

Benefits for non-UK nationals

There are different types of non-UK nationals. This page tells you about some of the groups and the benefits you may be entitled to. This is not a complete list and there may be exceptions to these rules.

Benefits available

Whether you are eligible for benefits will depend on your immigration status and if you are looking for employment.

Benefits you may be able to get are:

- [Pension Credit](#)
- [Income Support](#)
- Income-based [Jobseeker's Allowance](#)
- [Housing Benefit/Rate Relief](#)
- [Personal Independence Payment](#)
- [Attendance Allowance](#)
- [Carer's Allowance](#)
- Income-related [Employment and Support Allowance](#)
- [Tax Credits](#)
- [Universal Credit](#)

To find out if you need permission to work in Northern Ireland or if you need a work permit, visit the following page:

- [Permission to work in Northern Ireland](#)

European Economic Area (EEA) nationals

EEA countries are Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Romania, Spain, Slovenia, Sweden, Ireland and the UK (including the Isle of Man and Channel Islands).

Switzerland is not in the EEA but Swiss nationals have the same rights to live and work in the UK as EEA nationals.

If you are an EEA national, you need to show you have a 'right to reside' (can legally live here) and are 'habitually resident' (this is the place where you normally live) in the UK, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or the Republic of Ireland.

If you are not working, you will not generally be entitled to income-related benefits.

Jobseeker's Allowance and Housing Benefit

Before you can claim income-based [Jobseeker's Allowance](#) you must have been living in the UK, Channel Islands, Isle of Man or Republic of Ireland for the three months immediately before making your claim.

EEA nationals with 'jobseeker' residency status can claim income-based Jobseeker's Allowance for up to six months. You will have a Genuine Prospect of Work assessment after three months.

EEA nationals with 'retained worker' residency status can claim income-based Jobseeker's Allowance for up to nine months. You will have a Genuine Prospect of Work assessment after six months.

EEA jobseekers cannot claim Housing Benefit.

Croatian nationals

You will normally need to apply for a [registration certificate](#) ([external link opens in a new window / tab](#)) before you start work in the UK. Depending on the type of registration certificate, you will not normally be entitled to:

- Income Support
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- State Pension Credit

After 12 months of continuous employment as a registered worker, you will gain full EEA status and be eligible for benefits on the same basis as existing EEA nationals.

Returning UK nationals

Before you can claim income-based [Jobseeker's Allowance](#) you must have been living in the UK, Channel Islands, Isle of Man or Republic of Ireland for the three months immediately before making your claim.

Non-EEA nationals

If you are a third country national (a national of a non-EU country) with limited leave, including work permit holders, spouses and civil partners

during the two year probationary period, you generally won't be able to receive any benefits.

Asylum seekers

If you are an asylum seeker or destitute, for example, if you are homeless or can't buy food, financial support may be provided by the Home Office.

- [Asylum support - GOV.UK website](#)(external link opens in a new window / tab)

Refugees

If you are a refugee, or have been granted humanitarian protection or discretionary leave, you can apply for benefits in the same way as a UK national.

If you have been granted leave to stay in the UK by the UK Border Agency and have gone straight from National Asylum Support Service support into work, you can apply for [Tax Credits](#). You can use the fast-track process at your [local Jobs and Benefits Office](#) when applying.

- [Refugee guidance on benefits - Department for Communities website](#)(external link opens in a new window / tab)

People with indefinite leave

If you have indefinite leave to enter or stay in the UK you will generally have the same access to benefits as UK citizens.

If you are sponsored

If a UK sponsor has agreed to fund your stay in the UK, you won't be entitled to claim income-related benefits for five years, from your date of entry into the UK or from the date the sponsorship was signed (whichever is later), unless your sponsor dies.

Leaving the European Union (EU)

For information on leaving the EU, including the impact on benefits if you are an EU citizen in the UK or a UK national in the EU, visit the following pages:

- [EU citizens in the UK: benefits and pensions in a 'no-deal' scenario](#)(external link opens in a new window / tab)

- [UK nationals in the EU: benefits and pensions in a 'no-deal' scenario](#)(external link opens in a new window / tab)

Help and advice

For more information or if you are unsure about what benefits you may be entitled to, contact your local [Jobs and Benefits office](#).

More useful links

- [Benefits and financial support](#)
- [Claiming benefits - information you need to know](#)
- [Settle in the UK - GOV.UK website](#)