

Universal Credit full service Local Authority Support Pack

"Click here to start"

This pack has been designed to support Local Authorities develop their own learning and development material to support the staff whose job roles will be impacted by the introduction of Universal Credit full service. **simply click on the information button for more information**

Introduction to
Universal Credit full
service

Universal Credit
Advances

Personal Budgeting
Support and Alternative
Payment Arrangements

Bereavement Advice

Migration and form
UCMGP1LA

Data sharing with Local
Authorities for Local
Council Tax Reduction

Verification of Housing
costs for social and
Private Landlords

Managed Payments and
Housing Costs to
Landlords

Third Party
Deductions

UC full service contact
details and useful links

Disclosure of Information

Temporary and Specified
Accommodation

Local Authority Issue
Resolution Process

Universal Support

Preparing your Local
Authority

Transition to UC
Housing Payment

Fraud Referral Process

UC LA Bulletins

Sanctions

Frequently Asked
Questions

Change control sheet

Menu

Previous Version	V17 - December 2017
New version	V18 - April 2018
The following has been updated:	
Page	Revision / Additions / Change
Page 7	Detail on the Welsh Language Capability updated
Page 9	Scottish Choices - How Payments are made twice monthly
Page 15	From 14 February 2018 waiting days no longer be applied to Universal Credit new claims. Waiting days may still be applied to claims made before 14 February 2018
Page 19	Clarification that LAs will not receive a termination notification for the closure of Live Service when the transfer to full service is completed
Page 19	Clarification - reference to LA notification changed to LCTRS data share notification
Page 28	Temporary Accommodation added to the list of Gateway conditions
Page 29	Update to 18-21 year old policy - 18-21 yo will receive housing costs once legislation is updated
Page 42	Format changes to highlight Dec 2017 change to PRS process

Next

Change control sheet

Menu

Previous Version	V17 - December 2017
New version	V18 - April 2018
The following has been updated:	
Page	Revision / Additions / Change
Page 49	Reference to Temporary Accommodation added and updated to the categories on the MGP1 form
Page 49	Reference to Temporary Accommodation added to Migration Trigger Examples
Page 50	Process re-confirmed that the HB interest and not the LCTRS needs removing in CIS
Page 52	MGP1 categories updated and new MGP1 form (April 2018) added as an attachment
Page 58	UC Data Share for LCTR - Technical Guidance for LA Users updated - version 2 attached within the pack
Page 71	Changes to Temporary Accommodation policy in line with Budget 2017 Announcements and link to guidance added
Pages 73-75	Pages on Temporary Accommodation Easements removed from pack
Page 76	Reference to Specified Accommodation policy / process clarified

Back

Next

Change control sheet

Menu

Previous Version	V17 - December 2017
New version	V18 - April 2018
The following has been updated:	
Page	Revision / Additions / Change
New	Reference to Specified Accommodation categories added
New	Details on Transition to UC Housing Payment and link to guidance added
Page 84	Useful links updated - new website on understanding UC and also link to full service roll-out schedule added
Page 95	Updated Universal Support and Grant Funding guidance
All	Pages numbers and other format changes to pack based on the introduction and removal of pages from previous version

Back

Introduction to Universal Credit full service

Simply click on the information button for more information.

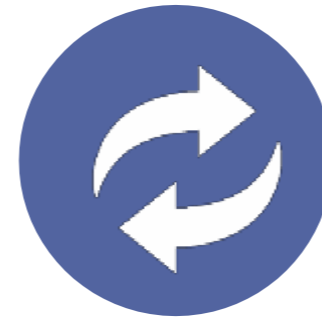
Menu



Universal Credit full service



Who can claim?



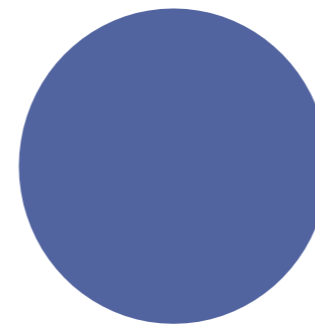
The live to full service transfer process



The claimant journey from claim to payment



Key differences between the live and full service



Welsh Language and Scottish Choices

What is the Full Service?

Universal Credit Full Service (UCFS) is transforming the benefit system and brings with it a complete culture change, both for the claimant and ourselves.

It is now a digital interactive service that allows claimants to:

- make and maintain their claim for Universal Credit
- check the progress of their claim and [payments](#)
- message their work coach and the service centre if they have questions.

Similarly, the work coach or service centre can contact the claimant via their online journal.

A text or email is also sent to the claimant, advising them that a message has been left on their journal. This could be to confirm an appointment, to ask for further information, or to request that a claimant **“to do”** is completed.

UCFS is designed to work on tablets, smart phones as well as on a desktop computer, making it easier for claimants to access the service in a way that suits them. The online service is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Eligibility for UCFS is based on whether the claimant lives in designated post code. The online claim process will only allow claims from post codes that are within a full service area and the service is available to all claimant types, for example:

- singles
- couples
- families
- people out of work
- people in work
- self employed
- people who are ill or disabled
- carers

As of 6 April 2017, claimants, where the household has more than two dependant children at the point of a new claim, will need to apply for Child Tax Credit and any other legacy benefits including Housing Benefit (HB) that they may be entitled to. Claimants who have been in receipt of Universal Credit within the previous six months and are making a reclaim should not be directed to a legacy benefit or CTC as they will remain on UC . [Universal Credit and families with more than 2 children: information for stakeholders](#)

Claimants apply directly on line to register and create an account and are able to maintain their account themselves, including any changes in circumstances. Where a claimant has no access to the Internet or a suitable device, they should be directed to the available Service Access Points in the area (i.e. Librarys, JCP etc).

If the claimant is unable/will never be able to self-serve, and they do not have/require an appointee, they should be directed to the DWP UC Helpline **0800 328 5644** who will identify the correct alternative channel of support (i.e. telephony or DWP Vistit)

Assisted Digital Support in UC full service

Assisted Digital Support in UC full service supports claimants navigation around the system and their understanding of the information required to complete the online new claim data gather. Additionally it supports claimants to manage and carry out transactions via the online UC account on whatever device they use to access the service.

For those claimants who could self-serve with support DWP has made funding available to Local Authorities to help deliver Universal Support – Assisted Digital. Detailed information can be found in the [Universal Support Guidance Pack](#)

What is the claimant ‘to- do’ list?

The claimant’s ‘to-do list’ is a list of actions that the claimant needs to carry out to move their claim forwards. Once the claim has been established these to-dos may also include actions to help the claimants improve their chances of moving closer to work, or increasing the earnings they already have. Failure to carry out a To-do can have an impact on the progress of their claim.

To-do's can be generated automatically by the full service or manually by Case Managers or Work Coaches.

Once a to-do is completed it is automatically moved to the claimant’s journal page so that they can see what has been completed. The journal is also used as the main method of communication between the claimant, Work Coach and Service Centre.

Where can I find more information about Universal Credit?

To support and inform claimants DWP have produced a comprehensive set of information guides. These guides are available on the [GOV.UK](#) website and outline how Universal Credit is paid, [calculated](#) and the support it provides for people who are on a low income or out of work. They also describe the [claimant responsibilities](#) under the live and full service.

Universal Credit full service and the Welsh Language service.

On accessing [GOV.UK](#) those with a Welsh language preference will be directed to ring 0800 0121 888 to discuss making their claim on-line. This is an interim solution until the Welsh on-line service is made available early 2018.

Claimants who wish to converse with Universal Credit in Welsh will be allocated a Welsh speaking Case Manager and Work Coach. They will also be able to communicate in Welsh on their Journal or can contact the Welsh enquiry line on 0800 328 1744.

Claimant facing information guides and notifications have already been translated into Welsh, this includes services such as [GOV.UK Verify](#) and the [Money Advice Service Budgeting tool](#).

On 22 March the Secretary of State for DWP laid a Written Ministerial Statement to outline detail on the Welsh language capability within the Universal Credit full service it can be accessed [here](#).

Universal Credit Scottish Choices

[The Scotland Act 2016](#) gave the Scottish Government powers to vary how Universal Credit is paid in Scotland. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) retains responsibility for the delivery of Universal Credit as it remains a reserved benefit. DWP will deliver the Scottish Government's policy.

The choices are to:

- be paid monthly or twice monthly; and
- have the relevant housing costs in the Universal Credit award paid to themselves or to their landlord.

How the choice is offered

Eligible claimants of Universal Credit will be offered the choice after they have received their first payment of Universal Credit. This means the offer will be made at the start of the second assessment period, when the expected Universal Credit award is known, and there has been time to assess the claimant's award, including housing costs if applicable.

Those transferring from live to full service will be offered the choice after their full service claim has been established.

Universal Credit Scottish Choices

Picklist

The choice will be offered in the claimant's online account in two stages:

- one for choosing to be paid monthly or twice monthly; and
- one for choosing to have the relevant housing costs in the Universal Credit award paid to themselves or to their landlord.

The claimant can make one or both choices.

If an Alternative Payment Arrangement has been applied prior to the time of the offer, the corresponding choice will not be offered. Landlords will not be able to request the new Universal Credit choice.

The process and operation of Alternative Payment Arrangements are not changing as a result of the new Scottish choices, these will be the first consideration for claimants with complex needs or rent arrears.

The effect of choosing to be paid [twice monthly](#) will be explained to the claimant as part of the offer – including confirmation that the next payment date will not change.

From 31 January 2018, existing Universal Credit claimants who were on Universal Credit prior to 4th October 2017 will also be able to request the Universal Credit Scottish Choices.

These changes have been communicated on [GOV.UK](#)

Next

Universal Credit Scottish Choices

Picklist

How payments will be made – twice monthly

The claimant makes a new Universal Credit full service claim on 14 February 2018. The first assessment period is 14 February 2018 to 13 March 2018.



The first payday is 20 March 2018.
The claimant receives their full Universal Credit award for assessment period 14 February 2018 to 13 March 2018.



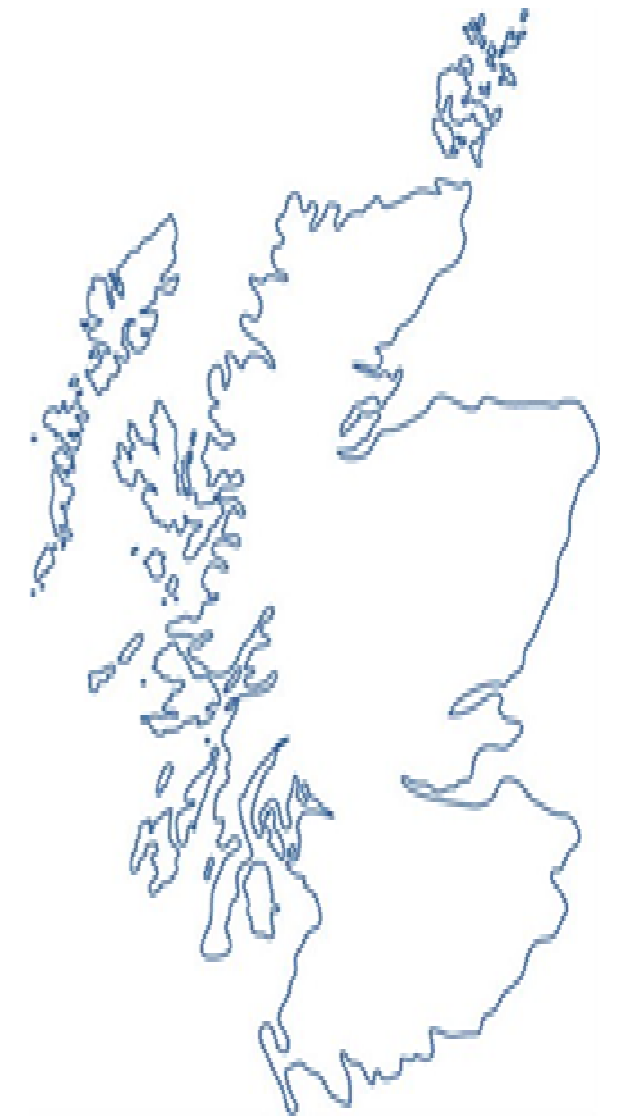
On 22 March 2018, the claimant chooses to be paid twice monthly.



The next payday doesn't change.
On 20 April 2018 the claimant receives half of the award for assessment period 14 March 2018 to 13 April 2018



15 days later on 5 May 2018, the claimant receives the second half of the award for assessment period 14 March 2018 to 13 April 2018. **This repeats for each assessment period.**



Back

When the payment date falls on a Weekend or Bank Holiday the claimant will be paid on the last working day before that date.

Who Can Claim

Picklist

The UC full service will be available for all claimant groups from the start and will initially be available for claimants making a new claim or certain changes in circumstances. As postcodes expand into a UC full service area, new claims to JSA (IB), ESA (IR), IS, Housing Benefit and Tax Credits are prohibited. However there will be some exceptions to this rule.



Housing
Benefit

Tax Credits

Income
based
JSA

Income
Support

Income
based
ESA

The only time a working age person in a UC full service area can claim HB is when:

- The person is living in Specified Accommodation, Temporary Accommodation **or**
- The person's partner is of state Pension Credit Age (for Universal Credit if someone over the upper age limit forms a partnership with someone on Universal credit, the UC claimant can choose either to remain on UC or claim State Pension Credit & HB as a couple.)

Additionally, as of 6 April 2017, claimants, where the household has more than two dependant children at the point of a new claim, will need to apply for Child Tax Credit and any other legacy benefits including Housing Benefit (HB) that they may be entitled to. Claimants who have been in receipt of Universal Credit within the previous six months and are making a reclaim should **not** be directed to a legacy benefit or CTC as they will remain on UC. [Universal Credit and families with more than 2 children: information for stakeholders](#) details further.

Next



UC and the 2 child policy

For claimants already in receipt of Universal Credit, they will remain on Universal Credit and, where a third or subsequent child is born or moves into the household on or after 6 April 2017, a decision will be made on entitlement taking into account whether exceptions apply.

Claimants who have been in receipt of Universal Credit within the past six months and are making a reclaim will return to Universal Credit.

Working Tax Credits
and
Child Tax Credits

Important Tax Credits note and the migration to UC full service:

Claimants who are already in receipt of one of the two Tax Credits components (CTC or WTC) and do not wish to claim another existing Legacy benefit will **not** move to UC full service if they subsequently wish to 'claim' the other component. HMRC treat this as a change of circumstances to an existing Tax Credits award.

Contribution -
Based
ESA and JSA

Contribution-Based Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA):

Contribution-based ESA and JSA remain following the introduction of Universal Credit (UC). In order to enable UC and contribution-based JSA or ESA to be paid together, a "new style" of ESA and JSA has been introduced. The new style benefits consist of a contribution-based element only, which means that they can be paid regardless of whether a claimant is also entitled to Universal Credit or not.

New style ESA and JSA are also payable where claimants do not qualify for Universal Credit, but satisfy the conditions of entitlement for these contribution-based benefits. For example, claimants who don't qualify for Universal Credit, because they have capital over £16,000, might still qualify for new style ESA or JSA. Claimants don't need to have made a claim to Universal Credit in order to make a claim to new style ESA or JSA.

How to claim new style ESA

If the claimant lives in a Universal Credit full service area they will need to telephone the service centre on the number below. The service centre will then e-mail form UCESA1 to the claimant for completion. If the claimant has an online UC account, they can ask for this using their online journal.

UC full service

Telephone: 0800 328 5644

Textphone: 0800 328 1344

Opening times are Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

More information about New style ESA can be [here](#)

How to claim new style JSA

If the claimant lives in a Universal Credit full service area they will need to make their claim for new style JSA using the Jobseeker's Allowance Online service found on Gov.uk

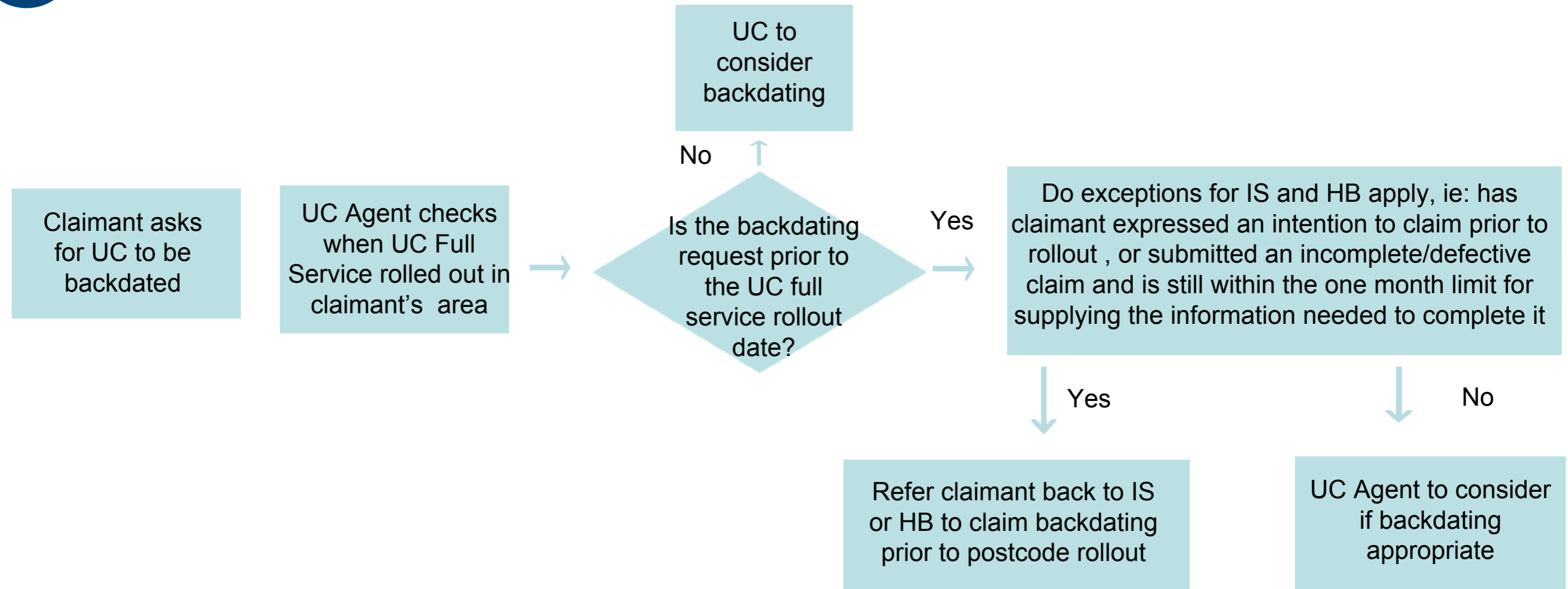
More information about new style Jobseeker's Allowance can be [here](#).

