



EDUCATION OTHERWISE

**Home Education:  
Information on  
Child Benefit**

## SUMMARY

Education Otherwise is a charitable organisation which has been supporting home educated families for over forty years. Our information sheets are based on our knowledge and expertise, supported where appropriate by legal advice.

### Key Messages

- 1) **School is not compulsory:** Education is compulsory, but school is not.
- 2) **Child benefit is payable for home educated children:** Child benefit is payable for home educated children and young people.
- 3) **Child benefit is payable after age 16:** Child benefit is payable for home educated children, post 16.
- 4) **You may need to notify HMRC:** Parents should notify HMRC if they do not receive a letter about their child's education.
- 5) **Child benefit is payable up to age 20:** Child benefit can be paid for home educated children up to age 20, just as it can for other children.

## Introduction

Education Otherwise is a charitable organisation which has been supporting home education and home educating families for over forty years.

For most parents, the choice to home educate is a lifestyle choice, requiring significant commitment in terms of time and resources; it is not something that parents generally decide to do without a great deal of research and thought. The decision to home educate can be made for a great many reasons, such as wanting to travel widely, wanting to spend more time together as a family, providing for a child's special interests, a child having special needs, being bullied, or simply being less well suited to a school environment.

## All children

Child benefit is payable for all children in England and Wales, until they cease to be of compulsory school age and this includes home educated children.

Payment of child benefit would normally end on 31<sup>st</sup> August following the child's 16<sup>th</sup> birthday, or on that date if the child's birthday is on the 31<sup>st</sup> August.

Parents can ask for an extension for up to 20 weeks, if their child is 16 or 17 and has left full time non-advanced education, or approved training and registered for work, education or training with a 'qualifying body'. Parents must claim the extension to qualify.



**All parents can claim child benefit for their children, including parents of home educated children.**



Claims can be made online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-benefit-apply-for-extension-ch299>

## After compulsory school age

Parents will usually be sent a letter by the child benefit office, early in the year during which their child attains 16 years of age. If parents do not receive a letter, they should notify the child benefit office that their child is continuing in full time, non-advanced education. Notification can be made online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-benefit-child-continuing-in-approved-education-or-training-ch297>

Home educating parents can continue to claim child benefit for a young person aged 16 and over, provided that they are not yet 20 years old and provided that they continue in full time, non-advanced education.

Following introduction of the Child Benefit (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2025, all post 16 children who remain in full time home education are qualifying children for child benefit purposes.

## Full time education

Full time education is education which takes place for at least 12 hours a week on average during term time (this is 540 hours a year). This limit does not apply to some disabled children.

The 12 hours of education must be spent receiving tuition, engaging in practical work, or supervised study, or taking examinations and,

it must not be advanced education. Advanced education means above level 3, or A levels and their equivalents.

If a child suffers from an illness or physical or mental disability, the required time is any amount of hours appropriate for that person's individual circumstances.

Please note that HMRC is conducting a review in 2025, in order to identify cases in which child benefit was denied for children in these circumstances.



## Child benefit ends

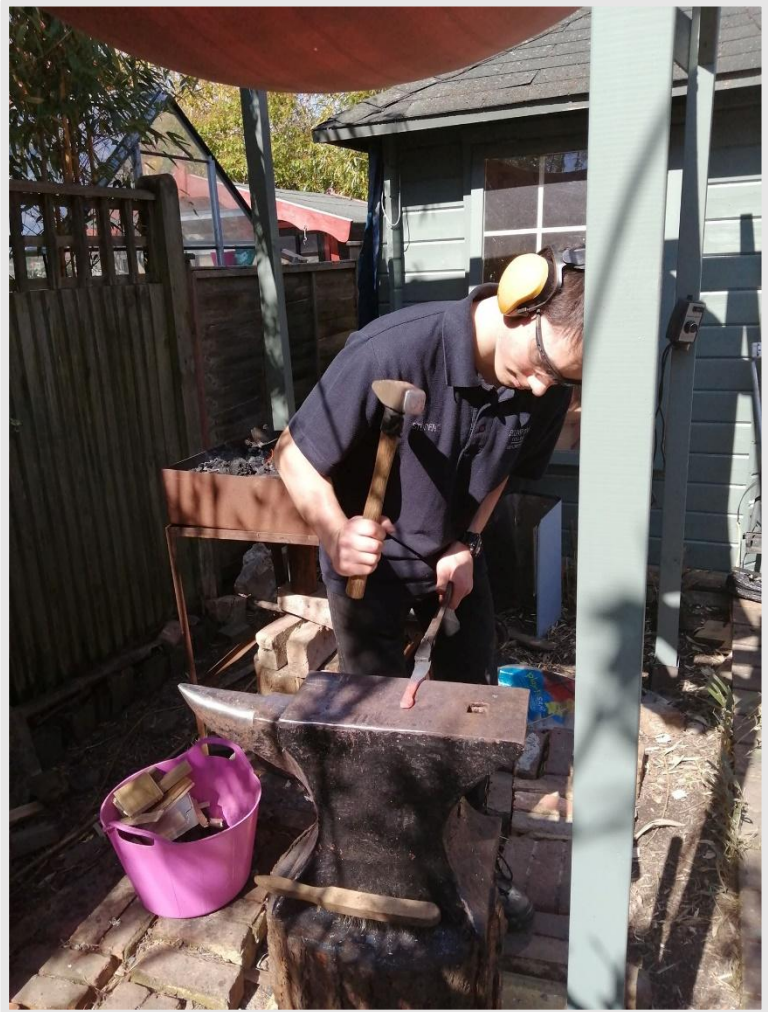
Once a young person ceases to be home educated, child benefit will end at the next 'terminal date'. Terminal dates are:

- the last day in February;
- the last day in May;
- the last day in August and
- the last day in November,

Payment of child benefit during the period between ceasing home education and the terminal date, is subject to the young person not being in paid work for more than 24 hours each week and not being in receipt of certain benefits in their own right.

The Child Benefit (General) Regulations 2006, Regulation 7

It is important to remember that parents must notify any changes to the child benefit office, as if they do not do so and continue to claim child benefit, they can be prosecuted for making a fraudulent claim.



**It is important to notify changes  
to the child benefit office**





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