

Front of House Guidance –

Introduction

Move to Universal Credit is a project made up of 3 ways that someone can end their legacy benefit claim and start claiming Universal Credit. These are:

- Natural migration
- Voluntary migration
- Managed migration

Natural migration (on-going)

Natural migration is where a legacy benefit claimant has a change in circumstances which would have previously resulted in them needing to make a new claim for one of the benefits that Universal Credit replaces.

So instead of making a new claim to Jobseeker's Allowance (Income Based), Employment and Support Allowance (Income Related), Income Support, Housing Benefit or Tax Credits, they will need to make a claim to Universal Credit.

There are many changes which can result in a new claim to benefit being required, such as a change in employment status, health or family circumstances.

Voluntary migration (on-going)

Voluntary migration is where a claimant voluntarily makes a claim to Universal Credit and:

- they have not received a migration notice directing them to make a claim to Universal Credit as part of managed migration
- they have not had a change of circumstances leading to them naturally migrating to Universal Credit

Managed migration

Move to Universal Credit (managed migration) is a process designed to close down legacy benefits and direct claimants to make a claim to Universal Credit.

Claimants selected to claim Universal Credit as part of Move to Universal Credit (managed migration) will receive a **migration notice** in the post.

This is a notification which explains their legacy benefit claim will be ending, and directs them to make a Universal Credit claim by a specific date. This will be 3 months and one day from the date of issue.

For example, if the Migration Notice is issued on 25 May, the claim by date is the 26 August.

If they claim by the claim by date, they will be considered for Transitional Protection. This protects eligibility and entitlement from existing benefits.

If the claimant makes a claim within one assessment period of their claim by date, they will still be considered for Transitional Protection.

Their Universal Credit claim start date will be backdated to their deadline date.

Only claimants on the Move to Universal Credit (managed migration) journey are eligible to be considered for Transitional Protection.

Once their claim to Universal Credit has been made, their legacy benefits will be stopped.

Claimants who have made a Universal Credit claim as part of the Move to Universal Credit (managed migration) programme are those who have not yet had a change of circumstances that have required them to claim Universal Credit nor chosen to make a Universal Credit claim voluntarily. For this reason, they are still claiming legacy benefits.

Universal Credit replaces the following legacy benefits:

- Child Tax Credit (CTC)
- Working Tax Credit (WTC)
- Housing Benefit (HB)
- Income Support (IS)
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA IB)
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA IR)

Eligibility for Move to Universal Credit (managed migration)

In most cases, those claiming Universal Credit as part of Move to Universal Credit (managed migration) must meet the normal eligibility criteria.

See: **Eligibility for Universal Credit**

However, there are some exceptions to the eligibility criteria for these claimants.

These exceptions are part of Transitional Protection, and only apply if claimants apply on or before the claim by date on their migration notice.

Exception: Students

Full time students are not usually eligible to receive Universal Credit. However, legacy benefit claimants who are making a claim as part of Move to Universal Credit (managed migration) and are already in full time education, are exempt from this rule.

They will be allowed to complete any course they were participating in, on the day before they made their claim.

If their claim to Universal Credit is closed and they are still a student when their course ends and they try to claim again, the normal student eligibility rules are applied. The only exception to this is if their claim is closed due to earnings. In these cases, if a further Universal Credit claim is made within 4 months of the last day of their previous entitlement, the student disregard can be applied.

If they are no longer a student when the course ends, normal Universal Credit rules apply.

If they start a new course of education after they make their claim, the normal Universal Credit student eligibility rules must be applied. See **Students:**

Eligibility, conditionality and student income

Exception: Tax Credit only claimants with capital over £16,000

Tax Credit only claimants who have more than £16,000 of capital or savings, and meet all other eligibility criteria are able to be entitled to Universal Credit for a maximum 12 assessment periods.

This exception does not apply to any other benefit or combination of benefits.

Capital or savings above £6,000 and up to £16,000 will be subject to the normal **treatment of capital**.

Any capital or savings above £16,000 is disregarded. (For example, if the claimant has £20,000, the amount from above £6,000 up to £16,000 is taken into account and the additional £4,000 is disregarded).

If their capital or savings falls to £16,000 or below, then increases above £16,000 within the 12 assessment periods, the disregard is not reapplied.

If their capital or savings remains above £16,000 after the 12 assessment periods have passed, they will no longer be eligible for Universal Credit.

If their capital or savings reduces significantly below £16,000, **deprivation of capital** will need to be considered.

If their claim is closed due to earnings before the 12 assessment periods pass, and they re-claim within 4 months of the end of the assessment period for which Universal Credit was awarded, the exception to the £16,000 rule continues until they reach 12 total assessment periods on their Universal Credit claim.

The total number of assessment periods does not reset if a new claim is made. For example: if the claimant spends 8 assessment periods on Universal Credit

- their claim closes due to earnings
- they re-claim within 4 months of the end of the assessment period for which Universal Credit was last awarded,
- they are able to spend another 4 months on Universal Credit with capital in excess of £16,000.

If claim closure due to earnings coincides with the claimant reaching 12 assessment periods, the exception to the £16,000 rule will not apply if they reclaim.

Migration notice

Claimants selected to claim Universal Credit through the Move to Universal Credit (managed migration) Programme will receive a migration notice by post. The migration notice is a notification letter which tells the claimant that their legacy benefits will be ending, and that they need to make a Universal Credit claim by a specific date. This will be a minimum of 3 months and one day from the date the migration notice is issued.

For example, if a migration notice is issued on 10th May, the claimant needs 3 months including 10th May to make their Universal Credit claim. They must be given until 10th August at least to make their claim. The 11th August (or later date) should be specified as the claim by date, to ensure the deadline is not within the 3 month and one day period.

Once the migration notice is issued an alert will be set in Universal Credit, to inform agents once a claim to Universal Credit has been made.

Change of circumstances after the migration notice is issued

Once the migration notice is issued, if the claimant has a change of circumstances within the 3 month and one day period, that moves them into an exclusion or deferral category, they may be issued a cancellation notice.

See **Move to Universal Credit (managed migration): Exclusions and deferrals**

They can be brought back on to the Move to Universal Credit (managed migration) journey if their circumstances change again, unless the change means that they are no longer entitled to legacy benefits.

A claimant may have a change of circumstances which means that:

- they are no longer entitled to legacy benefits and need to claim Universal Credit straight away
- they would have previously had to make a claim to a different legacy benefit that Universal Credit has replaced

These claimants need to make a Universal Credit claim straight away to ensure that they can receive the correct financial support.

Claimants who receive a migration notice and subsequently have any change of circumstance, including a change in couple status, will be eligible for the other Transitional Protection arrangements for students and for disregarding capital.

Claimants who move to a non-Move to Universal Credit (managed migration) postcode, after the migration notice has been issued are still considered to be Move to Universal Credit (managed migration) claimants.

