

Annex 7A: GOV.UK Accounts for mothers and fathers

The use case for GOV.UK Accounts is to make a complex series of services easier to use, “on the principle that you shouldn’t need to know how the government works to use government services.”¹ The flagship justification – indeed, the first official justification for all GOV.UK Accounts – was the Brexit transition checker.²

There appears to be no similar, ‘one-stop’ service for parents of newborns, who face a new service environment in a way which has long been poorly signposted by the Government.³

Why is there no cross-Government checklist for parents?

Most of the paper- and form-based hoops Departments require new parents to jump through are down to the Departments’ own requirements to know the parents do indeed have a newborn child; sending off multiple copies of their birth certificate, etc.

Quite aside from having to [register the child’s birth](#), parents may have to contact their Jobcentre Plus, local council and several other parts of government in order to access or maintain a whole range of vital benefits and allowances, including:⁴

- [Maternity Allowance](#)
- [Statutory Maternity Pay and Leave](#)
- [Statutory Paternity Pay and Leave](#)
- [Statutory Shared Parental Leave and Pay](#)
- [Sure Start Maternity Grant](#)
- Informing [Universal Credit](#) you are pregnant with an [MAT B1 form](#)
- Apply for a [Maternity Exemption certificate](#) using [form FW8](#) for free prescriptions and dental treatment
- [Healthy Start food vouchers](#)
- [Child Benefit](#)
- [Child Tax Credit](#)

To avoid building a database of every child in Britain, any such system must be built with care, but why are digital tools not being used to aid (new) parents?

As we cover in other parts of this Annex, such support would require service redesign of many different small and neglected services; if digital government cannot be ‘joined up’ for the newest of the citizens it serves, what hope for the rest of us?

Pursuing this topic further is beyond our available capacity and expertise at this point, but we would be happy to assist anyone who would like to see what they can do.

¹ <https://gds.blog.gov.uk/2020/09/22/introducing-gov-uk-accounts/>

² <https://www.gov.uk/transition-check/questions>

³ The best guide for expectant parents that we have seen is from Turn2Us: <https://www.turn2us.org.uk/Your-Situation/Expecting-a-child>

⁴ Not a comprehensive list. We have not included, e.g. what parents must do when things go wrong, such as [registering a stillbirth](#), or [when a parent dies](#), or if the child is [born with a disability](#).