Backdating new style Contribution-Based ESA or JSA

When a Universal Credit full service area goes live, only claims to the new style Contribution-Based JSA or new style Contribution-Based ESA can be considered for backdating under relevant legacy rules as entitlement to JSA Income Based JSA(IB) and Employment Support Allowance Income Related ESA(IR) ends.

Backdating after postcode expansion

Picklist



If a claimant makes a claim for UC and requests backdating to a date prior to the UC full service roll out start date, and IS/HB exceptions apply, the claimant will need to contact the LA if they require support with rented housing costs. If backdating is awarded, it will be only paid up to the UC effective date.

Back

Next

Waiting Days

Picklist

From the 14th February 2018, DWP removed the 7 day waiting period for new UC full service claims.

Subject to satisfying the conditions of entitlement, all new claimants will be eligible for Universal Credit from the first day they claim it.

Back

Live to full service the transfer process

Picklist



When you become a full service area all Universal Credit Live Service claimants will start to transfer onto the full service. The transfer process is managed by Universal Credit, the claimant does not have to do anything until they are asked. The transfer process starts approximately 3 months after offices have transitioned to full service.

Claimants will have an explanation about the transfer process, either by their work coach when they attend the jobcentre or in writing prior to them having to transfer their Universal Credit Claim. This will explain when they have to take action to transfer.

The action required from them is to complete their details on line via the full service, and then book and attend an appointment in their jobcentre. Claimants will also be asked to provide evidence to support their identity either by successfully using [VERIFY](#) on Gov.uk or at the jobcentre. This will ensure the most up-to-date evidence is held for the claimant.



Jobcentre staff will take all opportunities to explain to existing Universal Credit claimants about transferring to the full service and support will be offered for those who require it.

Next

live to full service the transfer process

Call to Action Letter

Picklist



Universal Credit
Post Handling Site B
Wolverhampton
WV99 1AJ

www.gov.uk/universalcredit

Telephone: 0800 328 7844

19 September 2017

You need to switch to the new Universal Credit online service

Dear Mr

Universal Credit is switching to an online service. You need to switch your Universal Credit claim now.

If you don't complete all the activities to switch to the online claim by , your payments may stop and your claim may be closed.

After you've switched, you'll be able to manage your existing claim, check your payments or report changes in your circumstances online at any time.

Before you start you'll need your own email address and a bank or building society account of your choice.

What you need to do now

- go to <https://www.universal-credit.service.gov.uk>
- Follow the instructions to create an online claim
- enter and declare all of your details online by

Call to action

Go to <https://www.universal-credit.service.gov.uk> to create an online account

Enter all your details online and complete the online declaration

Book a new appointment at the jobcentre

Attend the appointment

Once complete you'll need to:

- book a new appointment to attend the jobcentre by
- attend the appointment at the jobcentre by
- you'll need to show any evidence needed to support your claim by

This evidence may include, evidence that supports your identity and any housing cost that you are claiming for. We will explain what you need to take with you when you book your appointment.

Until you have completed all of the above, you should:

- tell us about any change in your circumstances that may affect your claim
- meet all of your responsibilities on your claimant commitment including attending any appointments with your work coach or work programme provider.

You may lose some or all of your payments if you don't meet your responsibilities.

Help and Support

Your local jobcentre can help if you need access to a computer or support when switching.

Yours sincerely,

Office manager

Back

Next

live to full service the transfer process

Picklist

Claimants who complete all actions to transfer to the full service will have their Live Service claims terminated.

When a LCTR interest marker is present Local Authorities will receive notification from full service for claimants who transfer their claim to the full service, this includes details of the full data gather and payment information at the end of the first Assessment Period (AP) on full service. Local Authorities will no longer receive information from Live Service.

If claimants do not comply with all the actions required to transfer their Universal Credit Claim their payments will be suspended and subsequently their claim to Universal Credit terminated.

Local Authorities will receive notifications when claimants have failed to transfer their claim to the full service and their Universal Credit claim will be terminated. LCTR data share notifications will include the Termination reason Transfer – Non Compliance in such cases.

Local Authorities will not receive a termination notification for the closure of the Live Service when the transfer is successfully completed

Back

Next

live to full service the transfer process

Picklist

A specialist transfer team will ensure the following information is transferred from the live service claim to the full service claim.

- Assessment period and payday
- Date of claim
- Alternative payment arrangements
- Deductions.

When a debt is in recovery on Debt Management System and the claimant complies with the transfer process then the debt will continue to be collected from UCFS. If the claimant doesn't comply or the debt is not currently in recovery it will be returned to the LA at the point of transfer.

Back

The claimant journey from claim to payment

Picklist

For your on-line claim presentation please visit <http://www.youtube.com/UniversalCreditinAction>

I find out how to claim Universal credit (UC)

I register for an account on Gov.uk by creating a username, password & answer security questions



If at any time I need help, I can phone the Universal Credit Helpline (0800 328 5644) for navigational/digital assistance.

A verification code is sent to my e-mail address. I have 1 hour to enter my code to verify my account.



Day 1



I review everything I have entered, confirm it is correct and submit.

I accept my high level claimant commitment before I attend the office

I make my declaration and given the option to [verify my identify via gov.uk](#)

My claim will start on the date I make my declaration (i,e submit my claim). My application isn't complete until I've attended an interview. I'm advised to book by phoning the number presented to me as soon as possible or I may have to make a new claim. If I forget when my appointment is I can check via my online account

Important: If a customer does not book their appointment within a calendar month of making their UC claim online, the claim will be cancelled and they will need to reapply again online.

I provide my circumstances under various headings to complete my claim . These are presented to me as a series of "to do's"

Day 2-7

I attend the jobcentre for my interview and I am advised of UC frequency payments & given a phone number should I at any time need to apply for an advance.

Now my online account is live and active I can now, view information about my next payment, make a change of circumstances online, upload documents and communicate in real time with my work coach

Day 30+

My statement is generated when payment is issued and i'm notified of entitlement, including Housing Cost if appropriate

Day 35

I receive my Universal Credit payment . This is made within 7 days after the end of the Assessment Period (AP)



For your on-line claim presentation please visit <http://www.youtube.com/UniversalCreditinAction>

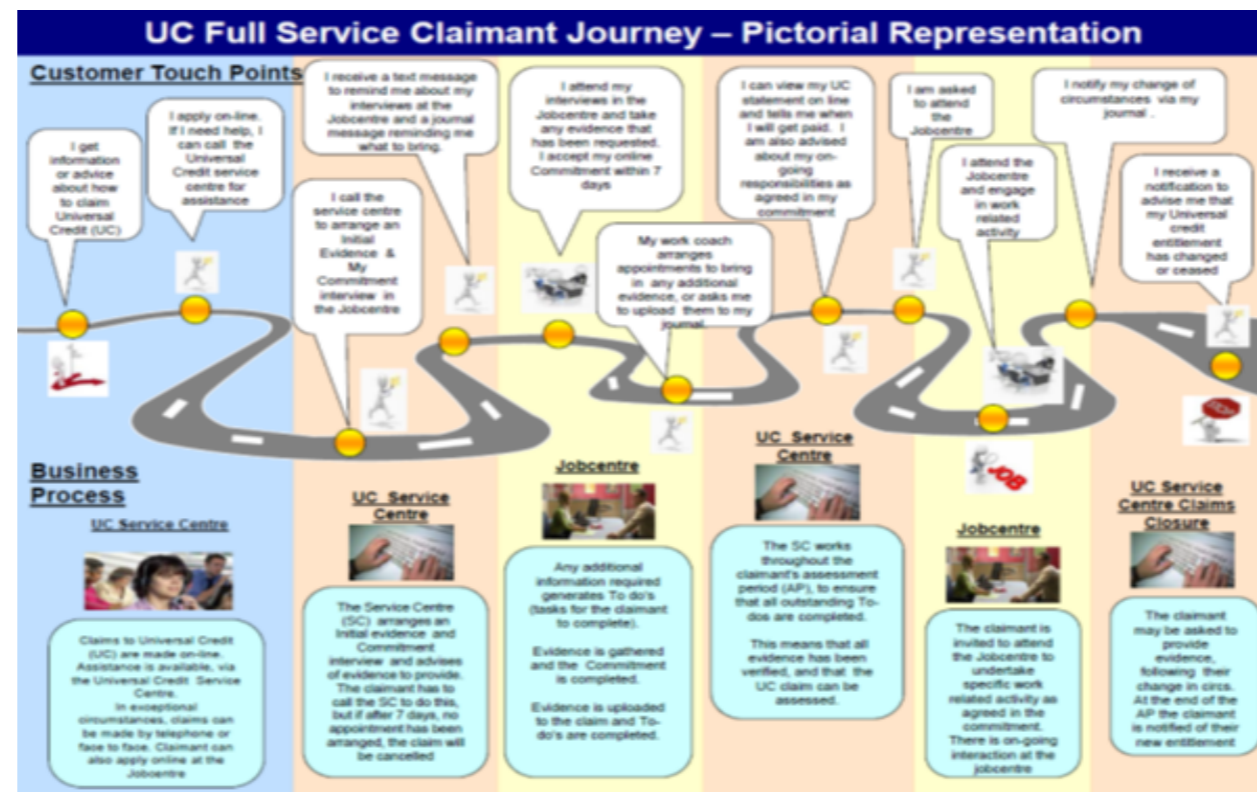
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You can also download the video from <https://www.dropbox.com/s/3fvhz4mm8ow3is7/Videos-June17.zip?dl=0>

The claimant journey from claim to payment

Picklist

To enlarge
[Click here](#)



Back

Next

The claimant journey from claim to payment

Picklist

Universal Credit claims are made online via www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit. If a claimant needs support to do this, help is available by the following means:

- face to face support via Universal Support, including [Assisted Digital](#) from Local Authorities.
- telephone
- local Jobcentre
- exceptionally, through a home visit

To start their application, the claimant creates an online account using their email address. The claimant needs to provide the following information:

- address (including postcode)
- National Insurance Number – this is not declared as part of the application but is supplied at a later date.
- details of the transactional bank account, Building Society, Basic Bank Account, Credit Union Account or a Post Office Card Account they want their Universal Credit paid into.
- rent agreement (if they have one)
- details of any savings or other capital (if they have any)
- details of any income that's not from work, for example from an insurance plan (if they have any)
- details of any other benefits they are receiving (if receiving any)
- Child Benefit reference numbers where relevant

If the claimant is part of a couple claiming Universal Credit, one person makes the online claim and receives a partner code. The partner must then login to their joint Universal Credit account using the partner code and input their information and confirm their details. Once they have completed their online claim they will be instructed to book an interview via the service centre.

Important: If a customer does not book their appointment within a calendar month of making their UC claim online, the claim will be cancelled and they will need to reapply again online.

Back

Next

The claimant journey from claim to payment

Picklist

The Claimant Commitment remains at the heart of the claim. It is the most important element in the claimants Universal Credit journey and will underpin a claim for UC. It is a contractual concept between the individual and the DWP. It will set out personalised and tailored requirements a claimant must meet in order to receive their Universal Credit.

On making a new claim, every claimant is automatically allocated to a Labour Market regime based on their individual and household circumstances.

The regime sets out the expectations that Universal Credit will have of the claimant group, the level and intensity of contact with the claimant and the support that will be made available to them.

The regime structure has been developed with the expectation that claimants will transition between the different groups.

This may be determined by an increase or decrease in earnings or a change in circumstances, for example the birth and increasing age of a child or recovery from a health condition.

Please note that when claiming as a couple both parties will have appointments.

The type of appointment will be dependent on the Labour Market Regime and individual circumstances. An additional interview may be required for complex cases, ie Habitual Residence Test (HRT) information gather interview.

Back

Next

The claimant journey from claim to payment

Picklist

Initial Evidence Interview and the Claimant Commitment

As part of the new claim process there are 2 interviews that need to be conducted for claimants in the Intensive Work Search regime:

- The Initial Evidence Interview undertaken by the Assisted Service Coach or Work Coach depending on local practices
- The Claimant Commitment meeting undertaken by the Work Coach

Claimants in the Intensive work search regime are those who are not currently working, but can work or those who are working but earning a low amount and are expected to take intensive action to secure work or more work.

Only some claimants will be required to attend both interviews face to face. Others will only be required to attend the Initial Evidence Interview face to face. Their new claim process will be conducted over the telephone and a Claimant Commitment will be accepted electronically. at the IEI interview (regardless of the work search regime that the claimant is in) All claimants should be assessed by the Work Coach to identify any Universal Support needs (Assisted Digital & Personal Budgeting Support)

This is dependent on which Labour Market regime the claimant is in:

Claimants in the Light Touch regime require 2 appointments;

- o 1 Initial Evidence and
- o 1 claimant commitment appointment; this may be conducted either face to face or by telephone.

There is currently an In Work Progression pilot that determines the level and frequency of support a light touch claimant receives. The pilot, for the first time, places requirements on claimants in work to engage with work coaches to increase their earnings. Participation in the pilot is mandatory and the support is determined based on the claimant national insurance number.

Back

Next

The claimant journey from claim to payment

Picklist

Claimants in the light touch regime are those whose individual or household earnings are above the Administrative Earnings Threshold (AET) but insufficient to take them above the relevant individual or household Conditionality Earnings Threshold (CET)

The current Administrative Earnings Threshold for 2018 / 2019 is:

- £338 per month for a single person
- £541 per month for a couple

The conditionality earnings threshold relates to an amount of earnings (35 hrs x National Minimum Wage for a single claimant) – for example, a 25 year old claimant earning £7.50 per hour this would be $£262.50 \times 52 \div 12 = £1137.50$ monthly, if the claimant's earnings equal or exceed the amount/threshold then they will be placed in the no work-related requirements group.

Claimants in the "Working enough" group who have chosen to verify themselves on "[GOV.UK Verify](#)" - and have been successful, would require 1 Initial Interview (do not need to provide primary and secondary evidence, but are still required to bring National Insurance Number, bank details and any other verification such as private rented housing costs).

They will have an auto generated Claimant Commitment that they accept online.

Claimants in the "Working enough" group are those whose earnings are over either the individual or household Conditionality Earnings Threshold (CET) or Self Employed and the Minimum Income Floor applies (National minimum wage multiplied by hours of conditionality less Class 2 and 4 National Insurance).

Claimants undertaking an apprenticeship with earnings also fall into this group.

Back

Next

The claimant journey from claim to payment

Picklist

Claimants in the Work Preparation and Work Focused Labour Market regimes will have 2 appointments;

- 1 Initial Evidence Interview and,
- 1 Claimant Commitment meeting.

Claimants in this group are those expected to work in the future but are currently nominated lead or responsible carers for children. This includes lead carers of a child over 1 year and under 3 years old.

Back

Key differences between the live and full service

Picklist

It is built on a different IT platform

This allows claimants to manage their claim using an internet-enabled device such as a smartphone, tablet or PC. Claimants can also report changes in circumstances on-line.

Does not have any gateway conditions

All claimants in [Specified](#) or new claims or current UC claimants who have a change of rental amount in [Temporary Accommodation](#) will continue to receive their rent via Housing Benefit. (Further guidance is available under the relevant sections) Also see [where the household has more than two dependant children at the point of a new claim](#).

Housing Benefit stop notices and the MGP1 process

The HB Stop notice in UC full service is sent via the DWP Data Hub.

Verifying rental costs from the Social Rented Sector (SRS)

The Service Centre will verify your tenants housing cost directly with the Social Landlord. This will be done via e-mail for those social landlords who have not enrolled on the [landlord portal](#)

Managed payments of Housing costs and rent arrears to the SRS

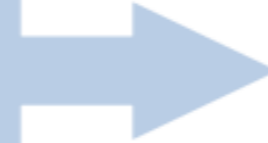
All managed payments to Social landlords will be paid via the 3rd party creditor payment process

Next

Key differences between the live and full service

Picklist

Requesting information from the Service Centre for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)



The Live service process of e-mailing the Service Centre to request UC award details will not apply to full service. Local Authorities are advised to check the Customer Information System (CIS) to confirm UC entitlement and/or request the award details directly from the claimant. Claimants can access award and payment details via their UC online Journal. The DHP proforma UC395 will not be used by the Service Centre in full service. LA's may wish to consider using the LCTR data share information to support any DHP awards.

Requesting information from the Local Authority to confirm claimant in Specified Accommodation



The Live service process of e-mailing form UC321 Specified Accommodation Data Share to the LA will not apply to full service. The Service Centre will check directly with the Social Rented Sector as part of the Housing Cost verification and HB Stop Notice process.

Prevention of Dual Provision of Carer Related Benefits



The Live service process of e-mailing form UC454/ UC456 to the LA when a UC claimant is awarded or has ceased receiving the Carer element is currently under development for full service. Detailed guidance will be issued when finalised.

Housing costs for 18 to 21 year olds



The Government is in the process of amending regulations so that all 18-21 year olds will be entitled to claim support for housing costs in Universal Credit. Currently, 18-21 year olds who make a new claim to UC in UC Full Service areas need to meet certain requirements in order to receive housing support. Claimants who make a claim to Universal Credit full on or after 1 April 2017 aged between 18 and under 22 years of age will not get housing costs paid as part of Universal Credit unless they meet certain exemptions. [Universal Credit full service information on housing costs for 18 to 21 year olds](#) details further.

Back

Next

Key differences between the live and full service

Picklist

The 6 month re-claim/re-award process

In both Live Service and Full Service if a claimant returns to UC within 6 assessment periods of their UC award ending the majority will return to their previous assessment period:

- when their UC award terminated because they entered work and their earnings reduced their UC award to zero, (**Live Service**); or
- when their UC award terminated because they had certain changes of circumstances that meant they were no longer entitled to UC, (**Full Service**).

