability if it is reasonable given your physical or mental condition. If you have caring responsibilities, you are also allowed a greater degree of flexibility here.

At the beginning of your Jobseeker's Allowance claim, you can restrict job-seeking to your usual occupation and your usual level of pay for up to 13 weeks.

Actively seeking work

You are expected to take a number of steps (usually at least three) each week in order to have the best prospects of getting a job. This can include applying for jobs, looking for vacancies, writing your CV and registering with employment agencies.

Claimant commitment

To keep receiving Jobseeker's Allowance, you must sign a claimant commitment. This will be drawn up at a face-to-face interview with a Department for Work and Pensions 'work coach'.

It will include details of your availability for work (including any restrictions imposed by your condition), the sort of work that you are looking for, how you will look for work and what you intend to do to improve your job prospects.

How do I claim Jobseeker's Allowance?

How you claim Jobseeker's Allowance depends on whether Universal Credit has been introduced into your postcode area yet. You can check this by visiting universalcreditinfo.net

If Universal Credit has not yet been introduced into your area, and you live in England, Scotland or Wales, you should start your claim for Jobseeker's Allowance by ringing the Jobcentre Plus claim line on **0800 055 6688** (textphone **0800 023 4888**). There is also a Welsh language line on **0800 012 1888**. If you live in Northern Ireland, contact your local Jobs and Benefits office or Social Security office.

You will be put through to someone who will go through the claim over the phone. Once they have finished, they will send you a customer statement so you can check the details are correct. You may be called back for extra information if you do not have it to hand. An appointment can then be made for you to attend an initial interview at the Jobcentre.

If Universal Credit has been introduced into your area, then how you claim Jobseeker's Allowance will depend on whether you plan to claim contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance only, or contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance and Universal Credit together.

- To claim Universal Credit alongside your contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance, you must claim online at www.gov.uk/universal-credit/how-to-claim
- To claim contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance without Universal Credit you must ring **0800 328 5644** (textphone **0800 328 1344**) and ask for form (UC)JSA1. This can only be emailed, not posted. When your form is completed, phone the helpline again to ask for an appointment at your local Jobcentre Plus office to take in the form and start your claim.

Initial interview

At the interview, a 'work coach' will discuss your application with you and ensure you understand the rules for claiming Jobseeker's Allowance. They will also discuss what type of work you want and the best ways for you to find a job.

'Signing on'

You will normally be expected to 'sign on' at your local Jobcentre Plus office (usually every two weeks) to discuss how your job search is going. In addition, you must also attend regular, more detailed interviews to look at your situation.

What if my circumstances change?

It is always important to provide full, accurate information to benefits offices, and to let them know if your circumstances change. If you don't do this your benefits may be stopped, you may receive demands for repayment, or you may face prosecution.

More information and support

Parkinson's nurses

Parkinson's nurses provide expert advice and support to people with Parkinson's and those who care for them. They can also make contact with other health and social care professionals to make sure your needs are met.

The role of the Parkinson's nurse varies. Each will offer different services, aiming to meet local needs. Some nurses are based in the community, whereas others are based in hospital settings.

Many Parkinson's nurses are independent prescribers. This means they can prescribe and make adjustments to medication, so someone with Parkinson's doesn't always need to see their specialist for changes to or queries about their Parkinson's drugs.

Parkinson's nurses may not be available in every area, but your GP or specialist can give you more details on local services.

You can find out more at parkinsons.org.uk/nurses

Information and support from Parkinson's UK

You can call our free confidential helpline for general support and information. Call **0808 800 0303** (calls are free from UK landlines and most mobile networks) or email hello@parkinsons.org.uk.

We run a peer support service if you'd like to talk on the phone with someone affected by Parkinson's who has faced similar issues to you. The service is free and confidential – ring the helpline to talk to someone about being matched with a volunteer.

Our helpline can also put you in touch with one of our Parkinson's local advisers, who give one-to-one information and support to anyone affected by Parkinson's. They can also provide links to local groups and services.

