What can I expect at the jobcentre?

**Your actions:** I make a claim to Universal Credit online as soon as possible. I can do this by going to the jobcentre before my appointment to use their computers. I arrange to go into the jobcentre about an hour before my Initial Evidence Interview to make my claim to Universal Credit.

**Jobcentre actions:**
Jobcentre staff can help you make your Universal Credit claim online.

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**Your actions:** I attend my ‘Initial Evidence Interview’, the prison work coach helped me to gather the information needed to prove my identity before I was released.
I attend my ‘New Claim Interview’ and agree my Claimant Commitment. I’m clear and honest about my situation and the difficulties I’m facing and get the help and advice I need.

**Jobcentre actions:** At the new claim interview the work coach talks to you about your circumstances and responsibilities and drafts a Claimant Commitment (an agreement which sets out your responsibilities) that reflects your personal circumstances. They tell you about the additional support available from the Help to Claim service once your Universal Credit claim is submitted. The Citizens Advice Help to Claim service offers tailored, practical support to help make a Universal Credit claim - up to receiving their first full correct payment.

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**Your actions:** I can get money by claiming an advance and know that budgeting advice is available too if I need it.

**Jobcentre actions:**
The work coach offers to arrange an advance payment and talks to you about money guidance and tells you about the support available including Money Manager.

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**Your actions:** I make a claim to Universal Credit online as soon as possible. I can do this by going to the jobcentre before my appointment to use their computers. I arrange to go into the jobcentre about an hour before my Initial Evidence Interview to make my claim to Universal Credit.

**Jobcentre actions:**
The work coach discusses budgeting with you and agrees to set up more frequent than monthly payments. The work coach will consider what other local support you may need.

**Your actions:** I’m worried about getting paid monthly so I ask about getting payments more often. I can ask my work coach what other support is available locally.

**Jobcentre actions:** The work coach helps you start to prepare for work by suggesting courses or other programmes which might help you. They also can help you take part in other work preparation activities like writing a CV.

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**Your actions:** I have changed my address so I report the change on my online account and ask my work coach about getting rent payments sent directly to my landlord.

**Jobcentre actions:**
Your monthly overall entitlement now includes housing costs and, after discussions, rent payments direct to the landlord are set up.

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**Your actions:** I’m ready to start looking and preparing for work. I know my work coach will help find me the right support or training.

**Jobcentre actions:**
The work coach helps you start to prepare for work by suggesting courses or other programmes which might help you. They also can help you take part in other work preparation activities like writing a CV.
Pre-release activity and tips

- If you have been released, your resettlement team will advice you to make your claim as soon as possible after your release.
- Your prison work coach will help you prepare your claim and will book your interview at the jobcentre.
- You can apply for a universal credit allowance that can be either:
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Working Tax Credit

Universal Credit is usually paid monthly. Your Universal Credit payment is made up of a standard allowance and any extra amounts that apply to you, for example:
- have children
- have a disability or health condition
- need help paying your housing costs

Universal Credit does not include help to pay for Council Tax. If you have your own tenancy you will need to claim this separately; speak to your work coach in the jobcentre for more information.

If you live in Scotland or Northern Ireland you will not have access to a resettlement team. You should make your claim as soon as possible after your release.

About Universal Credit

Universal Credit is replacing:
- Child Tax Credit
- Housing Benefit
- Income Support
- Income-related Jobseeker’s Allowance (JSA)
- Working Tax Credit

Universal Credit is an online system that the claimant has to log into. You will usually need to check your account to see if your work coach has set you actions to complete, these are called ‘to dos’. If you don’t have regular access to a computer or smartphone you can go into your local jobcentre or use public computers in libraries. Work coaches can help you do this.

In your resettlement team, you can get help from your prison work coach about any issues you have about claiming.

Your prison work coach can help you manage your claim and help with the activities in your Claimant Commitment if you have more should you need it.

- Speak to your prison work coach for more information.
- Universal Credit does not include help to pay for Council Tax. If you have your own tenancy you will need to claim this separately; speak to your work coach in the jobcentre for more information.

If you were working prior to your sentence and you have a short term sentence the prison work coach can try and help you keep your job. Speak to your prison work coach for more information.

If you need quick access to funds speak to the work coach in the jobcentre about claiming an advance.

To apply for a Universal Credit allowance, speak to your:
- prison work coach, or
- Jobcentre Plus work coach, or
- Dept for Work and Pensions.