This includes claimants who have not yet made their claim to Universal Credit.

They should continue on the Move to UC (managed migration) claimant journey, and be considered for Transitional Protection in the same way as other Move to Universal Credit claimants.

If the claimant does not make a claim by the claim by date on their migration notice, their legacy benefits will be terminated.

Sending a reminder

All claimants selected to take part in Move to Universal Credit (managed migration), receive a migration notice directing them to claim Universal Credit by a specific date.

Where an individual has not made a claim 7 weeks after receiving their migration notice, a reminder notice letter will be issued.

The reminder notice re-emphasises the requirement to make a claim by their claim by date, the implications of not making a claim, and the support available to them.

If the individual does not make a claim 10 weeks after the migration notice was issued, a second reminder notice is issued by SMS text if there is a mobile number held as a primary number.

If there isn't a primary number, the claimant is sent a reminder letter.

Claim made to Universal Credit

If a claimant makes a new Universal Credit claim by the claim by date, the following benefits will continue to be paid for a further 2 weeks, after the claim to Universal Credit was made from the day they made their Universal Credit claim.

- Income Support
- Jobseekers Allowance (IB)
- Employment and Support Allowance (IR)
- Housing Benefit

These will not be deducted from future Universal Credit payments.

However, Working Tax Credits and Child Tax Credits eligibility will stop from the day before they made their Universal Credit claim.

Claimants in temporary or specified accommodation will continue to receive Housing Benefit.

If the claimant has a current WCA decision recorded on their ESA claim, this will automatically be carried over to their Universal Credit claim. They will not need to attend another WCA assessment. Universal Credit WCA review processes will apply.

If a claimant states they need extra help with rent or housing costs and require further financial support, they should be referred to their Local Authority to apply for a **Discretionary Housing Payment**.

Once the National Insurance Number and claimant identification are verified, a banner will be visible within the service to identify claimants who are claiming under Move to Universal Credit.

The Transitional Element can be calculated once all evidence has been verified. See Transitional Protection (add link to guidance)

Claimants will be assigned to a Labour Market regime appropriate to their personal circumstances and be expected to participate in appointments and work-related activity if their regime requires this. See: **Labour Market regimes**

Claimant does not make a claim to Universal Credit

Claimants who do not make a claim by the claim by date will have their legacy benefits stopped.

However, if they make a Universal Credit claim within one assessment period of that happening, their Universal Credit claim date will be backdated to the claim by date. These claimants can still be eligible for Transitional Protection, if applicable, and the 2 week run on.

The 2 week run on is payable even if the claimant makes a claim to Universal Credit after their claim by date, or they don't claim at all.

For some claimants, a migration notice extension may be appropriate. Once all the reminders have been issued, if the claimant does not make a claim by their claim by date, no further attempts to contact the claimant are made before their legacy benefits are terminated.

Extensions

It may sometimes be appropriate to extend a claimant's claim by date.

A maximum of 4 weeks can be applied, either by the claimant requesting it, or where a support decision is made based on their circumstances.

There are a number of good reasons a claimant might need more time to claim, including:

- the claimant did not engage in the Move to Universal Credit process until their claim by date was already very close
- the claimant needs more time to get the necessary documentation, evidence or information to make their claim
- the claimant needs more time to get support with making their claim
- the claimant has planned hospital treatment (or a similar commitment) that means they are unable to make a claim by their deadline date

This list is not exhaustive.

If the claimant is still struggling to make a claim by the end of their extension period, they can request a further extension. This must be done more than 1 week before their claim by date to discuss their options.

There is no limit to the number of times an extension can be requested or allowed.

Extensions can only be applied before the claimant's claim by date.

Once the date has passed, an extension cannot be applied.

If it is clear the claimant can make and maintain a claim by online self-service, but needs support to do so, this is typically linked to skills, confidence, lack of motivation and access, see **Assisted Digital** support or **Help to Claim**.

If the claimant is unable to make and maintain an online claim, there are exceptional circumstances where they can make a claim by phone.

See: **Spotlight on: Claims by phone**.

Claimant fails to provide evidence for their Universal Credit claim

Once a Universal Credit claim has been made, information and /or evidence is needed to verify certain aspects of it, such as claimant identity and details of housing / rent payments. These are Business As Usual processes.

If the claimant fails to provide the information required to complete their claim within a month of that information being requested, the claim would be closed.

Self-employed claimants: Minimum Income Floor exemption

Self-employed claimants that claim Universal Credit, as part of Move to Universal Credit (managed migration) and are **gainfully self-employed** (GSE), will enter the 12 month start-up period.

They will not have the **Minimum Income Floor** (MIF) applied to their Universal Credit award until this period has ended. This is regardless of how long they have been self-employed before moving to Universal Credit.

After 12 months Business as Usual will apply.

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The 2 week run on is payable even if the claimant makes a claim to Universal Credit after their claim by date, or they don't claim at all.

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It may sometimes be appropriate to extend a claimant's claim by date.

A maximum of 4 weeks can be applied, either by the claimant requesting it, or where a support decision is made based on their circumstances.

There are a number of good reasons a claimant might need more time to claim, including:

- the claimant did not engage in the Move to Universal Credit process until their claim by date was already very close
- the claimant needs more time to get the necessary documentation, evidence or information to make their claim
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- the claimant has planned hospital treatment (or a similar commitment) that means they are unable to make a claim by their deadline date

This list is not exhaustive.

If the claimant is still struggling to make a claim by the end of their extension period, they can request a further extension. This must be done more than 1 week before their claim by date to discuss their options.

There is no limit to the number of times an extension can be requested or allowed.

Extensions can only be applied before the claimant's claim by date.

Once the date has passed, an extension cannot be applied.

If it is clear the claimant can make and maintain a claim by online self-service, but needs support to do so, this is typically linked to skills, confidence, lack of motivation and access, see **Assisted Digital** support or **Help to Claim**.

If the claimant is unable to make and maintain an online claim, there are exceptional circumstances where they can make a claim by phone.

See: **Spotlight on: Claims by phone**.

Claimant fails to provide evidence for their Universal Credit claim

Once a Universal Credit claim has been made, information and /or evidence is needed to verify certain aspects of it, such as claimant identity and details of housing / rent payments. These are Business As Usual processes.

If the claimant fails to provide the information required to complete their claim within a month of that information being requested, the claim would be closed.

Self-employed claimants: Minimum Income Floor exemption

Self-employed claimants that claim Universal Credit, as part of Move to Universal Credit (managed migration) and are **gainfully self-employed** (GSE), will enter the 12 month start-up period.

They will not have the **Minimum Income Floor** (MIF) applied to their Universal Credit award until this period has ended. This is regardless of how long they have been self-employed before moving to Universal Credit.

After 12 months Business as Usual will apply.