In Live Service where re-awards apply, a claimants earnings are monitored so where they subsequently become re-entitled to UC within the next 6 assessment periods, because their earnings have changed they will automatically return to UC without the need to make a claim.

However, in a Full Service area where re-claims apply, claimants will have to make a new claim to UC if their earnings or circumstances have changed and they want to return to UC. The new claim they make is quicker and easier to do than the one they initially made, as they will only have to tell DWP about any changes in circumstances they have had since their previous award ended.

Claimants in the Full Service are also notified when their UC award ends, which includes when their earnings go over the earnings threshold and they are no longer entitled to UC, that they will have to make a new claim to UC if their earnings drop or they have another change of circumstances, that means they may become entitled to UC. They are also told that the new claim needs to be made with 7 days of their job ending in order for them to be paid for the whole of the assessment period in which they return.

The APOLLO Register

The APOLLO register and implicit consent data share protocol for UC live service does not apply to UC full Service as claimants have full access to their personal data and award details. LA's may wish to consider how they engage with their residents to gather the additional information DWP is unable to share at this time.

Back

Introduction

Picklist

Key aims for introducing the portal

The portal is being introduced to simplify and speed up the process for rent verification and requesting alternative payment requests (APAs) for Landlords in the Social Rented Sector. It is a secure way of transferring relevant tenant information directly to universal credit.

When a claimant makes a claim for universal credit, DWP will match the address the claimant gives us against addresses owned by landlords. When this address is one of a social landlords the portal will send a request for rent verification to the landlord.

If the claimant is a tenant the landlord will verify housing costs using the portal which will then send a message to universal credit to pay housing costs to the claimant.

The landlord will be able to see the status of the rent verification using the tenant list on the portal. A landlord will be able to request an alternative payment arrangement or third party payment and view the status of this request using the portal. If the APA request is approved, this will trigger action to generate a conversation with the claimant about Universal Support – Personal Budgeting Support

Back

What is a Universal Credit Advance?

Universal Credit Advances replace the previous system of interim payments and alignment Crisis Loans with one simplified system. This change formed part of the government's reform of the Social Fund. It gives Universal Credit claimants who face short-term financial need access to interest-free payments in the period up to their first full payment. Universal Credit claimants who report a change in circumstances that will increase their entitlement can also apply for an advance.

The aim is to support claimants in financial need who can't manage until they receive their payment of Universal Credit. Evidence shows that long-term benefit claimants and those on very low incomes are unlikely to have access to savings or loans.

Claimants have access to four types of interest free advance:

- Universal Credit Advance (new claim)
- Universal Credit Advance (change of circumstances)
- Universal Credit Advance (benefit transfer)
- Budgeting Advance

A claimant is not required to have signed their Claimant Commitment before they can get an advance. Claimants can apply for a Universal Credit Advance by phoning the Service Centre on 0800 328 5644. The Claimant will also be offered Personal Budgeting Support (PBS) where appropriate.

Universal Credit Advances

The different types of advances

Menu



Universal Credit Advance (new claim)and (Change of Circumstances)



Universal Credit Advance (benefit transfer)



Universal Credit Budgeting Advance

A Universal Credit Advance (new claim) or (change of circumstances)

A Universal Credit Advance (new claim) or (change of circumstances) is an advance payment of a claimant's future award of Universal Credit which is recoverable from subsequent payments of benefit. The purpose of this is to:

- provide emergency funds where a claimant doesn't have enough money to support them through the period until their first UC payment or
- provide access to financial support where a claimant has a change in circumstances, such as the birth of a child that will increase their UC award. They will have to verify the change in circumstances in order to request a (change of circumstances) award or
- provide an interim payment to pay a claimant's full award where their payment due date has been reached but their benefit cannot be paid for technical reasons

It is a Secretary of State decision to make a UC Advance and it is a discretionary decision that depends on the claimant's individual circumstances.

The discretionary nature of the Advance means that DWP can identify and support those most in need. Any decision will not carry the right of appeal but the claimant can ask for a reconsideration of the decision. **The claimant will need to contact the UC service centre to request an advance.**

When can claimants request an Advance payment

A Universal Credit Advance (new claim) or (change of circumstances) at any time prior to 3 working days before the end of the assessment period. The advance will be paid into the claimants bank account. If the need is urgent the payment can be made by Faster Electronic Payment (FEP), which means the payment should be in the account the same day.

The maximum award for a Universal Credit Advance (new claim) in the first month is 100% of the overall estimated amount. This estimate includes any housing costs they may be entitled to. **The repayment period will be 12 months.**

For a Universal Credit Advance (change of circumstances), the maximum amount of advance is 50% of the increase to their Universal Credit estimated amount. The recovery period will be 6 months starting from the first benefit payment.

Where a claim to an advance cannot be progressed the claimant should be signposted to the Local Council or Local Welfare Provider for support.

A Universal Credit Advance (benefit transfer)

The Universal Credit advance (benefit transfer) is only available to claimants who are already getting existing benefits or who were getting existing benefits one month before they claimed Universal Credit.

Qualifying benefits include:

- Jobseeker's Allowance (income-based)
- Employment and Support Allowance (income-related)
- Income Support
- Housing Benefit
- Tax Credits

This also includes where a partner is being claimed for by a claimant prior to their move to claiming Universal Credit. Claimants will not need to demonstrate hardship to qualify for this advance.

The advance is recovered by deducting from a claimant's monthly Universal Credit Standard Allowance in equal amounts over 12 equal instalments, starting from the first month's award.

The maximum advance amount will be up to 100% of the expected total Universal Credit award, this includes any housing costs they may be entitled to.

It should be paid 5 days after it is requested. If the need is urgent the payment can be made by Faster Electronic Payment (FEP), which means the payment should be in the account the same day.

The claimant should be advised of the need to budget this money to last until they receive their first Universal Credit payment.

A Universal Credit Budgeting Advance

Budgeting Advances provide valuable access to interest free payments for one-off items. They are available to claimants who have been receiving Universal Credit or an income-related benefit continuously for a period of 6 months and have no income, or a very low income.

They are designed to help claimants with irregular expenses, for example:

- linked to obtaining or retaining employment such as work clothes, tools, travelling expenses and childcare costs
- buying essential household items such as furniture, cot, pram, appliances, clothing and footwear
- help with rent in advance or removal expenses to secure new accommodation
- improvement, maintenance and security of their home

Budgeting Advances are not intended to help pay for unexpectedly high household bills for example an electricity or gas bill.

Budgeting Advance – eligibility criteria

To be eligible for a Budgeting Advance the claimant must not have repayment of a Budgeting Advance outstanding and also have been in continuous receipt of Universal Credit or the following qualifying benefits, for at least 6 months:

- Income Support (IS)
- Jobseeker's Allowance (income-based) (JSA)(IB)
- Employment and Support Allowance (income-related) (ESA)(IR)
- Pension Credit
- Housing Benefit (HB)

An exception to the 6 month rule may be applied if the advance is to help the claimant start or stay in work. For example, it is needed for up front childcare costs, travel costs, clothing or tools.

Income related benefits can be linked to determine the 6 month qualifying period.

A Universal Credit Budgeting Advance

Picklist

A Budgeting Advance request must be:

- no less than the minimum amount of £100
- no more than the maximum their circumstances allow:
 - o £348 for a single adult
 - o £464 for a couple
 - o £812 for a single person or couple with children

The claimant must:

- not have repayment of a Budgeting Advance outstanding or have a partner who has repayment of a Budgeting Advance outstanding
- not have earned more than their allowable earnings:
 - o £2600 in the previous 6 assessment periods for a single claimant (with or without children)
 - o £3600 for a couple (with or without children)

Budgeting Advance Recovery Period

Budgeting Advances will be recovered over 12 months (18 months in exceptional circumstances).

During the recovery of the advance, a change in the circumstances of the Benefit Unit could mean that recovery over twelve months will push the claimant into genuine hardship. In these circumstances, a DM can consider making an offer to defer payments for up to 6 months.

Payments can be deferred in this way only in exceptional circumstances and full recovery must be completed within 18 months. Exceptional circumstances would be an unforeseen expense that occurs after an advance is agreed. Continued recovery for the initial agreed repayment period would cause the claimant and their household genuine hardship. An example of this is when a child goes into hospital, resulting in unexpected regular bus/taxi fares for parents to visit.

Only one Budgeting Advance can be paid at a time. No further Budgeting Advances will be made available until the balance of the previous Budgeting Advance is cleared.

Back

Next

A Universal Credit Budgeting Advance

Couples who have received a Universal Credit Advance

If a Universal Credit couple split up before an advance has been recovered, any outstanding advance will be split 50/50 between the couple and recovered from their single Universal Credit awards.

Additional Support

In certain circumstances a Budgeting Advance is not always appropriate. A claimant may request a Budgeting Advance under £100 to help them start work or remain in work, for example for:

- transport costs
- work clothes
- tools

These are examples, not a complete list.

- to help obtain employment

In these circumstances the individual should be advised to talk to their work coach about the Flexible Support Fund.

Personal Budgeting Support and Alternative Payment Arrangements

Universal Credit prepares claimants for the world of work in which 75% of employees are paid monthly. It also encourages claimants to take responsibility for their own financial affairs. Universal Credit is paid in a single monthly payment to households. Households are expected to manage their own budgets, making housing costs a priority.

It is important that claimants are able to make the same sort of decisions as those in work and develop the financial capability to do so. The purpose of this guidance is to provide high-level information. It sets out the department's approach to provide Personal Budgeting Support (PBS), money advice and Alternative Payment Arrangements (APA) where appropriate for Universal Credit claimants.

What is Personal Budgeting Support?

Personal Budgeting Support (PBS) is about helping claimants adapt to three key changes that Universal Credit brings:

- a single household payment
- being paid monthly
- Universal Credit housing costs are paid directly to the claimant - so the claimant will then be required to pay their rent to their landlord themselves

PBS will support claimants who need help to manage their money and pay their bills on time.

What are the elements of Personal Budgeting Support?

There are two elements to PBS:

- 1 Money advice to help claimants cope with managing their money on a monthly basis and paying their bills on time:
 - o money advice will be offered online, by phone, or face to face
 - o money advice will be delivered by external organisations with the relevant expertise to do this
- 2 [Alternative Payment Arrangements \(APA\)](#) for those claimants who can't manage the single monthly payment and there is a risk of financial harm to the claimant and/or their family.

How will money advice support Universal Credit claimants?

A multi channel Money advice approach will be offered to all Universal Credit claimants when they make a new claim or at the point of migration to Universal Credit.

Some claimants will need money advice for a short period of time, others for longer. There will be different levels and types of money advice based on the claimants needs:

- some claimants will be signposted to generic online services, such as those offered by Citizens Advice, Money Advice Service or Money Saving Expert
- others will be offered and referred to the online [MAS Money Manager tool](#) or more intensive face to face sessions/provision.

Money advice services will be tailored to the claimant's ability to handle each of the main Universal Credit financial changes:

- monthly payments
- single payment to the household
- housing costs are paid directly to the claimant

What is the money advice process?

The money advice process directs claimants to the most suitable service and channel in the most efficient way. This means that claimants who:

- have little or no need for money advice are signposted to external organisations
- have a moderate need for money advice and who have digital skills and not vulnerable and/or hard to reach will be referred to the [online MAS Money Manager](#)
- have a complex need for money advice and/or who are not digitally capable will be referred to their Local Authority.
- need an APA, in addition to money advice, are quickly identified and it is promptly put in place.

Personal Budgeting Support and Alternative Payment Guide

Detailed information about PBS and APA's can be found by selecting [Universal Credit personal budgeting support and alternative payment arrangements guidance](#)

Managed Payments and Housing Costs to Landlords

Introduction

Menu

We expect most Universal Credit claimants will receive the single monthly payment, taking responsibility for paying their own household bills including their rent on time.

However, we recognise that some claimants will need extra support and so alternative payment arrangements including a managed payment of the UC housing cost to the landlord can be considered in some cases to help protect tenancies.

Managed payments will be considered on a case-by-case basis and can be requested by landlords as well as claimants. They can be considered on request from the start of the claim or during the claim if the claimant has accumulated rent arrears which will put their tenancy at risk.

What are the key elements to consider

When a claimant has accumulated one month's rent arrears due to persistent underpayment, we will review the financial support they need and, if requested by the claimant or landlord, will consider making managed payments to their landlord if appropriate.

If a claimant has accrued two month's rent arrears, we will, if requested by the landlord, consider paying the UC housing costs direct to the landlord and take steps **where requested** to recover the rent arrears through deductions from their remaining UC payment. In all cases where a managed payment to landlord has been approved, the claimants need for personal Budgeting support should be continually considered and offered at the appropriate time, to support the claimant being able to move off of APA (MPTL)

From December 2017, claimants in the Private Renter Sector, who have managed payments to landlords for their legacy HB, will be asked questions to understand how they were paid HB and from this it will determine if the claimant needs an APA based on tier factors. offered this option, where appropriate when they claim UC. This will be done with the claimant at the new claim stage when they are asked to verify their housing costs.

When will Alternative Payment Arrangements be reviewed?

APAs will be reviewed to take account of a claimant's changing circumstances and characteristics. Each case will vary, taking into account the claimant's individual circumstances. APA's are currently set with a review date which ranges from 3 months to 24 months. Claimants who live in Scotland have a set APA review period of 24 months.

Next

How to Request a Managed Payment

Landlords can use the form available on GOV.UK – UC47 [Landlord request for a managed payment or rent arrears deduction](#) to apply for a managed payment of the housing costs and recovery of rent arrears.

The information they will need to supply on the form includes:

- tenants name, address, and if known their date of birth and National Insurance number
- details of the current tenancy
- details of the rent arrears which must include the amount of rent outstanding and the amount of rent due each calendar month
- the landlord's contact details – their name and address plus their bank/ building society account number and sort code for the payments.
- any reference number / transaction ID for that tenant
- the social landlords DWP creditor reference number

Once UC receives this information they will decide whether or not a managed payment is appropriate and inform both the landlord and claimant. The claimant will also be offered Personal Budgeting Support.

Social Landlords should note that they can apply for a managed payment of housing cost and recovery of rent arrears at the new claim [rent verification](#) stage.

Managed Payments and Housing Costs to Landlords

Menu

How does UC pay Managed Payments to Landlords?

All APA payments for UC Full Service tenants in LA's and RSL's are being paid via Third Party Deductions (TPD) payment process. DWP will use the landlords creditor reference number to pay both arrears **AND** the APA payment.

Payments will be shown as individual transactions, and will include an identifier to show whether the payment relates to rent arrears (RA) or APA (MP). A remittance note will also be sent to the landlord which shows how the payments have been broken down.

When a Managed Payment to Landlord (MPTL) and/or Rent Arrears are paid through Third Party deductions, the claimant reference number is annotated at the end with either RA for Rent Arrears payments, or MP for Managed Payment (MPTL APA). The claimant/ tenant reference number shown on the BACS transaction and remittance will be made up of 18 characters. Because 2 characters will be taken by the 'RA' or 'MP' suffix, the transaction will show 16 characters of the ref number followed by the 2 character suffix.

Payments

Once payments are set up you will normally receive a payment every 28 days. You will usually expect to receive the first payment for a customer on your next payment schedule within six weeks from the date deductions have commenced.

Social Landlords receiving third party deduction payments for customers on Universal Credit will receive 12 payments in a calendar year. This is because assessment periods for Universal Credit are calendar monthly. Consequently there will always be one 28 day payment cycle each year that does not align with the assessment of deductions from Universal Credit.

For Universal Credit please note that the payment you receive may change from month to month, i.e. due to a change in the claimant's circumstances or earnings.

Back

Next

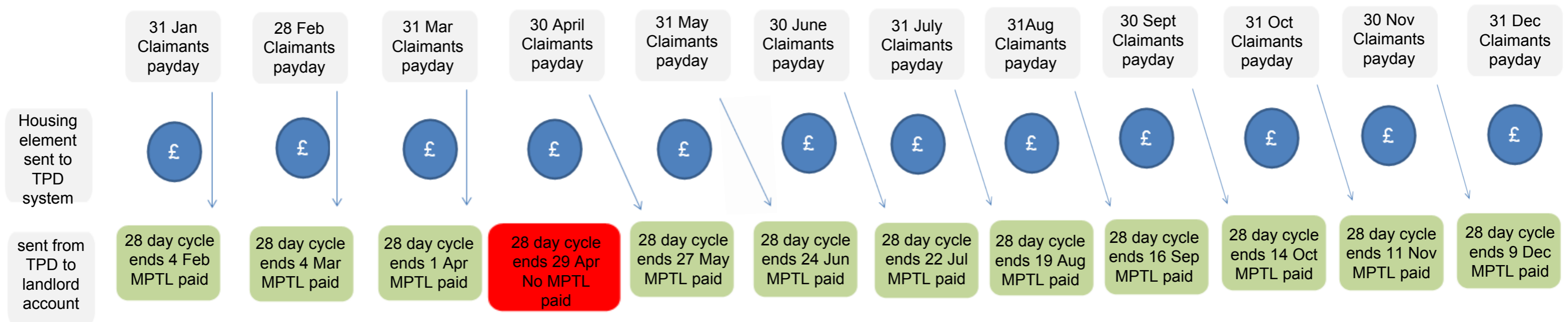
Managed Payments and Housing Costs to Landlords

Menu

Claimants are paid Universal Credit calendar monthly 12 times each year. – In the example below the claimants assessment period starts on the first of each month and ends on the last date of each month. On the claimants payday the housing costs are released to the Central Payment System (CPS). Housing costs cover the period of one calendar month, and the payment is held by the CPS until the payment release cycle is reached.

As with other third party creditor deductions, TPD are paid on a 28 day cycle therefore there are thirteen cycles each year.

CPS can only release a payment at the landlords next 4 weekly cycle date, meaning there will always be one 4 weekly cycle period where there is no payment to release. Therefore landlords will receive 12 payments per year, each payment will cover a one months housing costs.