We also have a self-management programme for people with Parkinson's, partners and carers. It is an opportunity to reflect on life with the condition, learn about self-management and think about the future. To find out if there is a group near you, visit parkinsons.org.uk/selfmanagement

Our website parkinsons.org.uk has a lot of information about Parkinson's and everyday life with the condition. You can also find details of your local support team and your nearest local group meeting at parkinsons.org.uk/localtoyou

Visit parkinsons.org.uk/forum to chat to other people with similar experiences on our online discussion forum.

Thank you

Thank you to Disability Rights UK for updating this information sheet. Disability Rights UK also have a wide range of online factsheets on disability-related issues including Access to Work, education, the Blue Badge scheme, independent living and disabled facilities grants.

Visit their website: www.disabilityrightsuk.org

Can you help?

At Parkinson's UK, we are totally dependent on donations from individuals and organisations to fund the work that we do. There are many ways that you can help us to support people with Parkinson's.

If you would like to get involved, please contact our Supporter Services team on **0800 138 6593** or visit our website at parkinsons.org.uk/donate. Thank you.

Our information

All of our most up-to-date information is available at parkinsons.org.uk/information-support. If you'd prefer to read one of our printed leaflets or booklets, find out how to place an order at parkinsons.org.uk/ordering-resources or by calling **0300 123 3689**.

We make every effort to ensure that our services provide current, unbiased and accurate information. We hope that this will add to any professional advice you receive and help you to make any decisions you may face. Please do continue to talk to your health and social care team if you are worried about any aspect of living with Parkinson's.

If you'd like to find out more about how we put our information together, including references and the sources of evidence we use, please contact us at publications@parkinsons.org.uk

Jobseeker's Allowance (WB19/2018)

Do you have any feedback about this information? Your comments will help us ensure our resources are as useful and easy to understand as possible. Please return to [Information Content team, Parkinson's UK, 215 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 1EJ](#), or email publications@parkinsons.org.uk. Thank you!

1. Please choose the option that best fits you.

- I have Parkinson's and was diagnosed in I care for someone with Parkinson's
 I have a friend or family member with Parkinson's I'm a professional working with people with Parkinson's
 Other (please specify)
-

2. Where did you get this information from?

- GP Specialist Parkinson's nurse Parkinson's UK local group Parkinson's UK local adviser
 Ordered directly from us Call to the helpline
 Other (please specify)
-

3. Has it answered all your questions?

- Yes, completely Yes, mostly Not sure Partly Not at all

4. How easy was it to understand?

- Very easy Easy Not sure Quite difficult Very difficult

5. Has it helped you manage your condition better, or make choices that have improved your life in some way?

- It helped a lot It helped a little No change It didn't help It made things worse

6. What is your ethnic background?*

- Asian or Asian British Black or Black British Chinese Mixed White British White other
 Other (please specify)
-

*We ask about your ethnicity to ensure our information is reaching a broad range of people. However, this question is optional.

Want to hear more from us?

- I would like a response to my feedback I would like to be a member of Parkinson's UK
 I'm interested in joining the Information review group, to offer feedback on Parkinson's UK information

If you've answered yes to any of these options, please complete your details below.

Name

Address

Email

Telephone

How would you prefer us to contact you? Email Post Phone

We will not pass on your details to any other organisation or third party. To find out more, read our privacy policy at parkinsons.org.uk/termsandconditions

Every hour, two people in the UK are told they have Parkinson's – a brain condition that turns lives upside down, leaving a future full of uncertainty.

Parkinson's UK is here to make sure people have whatever they need to take back control – from information to inspiration.

We want everyone to get the best health and social care. So we bring professionals together to drive improvements that enable people to live life to the full.

Ultimately, we want to end Parkinson's. That's why we inspire and support the international research community to develop life-changing treatments, faster. And we won't stop until we find a cure.

Together we can bring forward the day when no one fears Parkinson's.

Parkinson's UK

Free confidential helpline **0808 800 0303**

Monday to Friday 9am–7pm, Saturday 10am–2pm. Interpreting available.

NGT Relay **18001 0808 800 0303** (for use with smart phones, tablets, PCs and other devices).

For more information see www.ngts.org.uk

hello@parkinsons.org.uk

parkinsons.org.uk

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Please check our website for the most up-to-date versions of all our information.

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