Move to Universal Credit (managed migration): Transitional Protection

Background

Universal Credit is calculated differently to legacy benefits. This means that a claimant moving to Universal Credit might not be paid the same amount as they received before.

Transitional Protection

For those who claim Universal Credit as part of the Move to Universal Credit (managed migration) programme, if the amount of Universal Credit the claimant is entitled to is less than the amount they were entitled to on their legacy benefit(s), a transitional protection top-up is available.

Claimants who do not make a claim before their claim by date, but do make a claim within one assessment period of their claim by date are still entitled to Transitional Protection.

However, if they make a claim more than one assessment period after their claim by date, they are not entitled to Transitional Protection, even if their claim is backdated.

For example, if a claimant has a claim by date of 14 December 2022, as long as they make a claim by 13 January 2023, they will be considered for Transitional Protection and their claim will be backdated to 14 December 2022.

If they make a claim after 13 January 2023, they are not entitled to Transitional Protection.

Those who claim as part of Move to Universal Credit (managed migration) are also exempt from some of the normal eligibility rules for claiming Universal Credit. These exemptions apply to students and those in receipt of Tax Credits. See: **Move to Universal Credit (managed migration)**

Some claimants who were in receipt of Severe Disability Premium (SDP) will also be in receipt of Transitional Protection, even though they are not part of the Move to Universal (managed migration) programme. See: **Spotlight on: Severe Disability Premium Transitional Protection overview**

Other than claimants previously in receipt of SDP, those who claim Universal Credit naturally through a change of circumstances or voluntarily, and are not

part of the Move to Universal Credit (managed migration) programme, will not receive Transitional Protection.

Transitional Protection calculation

Transitional Protection is calculated by comparing the total amount of all legacy benefit(s) the claimant had been awarded, with the total amount of Universal Credit they would be entitled to (Universal Credit notional amount). These figures are both based on the circumstances on which their legacy benefit(s) awards were made the day before they made a new Universal Credit claim.

Where the Universal Credit indicative amount is lower, the Transitional Protection top-up will be available to make up the difference and will be paid as part of the Universal Credit award.

Transitional Protection: impact on Universal Credit award

The monthly Transitional Protection is paid at the end of every assessment period as part of the Universal Credit award. It forms part of the maximum award calculation.

On the Universal Credit statement, it shows as a separate amount in the 'What you are entitled to' section, under the heading 'Transitional Protection'.

Impact of earnings on Transitional Protection

An increase in earnings, will not erode a claimant's Transitional Protection top-up payment.

However, the Transitional Protection top-up payment is added to the claimant's entitlement before any deductions in the same way as any other element such as housing. So, while their Transitional Protection top-up entitlement is still the same, their take home payment from Universal Credit may be lower due to the impact of the increased earnings on the overall award.

A decrease in earnings does not impact a claimant's Transitional Protection top-up payment, unless they have earnings equal to or above the **Administrative Earnings Threshold** (AET) in their first assessment period, and their earnings then drop below the AET for more than 3 consecutive assessment periods at any time during the Universal Credit claim.

If this happens, the claimant's Transitional Protection top-up payments will stop.

A claimant's Transitional Protection top-up entitlement will not be affected by fluctuating earnings. Even if the claimant is earning a different amount each month, their Transitional Protection top-up entitlement remains the same unless it erodes for a different reason.

However, their take home pay from Universal Credit will change based on the impact their earnings have on the overall award, in the same way it would for any other claimant.

The work allowance and earnings taper rules still apply.

Transitional Protection: erosion

Erosion is where the Transitional Protection reduces as the amount awarded for other components of Universal Credit increases.

Transitional Protection is not time limited but will erode when:

- there is an increase to the Universal Credit maximum award following an increase in the Standard Allowance or additional element (for example, uprating), except for the childcare costs element
- a new Universal Credit element (such as support with housing costs) is awarded, (except for the childcare costs element)

It is not possible for the Transitional Protection to start eroding until the second assessment period after the claimant starts receiving the payments.

When this happens, the Transitional Protection will erode penny for penny with the increase to the Universal Credit maximum amount.

The erosion happens in the same assessment period that the increase is paid.

An increase in earnings does not erode Transitional Protection.

Transitional Protection is not increased by uprating. However, it is eroded by the uprating of all other Universal Credit elements in the award, except the childcare cost element.

Once Transitional Protection has fully eroded, it cannot be re-instated except where there has been a recalculation or successful appeal.

Transitional Protection will no longer apply from the assessment period in which it has eroded to nil.

Example of Transitional Protection erosion

A claimant receiving Transitional Protection has a Universal Credit award of £1000 at the end of their assessment period.

The claimant's Standard Allowance and additional amounts for housing and children add up to £880. The claimant also receives £120 in Transitional Protection. This means the total award the claimant sees on their statement is £1000.

Transitional Protection will appear separately on the Universal Credit statement.

In the next assessment period, the claimant reports a change of circumstances. Their housing costs have increased and the change is verified. As the claimant has not yet reached their Local Housing Allowance rate, their additional amount for housing increases by £50.

At the end of the assessment period, this means that the total amount of the claimant's Standard Allowance and additional amounts for housing and children is £930 rather than the £880 it was in the previous assessment period.

Transitional Protection erodes penny for penny with any increase to the Universal Credit award, apart from childcare costs.

This means that as the claimant's Universal Credit maximum amount has increased by £50, their Transitional Protection will reduce by £50. So the Transitional Protection that was previously £120 will reduce to £70.

The claimant's award for this assessment period will be made up of £930 for the Standard Allowance and additional amounts for housing and children - and £70 of Transitional Protection. This totals £1000.

AP1: Universal Credit award is £1000 (£880 + £120 TP)

AP2: Universal Credit award is £1000 (£930 + £70 TP)

AP 1	AP 2	
Transitional Protection £120	Transitional Protection £70	The total amount of Universal Credit that the claimant receives in both AP1 and AP2 is £1000.
Additional amount for housing £234.28	Additional amount for housing £284.28	
Additional amount for children £235.83	Additional amount for children £235.83	
Standard Allowance £409.89	Standard Allowance £409.89	

Agents can see by how much the Transitional Protection has eroded by comparing the statements from the current and previous assessment periods.

When Transitional Protection stops

Transitional Protection stops in the following circumstances:

- couples forming
- couples separating
- when an increase in Universal Credit is greater than the amount of Transitional Protection in payment
- the claimant has earnings equal to or above the **Administrative Earnings Threshold (AET)** in their first assessment period and the claimant's earnings then drop below the AET for more than 3 consecutive assessment periods at any time during the Universal Credit claim
- the Universal Credit award is terminated

Once Transitional Protection has ended, it will never be re-awarded except when a claimant has an increase in household earnings that means their Universal Credit payment is nil and they are no longer entitled to Universal Credit.

In these cases, the Transitional Protection will be re-instated if they re-claim within 4 months of the end of the assessment period for which they were awarded Universal Credit

The 3 assessment periods are calculated from the end of the assessment period when earnings were increased, which resulted in no Universal Credit being awarded. This is to encourage claimants to still work and earn more where possible.

When Transitional Protection amount can be revised

Transitional Protection calculations can be revised if the information used to calculate the total legacy benefits or the Universal Credit amount was incorrect, for example where:

- official error
- a revision has been made to a legacy benefit following a Mandatory Reconsideration or appeal
- unreported change of circumstances

Benefit cap

The **benefit cap** limits a household's total entitlement to Universal Credit unless they meet one of the exemption criteria.

When the Transitional Protection calculation is carried out, claimants will not be entitled to an amount of Transitional Protection that would take them above the benefit cap.

Move to Universal Credit (managed migration): Front of house lines to take

Move to Universal Credit is a project made up of 3 ways that someone can end their legacy benefit claim and start claiming Universal Credit. These are:

- Natural migration
- Voluntary migration
- Managed migration

Natural migration

Natural migration is where a legacy benefit claimant has a change in circumstances which would have previously resulted in them needing to make a new claim for one of the benefits that Universal Credit replaces.

There are many changes which can result in a new claim to benefit being required, such as a change in employment status, health or family circumstances.

Voluntary migration (on-going)

HMRC, Local Authorities and a range of other voluntary/community groups are currently encouraging legacy benefit claimants to access benefit calculators to see if they are better off on Universal Credit.

This is just advice and claimants will ultimately make the decision on whether to claim voluntarily.

When a claimant voluntarily claims Universal Credit, this is known as voluntary migration.

Managed migration

Move to Universal Credit (managed migration) is a process designed to close down legacy benefits and direct claimants to make a claim to Universal Credit.

Claimants selected to claim Universal Credit as part of Move to Universal Credit (managed migration) will receive a migration notice in the post.

This is a notification which explains their legacy benefit claim will be ending and directs them to make a Universal Credit claim by a specific date. This will be 3 months and one day from the date of issue.

Identifying if a claimant is part of Move to Universal Credit (managed migration)

How do I determine if a claimant is part of Move to Universal Credit (managed migration)?

To check if a claimant is part of Move to Universal Credit (managed migration), ask the claimant if they have received a letter (migration notice MNS1) from DWP telling them they need to make a claim to Universal Credit by a specific date.

Ask if at the bottom of each page of the letter, it states:

'This is a migration notice issued under regulation 44 of the Universal Credit (Transitional Provisions) Regulations 2014'.

For information on taking action when a claimant has not received a migration notice, see: Claimant has not received a migration notice.

Recording claimant contact

How do I record contact and discussions with a Move to Universal Credit (managed migration) claimant?

- Access the 'Track Move to UC migration' spreadsheet
 - hold the 'Ctrl' and 'F' keys on your keyboard at the same time and a free text box will appear
 - type the claimant's migration notice reference number into the free text field (If they do not have their reference number but they have had a migration notice, you can search for their surname)
 - scroll across to the 'Contact history' section of the spreadsheet
 - use this section to record any relevant contact/discussion that you may have had with the claimant
-

Claimant asks a question you are unable to answer

What do I do if a claimant asks a question that I cannot answer?

If a claimant asks a question about Move to Universal Credit (managed migration) that you are unable to answer, signpost them to the Migration Notice helpline:

- Universal Credit Migration Notice helpline Telephone: [REDACTED]
- **Relay UK(link is external)** (if you cannot hear or speak on the phone): [REDACTED] then [REDACTED]
- **Video relay service(link is external)** for British Sign Language (BSL) users - **check you can use this service(link is external)**

Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm.

From mobiles and landlines, [REDACTED] telephone numbers are free to call.

Claimant has already made their claim to Universal Credit

What do I do if a claimant has already made their claim and has questions about their move to Universal Credit?

If the claimant has already made their claim after receiving a migration notice and they have a general query about Universal Credit or their claim, you must not refer them to the Migration Notice helpline. This helpline is for queries specific to Move to Universal Credit (managed migration).

Claimants with general queries must be supported using the normal channels.

General queries may include:

- When will I receive my Universal Credit payment?
- How do I use my online account?
- How do I report a change of circumstances on Universal Credit?
- How do I claim housing costs/childcare costs on Universal Credit?
- What support will I receive from DWP while on Universal Credit?

This list is not exhaustive.

If the claimant has a query specifically relating to Move to Universal Credit (managed migration), signpost them to the Migration Notice helpline. This includes queries relating to:

- their individual transitional protection payments
- transfer of debt from legacy benefits to Universal Credit
- whether their education status will impact their claim
- savings and capital over £16,000

This list is not exhaustive.

The helpline details are:

Universal Credit Migration Notice helpline:

- Telephone: [REDACTED]
- **Relay UK(link is external)** (if you cannot hear or speak on the phone): [REDACTED] then [REDACTED]
- **Video relay service(link is external)** for British Sign Language (BSL) users - **check you can use this service(link is external)**

Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm.

From mobiles and landlines, [REDACTED] telephone numbers are free to call.

Migration notice

Why have I received a migration notice letter?

Some benefits are ending. Universal Credit is replacing the following benefits for those of working age:

- Housing Benefit
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- Income-based Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Working Tax Credit
- Child Tax Credit

You have received a migration notice because you are currently claiming one or more of the benefits that Universal Credit is replacing.

It is important that you make a claim to Universal Credit before the deadline date on the migration notice to continue receiving benefits.

Other benefits, such as Personal Independent Payments (PIP), will not be affected by these changes.

Is the migration notice letter that I have received genuine?

- ask the claimant to provide the reference number on their migration notice. This will appear next to 'Your ref' on the right-hand side of their letter
- access the 'Track Move to UC migration' spreadsheet
- hold the 'ctrl' and 'f' keys on the keyboard
- type the claimant's reference number into the free text box that appears

Claimant's reference number does not exist in the spreadsheet

If the reference number is not found, check the claimant's details against the spreadsheet to look for a match.

If a match is not found, the claimant has not been selected for managed migration at this stage. You must:

- tell the claimant to ignore the letter as it has not been sent from DWP and may be a scam

Claimant's reference number exists in the spreadsheet

- check the 'Migration notice sent' column in the spreadsheet

If the column has been completed with a 'yes', this means that the claimant has been sent a migration notice. You must:

- tell the claimant that the migration notice is genuine and they need to follow the instructions within the letter to make a claim to Universal Credit before the deadline date stated on the letter

If the column is blank, the claimant has not been sent a migration notice. You must:

- tell the claimant to ignore the letter as it has not been sent from DWP and may be a scam

What happens if I don't make my claim before the deadline date on the migration notice?

If you don't make a claim before the date stated in your migration notice letter, your legacy benefits will close, and your payments will stop.

Additional information and support are available at the move to Universal Credit website www.gov.uk/dwp/move-to-uc (link is external) . You can always make a claim to Universal Credit regardless of the deadline.

Claimant has not received a migration notice

I've heard Move to Universal Credit advertised in the media, does this impact me?

You do not have to do anything until you receive a letter from DWP requiring you to claim Universal Credit.

However, if you want to learn more about Universal Credit you can find further information at Understanding Universal Credit.gov.uk (link is external)(link is external).

I know somebody that has received a letter, but I haven't. Why is this?

We have issued letters to a small number of customers and will be steadily increasing those numbers over time.

Unless you receive a notification, there is nothing you need to do at this time.

However, if you want to learn more about Universal Credit you can find further information at Understanding Universal Credit.gov.uk (link is external)(link is external).

I haven't received a letter to tell me to claim Universal Credit, but I want to make a claim, what do I do?

You can find more about what a move to Universal Credit would mean for you including details of how to make a claim at **Understanding Universal Credit.gov.uk(link is external)**.

Re-issuing a migration notice

Can claimants be re-issued a migration notice?

A copy of the migration notice can be issued to a claimant if they specifically request it. This service should not be offered to a claimant unless they ask for it.

If the claimant asks to be re-issued a migration notice, direct them to contact the Migration Notice Helpline on [REDACTED] as the notice cannot be re-issued in the Jobcentre.

Their original deadline date will still apply.

Claimant is unable to / will not be making a claim Universal Credit

I will not be able to make a claim before my deadline date. What do I do?

- access the claimant's record in the Move service to identify their current claim by date
- the claimant's 'Claim by date' can be found in the 'Move status' section in the Move service

If there is an immediate need for the claimant to request a deadline date extension, signpost them to the **Migration notice helpline** where a specialist agent will discuss their options with them.

If the claimant's deadline date is still a number of weeks away, tell the claimant:

- the service used to make a claim to Universal Credit is available 24 hours a day
- there are options available to help them claim Universal Credit such as:
 - making a claim with the support of friends and family
 - **Assisted Digital** support or **Help to Claim** where the claimant would be able to make and maintain an online claim as long as they receive some support

If it is clear that the claimant needs to make a claim by phone, you must follow the normal process.

Where possible, discuss with the claimant how they will make a claim to Universal Credit.

Tell the claimant that if they still feel they cannot make a claim by their deadline date, they need to contact the **Migration notice helpline** who will discuss their options with them.

I am unable to make an online claim / don't have access to the internet / don't have a computer

Claimants asking about making a 'Claim by phone' must be informed that if they are capable of claiming online, this has advantages which include:

- 24-hour access to their online account
- an online journal to keep track of their claim
- the ability to update circumstances immediately
- view when payments are due

If it is clear the claimant can make and maintain their claim by online self-service, but needs support to do so (this is typically linked to skills, confidence, lack of motivation and access), consider if the following would be appropriate:

- **Assisted digital**
- **Help to claim**

Support with making a claim can also be provided by Citizens Advice Help to Claim services.

For claimants it is clear are unable to complete the online service, a new claim by phone is available. These claimants must be:

- given the National Service telephony number: [REDACTED], to make a new claim by phone
- advised what information they will need prior to making the call:
 - dates of birth for children who will be on the claim
 - if they pay rent, how much and when
 - who they pay rent to
 - bank account details
- informed that the agent taking their claim by phone may not have specific Move to Universal Credit (managed migration) knowledge, so if they have any questions about Move to Universal Credit (managed migration), they should ask these now or contact the Migration Notice helpline on [REDACTED]

If a claimant does not satisfy the above circumstances but insists on making a claim by phone, they must be allowed to do so.

Impact on legacy benefits

What happens to my current benefits when I make my claim to Universal Credit?

If you have received a migration notice and you make a claim to Universal Credit, any of the following benefits you are in receipt of will stop:

- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- Income-based Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Housing Benefit
- Income Support
- Child Tax Credits
- Working Tax Credits

Any benefits not in this list will continue as normal.

If you make a claim by the deadline date and you are receiving Income-based Jobseekers' Allowance (JSA), Income-based Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), Housing Benefit or Income Support, these benefits will continue to be paid for the first 2 weeks of your Universal Credit claim. These will not be deducted from your Universal Credit award.

Do I need to tell my other benefits that I am making a claim to Universal Credit?

No, DWP will contact your other benefits to inform them that you have made a claim to Universal Credit.

When will my final payments from my current benefits be?

The date of your final payments from your existing benefits depends on either:

- the deadline date on your letter
- when you make a claim to Universal Credit

Whichever of these dates takes place first will determine when your current benefits stop, and your final payments are made.

If any further payments are due, they will be made shortly after your entitlement ends.

Final payments for JSA, ESA, IS and HB

Your entitlement to these benefits will continue for 2 weeks after you have made a claim to Universal Credit. This means you may receive payments from your existing benefits for another 2 weeks after you've made your claim. If any further payments are due, they will be made shortly after your entitlement ends.

If you do not make a claim to Universal Credit by the deadline, your last day of entitlement to your existing benefits will be 2 weeks after the deadline.

Final payments for Tax Credits

If you are claiming Tax Credits, your entitlement will end as soon as you make your claim to Universal Credit.

If you do not make a claim by the deadline, your Tax Credits entitlement will end the day before your deadline date.

When to claim Universal Credit

When do I need to make my Universal Credit claim?

To continue receiving financial support you must claim Universal Credit by the deadline date given in your letter. This is 3 months and one day from the date the letter was sent out.

This gives you time to gather any information and evidence, such as identity documents that you need to make your claim.

It may take time to gather all your documents and evidence to make your claim online, so you need to act as soon as possible.

If you cannot claim Universal Credit by the deadline date given on your letter, you should telephone us as soon as possible on [REDACTED]

We can only give you more time to make a claim if you have good reason. You must request this before the deadline date on your letter.

Payments and transitional protection

Will I get less money on Universal Credit than I get on my current benefits?

On Universal Credit, most people will be entitled to the same amount or more than they received from their previous benefits.

For people who have received a migration notice and make a claim to Universal Credit before their deadline, if the amount of Universal Credit the claimant is entitled to is less than the amount they were entitled to on their legacy benefit(s), a transitional protection top-up is available.

You can only get this if you have received a Migration Notice letter and claim by the deadline date on your letter.

If your circumstances change before you make your claim, this may affect the amount you get.

You should claim as soon as possible to make sure the amount you are currently entitled to can be protected.

What are transitional protection payments?

For people who have received a migration notice and make a claim to Universal Credit before their deadline, if the amount of Universal Credit the claimant is entitled to is less than the amount they were entitled to on their legacy benefit(s), a transitional protection top-up is available.

You can only get this if you have received a Migration Notice letter and claim by the deadline date on your letter.

How much transitional protection will I get?

Whether or not you will receive transitional protection, and how much this will be, will be calculated before you receive your first Universal Credit payment. This cannot be calculated before entitlement to Universal Credit is established.

You must have proved your ID and be eligible for Universal Credit to receive transitional protection.

Transitional protection cannot be calculated until all the required evidence has been verified.

Those who require the transitional protection top-up will receive this automatically, as part of their monthly Universal Credit payment.

You will be able to see on your Universal Credit statement, how much transitional protection you have received before each Universal Credit payday.

Migration notice helpline

What are the details for the migration notice helpline?

Universal Credit Migration Notice helpline

Telephone: [REDACTED]

Relay UK(link is external) (if you cannot hear or speak on the phone): [REDACTED] then

[REDACTED]

Video relay service(link is external) for British Sign Language (BSL) users - **check you can use this service(link is external)**

Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

[REDACTED] telephone numbers are free to call from mobiles and landlines.

Claimant makes contact after making their claim to Universal Credit

How do I record contact with a claimant after they have made their Universal Credit claim?

If a claimant makes contact after making their claim to Universal Credit, any information and actions must be recorded in the service rather than the 'Track Move to UC migration' spreadsheet.

Claimants are expected to use their online account, journal and report changes in the same way as any other Universal Credit claimant.

They can still contact the migration notice helpline if they have a query specifically relating to Move to Universal Credit (managed migration), such as transitional protection.

If a claimant wants to change their contact details including address or telephone number, the spreadsheet does not need to be updated. The claimant must report this using their Universal Credit online account.

Reminder notice

Why have I received a second letter reminding me to claim Universal Credit?

It has been over 7 weeks since we sent you your first letter (migration notice) directing you to claim Universal Credit.

Our records currently show that you have not yet made a claim.

We have sent you this second letter as a reminder that you need to do so before the deadline date specified on your letter.

On the deadline date, any current claims you have to the following benefits will stop:

- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Housing Benefit
- Income Support
- Child Tax Credits
- Working Tax Credits

If you have already made your claim to Universal Credit then you do not need to take any further action. This letter will have been created and sent before your claim was verified.

Claims are not recognised by our systems until your ID has been verified, and this can take a few days.

Please make sure you have completed all of the necessary actions on your Universal Credit claim and check your online account regularly as you may be asked to provide further evidence and information.

I never got the first letter telling me to claim Universal Credit. Why have I received a letter reminding me to claim Universal Credit?

We sent a letter 7 weeks ago to the same address directing you to make a claim to Universal Credit by a specific deadline date. This is the same deadline date as the one on your reminder letter.

On the deadline date, any current claims you have to the following benefits will stop:

- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Housing Benefit
- Income Support
- Child Tax Credits
- Working Tax Credits

Universal Credit has replaced these benefits. So it is important that you make a claim before the deadline date so that you can continue to receive benefit payments.

Extensions

Why have I received a letter telling me that my deadline date to claim Universal Credit has been extended?

We have sent you 2 letters over the past 3 months directing you to make a claim to Universal Credit.

Our records currently show that you have not yet made a claim and we have sent you this extension letter because your original deadline date for making a claim to Universal Credit has now passed.

We have given you an additional 5 weeks to make your claim and you will be able to see your new deadline date on your letter.

On the new deadline date, any current claims you have to the following benefits will stop:

- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Housing Benefit
- Income Support
- Child Tax Credits
- Working Tax Credits

There are many ways that you can get support with making your claim should you need it.

You must make a claim by this deadline if you need financial support. You should do this as soon as possible so you don't miss this deadline.

If you want to discuss any of this further, you can contact the **Migration notice helpline**.

I have already made my claim to Universal Credit. Why have I received an extension letter?

If you have already made your claim to Universal Credit, you do not need to take any further action. This letter will have been created and sent before your claim was verified.

Claims are not recognised by our systems until ID has been verified. This can take a few days.

Please make sure you have completed all the necessary actions on your Universal Credit claim and check your online account regularly as you may be asked to provide further evidence and information.

I've received an extension letter telling me to claim Universal Credit, but I never received the original letters asking me to claim. What do I need to do?

We have sent two previous letters to the same address as your extension letter directing you to make a claim to Universal Credit by a specific deadline date.

The original deadline date that we gave you has now passed, so we have sent you the extension letter with a new deadline date to give you some additional time to make your claim.

It is important that you make a claim to Universal Credit by the deadline date on your letter because on that date any current claims you have to the following benefits will stop:

- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Housing Benefit
- Income Support
- Child Tax Credits
- Working Tax Credits

Universal Credit has replaced these benefits. So, you need to make a claim before the deadline date in order to continue receiving benefit payments.

There are many ways that you can get support with making your claim should you need it.

If a claimant asks about having their original migration notice re-issued, see: **Re-issuing a migration notice**.

Can my deadline date be extended? / Can I have some additional time to make my claim?

Explain to the claimant:

they can request an extension to their deadline date by contacting the **Migration notice helpline** who will discuss their options with them however, there are a number of ways that they can be supported to make their claim before their deadline date, such as:

- making a claim with the support of friends and family
- **Assisted Digital** support or **Help to Claim** where the claimant they would be able to make and maintain an online claim as long as they receive some support
- making a **Claim by phone** where the claimant would not be able to make or manage an online claim even with support

Following the discussion about the different ways of claiming, if the claimant still wants to request an extension, signpost them to the **Migration notice helpline**.

If it is clear that the claimant needs to make a claim by phone, you must follow the normal process.

Suspensions

What do I do if a claimant makes contact following their legacy benefits being suspended?

1.1: Ask the claimant:

- Have you already spoken to a different team who have removed the suspension from your current benefits?

If the claimant is unsure in any way: go to 1.2

If the claimant answers 'Yes': go to 1.5

If the claimant answers 'No': go to 1.2

1.2: Explain the following to the claimant:

- DWP have been attempting to make contact with them over the last few months about moving to Universal Credit
- DWP sent them a number of letters with a deadline date by which they were expected to make a claim. Attempts were also made to contact them by phone

- their benefits have been suspended because their original deadline date for making a claim to Universal Credit has now passed
- while their current benefits have been suspended, they have been granted some additional time to make their claim to Universal Credit and been given a new deadline date. They will have been sent a letter to confirm this

If the claimant says they have not received any letters, ask them to confirm their address and cross check the information with the address / correspondence address held on the 'Move to UC migration' spreadsheet.

If we currently hold an incorrect or out of date address, update the spreadsheet with the new details.

You will now take action to remove the suspension.

Go to 1.3

1.3: Take the following action:

Access CIS (searchlight) and locate the claimant's National Insurance Number (NINo).

