



## **Jobseeker's allowance**

### **What is jobseeker's allowance**

Jobseeker's allowance (JSA) is paid if you are unemployed, available for and actively seeking work. There are two forms of this benefit, contribution-based JSA and income-based JSA.

### **Contribution-based JSA**

You need to have enough national insurance contributions in certain tax years before you can receive this. It is also only paid for 6 months .

Contribution-based JSA is not paid for dependents so if you have a partner or if you do not have enough national insurance contributions to get this benefit you should apply for income based JSA.

### **Income-based JSA**

This is worked out in the same way as income support (see Factsheet - [income support](#)). You have to pass the "habitual residence" test and have the right to reside to receive this benefit.

If you find work and are on income-based jobseeker's allowance your housing costs can continue for four weeks.

### **The habitual residence test and the right to reside**

For more about this test see Factsheet - [income support](#).

### **How much is jobseeker's allowance?**

The rate for contribution based JSA is:

age under 25 - £50.95  
age 25 or over - £64.30

Income based JSA is calculated in the same way as income support so the amount you get will vary depending on your circumstances.



If you want to know more about the personal allowances and premiums used when calculating jobseeker's allowance see our Factsheet - [income support](#)..

If you and your partner are both signing on you need to decide which one of you receives payment of JSA

### **How do I claim?**

You claim by completing forms JSA1 and ES2 (ES9 if you are age 16 to 17) available from your local Jobcentre Plus office and also by signing a jobseeker's agreement.

You can also make an online claim at [www.dwp.gov.uk/eservice/](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/eservice/) or [phone](#) the following:

Telephone: 0800 0 55 66 88

Textphone: 0800 0 23 48 88 (i)

Lines are open from 8:00 am - 6:00 pm, Monday to Friday. Charges may apply to calls from mobile phones, but the contact centre will call the customer back if requested.

### **Available for work**

You will be required to sign a jobseeker's agreement, which contains a description of the type of work you're looking for, the hours you are available and the action you're expected to take to look for work and to improve your job prospects, details of any restrictions on your availability for work.

You must be prepared to take up employment of at least 40 hours a week and less than 40 hours if required to do so. In most cases, you don't have to accept a job of less than 24 hours a week.

You can restrict the hours available if you are providing care. You can also restrict your availability in any way (eg pay, hours, travel time, type of work), providing the restrictions are reasonable given your physical or mental condition.

Either you or the adviser can propose to vary the agreement at a later date. For a 'permitted period' of up to 13 weeks from the beginning of your claim, you may be allowed to restrict your availability and jobseeking to your usual occupation and/or to your usual pay. After this you must be prepared to widen your availability for work and job searching activity.



You will have to sign on every fortnight at a Jobcentre Plus to confirm that you are following your agreement.

If you have a partner, but no dependent children, and either of you are over 18 and born after 28 October 1947 you must both be available for work and meet all the other JSA rules. This does not apply if one of you is eligible to claim income support.

### **Students and JSA**

Students attending a full-time course are normally excluded from JSA until the end of the course, or until they abandon it or are dismissed from it but there are exceptions.

If you have a partner who is also a student and you have responsibility for a child (aged under 16 years) or a young person (aged under 20 years old, undertaking a full-time course of non-advanced education) you can get JSA during the long vacation as long as you are available for work.

You can also get JSA temporarily while you are waiting to return to your course after an agreed break because you were ill or because you had to care for someone. You can claim JSA once you have recovered or your caring responsibilities have ended until either the date you go back to your course or the date your education establishment has agreed that you can go back, whichever is earlier, but only for a maximum period of one year and providing you are not eligible for a student loan or grant during this time.

### **Part-time study**

You can study part-time and get income-based or contribution-based JSA if your course or training takes place outside of the hours you are required to be available for work. These times are usually recorded in your jobseeker's agreement.

If the course overlaps with the hours in which you must be available for work, you can still get JSA for part-time study if you are willing and able to rearrange the hours of your course immediately to take up employment or willing and able to give up the course if a job becomes available.

### **Age 16 or 17**

You are unlikely to have worked for long enough to satisfy the contribution test for contribution-based JSA. You may be able to get income-based JSA for a short period in special circumstances such as if you are forced to live away from your parents or will suffer severe hardship if you do not get JSA or you are a member of a



couple who has responsibility for a child. The DWP has [guidance on severe hardship payments](#).

You can also get JSA if you are in one of the groups of people who can claim income support. For more information see our Factsheet - [income support](#).

**Where can I get more help and information?**

DIAL Great Yarmouth

12a George Street

Great Yarmouth

Norfolk

NR30 1HR

01493 856900

Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm