



SOCIAL
SECURITY
AGENCY

Sure Start Maternity Grants from the Social Fund

SFMSSA

What is the Social Fund?

If you are living on a low income and faced with costs that you are unable to meet, you may be able to get a payment, grant, or loan from The Social Fund. This can help with important intermittent expenses that you are unable to pay for out of your normal income.

This information sheet provides information about Sure Start Maternity Grants, available from the Social Fund to help pay for essential items needed, to allow you to care for a new baby.

The advice in this information sheet applies to people of working age and to people over State Pension age.

What is a Sure Start Maternity Grant?

A Sure Start Maternity Grant is a one-off payment of £500, given to help you pay for any essential items you may need immediately, to allow you to care for, and meet the immediate needs of a new baby.

You do not have to pay income tax on any Sure Start Maternity Grant you receive.

Am I eligible?

You may be eligible for a Sure Start Maternity Grant if you or your partner:

- are pregnant and expecting your baby within 11 weeks,
- have had a baby in the past 3 months,
- have a dependent child or dependent young person who is pregnant and expecting a baby within 11 weeks or who has had a baby, in the past 3 months,
- have adopted a baby who is under 12 months old,
- have, in certain circumstances, been granted a residence order by the courts in respect of a baby who is under 12 months, or
- have been granted a parental order by the courts in respect of a surrogate birth;

AND you or your partner are getting at least one of the following:

- Income Support,
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance,
- Pension Credit,
- Working Tax Credit (where a disability or severe disability element is included in the award),
- Child Tax Credit (at a rate higher than the family element).

What else do I need to know?

How will this affect any other benefits I get?

Any Sure Start Maternity Grant you receive will not affect any benefits or entitlements you are getting.

Repaying a Sure Start Maternity Grant

You do not have to repay any Sure Start Maternity Grant you receive.

How and when should I claim?

If you think you may be eligible for a Sure Start Maternity Grant and would like to make a claim, you should complete claim pack SF100 (Sure Start). To get a claim pack, contact your Social Security or Jobs & Benefits office or, you can download a copy online at www.dsdni.gov.uk/ssa. You should return your completed claim pack to your Social Security or Jobs & Benefits office.

When should I make a claim?

- **If you are expecting a baby or have recently had a baby**
You must claim during the period from 11 weeks before the week your baby is due up until your baby is 3 months old.
- **If you are adopting a baby, or have been granted a residence order in respect of a baby**
You can apply for a grant as long as the baby is not more than 12 months old when you apply. You must apply for a Sure Start Maternity Grant within 3 months of adopting or, within 3 months of the date of the residence order.

- **If you and your partner, have been granted a parental order for a surrogate birth**
You must apply within 3 months of the date shown on the parental order.
- If you are waiting for a decision on a qualifying benefit or entitlement, or you have asked for your Child Tax Credit award to be reviewed see “Am I eligible” for a list of qualifying benefits and entitlements. You must still claim within the time limits above.
- Either you or your partner may apply for the grant, but the name of the child’s mother must be included on the claim form.

How are Sure Start Maternity Grants paid?

Payment will usually be made directly into a bank, building society, or Post Office® card account that you have nominated.

What information do I need to provide?

You will need to tell us the date your baby is due (sometimes called the expected date of confinement) or the date of birth if your baby has already been born.

For surrogate births, residence orders, or adoption, you will need to tell us the date of the surrogacy, residence order or adoption. We will also need to see your adoption papers, residence order or parental order.

You will also need to show that you have received advice on the health needs and general welfare of your new baby, and, if you claim before your baby is born, advice on maternal health. To do this, use the certificate attached to the back of the SF100 claim pack.

The certificate must be signed by a health professional that is a registered medical practitioner, nurse or midwife, for example, your GP, hospital midwife or practice nurse.

How decisions are made

Once you have returned your SF100 claim pack to your Social Security or Jobs & Benefits office, we will look at your application and decide if you are entitled to a Sure Start Maternity Grant. You will be sent a decision letter explaining what the decision is.

If you want to know more about the decision or if you think it is wrong

Please get in touch with your Social Security or Jobs & Benefits office within one month of the date of the decision letter. If you contact us later we may not be able to help you.

You, or someone else who has the authority to act on your behalf, can

- ask for an explanation
- ask for a written statement of reasons for our decision
- ask us to look again at the decision to see if it can be changed. There may be some facts you think we have overlooked or you may have more information which affects the decision.
- appeal against the decision to an independent tribunal (but this must be in writing).

You can do any of the actions listed above, or you can do all of them.

You can find more information about decision making and appeals in leaflet **GL24** *If you think our decision is wrong* - available from any Social Security or Jobs & Benefits office or the DSDNI website.

Where can I get more information?

You may be able to get other help from the Social Fund to help meet certain intermittent expenses that you are not able to pay for. You can get information about the different types of help available in the following information sheets.

- Grants and Loans from the Social Fund (SFLSSA)
- Help with Extra Heating Costs from the Social Fund (SFCSSA)
- Help with Funeral Expenses from the Social Fund (SFFSSA)

If you would like copies of any of these information sheets, please contact your Social Security or Jobs & Benefits office. You can find the phone number in the business pages of your local phone book.

You can also find more detailed information on the Social Fund online at: **www.dsdni.gov.uk/ssa**

Remember that this information sheet is a guide only. It is not meant to say exactly what your legal rights are. While we have tried to make sure that the information in this information sheet is correct at the date shown on the cover, it is possible that there may be incorrect information or some items may be oversimplified. Also, please remember that the information in this information sheet is likely to become less accurate over time, for example because of changes to the law.

www.dsdni.gov.uk/ssa