In this above example – there is no payment in the third party deduction system to pay the landlord 28 day cycle on 29 April as the claimants AP falls after the TPD payment cycle. The next payment is paid in the next 28 day cycle on 27 May. Although the landlord has 13 cycles per year, they will be paid in 12 of those cycles. Each payment will consist of one calendar months housing cost. The date of the zero 4 weekly cycle payment will be different for every claimant depending on their individual assessment period.

Back

Next

Payment schedule queries

If you have a payment schedule query please contact Payment Services on: 0800 328 0128. Please have your Creditor/ Supplier Number ready when contacting the Payment services as you will be asked for this as part of our security check. This can be found on the first page of your payment schedule.

Please note: For Private Sector Landlords (PSL's), the payment of APAs will continue to be made via the existing route, meaning that payments will be made into the account specified the landlord, at the end of the Universal Credit Assessment Period (AP). Any rent arrears deductions will be paid under the Third Party Deduction (TPD) Scheme. The first payment is normally received within 6 weeks from the date deductions commence. A TPD payment schedule will also be sent to the landlord with a breakdown of rent arrears payments.

Who else can request a Managed Payment of the Universal Credit housing cost to the landlord?

The claimant, or their representative can make this request.

If the claimant (or representative) is making the request, this can either be:

- during the Initial Interview or subsequent Work Search Interview with their Jobcentre Plus work coach, or
- by phoning Universal Credit on 0800 328 5644 .

See [Managed Payment of housing costs frequently asked questions](#) for more information

Migration Definitions

Menu

Claimants currently claiming Income Support (IS), Jobseekers Allowance (Income Based) (JSA(IB)), Employment & Support Allowance (Income Related) (ESA(IR)), Working Tax Credit (WTC), Child Tax Credit (CTC) and Housing Benefit (HB) will remain on their existing benefits until such time that their claim can migrate to Universal Credit. These benefits will be referred to as Legacy benefits.

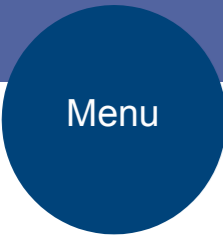
Type 1

Natural Migration – This occurs when a claimant reports a natural migration qualifying change of circumstance to their Legacy benefit, for example when moving from sick to out of work or claimant is no longer a full time carer. As Universal Credit is a household benefit, this would also trigger the closure of all legacy benefits that Universal Credit is replacing.

Type 2

Managed Migration – This occurs when DWP will initiate the transfer of an entire household from Legacy benefits to one Universal Credit entitlement.

Next



The trigger for a claim to UC full service will be claimants making a new claim who would previously been eligible to make a new claim for JSA(IB), IS, ESA (IR), Tax Credits and Housing Benefit.

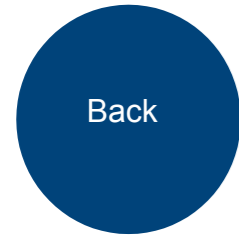
When postcodes expand into a UC full service area, new claims to JSA (IB), ESA (IR), IS, Housing Benefit and Tax Credits are prohibited and claimants who would normally be advised to claim one of these benefits should be advised to make an online claim to Universal Credit at www.gov.uk/universalcredit. This will also include any existing benefit claimants who experience certain changes in circumstances.

Important note:

If the claimant is already in receipt of any element of Tax Credits and wishes to claim the other, for example: Claimant currently receiving Child Tax Credits (CTC) and then starts work (16 hrs plus) they can continue to claim Working Tax Credits (WTC), and will **NOT** move across to UC.

If the claimant is living in Specified (supported) accommodation) or Temporary Accommodation a Housing Benefit stop notice will still be issued if there is a Housing Benefit interest for the claimant on Customer Information System (CIS). **In all cases** the UC MGP1 must be returned with the appropriate option from the drop-down list on the UC MGP1LA form; list selection is as follows;

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| SUPPORTED EXEMPT /SPECIFIED - HB NOT CLOSED | SENSITIVE |
| TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION - HB NOT CLOSED | SENSITIVE |



Migration Trigger Examples

Menu

Household becomes responsible for a child for the 1st time

Claimants living in a Universal Credit Full Service area are no longer able to make a new claim to Tax Credits and should be advised if they wish to claim for additional financial support because they have a child living with them to make an online claim to Universal Credit.

Move from out of work to in work

Current JSA(IB)/ IS claimants, or their partners, who increase their working hours or start work such that they no longer meet the conditions for JSA/IS are no longer able to make a new claim to Tax Credits if they live in a Universal Credit Full Service area and should be advised to make an online claim to Universal Credit.

Move from in work to out of work

Current WTC claimants whose hours reduce to less than 16 hours per week are no longer able to make a new claim to JSA(IB) or IS if they live in a Universal Credit Full Service area and should be advised to make an online claim to Universal Credit.

Move from out of work to sick

Current JSA(IB)/ IS claimants are no longer able to make a new claim to ESA(IR) if they live in a Universal Credit Full Service area and should be advised to make an online claim to Universal Credit.

Move from sick to out of work

Current ESA(IR) claimants are no longer able to make a new claim to JSA(IB) or IS if they live in a Universal Credit Full Service area and should be advised to make an online claim to Universal Credit.

Move from sick to in work (or permitted work becomes permanent)

Current ESA(IR) claimants are no longer able to make a new claim to Tax Credits if they live in a Universal credit Full Service area and should be advised to make an online claim to Universal Credit.

Move from in work to sick (reduction in hours due to sickness)

Current WTC claimants are no longer able to make a new claim to ESA(IR) if they live in a Universal Credit Full Service area and should be advised to make an online claim to Universal Credit.

IS lone parent child under 5 reaches age 5 or permanently leaves household

Current IS claimants are no longer able to make a new claim to JSA(IB)/ ESA(IR) when their award to IS ends if they live in a Universal Credit Full Service area and should be advised to make an online claim to Universal Credit.

HB claimant moves from a UC Live Service LA into a UC Full Service LA

Existing HB claimants with the exception of those claimants living in SEA or TA, who move into a Universal Credit Full service area LA are no longer able to make a new claim to HB in the new LA area and should be advised if they wish to continue to obtain financial support with their rent to make an online claim to Universal Credit.

Stopping an existing claim when a claim to Universal Credit-Full Service is made

If a new claim to Universal Credit Full Service is made and there is a current JSA(IB)/ ESA(IR)/ IS/ HB or Tax Credits claim. Universal Credit full service will contact Benefit Centres/Local Authorities and/or Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs to stop the existing claim where appropriate .

Back

Next

HB Stop Notice & Migration Gather Proforma - UC MGP1 (LA)

Menu

The full service HB Stop notice and Universal Credit Migration Gather proforma (UC MGP1 LA) are used by Universal Credit to instruct legacy to carry out certain actions and to gather data on a claimant who is migrating from Housing Benefit to Universal Credit full service.

The purpose of the HB Stop notice is to:

- notify the LA that the existing claim to HB is to be closed to prevent dual provision when a new claim to UC is made. A separate notification will be sent for each claimant in a joint claim.

The purpose of the UC MGP1 (LA) is to:

- gather data and any overlapping Housing Benefit that has been paid to the claimant due to the claim migrating across to Universal Credit.
- action the payment of the Transition to UC housing payment (where applicable)

When a new claim to UC full service is made or a partner joins the household and where there is a HB Interest marker on CIS, a HB Stop notice will be sent to the relevant Local Authority (LA) via the DWP Data Hub.

The HB Stop notice will also act as a trigger for the LA to complete a UC MGP1 (LA) form and email it securely to the Service Centre within 5 days. This will remain a clerical process.

It is important CIS interest markers are kept up to date to ensure that you receive the HB Stop notification for your claimant. If you receive a HB Stop and the claimant does not have a claim in your LA then you will need to remove the HB interest in CIS, the HB Stop notification is the evidence you need to access CIS.

Also if even if there is no HB claim LAs will still need to return the MGP1 with the correct drop down option selected.

Back

Next

HB Stop Notice - Example

Menu

Data shared for UC FS HB Stop Notice upload.

UC Person

- Given Name
- Family Name
- NINO
- Date of Birth
- Gender
- Address Postcode

HB Stop

UC Effective Date*

The HB Stop Notice will only be issued to the LA where the HB interest is set to 'Y' on CIS.

When closing down the HB claim except where the claimant is in Supported or Temporary Accommodation the interest needs to be set to "N" on CIS.

If LAs experience any issues uploading the files they should raise an incident via LA-SST to la-sst.hdd@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

Please note:

- * The effective date will not be amended to include the two weeks [Transition to UC Housing Payment](#). The UC Effective Date will remain as the start of the UC claim and the LA will need to add the additional two weeks [Transition to UC Housing Payment](#) to pay the claimant.

When a claimant declares a change of circumstance to add a partner, the UC effective date will show as the first day of the assessment period that the new partner joined the claim.

Back

Next

Migration Gather Proforma - UC MGP1 (LA)

Menu

LA's should complete Migration Gather proforma UC MGP1 (LA) as follows:

Select the appropriate reason for completing the UC MGP1 (LA) from the email header menu. There are five email subject header options which can be selected to indicate the action taken, this will pre populate the subject header field of the return email:

- **NO HOUSING BENEFIT IN PAYMENT**
- **OVERLAPPING HOUSING BENEFIT - HB CLOSED**
- **NO OVERLAPPING HOUSING BENEFIT - HB CLOSED**
- **SUPPORTED EXEMPT /SPECIFIED - HB NOT CLOSED**
- **TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION - HB NOT CLOSED**

The LA should then complete all sections of the form including:

- Claimants details
- UC effective date, as shown on the HB stop notice download.
- Where appropriate,
 - HB overlap period after Transition to UC Housing Payment ends
 - HB overlap amount after Transition to UC Housing Payment ends
- HB CIS interest ended - select "Yes" or "No" from the drop down

Once the template has been completed, select the box 'click here to email form'. This will pre populate the email address with the UC full service inbox address ucfull.service@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

Please note: A UCMGP1(LA) needs to be completed for every HB stop notice download received by LA. Please select the paper clip (attachments) on the left of the screen to access form UCMGP1 (LA) April 2018 or a version can be downloaded from the LAST pages on Glasscubes.

LAs must only use the April 2018 version of the UCMGP1 (LA) form

email address: ucfull.service@dwp.gsi.gov.uk	
Click here to email form	
Email Header :	CLICK HERE TO SELECT EMAIL HEADING
Title	
Surname	
Forename	
NINO	
Address Line 1	
Address Line 2	
Address Line 3	
Address Line 4	
Post code	
UC Effective date	
Overlapping HB Payments	
HB overlap period after Transition to UC Housing Payment ends	From <input type="text"/> To <input type="text"/>
HB overlap amount after Transition to UC Housing Payment ends	<input type="text"/>
HB CIS interest ended	<input type="text"/>

Sample Only

Back

Next

Backdating

Menu

In exceptional cases the Universal Credit Service Centre (SC) may make a decision to backdate the UC claim. A UC claim can be backdated up to one month. Where a claim is backdated, the customer will be issued with the relevant letter.

Where the LA have already received a HB stop notice and as a result completed a UC MGP1(LA) form to notify the Service Centre when Housing Benefit ended, they will be sent a further HB stop notice via the DWP Data Hub to inform them of the backdating of the UC claim.

The LA will be required to cancel the Housing Benefit from the earlier date and record the overpayment as DWP error and non-recoverable. UC awarded will be adjusted to take the overpayment into account.

If the LA receive a revised HB Stop notification as the claimant has had their UC award backdated to an earlier date, then the LA needs to reassess the amount of HB that has been paid to the claimant. They will need to recalculate the two week transition to UC housing payment based on the revised date on the reissued HB Stop notification and the complete the UC MGP1 including any overlapping benefit that has have been paid to the claimant. This will then be recovered through UC.

[See frequently asked questions for UC and HB overlapping payments](#)

Back

Data sharing with Local Authorities for Local Council Tax Reduction (LCTR)

Introduction

Menu

As part of the online claim (data gather) the claimant will be asked if they are already claiming, in receipt of, or intend to claim LCTR from their Local Authority.

UC will set the CIS interest marker when the claimant states that they intend to claim LCTR from the LA. Data is shared to assist the LA in accurately assessing the UC claimants entitlement to Local Council Tax Reduction (LCTR). If the claimant does not intend to claim LCTR, data sharing will not apply.

LAs will be able to download the data from the DWP data hub.

During the online claim process the claimant will also be advised that they will need to contact the LA to make a claim for LCTR. It is at the LA's discretion whether they accept the data sharing as a claim for LCTR.

If the claimant reports a change of address and they have moved into a different Local Authority area they will be advised to contact their new Local Authority to claim LCTR.

Next

Data Sets

DWP will share two distinctive types of data sets with the LAs when a CTR interest is registered on CIS and there is a UC claim:

UC Claim data set

UC claim data including the following:

- Personal details including:
 - Personal details (Title, Given/requested name and Suffix will never be shared)
 - Other income (total amount, type not shared. May be shared in future)
 - Other benefits
 - Dependants(Title, Given/requested name and Suffix will never be shared)
 - Non-dependents(Title, Given/requested name and Suffix will never be shared)
 - Childcare provision
 - Property
 - Household Deemed Capital Income (total amount, type not shared. May be shared in future)
 - Address
 - Property details
 - Termination

***Employer information will not be included in the claim data set**

UC Payment data set

- UC maximum award
- Benefit cap deduction
- Deductions from payments – (Sanctions, Fraud penalties, managed payments to Landlords, Advances)
- Other deduction types –
Total amount of other unspecified deductions, breakdown and type may be shared in the future.
- Amount deducted due to earnings
- Monthly UC payment
- UC Payment information, including
 - Earned income
 - NINO (of who the earnings relate to; claimant or partner) Gross amount
 - Net pay amount
 - NI amount
 - Tax amount
 - Pension contributed under net pay amount
 - Pension not contributed under net pay amount

***Employer address will not be included in the payment data set**

If any of the above information is not included in the files as stated, please raise an incident through LASST by sending an email to LA-SST.HDD@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK

Data Sets

Menu

Below is a breakdown of the information UC FS is now sharing; what is being considered for sharing in the future and what will still not be shared.

What is shared now in full service:-

Full Property Details
Full earnings information to include:
NINO (of who the earnings relate to; claimant or partner);
Gross Amount,
NI Amount;
Tax Amount;
Pension Contributed Under Net Pay Amount',
Pension Not Contributed Under Net Pay Amount
Net amount
Amount deducted from payment due to earnings (this is the amount deducted from the UC award after work allowance and taper applied)
Amount deducted from payment due to benefit cap
Deductions from payment for:
Sanctions
Fraud penalties
Managed payments to Landlords
Advances
Total amount of (unspecified) other deductions such as overpayments, rent arrears, RHP, third party deductions.
Other benefits in payment

What may be shared in future:-

UC FS may consider sharing the information below in the future, the earliest they can do this is 2018.
Other income type
Capital type
Deemed Capital reason
Transitional protection
Other Deduction types and amounts.

What will not be shared:-

The information below will not be included in the files because it is not collected by UC FS and there are no plans to do so.
Claimant/Dependant/non-dependant's Title, requested name and Suffix
Residency Status

Employment to date/from date
Employer's address

Back

Next

Types of Data Sharing

There are three types of data share:

New Claim data share

This is the first data set which will be shared with the LAs once the claimant's ID has been verified. The data shared at this point should be treated as unverified.

End of first assessment new claim data share

At the end of the first UC Assessment period, the new claim payment data set will be shared with the LAs. In addition, if there have been any changes to the original claim data, a complete set of new claim data will also be shared. This is verified data. If at the end of the first assessment period, only payment data is shared with the LA, then the LA can treat the original claim data set as verified.

Change of circumstance data share:

Once a UC claim is established, LAs will receive a notification each time there is a change to either claim or payment data. These notifications will be sent at the end of each UC assessment period where a change has occurred. If there have been no changes during a UC assessment period no notification will be sent to the LA.

Where the Local Authority receives payment data that contains earnings from employment, there is a change to the amount of the UC award compared to a previous period and similar earnings have been included in the assessment it is likely to be as a result of changes to claimants Work Allowance. The claimant will be aware of the changes to the Work Allowances and if necessary the LA may wish to contact the claimant for clarification.

Types of Data Sharing

Terminations

When a UC claim is terminated, the LAs will receive a notification from UC through the Data Hub which will contain the following information:

- Personal details
- Address
- Date of termination
- Reason for termination

For more information & technical guidance on the LCTR data share please refer to the UC Data Share for LCTR - [Technical Guidance for LA Users](#)

Data sharing reminder:

The APOLLO register and implicit consent data share protocol for UC live service does not apply to UC full Service as claimants have full access to their personal data and award details.

LA's may wish to consider how they engage with their residents to gather the additional information DWP is unable to share.

Issues regarding the Universal Credit data share can be escalated through the Local Authority Support Team. Enquires should be made via email in the first instance to LA-SST.HDD@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK

Please note that this channel should only be used for issues with the actual data share e.g.

- queries regarding which LA data has been shared with
- confirmation of the type of data and the dates it has been shared

The team can also be contacted by phone on 01253 689422

In line with normal procedure the online communication tool Glasscubes will be used to share general and system information about local authority data sharing.

Customer Information System (CIS)

Menu

When UC has been awarded, CIS will show the dates of the Assessment Period (AP) and the award amount. This will not update until there is a change to the award amount in a subsequent AP or the award becomes nil.

Local Authorities can assume that UC remains in payment at the rate shown on CIS beyond the dates of the AP until the award amount is updated.

NB: Checking CIS may not provide all the information regarding a claimant's UC award, so the LA may have to contact the Claimant for their UC award statement for further information, eg: Non dependant income.

Local Authorities should note that when checking Universal Credit Claim details on the Customer Information System (CIS) Live Service and Full Service Claims are represented in the Interest History screen as follows:

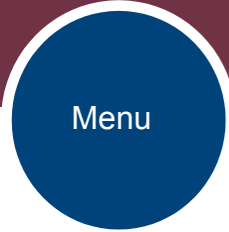
- **UC Live Service – UC160001**
- **UC Full Service – UCD160005**

The interest will normally be set automatically however, there may be occasions where the interest will need to be updated by the Local Authority staff e.g. if the customer moves into a different Local Authority area or the LCTR claim is terminated. The LA can set or un-set the interest marker via the CIS as they do now for legacy benefits.