Access the 'M2UC-SUSPENSION URGENT' SCOLA Microsoft Teams chat and send the following message:

- 'Remove suspension for claimant (insert NINo) as they have made contact through the Move to Universal Credit Migration Notice helpline. Once the suspension has been removed, reply to this message with 'Suspension removed.'

Important: The Microsoft Teams chat is constantly monitored. You should receive an almost immediate response to confirm receipt of the message. However, you do not need to wait for the response before continuing the discussion with the claimant.

Important: Once you have received confirmation that the suspension has been removed, the Microsoft Teams message containing the claimant's NINo must be deleted.

Take the following action:

- cross check the claimant's phone number with the numbers held in the 'Move to UC migration' spreadsheet
- if the claimant provides a contact number that we do not hold, add this to the spreadsheet under the 'Primary contact number' column
- tell the claimant that if they are currently due any payments from their current benefits, these will be sent to them by faster payment and will appear in their account before midnight
- if there are any issues with the payment, we will contact them on the number they have provided

Go to 1.4

1.4: Explain to the claimant:

- even though the suspension on their payments has been lifted, they do still need to make a claim to Universal Credit as soon as possible
- the benefits they are currently in receipt of are being replaced by Universal Credit and will be stopped, so it is very important that they make a claim by their deadline date

Make sure the claimant knows their current claim by date for claiming Universal Credit. Agents can find this information by checking the 'Claim by date' on the claimant's record in the Move service.

Discuss and agree with the claimant the method they will use to make their claim.

Most claimants will be able to make an online claim to Universal Credit without support. However, others will require additional help to make their claim.

If the claimant has more specific questions about their Move to Universal Credit or they feel they will be unable to make a claim to Universal Credit by their current deadline, direct them to call the **Migration notice helpline**.

Record any additional information in the 'Contact History' section of the spreadsheet.

End of process.

1.5: Explain to the claimant:

- even though the suspension on their payments has been lifted, they do still need to make a claim to Universal Credit as soon as possible
- the benefits they are currently in receipt of are being replaced by Universal Credit and will be stopped, so it is very important that they make a claim by the deadline date given on their letter

Make sure the claimant knows their current claim by date for claiming Universal Credit. Agents can find this information by checking the 'Claim by date' in the claimant's record in the Move service.

If the claimant says they have not received any letters, ask them to confirm their address and cross check the information with the address / correspondence address held on the 'Move to UC migration' spreadsheet.

If we currently hold an incorrect or out of date address, update the spreadsheet with the new details.

Cross check the claimant's phone number with the numbers held in the spreadsheet. If the claimant provides a contact number that we do not hold, add this to the spreadsheet under the 'Primary contact number' column.

Discuss and agree with the claimant the method they will use to make their claim.

Most claimants will be able to make an online claim to Universal Credit without support. However, others will require additional help to make their claim.

If the claimant has more specific questions about their Move to Universal Credit or they feel they will be unable to make a claim to Universal Credit by their current deadline, direct them to call the **Migration notice helpline**.

Record any additional information in the 'Contact History' section of the spreadsheet.
End of process.

Legacy benefit ending

Why have I received a letter saying that my benefits are ending?

Locate the 'Version of UC termination letter sent' column on the 'Track Move to UC migration' spreadsheet.

Check which version of the termination letter the claimant was sent.

Claimant was sent 'Requested termination v1' or 'MNT1'

Explain the following to the claimant:

- you have been sent this letter because you previously contacted us to say that you were not going to make a claim to Universal Credit, even though your existing benefits were ending
- the letter you have received is to notify you that your deadline to make a claim to Universal Credit has now passed and the benefits listed on your letter will now stop
- if you are in receipt of Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support, or Housing Benefit, you will continue to receive payments from these benefits for the next 2 weeks, after which these payments will stop
- if you are in receipt of Tax Credits, these payments will stop immediately
- you will receive letters from your benefit providers in the near future to notify your entitlement to these benefits has now ended
- if you still wish to continue receiving financial support, you must make a Universal Credit claim as soon as possible
- there is a section at the bottom of your letter called 'You can change your mind'
- if you make a claim to Universal Credit by the date shown in this section of the letter and your circumstances have not changed, then **transitional protection** is still available

Answer any further questions the claimant may have.

Make sure the claimant is aware of the support available to help them in making a claim to Universal Credit.

Tell the claimant, if they have any further questions about Move to Universal Credit, they can contact the **Migration notice helpline**.

Claimant was sent the 'MNT2'

- you have been sent a number of letters in recent months to tell you that you need to make a claim to Universal Credit
- we also managed to speak to you over the phone and discussed the support available to help you make a claim
- the date of this contact can be found on your letter
- the letter you have received is to notify you that your deadline to make a claim to Universal Credit has now passed and the benefits listed on your letter will now stop
- if you are in receipt of Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support, or Housing Benefit, you will continue to receive payments from these benefits for the next 2 weeks, after which these payments will stop
- if you are in receipt of Tax Credits, these payments will stop immediately
- you will receive letters from your benefit providers in the near future to notify you that your entitlement to these benefits has now ended
- if you still wish to continue receiving financial support, you must make a Universal Credit claim as soon as possible
- there is a section at the bottom of your letter called 'You can still claim'
- if you make a claim to Universal Credit by the date shown in this section of the letter and your circumstances have not changed, then transitional protection is still available

Answer any further questions the claimant may have.

Make sure the claimant is aware of the support available to help them in making a claim to Universal Credit.

Tell the claimant, if they have any further questions about Move to Universal Credit, they can contact the **Migration notice helpline**.

Claimant was sent the 'MNT3'

- you have been sent a number of letters in recent months to tell you that you need to make a claim to Universal Credit

- we also made multiple attempts to contact you over the phone to discuss the support available to help you make a claim
- the letter you have received is to notify you that your deadline to make a claim to Universal Credit has now passed and the benefits listed on your letter will now stop
- if you are in receipt of Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support, or Housing Benefit, you will continue to receive payments from these benefits for the next 2 weeks, after which these payments will stop
- if you are in receipt of Tax Credits, these payments will stop immediately
- you will receive letters from your benefit providers in the near future to notify you that your entitlement to these benefits has now ended
- if you still wish to continue receiving financial support, you must make a Universal Credit claim as soon as possible
- there is a section at the bottom of your letter called 'You can still claim'
- if you make a claim to Universal Credit by the date shown in this section of the letter and your circumstances have not changed, then transitional protection is still available

Answer any further questions the claimant may have.

Make sure the claimant is aware of the support available to help them in making a claim to Universal Credit.

Tell the claimant, if they have any further questions about Move to Universal Credit, they can contact the **Migration notice helpline**.

