

United Kingdom (UK)

Distinctive Features: No explicit family policy; stress on social assistance and means-tested benefits; generous universal child benefit; increasing concern about reducing child poverty and number of lone parents; exemplary home health visiting.

Maternity / Parental Leave

Benefit	Maternity: Cash benefit and job-protected leave; Parental: job-protected leave
Eligibility Criteria	Maternity: all working women; Parental: any parent.
Duration of Leave	Maternity: 18 weeks; Parental: 13 weeks
Compensation Rate	Maternity: 6 weeks at 90%; 12 weeks at low flat-rate. Parental: unpaid

Early Childhood Education and Care

Age Group Served	Social Welfare Day Care (SWDC): Ages 0-4; Preschool: Ages 2½ - 4.
Eligibility Criteria	SWDC: Specialized, poverty ¹ ; Preschool: Universal
Fees	SWDC: Free or income-related fees; Preschool: Free
Locus of Care	SWDC: Centers; Preschool: Preschools
Funding Strategies	SWDC: Govt., income-related fees; Preschool: Govt., Free
Access/Coverage (%)	SWDC: N.A.; Preschool: 60% (ages 3-4)

Family and Child Allowances

Benefit & Eligibility	Universal Child Benefit: all residents with one or more children.
Benefit Level	Extra benefit for first child

Child Support

Benefit	Minimum amount not guaranteed by government.
Maintenance Rate	Depends on income of non-custodial parent; capped at 25% of non-resident parent income.

Child and Family Tax Benefits

Tax Deductions/Relief	Working Family Tax Credit (modeled after US Earned Income Tax Credit) Low-income families in which parent works at least 16 hours per week. Children's Tax Credit – targets low and moderate income families with children. To be replaced by the Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit in April 2003.
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Other Child-Conditioned Income Transfers

Benefits	Survivor's Benefits for disabled children, Dependent's Benefits for children of old age pensioners and disabled workers.
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Child and Adolescent Health

Access to Coverage	Universal coverage through National Health Service.
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Housing Benefits

Benefit	Non-taxable housing benefits for rent assistance.
Eligibility Criteria	Means-tested, geared towards low-income individuals and families.

School-Age Children Policies

Compulsory School	5 – 16
School Hours	9:00 – 12:00 and 13:00 – 15:30

Youth Policies

Distinctive Features	Youth receive priority for housing benefits, are entitled to free health care, and can qualify for welfare payments at age 18.
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¹ Similar to U.S. Head Start and Smart Start