Please note that when checking CIS for award details the additional amount for claimants with a Limited Capability for Work (LCW) is shown as “Health allowance”.

Back

Verification of Housing costs for Social and Private Landlords



Housing Cost
Journey
Social Rented
Sector



Housing Cost
Verification
Process Map



Verification of
Social Rented
Sector (SRS)
Housing Costs



Verification of
Private Rented
Sector (PRS)
Housing Costs

Housing Cost Journey - Social Rented Sector (SRS)



Claimant and Service Centre touchpoints

Day 1

Claimant completes the housing section questions online and submits the claim

The Claimant also receives a "to do" to telephone the service centre to book an initial appointment at the Jobcentre.

Day 2 - Day 10

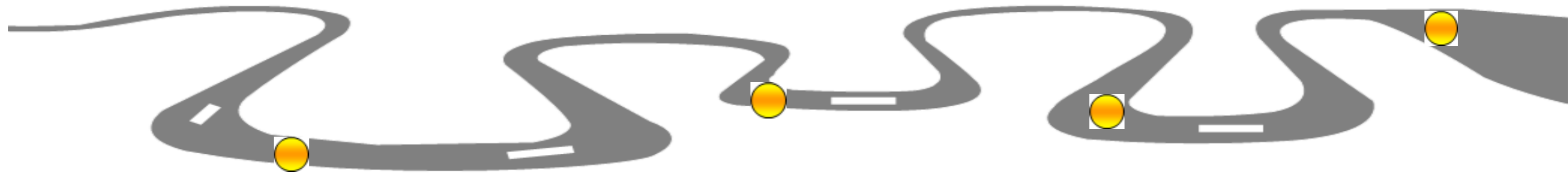
Claimant attends the jobcentre to complete their initial interviews. These could include providing verification to support their claim and creating their commitment. Everybody will be issued with personal security number (PSN).

AP end date Day 30+

Claimant's statement is generated when payment is issued and claimant notified of entitlement, including Housing Cost if appropriate

Day 35 - 38

Claimant receives their Universal Credit payment . This is made within 7 days after the end of the Assessment Period (AP)



UC Service Centre

The Service Centre receive a "to-do" to send a SRS Housing Costs verification form to the landlords e-mail address.

A "to-do" is then created to follow up the return for 7 days.

For landlords using the social landlord portal no SRS form is sent, the landlord will verify housing via the portal.'

Telephony

Telephony book an Initial Interview at the relevant Jobcentre

UC Service Centre

When the SRS landlord form is returned to the UC full service inbox the service centre will calculate how much the claimant is entitled to based on the claimants circumstances and make up of the household.

If the landlord requests an Alternative Payment Arrangement (APA) and/or rent arrears deduction the service centre will send an instruction to the Third Party Payments team.

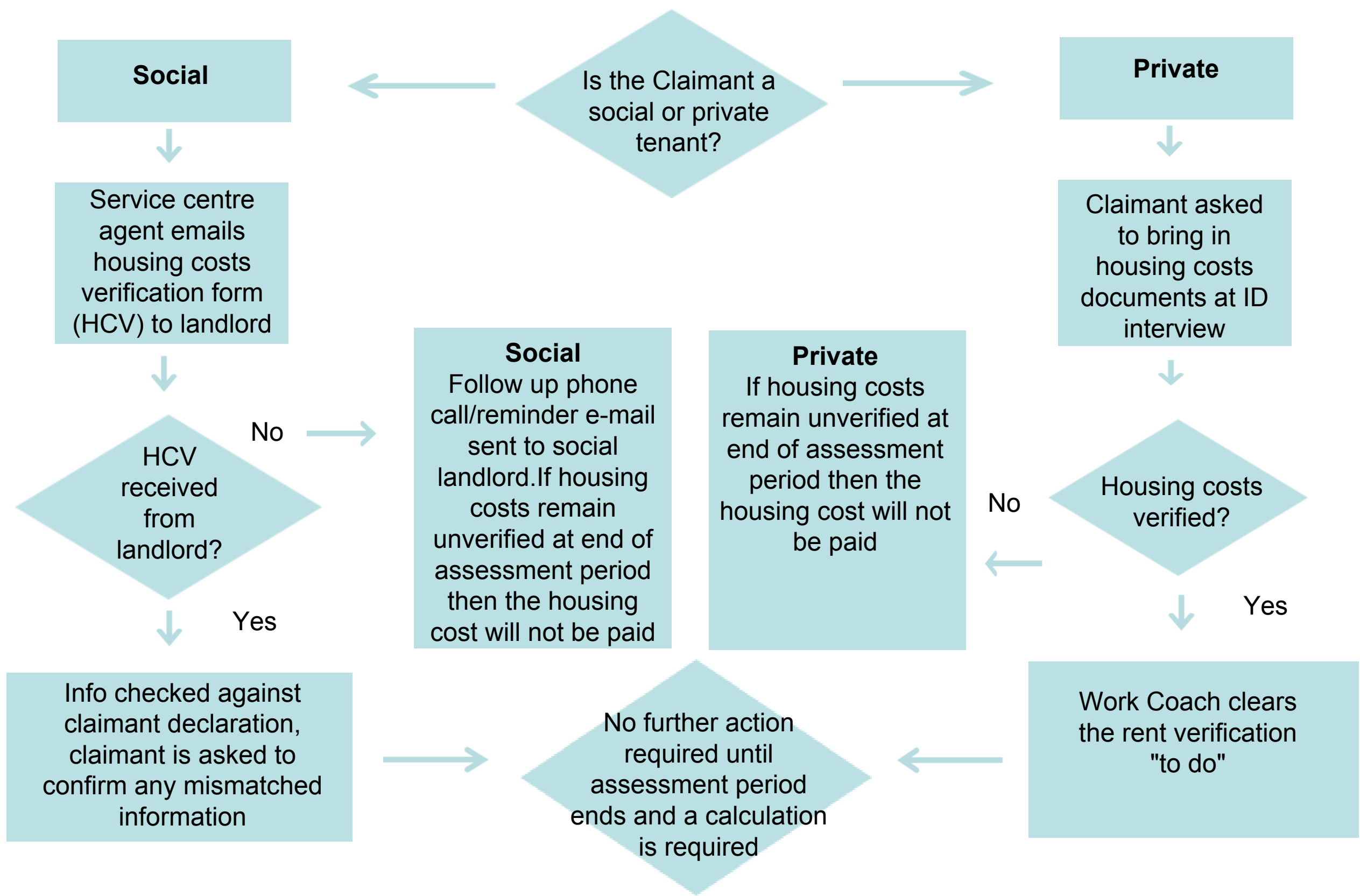
UC Service Centre

Once all evidence has been verified and the AP end date has been reached the payment is calculated.

The claimant receives payment seven days after the AP end date

Housing Cost Verification Process Map - for those not on the Landlord Portal

Picklist



Verification of Social Rented Sector (SRS) Housing Costs

Picklist

The Social Rented Sector(SRS) housing verification process is done directly between DWP and SRS landlords. This is done once evidence has been received from the claimant clearly showing their landlord is Social Rented Sector. This will allow the social landlord to offer welfare support to their tenant at the earliest opportunity.

The SRS verification of Housing Costs Form is sent to the landlord's (specific for UC full service) email address for completion. The service centre agent will contact the landlord if the form has not been returned within 7 days.

Social Landlords will have been advised by the Local Authority to set up a dedicated email address for the DWP to send all forms.

only one email address is to be set up per SRS landlord, unless there are different regional offices. For example:

universal.credit@sociallandlord.org...or..southeastregionuniversalcredit@sociallandlord.org.

These will then be sent via the DWP Partnership Manager to be added to the landlord database.

Social Landlords should send the Housing costs verification form relating to their tenants to: ucfull.service@dwp.gsi.gov.uk .

The inbox will form part of the Service Centres daily activities and will be given priority.

For landlords using the social landlord portal no SRS form is sent, the landlord will verify rent via the portal.

Please note that the Social Landlord early notification form UC179 currently sent in Live service areas will not be sent under full service.

Next

Verification of Social Rented Sector (SRS) Housing Costs

Picklist

For Social Rental Sector the evidence will be obtained directly from the Social Landlord, and include:

- name of all tenants on the tenancy agreement
- property address including full postcode
- current rent and frequency (for example. monthly, weekly)
- details of rent, frequency and amount of each service charge
- number of bedrooms
- landlord/agent details (name, address)
- rent free weeks (where applicable)
- if the tenant(s) are living in temporary accommodation

The evidence required is the same for a new claim or a change of circumstances.

Back

Next

Verification of Social Rented Sector (SRS) Housing Costs

Social Rented Sector (SRS) Housing costs verification form

Picklist

Universal Credit

**Verification of Housing Costs
Social Rented Sector Landlord Form v84**

Official-Sensitive

Agent to complete this section (before sending)

Claimant one name

Claimant two name (if applicable)

Claimant Address

Claimant Postcode *Always include the Landlord Name

Claimant in Temporary Accommodation? Yes No

Claim start date Format dd/mm/yyyy

Landlord to complete this section
(please ensure all relevant sections are completed full before returning)

Confirm that the person named above is our tenant

1. Tenant One Reference No.

2. Tenant Two Reference No. *If applicable

1. Tenant start date Format dd/mm/yyyy

2. Date tenant moved in (if known) Format dd/mm/yyyy

3. Is this property temporary accommodation?

4. Is this a joint tenancy?

5. Total number of joint tenants?

Complete question 6 only if two claimants are named at the top of this form

6. Are both the claimants named above on the joint tenancy?

7. Number of bedrooms?

8. Are there any rent free weeks?

9. Rent breakdown for this property (do not include Management fees if claimant is in Temporary Accommodation)

Basic Rent Amount	Frequency	<input type="text"/>
*Eligible Service Charge amount for UC	Frequency	<input type="text"/>
Eligible Service Charge amount for UC	Frequency	<input type="text"/>

[* Universal Credit service charge guidance for Landlords](#)

10. Total Rent payable for this Property

11. Date of last rent increase? Format dd/mm/yyyy

12. Confirm that the tenant(s) named above is/are liable for payment of rent Confirmed

13. Is this tenant in arrears?

14. If so, what is the outstanding figure?

15. Do you want to apply for a Managed Payment of rent for this tenant? Managed Payments to Landlords are also often referred to as Alternative Payment Arrangement (APA). Guidance on Managed Payments to Landlords can be found on GOV.UK on the following link for Universal Credit and related housing

16. If 'Yes', please provide your UC editor Ref. No

17. Reason for APA request - If applying

Tier 1 (tick all factors that apply)
Reason for APA request

1.1	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.2	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.3	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.4	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.5	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.6	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.7	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.8	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.9	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.10	<input type="checkbox"/>

Tier 2 (tick all factor that apply)
Reason for APA request

2.1	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.2	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.3	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.4	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.5	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.6	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.7	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.8	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.9	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.10	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.11	<input type="checkbox"/>

18. Do you want to apply for a Third Party Deduction to repay existing rent arrears?

19. If you would like to apply for a Managed Payment for this tenant at a later stage you can do this with the UC 47 form at the link below and following the details on the form: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-third-party-deduction-to-repay-rent-arrears>

*Please ensure the rent breakdown complies with the Universal Credit service charge guidance for Landlords (see link above)

Important: - If you have also applied for Managed Payment, rent arrears deduction, or both; by submitting this request you agree:

- The information provided in my request form is correct and complete
- Providing false or incorrect information can lead to a prosecution or other action including stopping payments and recovering any over payments.

Completing Officer name

Position of Completing Officer

Contact Number

Date

Please return the completed form to this e-mail address within 5 working days:
You will receive an automated reply if this has been successfully received

UCFULLSERVICE@DWP.GS.GOV.UK

Social Landlords will receive a [verification of housing costs form](#) to complete when one of their tenants claim UC. This form also advises that their tenant has claimed UC.

The form has a section for social landlords to request an Alternative Payment Arrangement (APA). Social landlords can apply for a Managed Payment to Landlord (MPTL) APA and request recovery of rent arrears at the outset of their tenants claim to UC. This safeguards their welfare and prevents further rent arrears from accruing.

Back

Next

Verification of Social Rented Sector (SRS) Housing Costs

APA request matrix

Picklist

When applying for an APA, social landlords will have to supply the reasons for the request, ticking all the tier 1 or 2 factors that apply to their tenant, using the [APA criteria matrix](#).

Completed forms should be sent to
UCFULL.SERVICE@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK within 5 working days.

Landlords will receive an automated reply if this has been successfully received.

Social landlords should continue to use the UC47 form on gov.uk to request an MPTL following the new claim stage if required.

Factors to consider for alternative payment arrangements	
Tier One factors – Highly likely / probable need for alternative payment arrangements	
1.1	Drug / alcohol and / or other addiction problems e.g. gambling
1.2	Learning difficulties including problems with literacy and/or numeracy
1.3	Severe / multiple debt problems
1.4	In Temporary and / or Supported accommodation
1.5	Homeless
1.6	Domestic violence / abuse
1.7	Mental Health Condition
1.8	Currently in rent arrears / threat of eviction / repossession
1.9	Claimant is young either a 16/17 year old and / or a Care leaver
1.10	Families with multiple and complex needs
Tier Two factors - Less likely / possible need for alternative payment arrangements	
2.1	Third party deductions in place (e.g. for fines, utility arrears etc)
2.2	Claimant is a Refugees / asylum seeker
2.3	History of rent arrears
2.4	Previously homeless and / or in supported accommodation
2.5	Other disability (e.g. physical disability, sensory impairment etc)
2.6	Claimant has just left prison
2.7	Claimant has just left hospital
2.8	Recently bereaved
2.9	Language skills (e.g. English not spoken as the 'first language').
2.10	Ex Service personnel
2.11	NEETs - Not in Education, Employment or Training

Back

Verification of Private Rented Sector (PRS) Housing Costs

Picklist

The claimant needs to provide evidence of their private rented housing arrangement at a face to face interview. This needs to happen before any payment can be made. Supporting evidence must include proof that the claimant is:

- legally responsible for paying rent, for example a tenancy agreement or letter from the landlord (including details of any joint tenancies)
- living in the property, for example a utility bill, telephone bill or medical card
- paying rent, for example a bank statement showing payments to a landlord (a tenancy agreement can't be used as proof of paying rent)

These are examples of evidence, not a complete list.

New tenants may only have a tenancy agreement as evidence. They can obtain a supporting letter from their landlord as further evidence, for example to confirm that they are living in the property or have paid a deposit.

A claimant's Universal Credit calculation will include either the total amount of rent they pay, or the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate, whichever is lowest.

LHA rates are based on the number of bedrooms in a property. An amount will be paid based on the bedrooms that the claimant needs (up to a maximum of 4).

Single claimants aged under 35 will usually receive only the Shared Accommodation Rate (SAR).

Next

Verification of Private Rented Sector (PRS) Housing Costs

Shared Accommodation Rate (SAR) Exemptions

Picklist

Shared Accommodation Rate (SAR) Exemptions

The SAR will not apply if the claimant:

- is responsible for a child or qualifying young person
- has non-dependants living in their household
- Armed Forces Independence Payments
- was previously in care – they must have entered care after reaching the age of 14 and with care ending after reaching the age of 16 and now be aged over 18 years and under 22 years of age. Many care leavers will have remained in care until their 18th birthday.
- subject to multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA)
- was previously homeless and they are:
 - at least 25 years old
 - on or have been on a planned resettlement programme typically provided by their former hostel accommodation.
 - have spent three months or more living in a hostel for homeless people (this can be living in more than one hostel during this time and the three months doesn't have to be continuous).
- is receiving a benefit because of a disability - they must be receiving one of the following:
 - Disability Living Allowance (care component at the middle or higher rate)
 - Personal Independence Payment (daily living component at the standard rate or enhanced rate)
 - Constant Attendance Allowance (paid as part of Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit or War Disablement Benefit)

Non-dependents living with a claimant in PRS housing are expected to pay towards the rent. This is called a Housing Cost Contribution, if there is a room allocated to a non-dependent, a Housing Cost Contribution (HCC) is deducted from the Housing Costs in respect of each adult non-dependent. This is currently set at £70.06 per month from April 2017.

Back

Next

Verification of Housing costs - Scotland

Picklist

There is specific legislation to protect tenants and all landlords are required to register with each Local authority. Failure to register, or if registration is refused, means that the local authority may take enforcement action including issuing a rent penalty notice which would mean that the tenant has no rental liability. This would mean that Universal Credit would not pay housing costs.

Claimants can still qualify for Universal Credit housing costs in Scotland if their landlords have failed to register the property as long as the requirements around liability, payment and occupancy are met. Where the UC agent is unable to establish that the property is registered Universal Credit housing costs will still be awarded. Once the housing costs have been verified and will not be delayed.

There are exemptions that apply to registration. Exemptions apply to properties rather than to people. If all of a landlord's properties in a particular local authority area are covered by one or more of the exemptions, he or she does not need to register with that authority. If some of his or her properties are exempt, the other properties must still be registered.

A property is exempt from registration if it is:

- the only or main residence of the landlord, where there are not more than 2 lodgers
- let under an agricultural tenancy and occupied by the agricultural tenant
- let under a crofting tenancy
- occupied under a life rent
- used for holiday lets only
- regulated by the Care Commission, in certain categories
- owned by a religious organisation and occupied by a leader or preacher of that faith
- occupied only by members of a religious order
- held by an executor for a period less than 6 months
- possessed by a heritable creditor for a period less than 6 months
- owned by a local authority or Registered Social Landlord

Claimants will not be able to get help with their housing costs if their landlord has been served a Rent Penalty Notice or Rent Penalty Order for failing to:

- register the property
- deal with antisocial behaviour
- make required improvements

Back

Temporary Accommodation (TA)

Menu

By temporary accommodation (TA) we mean:

- housing arranged by a LA because they have decided that the tenant is homeless
- in all cases the accommodation must be allocated by the LA or by a social housing provider through arrangements made with the LA

From 11 April 2018, claimants who are making a new claim to UC will no longer be paid for their housing costs through UC whilst living in TA. Affected claimants will now be able to claim Housing Benefit (HB) for support with their TA housing costs while receiving the personal element of UC.

