



Recent changes to the welfare system

May 2018

This update has been prepared by Homeless Link's Policy Team. Please contact Chris Brill (chris.brill@homelesslink.org.uk) for more detail on any item contained within the briefing.

New schedule for full service roll-out of Universal Credit

The schedule for roll-out for Universal Credit has been updated. Details of when your area will have full service can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693928/universal-credit-transition-rollout-schedule.pdf

All areas are expected to have the full service for all new claims by December 2018. Migration of all remaining existing benefit claimants to the Universal Credit full service is due to start in 2019, with migration of existing claimants expected to be completed by March 2022.

Please note that the Universal Credit Live Service Gateway was closed in December 2017; all new claims are either made to legacy benefits or Universal Credit in full service areas. For full details see:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/672724/u4-2017.pdf

Removal of 7 day waiting period

From February 2018, new Universal Credit claimants will not be subject to the seven waiting day period. This means that the delay in receiving an initial payment of Universal Credit should be reduced by one week.

Changes to Advance payments

As Universal Credit is paid in arrears, new claimants will not receive their first payment for around five weeks after making their claim.

Advance payments have been introduced to mitigate the impact of this delay. From January 2018, people can loan up to 100% of their initial payment, to be repaid over up to a 12 month period. People can ask for an Advance payment at their initial interview with a Work Coach. Self-service advance will be made available from spring 2018 (online)

Transitional Housing Benefit payment when moving to Universal Credit

From April, claimants who were previously receiving Housing Benefit will receive a transitional payment of two weeks Housing Benefit when they move to Universal Credit.

This payment is unrecoverable and received early in the first assessment period. The payment should be automatic, but if moving addresses claimants will 'need to inform their local authority.'

Guidance issued by DWP states that "If you move out of temporary, supported or sheltered housing when you're already claiming Universal Credit, you will not get the extra 2 weeks payment of Housing Benefit."

For full details see: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/moving-from-housing-benefit-to-universal-credit>

Reinstatement of housing costs for 18-21 year olds claiming Universal Credit

The Government has announced that it will amend regulations so that all 18-21 year olds will be entitled to claim support for housing costs in Universal Credit. More information is available [here](#) and [here](#).

Young people will still be required to undertake the Youth Obligation – an intensive package of labour market support for 18-21 year-olds looking to get into work.

No date has been announced for the implementation of reinstatement. In the interim, exemptions remain in place to support young people experiencing homelessness with their housing costs.

Full details of the current exemption process can be found here:

<https://www.homeless.org.uk/connect/blogs/2017/apr/10/homeless-18-21-year-olds-still-entitled-to-housing-cost-element-of>

Consent and representatives

DWP have updated their information around consent and representatives.

A representative can be any person or organisation acting behalf or making enquiries for a claimant. Claimants must provide explicit consent before information can be disclosed to a representative. Updated information notes that consent can be provided in writing, on the telephone or face to face, and that explicit consent usually lasts until either the specific request is completed or the end of the assessment period after the one in which the consent was given.

Further details, including how claimants can authorise explicit consent, can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/universal-credit-detailed-information-for-claimants/universal-credit-consent-and-disclosure-of-information>

Some other changes

Personal Independence Payments: In December 2017 the courts ruled that restricting mobility part to lower award for people experiencing mental health problems unlawful. As the Government will not appeal the court decision around PIP, the Government has said that it will write to everyone who has been affected and that it will backdate payments to when you had your decision or to December 2016

Simple Payment service: The Simple Payment service finished on 20 March 2018 and has been replaced by [Payment Exception Service](#). Under the new service benefits will need to

be withdrawn within 30 days (or an individual will need to contact DWP to have payment voucher reissued). The maximum withdrawal payment is set at £100 a time.

Mandatory Reconsideration request form: The [Mandatory Reconsideration process has been changed](#). In addition to calling the number at the top of a decision letter to request a Mandatory Reconsideration, people can now use a new Mandatory Reconsideration request form. The form, and a supporting guide explaining how the process works can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/challenge-a-decision-made-by-the-department-for-work-and-pensions-dwp>

Online information: The DWP have developed [new webpages](#) 'Understanding Universal Credit portal', which provides in depth information to support claimants and organisations supporting them with information on Universal Credit www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk. The site works alongside the existing [Universal Credit pages on GOV.UK](#), which is where people should go to make a Universal Credit claim.

Notifying DWP of advantageous change of circumstances: From 11 April, the time limit for providing information or evidence of advantageous change of circumstances is reduced from one month to 14 days.