Claimant was sent the 'MNT4'

- you have been sent a number of letters in recent months to tell you that you need to make a claim to Universal Credit
- we also made multiple attempts to contact you over the phone to discuss the support available to help you make a claim
- after we were not able to contact you and your deadline date passed, the payments from your current benefits were suspended
- we wrote to you notifying you of the suspension and your new deadline date for making a claim to Universal Credit
- the intent of the new deadline date was to give you some additional time in which to make your claim
- the letter you have received is to notify you that your deadline to make a claim to Universal Credit has now passed and the benefits listed on your letter will now stop

- if you are in receipt of Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support, or Housing Benefit, you will continue to receive payments from these benefits for the next 2 weeks, after which these payments will stop
- if you are in receipt of Tax Credits, these payments will stop immediately
- you will receive letters from your benefit providers in the near future to notify you that your entitlement to these benefits has now ended
- if you still wish to continue receiving financial support, you must make a Universal Credit claim as soon as possible
- there is a section at the bottom of your letter called 'You can still claim'
- if you make a claim to Universal Credit by the date shown in this section of the letter and your circumstances have not changed, then transitional protection is still available

Answer any further questions the claimant may have.

Make sure the claimant is aware of the support available to help them in making a claim to Universal Credit.

Tell the claimant, if they have any further questions about Move to Universal Credit, they can contact the **Migration notice helpline**.

Can I have a new deadline to make a claim?

As your deadline date has now passed, you cannot be given a new deadline date.

However, if you make a claim to Universal Credit by the date provided in the 'You can still claim' section of the letter, you will still be entitled to transitional protection as long as your circumstances have not changed. You should make a claim as soon as possible.

Move to Universal Credit (managed migration): Differences in additional support for Universal Credit claimants compared to legacy benefits

What are passported benefits?

Passported benefits are benefits or schemes some claimants are entitled to because of their entitlement to certain other benefits or Tax Credits.

Claimants must be made aware that just because they had entitlement on legacy benefits, does not mean they automatically do on Universal Credit.

Some claimants may find that entitlement to passported benefits changes on Universal Credit, as the eligibility criteria is different to when they were on legacy benefits.

The eligibility criteria for passported benefits are not set by Universal Credit policy. They are set by the Government Departments, Utility Organisations and Devolved Administrations that own them.

Help with health costs

Can I receive help with health costs on Universal credit?

Universal Credit claimants are entitled to help with health costs if, in their last assessment period they had earnings of either:

- £435 or less
- £935 or less, if the claimant's Universal Credit includes a payment for a child, or they have limited capability for work or limited capability for work and work-related activity

If you are part of a couple, the net earnings threshold applies to your combined net earnings.

Claimants entitled to help with health costs will get:

- free NHS prescriptions (the new prescription form includes a 'Universal Credit' tick box. If the old form is used, claimants should continue to select the 'Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance' box while stocks last)
- free NHS dental treatment

- free wigs and fabric supports
- free sight tests
- access to optical vouchers to help with the cost of glasses or contact lenses
- travel to an NHS appointment on referral by a primary care practitioner (for example, doctor, dentist or optician)

For further information about NHS Help with Health Costs, see **Check if you're eligible for help | NHSBSA(link is external)**

How to claim help with health costs

Claimants must show the healthcare professional their Universal Credit statement page, when their prescription is dispensed.

Claimants who are unsure about entitlement to support with health costs (for example, because they are waiting for a decision on their claim), should pay the relevant charge and ask for a refund form at the same time.

Claimants must obtain the refund form at the same time the costs are paid, as it will not be issued later. Once the claimant receives their award letter, the refund can be claimed. This must be within 3 months of the date the charge was paid.

Universal Credit claimants who meets all the criteria for help with health costs but didn't get the refund form, must contact the NHS Business Services Authority who consider applications for refunds on a case-by-case basis.

The claimant must be made aware that a refund is not guaranteed.

Penalty charges

Claimants must make sure they are claiming health costs correctly, as checks are made on forms they have signed.

If a claim is made incorrectly, or the claimant is unable to prove they are entitled, they may have to pay a penalty charge if they are then found to be not entitled.

The penalty charge will be 5 times the charge the claimant should have paid, up to a maximum of £100. Failure to pay the penalty charge, can lead to the NHS taking action in court to recover the debt.

Why is entitlement to health costs different on Universal Credit?

On legacy benefits, claimants had automatic entitlement to help with health costs, if they were in receipt of:

- Income Support (IS)
- Jobseekers Allowance Income Based (JSA IB)
- Employment and Support Allowance Income Related ESA (IR)
- Pension Credit Guarantee Credit (PCGC)

Claimants on Contribution based Jobseekers Allowance (JSA C) or Employment and Support Allowance (ESA C) were not automatically entitled to help with health costs. However, they could have been entitled on the grounds of low income.

Claimants with a valid NHS Tax Credit exemption certificate were entitled to help with health costs, if their annual family income used to calculate their Tax Credits was £15,276 or less, and they received any of the following:

- Child Tax Credit
- Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit paid together
- Working Tax Credit including a disability or severe disability element

Free school meals

Are my children entitled to free school meals?

England and Wales:

Children may be entitled to free school meals where parents or guardians who are awarded Universal Credit, and whose annual net earned income does not exceed £7400 (£616.67 per calendar month).

Scotland and Northern Ireland:

For information on the threshold amounts for free school meals in Scotland and Northern Ireland:

- for Scotland see: **School meals(link is external)**
- for Northern Ireland see: **Free school meals(link is external)**

Why were my children entitled to free school meals when I was on my previous benefits but not now I'm on Universal Credit?

The eligibility criteria are different on Universal Credit to other benefits.

Previously, children could receive free school meals if their parents or guardians received:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credit (provided they were not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and had an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on, paid for 4 weeks after they stopped qualifying for Working Tax Credit

Healthy Start

Am I eligible for a Healthy Start card on Universal Credit?

Claimants on Universal Credit may be eligible for a Healthy Start card if both of the following apply:

- they are at least 10 weeks pregnant or have at least one child aged under 4
- they (and their partner, if they have one) are earning £408 or less per month

Why did I receive a Healthy Start Card when I was on other benefits but I can't get one now I'm on Universal Credit?

Claimants could apply for a Healthy Start card if they were at least 10 weeks pregnant, or had at least one child under 4, and was in receipt of one of the following:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Pension Credit (which included the child addition)
- Working Tax Credit run-on (paid for the 4 weeks after the claimant, their partner or carer started working less than 16 hours per week) and they did not get Child Tax Credit

Claimants who were previously on Child Tax Credits could apply for a Healthy Start card if:

- they had at least one child under 4
- they had a family annual income of £16,190 or less
- they were not in receipt of Working Tax Credits

See **Passported benefits**

Council Tax

I was told I wouldn't be any worse off on Universal Credit, so why has my council tax support reduced?

DWP are unable to guarantee an individual's entitlement to a Council Tax Reduction as this is determined and governed by the local authority in which you live.

For further information and to check eligibility, signpost the claimant to **Apply for Council Tax Reduction - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)(link is external)**.