UC claimants who already receive the UC Housing Costs whilst living in TA will continue to do so until there is any change to the amount of the rent they pay for their TA (a change in rent is a change to the cost the LA charge to the claimant). At this point, the Housing Costs of UC will cease, and the claimant will be required to claim HB for ongoing support with housing costs while continuing to receive their personal allowance through UC.

Where the claimant has declared a change to the amount of rent they are paying and they are living in TA, the UC system will signpost the claimant to the LA to make a claim for HB whilst removing the housing costs from their UC entitlement. This change will apply to the whole assessment period that they claimants reported the change.

If the claimant does not report a change in the amount of rent they are paying whilst living in TA they will remain on UC and continue to have their housing costs paid through their award.

The Benefit Cap will not be applicable to a case where a claimant is in receipt of UC and HB when the claimant is living in TA. If the Benefit Cap does apply to the claimant this will be included as a deduction on the claimants UC account and not the HB.

If a claimant has their UC reduced to Nil due to earnings and is no longer entitled to UC but still remains in TA, then the LA would need to reassess the HB claim as a standard claim to include the income and earnings as passporting would no longer apply.

Where the claimant is living in TA and the LA are paying HB they should ensure that the HB interest is CIS is set correct to show that this is a Live claim. This will need to be updated if the claimant moves out of the TA and the HB claim is closed.

Next

Further guidance can be found in the A2/2018 Circular -

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/690867/a2-2018.pdf

Temporary Accommodation

Shared Accommodation Rate Exemptions

Menu

The Shared Accommodation Rate (SAR) will apply to those claimants in Temporary Accommodation receiving Universal Credit for their Housing Costs

Shared Accommodation Rate (SAR) Exemptions

The SAR will not apply if the claimant:

- is responsible for a child or qualifying young person
- has non-dependants living in their household
- Armed Forces Independence Payments
- was previously in care – they must have entered care after reaching the age of 14 and with care ending after reaching the age of 16 and now be aged over 18 years and under 22 years of age. Many care leavers will have remained in care until their 18th birthday.
- subject to multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA)
- was previously homeless and they are:
 - at least 25 years old
 - on or have been on a planned resettlement programme typically provided by their former hostel accommodation.
 - have spent three months or more living in a hostel for homeless people (this can be living in more than one hostel during this time and the three months doesn't have to be continuous).
- is receiving a benefit because of a disability - they must be receiving one of the following:
 - Disability Living Allowance (care component at the middle or higher rate)
 - Personal Independence Payment (daily living component at the standard rate or enhanced rate)
 - Constant Attendance Allowance (paid as part of Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit or War Disablement Benefit)

Back

Next

Specified Accommodation

Introduction

Menu

The housing cost for claimants in specified accommodation, previously known as ‘supported ‘exempt’ accommodation’ is normally met by LAs through Housing Benefit and not Universal Credit. Exceptions apply if a claimant is fleeing violence. A claimant will still get their housing costs met through HB but they could also receive UC Housing Costs for up to 12 months when they intend to return to the property that they remain liable for.

Specified accommodation

Is classed as the following:

- for Universal Credit, Supported Exempt Accommodation is a resettlement place or accommodation provided by a non-metropolitan county council (in England), housing association, registered charity or voluntary organisation (the organisation providing the accommodation, or person acting on their behalf, must provide the claimant with care, support or supervision)
- accommodation into which the claimant has been admitted in order to meet a need for care, support or supervision that is provided by one of the following:
 - county council
 - housing association
 - registered charity
 - voluntary organisation
- accommodation for victims of domestic violence where they are managed by:
 - local authorities
 - county councils
 - housing associations
 - registered charities
 - voluntary organisations
- hostel accommodation provided by local authorities where care, support or supervision is also provide

Please note: It is the responsibility of the LA to decide whether the UC claimant is living in specified accommodation. If the LA believe that the claimant is living in specified accommodation they should ensure that the UC MGP1 is completed correctly when returning this to UC with the appropriate drop down option selected to show that the HB claim will not be closed down.

Claimants fleeing violence

May have their housing costs paid for two properties for up to 12 Assessment periods see [Paying for two homes](#).

Back

Next

Specified Accommodation

Categories

Menu

There are four categories of specified accommodation. This is accommodation in which the claimant has been placed, in order to meet a need and receive care, support or supervision.

Category 1

For universal credit, supported exempt accommodation is a resettlement place or accommodation provided by a non-metropolitan county council (in England), housing association, registered charity or voluntary organisation.

The organisation providing the accommodation or person acting on their behalf must provide the claimant with care, support or supervision.

Category 3

Accommodation for victims of domestic violence where they are managed by:

- local authorities
- county councils
- housing associations
- registered charities
- voluntary organisations

Category 2

Accommodation that is provided by one of the following in which the claimant has been placed in order to meet an identifiable need for care, support or supervision and where he receives that care, support or supervision:

- county council
- housing association
- registered charity
- voluntary organisation

Category 4

Hostel accommodation provided by local authorities where the following is provided:

- care
- support
- supervision

Back

Next

Specified Accommodation

Continued

Menu

The benefit cap will not be applicable to a case where a claimant is in receipt of UC and HB when the claimant is living in specified accommodation. If the Benefit cap does apply to the claimant this will be included as a deduction on the claimants UC account and not the Housing Benefit.

If a claimant has their UC reduced to Nil due to earnings and is no longer entitled to UC but still remains in specified accommodation, then the LA would need to reassess the HB claim as a standard claim to include the income and earnings as passporting would no longer apply.

Where the claimant is living in specified accommodation and the LA are paying HB they should ensure that the HB interest in CIS is set correctly to show that this is a Live claim. This will need to be updated if the claimant moves out of the specified accommodation and the HB claim is closed.

Importance of stating Specified Accommodation on the MGP1 return

If a claimant is living in SEA and you are paying HB and are aware that the claimant is also receiving Housing Cost in Universal Credit, the LA should complete the MGP1 with the appropriate drop down option - 'SUPPORTED EXEMPT / SPECIFIED - HB NOT CLOSED'.

Please refer to [slide 52 on MGP1s](#) for more details.

Back

When Third Party Deductions (TPD's) are made

Universal Credit will make third party deductions to safeguard vulnerable claimants, or to enforce social obligations. Where a number of deductions are needed, these are made according to priority. This is called the deductions priority order and only 3 Third Party Deductions can be made in any one assessment period.

There are currently eleven different types of TPD's set out in the regulations:

- Mortgage Interest arrears (where the lender is not part of the MID scheme)
- Owner-occupier service charges arrears
- Rent and/or service charges arrears
- Gas arrears
- Electricity arrears
- Council Tax or Community Charges arrears
- Court Fines (or Compensation Orders)
- Water arrears
- Child Support Maintenance (Old Scheme)
- Integration loan arrears
- Eligible loan arrears

Third Party Deductions priority order

For Universal Credit, all the different deductions which can be made from a claimant's benefit have been brought together into a single priority order. This includes Third Party Deductions and different types of benefit debt. The recovery of benefit debt has a lower priority than Third Party Deductions.

The law sets a limit on the total amount that Universal Credit can deduct from a claimant's benefit in any one assessment period. This safeguard has been put in place to protect claimants from excessive deductions. The priority order helps ensure that those debts which Universal Credit considers to be the most important are paid first.

For more information see: [Chapter D2: Third Party Deductions UC, JSA and ESA](#)

If UC are not able to continue with a deduction once it has been accepted, for example there is not enough UC in payment or another deduction has taken priority, then the LA will be sent a notification UC247. If this happens the LA should contact the claimant to discuss other repayment methods.

Third Party Deductions

Menu

Third Party Deductions for rent and utility arrears

Universal Credit protects vulnerable claimants by making deductions for rent and fuel arrears. This reduces the risk of claimants being made homeless or having their utilities disconnected. These deductions are at the top of the priority order.

Enforcing social obligations

Universal Credit enforces social obligations by making deductions for:

- Council Tax or Community Charge Arrears,
- Fines
- Water Charges
- Child Maintenance

These deductions are in the middle of the priority order.

Deduction amounts

Each item for which deductions can be made has a maximum or set deduction amount. Most Third Party Deductions are taken at a set rate.

Rent arrears and the recovery of court fines are exceptions. These have a minimum amount that can be taken as a priority.

TPDs can be requested by either the claimant or a Third Party.

Maximum rates of deductions

There is an overall maximum amount that can be deducted from someone's Universal Credit. This is the equivalent to 40% of the benefit unit's Universal Credit Standard Allowance. This limit is set to reduce the risk of claimants facing hardship because of the amount being deducted from their Universal Credit payment.

There are two exceptions to the maximum amount rule:

- where there are deductions for arrears of fuel or water, deductions for on-going normal consumption will also be made but the amount deducted for normal consumption will not count towards the 40% maximum amount
- if a sanction or penalty needs to be applied or an advance needs to be deducted, last resort deductions will continue even if it means the total deductions exceed the 40% maximum amount

Back

Next

Third Party Deductions

Menu

Third Party Deductions

There will be a set deduction rate for Third Party Deductions (excluding rent arrears and fines).

Third Party Deductions (excluding fines) will be deducted at an amount equivalent to 5% of the benefit unit's Universal Credit standard allowance. This means couples will make higher third party payments than single claimants.

The 5% is a flat rate and if the full 5% cannot be taken, no deduction will be made (particularly if the 5% deduction would take a claimant above the overall maximum deduction rate of 40%).

A variable amount will be deducted for normal usage of gas, electricity or water, but only if deductions are being made for arrears of that utility. Once the arrears are repaid, the deduction for normal usage will also stop.

Rent Arrears

There will be both a maximum and minimum deduction rate for rent arrears. The amount taken will vary depending on other deductions that are being made.

The maximum amount will be an amount equivalent to no less than 10% and no more than 20% of the benefit unit's Universal Credit Standard Allowance per month.

Deductions causing financial hardship

If a claimant is struggling financially, they can ask for the amount of deduction to be reconsidered on the basis of financial hardship.

Financial hardship decisions are only available when deductions amount to more than 10% of the Universal Credit Standard Allowance and are being made for any of the following:

- benefit debt
- a Social Fund loan
- rent arrears

Back

Next


Third Party Deductions

Menu

How do LA's apply for a third party deduction.

To apply for a third party deduction please complete one of the appropriate forms listed below:

- Application for third party deductions: Universal Credit is available on GOV.UK to request a TPD for:
 - gas, electricity or water utility company arrears
 - Mortgage interest arrears or owner- occupier service charge arrears, or
- Landlord request for a managed payment or rent arrears deduction to apply for a managed payment of the housing costs, recovery of arrears and allowable service charges.

For Council Tax or Community Charges arrears please complete form UC275(a) 

How does the LA request recovery of Council Tax Arrears?

In order for a deduction to be taken for either Council Tax or Community Charge debts, the Local Authority must have obtained a Liability Order in England and Wales, or a Summary Warrant in Scotland. The Order or Warrant gives the Local Authority the authority to request deductions without having to get the claimant's consent.

In order to make a TPD request, the LA must complete a UC275(a) for each claimant individually and send to the UC shared mailbox - ucfull.service@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

The LA must send this by secure email and the subject line should be noted 'OFFICIAL SENSITIVE DATA LA UC TPD'.

Please select the paper clip on the left of the screen to access Form UC275(a)

There can only be one Council Tax / Community Charge deduction in effect at any time – subsequent requests will be rejected. Once the form is received at the service centre, the UC agent will then complete a UC275(b) to indicate if the request has been accepted or rejected, and return to the LAs designated secure e-mail account, and the subject line will be noted 'OFFICIAL SENSITIVE DATA LA UC TPD'.

If UC are not able to continue with a deduction once it has been accepted, for example there is not enough UC in payment or another deduction has taken priority, then the LA will be sent a notification UC247. If this happens the LA should contact the claimant to discuss other repayment methods.

Back

Next

Third Party Deductions

Menu

How does the LA request a cessation of council tax recovery.

It is the LA's responsibility to notify UC if:

- a debt has been fully recovered or if there is any change that affects the amount of debt that we were originally asked to recover.
- an overpayment is made or monies are paid to the LA in error (i.e. not one of the LA's customers).

For customers on Universal Credit full service e-mail the ucfull.service@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

Back

Transition to UC Housing Payment

Two weeks of additional Housing Benefit

Menu

Overview

From 11 April 2018, a two week Transition to UC Housing Payment will be awarded to HB claimants who naturally migrate to UC by awarding an additional two weeks HB entitlement from the date of the HB stop notification.

As UC is treated as a passported benefit for HB purposes, the Transition to UC Housing Payment will be an extension of the current HB claim by adding two weeks of HB entitlement based on the claimant's new circumstances of receiving UC, which will passport full HB entitlement less any reduction for benefit cap for the two week payment.

There is no need to make a fresh means test assessment of income to calculate the two week Transition to UC Housing Payment, but UC will need to be added as an income to HB claims.

As this is an additional HB payment it is subject to all other factors determining HB assessment, such as eligible rent, LHA rate, Removal of the Spare Room Subsidy, Non-dependant deductions etc... except that the income applied for the two week period is UC which will passport max HB. The award for the two week period would be the same as if the claimant received Income Support prior to migration to UC.

Exceptions

There are certain exceptions where the transition to UC housing payment should not be made:

- Partners joining a UC claim who were previously claiming HB
- UC claimants who are no longer living in temporary accommodation, their HB claim is closed and they are having their housing costs met through their UC entitlement.
- UC claimants who are no longer living in specified/supported accommodation, their HB claim is closed and they are having their UC housing costs met through their UC entitlement.

Next

Transition to UC Housing Payment - Continued

Two weeks of additional Housing Benefit

Menu

Process

LAs will receive HB Stop Notices from the data hub. The dates on the notice will not alter to reflect the period the Transition to UC Housing Payment will be applied to, so **HB claims will need to be adjusted manually to pay for the correct run-on period.**

If the claimant has changed address and the claimant's HB was paid to their previous landlord, HB teams should contact the claimant to obtain the correct bank details.

Once the correct payee details are available, HB teams should add UC as a passporting income to the HB claim from the date of the HB Stop Notice. HB teams should add a 14 day period after the date of the HB Stop Notice and award the Transition to UC Housing Payment for this period.

Where the benefit cap had been applied to the HB prior to the receipt of the HB Stop notification, the new Transition to UC Housing Payment when calculated will need to have the cap applied until such time the LA received a 'Remove Cap' notification via the Automated Transfer to LA Systems because the Transition to UC Housing Payment remains a payment of HB and is still subject to any existing cap arrangements until advised otherwise.

Change of address cases

Where the migration is prompted by a change of address, it is not appropriate to pay a Transition to UC Housing Payment to a former landlord and the two week payment must be paid to the claimant in all such cases.

Where HB was previously paid to the landlord, LAs may not have the payment details for the claimant. The HB Stop Notice includes the claimant's new address details and HB teams will need to contact the claimant at the new address to obtain the claimant's bank details to pay the Transition to UC Housing Payment.

Change of address to a new LA area

Where the claimant has moved out of the LA area triggering the UC claim, the additional 2 weeks will be paid direct to the claimant from the LA which paid HB until the change occurred. The LA will need to contact the claimant for their payment details if HB was previously paid to the landlord.

Back

Next

Transition to UC Housing Payment - Continued

Two weeks of additional Housing Benefit

Menu

Completion of the MGP1

When the LA receives the HB Stop notification from UC via the Data Hub, the UC start date will not be changed to include the Transition to UC Housing Payment which needs to be paid.

The LA should still return the MGP1 for all cases but in the majority of cases this will mean that there is not an overlapping benefit to recover which should reduce the amount of overlap that is paid to the claimant.

When completing the MGP1 this should not include the 2 week Transition to UC Housing Payment period. Any overlapping benefit which has been paid to the claimant after the end date of the Transition to UC Housing Payment can be included on the forms.

Further detailed guidance can be found in the [A2/2018 HB Circular](#)

Back

UC full service contact details

On occasions when claimants send post to Universal Credit Full Service, there are two addresses they need to be aware of.

Signed delivery and Recorded delivery must be addressed to:

- UCFS Post, Canterbury BC, Nutwood House, Chaucer Road, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 1 ZZ

All other post must be addressed to:

- Freepost DWP UNIVERSAL CREDIT FULL SERVICE

If mail is not addressed correctly there is a risk the post will be sent to the wrong place which could result in delays to claims being processed and paid.

Claimants can also contact the Service Centre by telephoning 0800 328 5644.

[Universal Credit and rented housing](#) explains what UC means for landlords, local authorities and tenants. The products hosted here include the Social Landlord Support Pack, Personal Budgeting Support (PBS) and Alternative Payment Arrangement (APA) guide.

[Discretionary Housing Payments guidance manual](#) provides guidance and advice for local authorities on good practices that should be taken into account when payment of a DHP is being considered.

[How the deductions from benefit scheme works: guidance for creditors or suppliers](#) gives an overview of how the Third Party Deductions Scheme works for organisations and individuals (referred to as Creditors or Suppliers), who receive Third Party Payments.

[Housing Benefit claims processing and good practice for local authority staff](#) provide advice, guidance and information on Housing Benefit for local authority staff. Urgent bulletins contain advice and information for immediate action by local authorities. General information bulletins contain information about social security benefits, tax credits and council tax support arrangements.

[Universal Credit and you](#) gives an introduction to Universal Credit for people who are claiming it.

[Money Advice Service](#) - advice and support for landlords [Money Advice Service](#) - help for tenants

[Money Manager](#) tool provides personalised, independent advice to help people manage their budget and monthly Universal Credit payments. A demo video is available for those who require more information <https://youtu.be/cfnLgHeFySQ>.

Menu

[Universal Credit: different earning patterns and your payments](#) – information about different earnings patterns and how these may affect a Universal Credit payment

[Support you may be entitled to if you receive Universal Credit](#) provides links to information on the extra support you may be able to get if you receive Universal Credit, including: healthcare costs, free school meals ,grants and payments if you are disabled or pregnant.

