

Bereavement Support Payment

Bereavement Support Payment will be introduced on **6th April 2017** to help people deal with the more immediate costs associated with the death of a spouse or civil partner.

Bereavement Support Payment will replace the three existing bereavement benefits (Bereavement Payment, Bereavement Allowance and Widowed Parent's Allowance) and will be paid to new claimants where the date of death is on or after 6th April 2017. **People already receiving existing bereavement benefits will continue to do so and will not be affected by the introduction of Bereavement Support Payment.**

SOME KEY FEATURES OF BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT PAYMENT

- Payments will consist of an initial larger payment followed by a series of smaller monthly payments up to a maximum period of 18 months at set standard or higher rates;
- Bereavement Support Payment will be a contributory benefit but the contributory element has been simplified, in that the deceased must have paid sufficient National Insurance contributions in any one tax year during their working life;
- Anyone of working age will be eligible to apply for Bereavement Support Payment while the upper age limit for BSP will align to the State Pension age;
- The claimant's age will not affect the amount of Bereavement Support Payment received;
- The claimant re-marrying or re-partnering will not affect payments;
- Bereavement Support Payment will be disregarded from means-tested and contributory benefits, including the Benefit Cap;
- All Bereavement Support Payments will be tax free.

CLAIMS AND PAYMENTS

There are two rates of Bereavement Support Payment, the standard rate and the higher rate. As it is recognised that bereaved spouses or civil partners with dependent children have additional financial needs, people with entitlement to Child Benefit will receive the higher rate of Bereavement Support Payment.

The rates of payment for Bereavement Support Payment are as follows;

- Surviving partners with at least one dependent child – an initial payment of £3,500 and up to 18 monthly payments of £350; and
- Surviving partners with no dependent children – an initial payment of £2,500 and up to 18 monthly payments of £100.

To be eligible for the initial payment at the increased rate (either £3,500 or £2,500)

claims must be received within 12 months of the date of death. Claims received more than 12 months after the date of death will be treated as late by the Department and the initial increased payment will not be paid.

To be considered eligible to receive the maximum number of payments, claims must be made within 3 months of the date of death. Claims received more than 3 months after the date of death will be treated as late by the Department and the period of entitlement will be reduced accordingly.

HOW TO CLAIM BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT PAYMENT

Where the date of death is on or after 6th April 2017, Bereavement Support Payment can be claimed by telephoning the Bereavement Service on 0800 085 2463, or via completion of a paper-based application form which will be available on the nidirect website.

Further information in relation to Bereavement Support Payment will be published at:
www.communities-ni.gov.uk/advisor-information