[Decision Making Guide](#) for detailed information and an explanation of the law.

www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk helps people find out what benefits they should be claiming, and provides more detail about how Universal Credit (UC) can help them move into, or progress in, work. There's also a section for organisations who advise their customers about Universal Credit

[Universal Support - a guide for local authorities](#) - Detailed guidance to support local authorities providing Assisted Digital and/or Personal Budgeting Support under Universal Support.

[Universal Credit full service rollout schedule](#) - details on when JobCentres and local authorities transition to the full service

Back

Universal Credit full service is transforming delivery. The claimant has all their data in their own hands via a secure online claimant account. This online account means claimants can check payments and award details, ask a question through the journal and alert the work coach of any changes. This builds financial responsibility and minimises telephony queries.

For claimant specific enquiries, we advise local authorities to first check the Customer Information System (CIS) to confirm UC entitlement. You can also request the award details directly from the claimant when further information is required. Claimants can access award and payment details via their UC online account which is accessible via any internet enabled device. If, for whatever reason, claimants cannot access the online service, they can call the Universal Credit Service Centre on 0800 328 5644 to get details of their claim.

We also ask local authorities and social landlords to work closely with their vulnerable tenants to provide the best possible support. Each request received for the disclosure of personal information will be assessed on its individual needs and any relevant legislative powers.

The APOLLO register and implicit consent data share protocol for UC live service does not apply to UC full Service as claimants have full access to their personal data and award details. LA's may wish to consider how they engage with their residents to gather the additional information DWP is unable to share.

What information can be disclosed to social landlords?

The following information can be shared with social landlords without the need for explicit consent:

- the start date of the managed payment and/or third party deduction
- when to expect to receive the first payment of the managed payment and/or the third party deduction from DWP
- the amount of the next payment
- the maximum amount of the housing costs payable in the next payment of Universal Credit. The circumstances that led to the change will not be discussed.

Information that will not be disclosed

The following information relating to claimants or their partners will not be revealed to a third party

- addresses
- dates of birth
- National Insurance Numbers (NINO)
- bank details (sort code, account number, account holder name)
- telephone numbers
- names of household members
- names of employers or former employers.

Disclosure to private landlords

Private landlords may ask for their tenant's rent to be paid directly to them without the need for explicit consent from the claimant. The claimant is informed about the request for Alternative Payment Arrangements (managed payment to the landlord). If the claimant is happy for the managed payment to go ahead, they do not need to reply to give their consent. The rent will automatically be paid to the landlord. If the claimant does not want the rent to be paid directly to the landlord, they can dispute this, although the claimant would need to provide proof the rent arrears do not exceed two months or that they are currently in dispute with their landlord. If they can not provide such proof then the Alternative Payment Arrangement will be put in place.

Once the APA is in place, the following information can be disclosed to the landlord, if they request:

- the start date of the managed payment and/or third party deduction
- when they can expect to receive the first managed payment and/or the third party deduction from DWP
- the amount of the next payment
- the maximum amount of the housing costs payable in the next payment of Universal Credit.

The claimants personal circumstances will not be discussed.

A private landlord can act as a representative for the claimant but will always need the claimant's **explicit consent to do so**, unless it is about requesting an Alternative Payment Arrangement.

If claimants feel unable to find the information or understand more complex issues, they may ask the third party to contact DWP on their behalf to obtain the information. This information can usually be provided if there is explicit consent. Certain information can never be released under any circumstances.

Explicit consent

The claimant must provide explicit consent before information can be disclosed to a representative they wish to act on their behalf. Explicit consent can be provided by the claimant, using the most appropriate channel in their circumstances, whether that is through the journal, over the telephone or face to face.

For explicit consent to be effective the claimant must state:

- that they give consent for their personal information to be disclosed
- what information they want to be disclosed
- why the information is needed
- the name of the third party representative who they want to handle the issue on their behalf and the name of the third party organisation (where it applies)

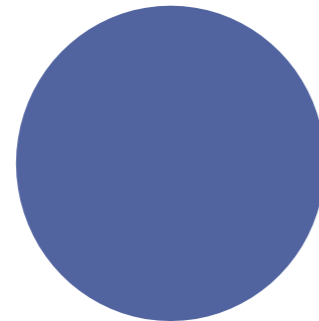
There is no set or preferred wording to be used by claimants to express their consent as long as it covers the above criteria. Explicit consent will not last indefinitely, it will cease when the specific query is resolved. The claimant should provide explicit consent for each new query raised.

Introduction

In 2017 changes came into effect to:

- Remove the Limited Capability for Work Payment - effective in UC live Service and UC full Service
- Limiting support for third or subsequent child - effective in UC live Service and UC full Service
- Changes to housing costs for 18 to 21 year olds - effective in UC full Service only

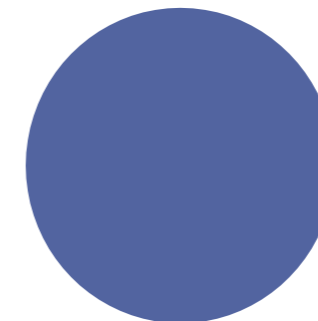
On 29 March 2018 further changes were announced to the treatment of housing costs for 18-21 year olds



Removal of Limited
Capability for Work
Payment **UC Live
Service and UC full
Service**



Limiting support for third or
subsequent child **UC Live
Service and UC full
Service**



Changes to housing costs
for 18 to 21 year olds **UC
full Service only**

Claimants who make a claim to Universal Credit on or after 3 April 2017 on the grounds of having a disability, illness or health condition, will not get the limited capability for work payment of Universal Credit.

Protection for existing claimants

The removal of the LCW element will only apply to claims made to Universal Credit on or after 3 April 2017 therefore it will not apply to the following claimants;

- existing Universal Credit claimants who are already being paid the limited capability for work payment;
- existing Universal Credit claimants who made a claim before 3 April 2017 on the grounds of having a health condition or disability and are later found to have limited capability for work following a Work Capability Assessment (WCA);
- existing Universal Credit claimants who have a further WCA (re-assessment) after 3 April 2017 and are assessed as having limited capability for work, even if they move from limited capability for work and work-related activity to limited capability for work;
- claimants who were getting a limited capability for work payment who are no longer entitled to Universal Credit due to their income and then re-claim Universal Credit within 6 months;
- existing claimants who made their claim to Universal Credit before 3 April 2017 and are found fit for work, who request a mandatory reconsideration and appeal and are then found to have limited capability for work;
- ESA claimants who are being paid the Work Related Activity component and move to Universal Credit following a change of circumstances.

The conditionality criteria, the work allowance, access to childcare and access to some specific passported benefits that are all currently associated with having limited capability for work, are unchanged and remain in place.

For detailed information

[ADM memo 7/17: UC, changes to LCW element and work-related requirements](#)

[ADM memo 8/17: ESA, removal of Work-Related Activity component and permitted work limit](#)

Universal Credit will no longer pay an additional amount for a third or subsequent child or qualifying young person born on or after 6 April 2017, unless certain exceptions apply. Claimants with three or more children will not be able to make a new claim – unless the claimant has been in receipt of Universal Credit within the previous six month period and is making a reclaim. **Claimants will still be entitled to an additional amount for any child or qualifying young person born before 6 April 2017.**

Claimants will also be entitled to an additional amount in respect of any disabled children, regardless of the total number of children in the household. The exceptions where we pay for a third or subsequent child is when the child:

- is born as part of a multiple birth e.g. twins, apart from one child in the multiple birth
- is adopted from local authority care
- is living with the claimant as part of either:
- a formal caring arrangement (or was in such an arrangement until their 16th birthday and has continued living with the claimant); or
- an informal caring arrangement, where it is likely they would otherwise be likely to be looked after by the local authority
- is the child of a child (under 16) that the claimant is responsible for
- was conceived as a result of non-consensual sexual intercourse, or at a time when the claimant was subject to ongoing control or coercion by the other parent of the child .

For detailed information: [Universal Credit and families with more than 2 children: information for stakeholders](#)

Changes to housing costs for 18 to 21 year olds (UC full Service only)

Picklist

From 1 April 2017, claimants who make a claim to Universal Credit **on or after 1 April 2017** aged between 18 and under 22 years of age will not get housing costs paid as part of Universal Credit unless they meet certain exemptions. This change applies to:

- new claims and existing claimants that declare a change to add housing costs for the first time
- single claimants in the all work related requirements regime

Exemption categories include

- the claimant is responsible for a child or qualifying young person
- Housing Benefit claimants who move into a Universal Credit full service area or are transferred into Universal Credit Full Service by DWP
- entitled to Housing Benefit at the point when they move or are moved Universal Credit claimants in Live Service areas
- Universal Credit claimants who move into a Full Service area or are transferred from Live Service to Full Service after 31 March who are in receipt of the housing costs element at the point when they move or are moved
- Universal Credit claimants in Full service, whose award began before 1 April and includes housing costs for an assessment period including 01 April 2017. This exemption does not apply on reclaims where there is a break in entitlement to housing costs after 01 April 2017

Detailed information on exemptions can be found in: [ADM memo 6/17: Housing costs element for Universal Credit claimants aged 18 to 21](#)

On 29 March 2018 it was announced that that the Government will amend regulations so that all 18-21 year olds will be entitled to claim support for housing costs in UC. This will mean that young people on benefits will be assured that if they secure a tenancy, they will have support towards their housing costs in the normal way.

Young people in return will have a Youth Obligation – an intensive package of labour market support for 18-21 year-olds looking to get into work.

This change will be implemented as soon as we can, but it's important to know that we have significant exemptions in place to ensure any vulnerable young person gets the support they need with their housing costs under UC.

Universal Support (US) is advice, assistance or support provided by UC or partners (Local Authorities; Citizens Advice; Registered Social Landlords; Charities; Credit Unions) to a Universal Credit claimant for the purpose of assisting them with:

- Managing their claim or award of Universal Credit including accessing and using online services and/or
- Managing their financial affairs

US Funding

Universal Credit has made funding available to LAs in Great Britain to put in place Universal Support (Assisted Digital (AD) and Personal Budgeting (PBS) as we transition to UC. From April 2017 LAs can access the US funding through signing a Grant Funding Agreement.

Where a LA has signed up to provide US, Jobcentre Plus and local partners need to work together to set out the US support needed in their locality. Once the detail of the local US offer has been decided, the content and processes must be communicated amongst the US partners, so that claimants can be helped to access the right support at the right time.

Universal Credit full service is delivered predominantly through online self-service, requiring the claimant to make their claim and subsequently manage enquiries and change of circumstance via their on-line UC account. This is not a problem for the majority of UC claimants. However, it is essential that claimants who struggle with self-service have their support needs identified. Those who could self serve with help should be offered Universal Support (Assisted Digital).

Menu

Assisted Digital (delivered via LA or their commissioned partners) in UC Full Service, will support claimants understanding of the information required to complete the online new claim gather and addition support claimant navigation around the system and to manage their UC account online on whatever device they use to access the service.

Claimants who cannot and will never be able to self-serve on-line and do not have a formal representative (appointee etc.) should contact the DWP service centre so that they can access UC through an appropriate channel.

Personal Budgeting Support (PBS) is about helping claimants adapt to the key changes that Universal Credit brings i.e. a single household payment that is paid monthly.

PBS is not about telling claimants what they can and cannot spend their Universal Credit award on, its about providing help and assistance that mean claimants can save a bit of money.

For detailed information about Universal support please refer to the [Grant Funding Guidance](#)

and, [Frequently Asked Questions Annex H](#)

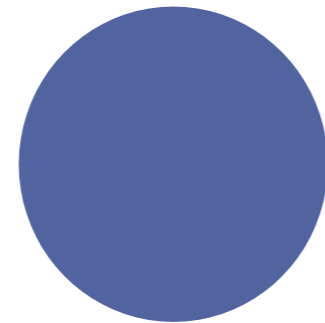
Further detailed guidance can also be accessed on GOV.UK - [Universal Support 2018/19 Guidance](#)

Back

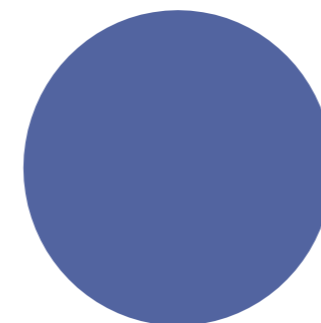
Preparing Your LA for full service

Lessons learnt and good practice

Menu



**LA Claims
process good
practice**



**LA & JCP
Lessons
learnt**

Local Authority (LA) Issue Resolution Process

Menu

For issues regarding:

- technical Payment Deductions Project (PDP) interface queries please see [Housing Benefit Circular A6/11 - 2016](#) and [HB Bulletin U2/2016](#)
- DWP Data Hub LCTR and HB Stop Notices Issues should be made via email in the first instance to LA-SST.HDD@dwp.gsi.gov.uk.

For issues regarding claimants with complex needs

In the first instance Local Authorities **must** engage with the claimant about the issue. The Claimant has access to their own information via their Universal Credit on-line account. They can share the information from their account with the LA, or other representative if they wish to do so.

If more assistance is required the claimant can ask via the journal, face to face or telephone the service centre and provide [explicit consent](#) to share their information with the LA or other representative.

When contacting Universal Credit the claimant's representative will be asked to confirm their identity so the case manager can speak to them direct.

If you are unable to engage with the claimant you can contact the service centre using the following telephone number 0800 328 5644.

If the issue remains unresolved please contact your local DWP Partnership Manager who will endeavor to resolve the matter and/or provide advice and guidance where appropriate.

Frequently Asked Questions

Menu

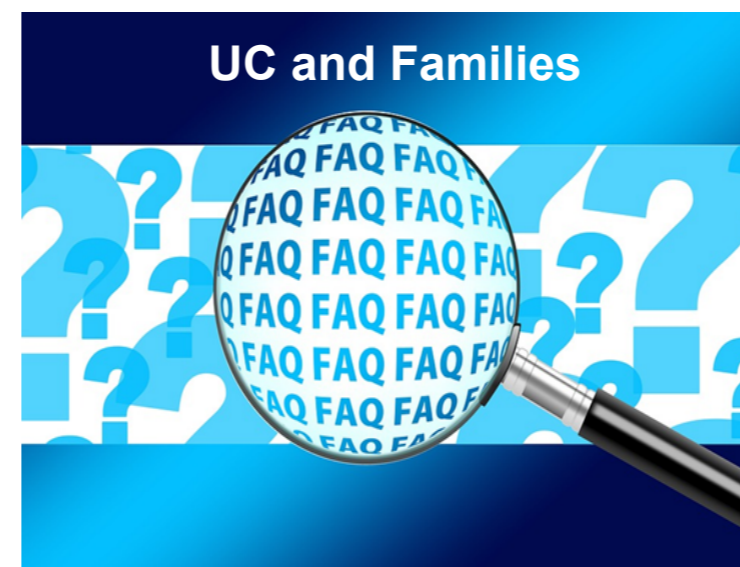
UC and HB
Overlapping
Payments

Managed
Payment of
the Housing
Costs to
Landlords

Universal
Support
Grant
Funding

Frequently
asked
questions
from
employers

Questions
employees
may have
about UC



UC and HB Overlapping Payments

Picklist

What overpayment action should the LA take where a HB claimant moves to UC and receives both HB and UC for a period?

LAs should create any overpayment arising from a claimant ceasing HB some time in the past in order to switch to UC; as DWP error in their system and class as non-recoverable. There will be no subsidy implications for LAs as they receive 100% subsidy for these types of overpayment. LAs should then record the overpayment on the UC MGP1 (LA) form. DWP will deduct the “overlap” from the first UC payment.

Some LAs credit HB entitlement in advance. An overpayment that occurs would normally be classed as a “technical overpayment”.

Can this “technical overpayment” over the period credited in advance be classed as “DWP Official Error/ unrecoverable”?
Yes, it should be recorded as a “DWP Official Error/ unrecoverable” to ensure that HB expenditure is recovered by the LA.

Can the LA choose to recover the overlap rather than DWP?

No, Regulations 10 (3) (b) states that LAs cannot recover for the HB/UC overlap period (period claimant receives both HB and UC). This does not apply to HB overpayments outside of the HB/UC overlap period.

Next

UC and HB Overlapping Payments

Picklist

What impact does a UC award of nil have on recovery of the overlap?

If the UC award is nil, the recovery will come out of any future UC. The LA should action the case as advised above and will still receive their subsidy.

When a HB claimant joins a UC household, do the usual HB rules apply in terms of cease dates?

In the case of a new claimant partner who moves in with a UC claimant the effect of Regulation 7 (5) (b) is that they can get HB until the Sunday after they move out of the HB address.

When a HB claimant joins a UC household, would the LA need to consider paying Transition to UC Housing payment?

Transition to UC Housing payment should not be paid when the HB claimant joins a Universal Credit household as Housing Benefit continues to be paid to the Sunday after they move out of the HB address.

When a UC claimant moves into the property of a HB claimant, do the usual HB rules apply for cease dates?

No, Regulation 7 (5) (b) will not apply and in these cases, the HB award will end on the day before the first date of UC entitlement, because the new joint UC award will include housing costs for the full period. Refer to [HB Circular A12/2014](#). This means that the HB award will end on any day during the week as this is linked to the date of the UC entitlement. Therefore this could be mid-week, unless the first day of the Universal Credit joint award is a Monday.

When a HB claimant who lives in Specified or Temporary Accommodation and receives UC moves address and receives ongoing housing costs in UC, would the LA need to consider paying Transition to UC Housing Payment?

Transition to UC Housing payment should not be paid when the claimant is moving across to Universal Credit as the claimant is not migrating to a new UC claim from legacy benefits.

Back

Managed Payment of the Housing Costs to Landlords

Picklist

Will a claimant have a managed payment to their landlord from the start of their claim, if they are already in rent arrears when they make a claim for Universal Credit.

It will depend on the claimant's level of arrears and their particular circumstances. When a Universal Credit claim is made, UC will offer the claimant Personal Budgeting Support and through this process decide if a managed payment to the landlord is needed. All cases will be looked at on an individual basis.

Can landlords contact UC to ask for a managed payment from the start due to the claimant having significant rent arrears?

Yes, Landlords can contact UC as stated in an earlier slide to request a managed payment from the start. Once the necessary information is received the UC agent will then decide if a managed payment is appropriate and inform the landlord and claimant. This will trigger action to generate a conversation with the claimant about Universal Support - Personal Budgeting Support.

Can rent arrears be recovered from claimants through a deduction to their Universal Credit?

Yes, arrears of rent and service charges for the property the tenant is currently living in are included in the list of deductions that can be made from a Universal Credit payment.

Landlords should use the UC47 [Landlord request for a managed payment or rent arrears deduction](#) to request a 'third party deduction' for rent arrears when arrears reach the equivalent of two months rent.

Next

Managed Payment of the Housing Costs to Landlords

Picklist

What budgeting support will be available and how do claimants access this?

Everyone will be screened for Personal Budgeting support at their Initial Evidence Interview and any relevant interview in the next 3 months (or after an APA is implemented)

Many claimants will be able to help themselves through the online budgeting support services that are already available, and we will help people who have a clear need for more intensive support.

Money advice will be offered at a national and local level, and will include a mix of online, phone and face to face services.

Will managed payments be reviewed?

Yes, all managed payment will be subject to a review. The UC agent will decide the review period taking into account the claimant's particular circumstances and level of rent arrears. At the review, they will decide if the claimant is now capable of managing the standard monthly payment.

When would a managed payment not be considered appropriate?

A managed payment is not considered appropriate if there is no financial risk to the claimant or their family and / or any rent arrears are being satisfactorily managed.

These arrangements will be kept under review as Universal Credit rolls out and may be subject to change.

Back

Introduction

For Universal Credit, when a claimant suffers a bereavement there are certain easements available depending on their particular circumstances. This includes the need to look for work and/or attend appointments at the Jobcentre. Therefore getting the right information and help at this difficult time is essential.

The [What to do after someone dies](#) guide provides practical information such as, registering the death, arranging the funeral and how to apply for a [Funeral Payment](#). Also, the [Tell Us Once](#) service lets individuals report a death to most government organisations, including Universal Credit at the same time.

Universal Credit Bereavement Protection.

Payment of Universal Credit that would otherwise reduce or stop following bereavement can continue for a short time. This is called a Bereavement run-on.

Bereavement Run-on allows a claimant's Universal Credit award to remain unchanged for 3 months following the death of a:

- Partner
- Child
- person for whom the claimant was carer.

The surviving member of a couple will receive a 3 month run-on for:

- the assessment period in which their partner dies, and
- two subsequent assessment periods

If the surviving member of the couple is over [State Pension Credit qualifying age](#) they can receive Universal Credit for the 3 month run-on period. Once this period had ended they need to make a new claim for [State Pension Credit](#).

The 3 month run-on period will also apply if a child dies and additional payments are being made for them through Universal Credit. These payments could include the child and/or the Disabled Child Addition. This also applies when a new born child is added to the

Universal Credit claim and dies within the same assessment period.

Once the run-on period ends:

- any additional payments being made for the child will stop
- the change is applied to the Universal Credit award (without the need for a re-claim)

Claimant with regular caring responsibilities

If a claimant has regular caring responsibilities and they are receiving the carer's payment for a person who then dies, this continues for the run-on period.

Once the run-on period ends, payment will stop and the change applied to the Universal Credit award (without the need for a re-claim).

Looking for Work and the Claimant Commitment

When a claimant suffers a bereavement it may be appropriate to temporarily "switch- off" the work search and availability requirements detailed on the Claimant Commitment.

The work related requirement can be "Switched off" for six months following the death of:

- the claimant's partner
- a child, where the claimant was the child's parent
- a child or qualifying young person(s) for whom the claimant, or where the claimant is a couple, the other member has caring responsibilities

Please note: that it is optional for a claimant suffering bereavement to look for work during the "switch off" period.

At three-months, Universal Credit will contact the claimant to check if they require any additional support. **If they do:**

- the claimant will be invited for a work focused interview (WFI), but all requirements are voluntary including attending the WFI.

If they do not:

- UC will contact the claimant at the end of the switch off period.

If a claimant has had their work search and availability requirements switched-off for 6 months because of bereavement, they may be eligible to have their requirements switched-off for a further 3 one month periods if their child is in considerable distress. This additional easement can be accessed once every 6 months for a period of 2 years from the time of death.

There are no specific rules for an exemption from work search and availability requirements where the claimant suffers the death of a relative other than a child or partner, nor the death of a close friend. However, the Work Coach/Case Manager will consider **discretionary easement of work-related requirements** on a case by case basis.

Other Bereavement Benefits

There may be other benefits that the Bereaved person may be entitled to these include:

If a person's husband, wife or civil partner **died on or after 6 April 2017**, they may be able to get [Bereavement Support Payment \(BSP\)](#). BSP is a one-off, lump sum payment followed by up to 18 regular monthly payments. There are 2 rates of Bereavement Support Payment.

If someone has dependent children under the age of 20, they could get:

- a lump-sum payment of £3,500
- up to 18 monthly payments of £350

If a person does not have any dependent children, they could get:

- a lump-sum payment of £2,500
- up to 18 monthly payments of £100.

Further details, qualifying conditions and how to claim can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/bereavement-support-payment/how-to-claim>

If a person's husband, wife or civil partner **died before 6 April 2017**, they may be able to get one or more of the following:

- [Bereavement Payment](#) (a one-off payment)
- [Bereavement Allowance](#) (monthly payments)
- [Widowed Parent's Allowance](#) (if you're bringing up children)

The surviving spouse or civil partner can also call the Bereavement Service helpline using the telephone numbers below.

Bereavement Service helpline

Telephone: 0800 731 0469

Welsh language: 0800 731 0453

Textphone: 0800 731 0464

Welsh language: 0800 731 0456

Lines are open Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm.

Voluntary organisations that may be able to help and support.

- Local Citizens Advice
- Cruse Bereavement Care offer emotional support to the bereaved.

The Cruse Bereavement Care National Helpline is staffed by trained bereavement volunteers, who offer emotional support to anyone affected by bereavement.

The Freephone helpline is open Monday-Friday 9.30-5pm (excluding bank holidays), with extended hours on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings, when they are open until 8pm. The number is **0808 808 1677**.

Fraud Referral Process

Menu

Introduction

The National DWP fraud referral process remains unchanged under Universal Credit. Recognising and reporting fraud within the Benefits System remains an important activity in protecting the public purse. In the last year, it is estimated that [Fraud and Error in the Benefits System](#) cost the taxpayer £3.6 billion. We can reduce this by getting it right first time and making every contact count in terms of prevention and detection.

A claimant and/or their partner may commit benefit fraud by either:

- failing to report a change in their circumstances
- providing a false statement to obtain Housing Benefit (HB) and/or a DWP Benefit

Common examples of where benefit fraud may occur are:

- Living Together as a Married Couple
- Undeclared Income or Capital
- Identity Fraud
- Housing Costs
- Under declared self-employed earnings
- Landlord Fraud

If you suspect benefit fraud or a member of the public provides details of suspected fraud, it is important that the following processes are followed. **Please note** that a separate process should be used for [LA HB processing teams](#) who identify or suspect HB fraud during routine HB administration.

Where a member of the public approaches the LA and wishes to report a HB or DWP benefit fraud, the LA should signpost the informant to the existing DWP channels. **This process also applies to all non-HB processing staff within your local authority.**

Next

Fraud Referral Process

Menu

DWP currently has three channels for reporting fraud that can be used by members of the public. These channels should also be used by LA staff when reporting any fraud including HB fraud that hasn't been identified during routine HB administration:

- 1 Where the informant has access to the internet they can go to www.gov.uk/benefit-fraud and complete an online form with the details of the suspect and the type of fraud they are allegedly committing.
- 2 If the informant would rather report the fraud by telephone, they can call the National Benefit Fraud Hotline using one of the numbers outlined below.

National Benefit Fraud Hotline (NBFH)

Telephone: 0800 854 440

Textphone: 0800 328 0512

Welsh Telephone: 0800 678 3722

Lines are open Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

- 3 If the informant does not wish to use either of these channels they can be given the postal address of:

NBFH

PO Box 224

Preston

PR1 1GP

If a fraud report has been received by post, it should also be forwarded to the PO Box postal address above.

Back

Next

What Happens Next

When there is evidence, a claimant and/or their partner have committed fraud they are told to pay back the overpaid money and one or more of the following may apply:

- taken to court or asked to pay an administrative penalty (between £350 and £5,000)
- benefits may be reduced or stopped.

Where, following a conviction for fraud, the DWP may impose a Loss of Benefit (LOB) penalty. The length of penalty is:

- 13 weeks for a first offence that results in a conviction
- 26 weeks for a second offence, the later of which results in a conviction
- 3 years for a third offence, the later of which results in a conviction

For the escalation of the offences to apply, the offence needs to have been within 5 years of the last offence.

Visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/loss-of-benefit-as-a-penalty-for-benefit-fraud/loss-of-benefit-as-a-penalty-for-benefit-fraud> for a list of Benefits that can be reduced or stopped as a penalty for benefit fraud.

Administrative penalty

An administrative penalty can be offered as an alternative to prosecution. If an administrative penalty is refused, the case is considered for prosecution. If convicted, the offender could face:

- Imprisonment or
- A community/non-custodial sentence.

Civil Penalty

A civil penalty of £50 may also apply to claimants who receive an overpayment (over £65) because they:

- do not give correct information and do not take reasonable steps to correct the error
- do not have a good reason for not providing information
- do not have a good reason for not telling us about a change

This penalty must be repaid in addition to the overpayment.

For further information please visit <https://www.gov.uk/civil-penalty-changes-affect-benefits>

Housing Benefit Fraud Referrals from HB Processing teams

When a potential HB fraud is identified during routine LA HB administration the HB processor should complete the Single Fraud Investigation Referral (SFI) form with all appropriate HB data and any relevant additional information, as detailed in the attached [“Housing Benefit Fraud Referrals Guide”](#).

Please note: If the referral does not contain basic information, such as the claimant’s name or address, it will be returned to the LA with a request to resubmit with the information included.

The SFI referral form should be completed in Microsoft Word format and emailed to the agreed regional DWP FES email address. Microsoft Word is the preferred format as it enables FES to transfer the information efficiently and accurately into FRAIMS.

What Happens Next?

The referral goes through a number of crucial stages before a routing decision is made.

- 1. Referral Received by DWP** - DWP acknowledge receipt of referral to sender (automated response)
- 2. Central Referral Service (CRS) team will:**
 - notify the LA where the HB fraud referral, identified through routine HB administration, has been assessed and closed at this stage.
 - refer for Criminal Investigation or Low Level Fraud Intervention (Compliance) as appropriate.
- 3. The FES Local Service (Criminal) team will then:**
 - notify LA when a HB investigation starts, when the investigation is closed and its outcome, or when a referral moves from criminal investigation to low fraud investigation
- 4. Where the referral is routed for Low level fraud intervention, the FES Local Service (Compliance) team will:**
 - Notify the LA when activity starts, and
 - When activity is closed and its outcome

Fraud Referral Process

Menu

In all cases, where FES are aware that an HB award has been suspended, the LA will be notified when a case is closed.

FES will provide feedback on all cases involving HB that are initiated by HB teams. As this cannot be an electronic process directly back to the person who made the referral it will go to the LA SPOC.

The “[Housing Benefit Fraud Referrals Guide](#)” details further.

On the Horizon - The Joint working Initiative.

The Joint working Initiative sees DWP and Local Authorities (LAs) investigating criminal benefit fraud together.

The Joint Working initiative will be an opportunity for a collaborative approach to investigation and prosecution of fraud cases focusing on DWP Social Security benefits, Tax Credits, Local Authority Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) and Housing Tenancies.

Joint Working is voluntary and participating LAs can decide which cases to refer and accept.

We will keep you updated.

Back

Introduction

The core objective of Universal credit is to support claimants, enter work, earn more or prepare for work in the future. A claimant's circumstances will place them in a particular work-related group and an associated Labour Market regime that defines the level of support they can expect to receive.

The work-related group and Labour Market regime that a claimant is placed affects which sanctions can be imposed on them. When are sanctions imposed?

Universal Credit sanctions are imposed when, without **good reason**, a claimant:

- causes or prolongs their own unemployment
- causes a reduction in their working hours and/or salary
- fails to carry out a work-related requirement
- fails to carry out or provide suitable evidence of work search activity, or
- fails to participate in a Work Focused Interview

To claim Universal Credit, a Work Coach will set out with the claimant what is required of them in the Claimant Commitment. If they fail to meet each of their responsibilities that they agreed in their Commitment without **good reason**, they may be subject to a sanction, where their UC standard allowance is reduced for a set period.

There are four sanction levels in UC:

- Higher level sanctions
- Medium level sanctions
- Low level sanctions
- Lowest level sanctions

Higher Level Sanctions

Higher level sanctions apply to claimants who are in the All Work-Related Requirements (AWRR) group.

A higher level sanction will be imposed on claimants who:

- cease paid work or lose pay through misconduct, or voluntarily without good reason
- fail to apply for a particular vacancy without good reason
- fail to take up an offer of paid work without good reason

The fixed durations for higher level sanctions are 91 days, 182 days and 1095 days. The sanction duration increases in length with repeated non-compliance.

For eligible 16-17 year olds, the fixed durations are 14 days and 28 days.

Medium Level Sanctions

Medium level sanctions apply to claimants who are in the All Work-Related Requirements (AWRR) group.

A medium level sanction will be imposed on claimants who, without good reason, fail to:

- undertake all reasonable work search action as recorded on their Commitment
- be able and willing immediately to take up paid work (or more paid work, or better paid work)

The fixed durations for medium level sanctions are 28 days and 91 days. For eligible 16-17 year olds, the fixed durations are 7 days and 14 days.

Low Level Sanction

Low level sanctions apply to claimants who are subject to all work-related requirements, work preparation and work-focused interview requirements. A low level sanction is imposed on claimants who, without good reason, fail to comply with specified work-related requirements.

There are two components to a low level sanction. The first component is an open-ended period, followed by a fixed period of 7, 14 or 28 days.

The open-ended component is equal to the number of days from the date of the sanctionable failure until:

- the day before the date the claimant meets a compliance condition
- the day before the date the claimant moves to the No Work-Related Requirements Group (the No Work Related Requirements Regime and the Working Enough Regime), or
- the day before the date the claimant is no longer required to undertake a particular action under the work-preparation requirement, or
- the date the award is terminated (other than by reason of the claimant ceasing to be or becoming a member of a couple)

For eligible 16 and 17 year olds, the fixed period will only ever be 7 days, but does not apply to the first failure.

Lowest Level Sanctions

Lowest level sanctions apply to claimants who are in the Work Focused Interview Only group.

A lowest level sanction will be imposed on claimants who, without good reason, fail to participate in a work-focused interview.

A lowest level sanction is open ended until:

- the day before the date the claimant meets the compliance condition, that is attends, or agrees to attend, a work-focused interview, or
- the day before the date the claimant moves to the No Work-Related Requirements Group (the No Work Related Requirements Regime and the Working Enough Regime), or
- the day the award terminates

This applies equally to eligible 16-17 year olds.

The amount deducted is calculated daily as a percentage of the standard allowance and is dependent on the claimant's current personal circumstances and conditionality regime. See below:

- Single claimant in either the Searching for Work, Working – with requirements or Preparing for work Conditionality Regime - **100%**
- Claimant in a couple in either the Searching for Work, Working – with requirements, Working No Requirements or Preparing for work Conditionality Regime - **50%**
- Single claimant in the Planning for Work regime or in No Work related requirements regime on the grounds of childcare responsibilities, adoption or pregnancy - **40%**
- Claimant in a couple in the Planning for Work regime or in No Work related requirements regime on the grounds of childcare responsibilities, adoption or pregnancy - **20%**
- Claimant in No Work related requirements regime with limited capability for work related activities - **0%**

Hardship Payments

When a sanction is imposed on a UC claim and the sanctioned claimant or couple have had their standard allowance reduced at the daily rate equal to 100% – or 50% for a couple – for a high, medium or low level sanction, hardship payments may be available for claimants.

These payments are equivalent to about 60% of the UC standard allowance and have to be paid back under UC. For UC claimants, a hardship payment is only available following the first reduced payment and where the claimant complies with all requirements placed on them. They are available to any claimant who can demonstrate that they would suffer financial hardship if the benefit were not paid. Claimants are expected to apply for a hardship payment for every assessment period where a sanction has been applied

The Decision Making Process

The Decision Making Process follows four stages:

1. **Referral:** Work Coach in a Jobcentre, or Employment Scheme provider, identifies that the claimant has failed, in some way, to meet the requirements placed upon them. The benefit will remain in payment until the Decision Maker makes an adverse decision. The Work Coach will gather information to support the referral from the claimant and, where applicable, the reasons for their failure, to enable a quality decision to be made. The case is then referred to the Decision Maker. If the referral is from an employment scheme provider, the Decision Maker will gather this information from the claimant.
2. **Original Decision:** The Decision Maker will weigh up all of the information and evidence presented to them, including the claimant's reasons for failing to meet the requirements placed upon them. They will then make a decision. If the decision is to apply a sanction (adverse decision), the claimant is notified of the outcome in writing.

Hardship Payments and the Decision Making Process

Menu

3. **Mandatory Reconsideration (MR):** If a claimant disagrees with a decision made about their benefit, they can ask the department to look at it again. A Mandatory Reconsideration must be undertaken before the claimant can appeal. There are strict time limits for asking for a Mandatory Reconsideration.

The claimant must ask for a Mandatory Reconsideration within one month of the date on their decision letter, however, they can apply outside of this period if they show good reason for the delay, or have this period extended by 14 days if they receive a written statement of reasons.

If the DWP changes its original decision (non-adverse MR decision), any arrears of benefit due are paid less any hardship payments. Once the MR has been undertaken, the claimant will receive two copies of a Mandatory Reconsideration Notice (MRN). The MRN tells the claimant the outcome of the reconsideration and what to do if they wish to appeal.

4. **Appeal:** If the department does not change the decision at Mandatory Reconsideration, the claimant can appeal directly to an independent tribunal.

Back