

# Universal Credit Local Authority Bulletin

Department for Work and Pensions  
Caxton House, Tothill Street, London SW1H 9NA



**24 August 2018**

**UC2/2018 Revised**

<b>WHO SHOULD READ</b>	All Working Age Local Authority Staff
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>This circular is for information only</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction</li> <li>• Universal Credit Announcements</li> <li>• Universal Support – Ongoing review</li> <li>• Local Authority Funding</li> <li>• Universal Support Management Information reminder</li> <li>• US LA Funding</li> <li>• UC New Burdens</li> <li>• Trusted Partner and the Landlord Portal</li> <li>• Local Authority Quarterly Engagement Workshops</li> <li>• Corporate Appointees</li> <li>• UC and Students</li> <li>• Managed Migration Update</li> <li>• UC Advances on line</li> <li>• LA Full Service Support Pack Update</li> <li>• Passported Benefits</li> <li>• DWP LA Welfare Steering Group</li> <li>• LA Practitioners' Operational Group</li> <li>• Universal Credit Statistics</li> <li>• Housing Benefit Information</li> </ul>

## Queries

- about the
  - **Information in this bulletin**, contact [uclocalauthority.liaisonteam@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:uclocalauthority.liaisonteam@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)
  - **distribution of this circular**, contact [housing.correspondenceandpqs@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:housing.correspondenceandpqs@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)

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## Introduction

Welcome to the second Universal Credit Local Authority (UC LA) Bulletin of 2018. The aim of the UC Bulletin is to provide LA colleagues with updates on developments with Universal Credit and Universal Support.

These bulletins will be issued as and when and are designed to mirror the style of Housing Benefit circulars and bulletins that have been a regular communication tool from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

We hope you'll find these bulletins useful and we would welcome any feedback you have.

Please see the "Queries" section on the cover page for the respective email address to submit your feedback.

Regards,

The Universal Credit Local Authority Engagement Team

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## Universal Credit Announcements

### 7 June 2018 Announcement

The Secretary of State made a Written Statement about Universal Credit (UC) on 7 June 2018. The statement highlighted the increased pace of Universal Credit rollout and the changes we are making for people on Universal Credit.

The main changes are for claimants in receipt of Severe Disability Premium and Transitional Protection. In order to implement these changes, we will now complete migration of all claimants to Universal Credit by March 2023.

Neil Couling, Director General of the Universal Credit Programme wrote to all LA Chief Executives on 7 June, highlighting the Written Statement and below is the link to the Written Statement.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2018-06-07/HCWS745/>

### Universal Credit Commencement Order

The final Commencement Order for transition phase, covering the remaining Jobcentres from September to December was laid on 19 July 2018. By December 2018 all 643 jobcentres in Great Britain will have the Full Service (currently 399) - please see the link below:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2018/881/made>

## **Funding for Supported Housing**

On 9 August 2018 the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and the DWP jointly wrote to LA Chief Executives and Revenues and Benefits Managers informing them of the publication of DWP's/MHCLG's formal response to the October 2017 consultations on future funding for supported housing. Please see the link below:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/656027/Funding\\_supported\\_housing\\_-\\_policy\\_statement\\_and\\_consultation.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/656027/Funding_supported_housing_-_policy_statement_and_consultation.pdf)

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## **Universal Support Local Authority Funding**

### **2017-18 Universal Support Grant Funding**

The financial year 2017-18 was the first year of the Universal Support Grant Funding Offer to Local Authorities for the provision of Universal Support, comprising of Assisted Digital Support (ADS) and Personal Budgeting Support (PBS) to claimants either already on UC or about to transition.

The support is to ensure that claimants can manage their online UC account and are able to manage their own budget. More vulnerable claimants are referred to support that better targets their needs.

For 2017-18, DWP guaranteed 80% of the funding allocated to each LA to provide assurance and encourage them to put resource in place to provide the services. Of the 379 LAs, 366 took up the offer of which 357 provided both and 9 opting to provide either PBS or ADS.

We have analysed the Management Information (MI) for Universal Support for 2017-18 and results show that only a third of expected numbers took some form of support.

Reconciliation of each LA's funding for the year has been completed and final payments were made on 9 July 2018.

We have undertaken a review of Universal Support to understand how it is working and if it meets claimant's needs. We have visited Jobcentres and talked to staff and claimants, Service Centres, LAs & providers to gather feedback. We will provide a summary of the findings and recommendations from our review in autumn 2018.

## **2018-19 Universal Credit New Burdens Funding**

The Universal Credit New Burdens funding for 2018/19 to cover administrative duties was paid on 15 August 2018.

## **2018-9 Universal Support Funding**

373 LAs accepted the 2018-19 Universal Support Grant Funding Offer and have received their first payment, being 50% of their total Funding Allocation for the year.

The deadline for Q1 2018-19 MI was 15 July 2018 and 338 returns were received. These are being collated for analysis and early indications are that take-up is better than in previous quarters.

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## **Corporate Appointees**

We do have a process that allows us to successfully deal with claimants on a case by case basis. However we are currently looking at improving this process as Universal Credit rolls out.

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## **Universal Credit and Students**

Please see below the link for guidance and advice on students claiming Universal Credit.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/universal-credit-and-students>

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## **Trusted Partner and the Landlord Portal**

As of August 2018, there are 366 landlords enrolled on the portal. We aim to roll-out the landlord portal to 90% of social housing landlords by December 2018.

The list of landlords with access to the portal is updated regularly in the House of Commons Members' Library. This was last updated on 27 June 2018.

[http://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2018-0635/Universal\\_Credit\\_Landlord\\_Portal\\_-\\_Updated.pdf](http://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2018-0635/Universal_Credit_Landlord_Portal_-_Updated.pdf)

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## **Local Authority Quarterly Engagement Workshops**

During May and June 2018 we held 11 quarterly engagement workshops across the country with local authorities in DWP Service Centres that are live or are just about to go live with the full service.

These workshops provided updates on the latest developments with Universal Credit and Universal Support and gained vital insight, feedback and challenge from local authorities that has been fed back into the Universal Credit Programme.

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## **Updated Universal Credit Full Service Support Pack**

The UC LA full service support pack Version 19 is in the process of being updated to incorporate service improvements, recent budget announcements, policy/process changes and user feedback.

At the recent LA Engagement events, a large number of local authorities stated they found this pack really useful and used it to train and up skill their staff.

Thank you for your continued cooperation and feedback.

If you have any enquiries about the information contained within this update please contact DWP UC LA Liaison Team.

[uclocalauthority.liaisonteam@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:uclocalauthority.liaisonteam@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)

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## **Passported Benefits**

### **Free School Meals – Wales (Department for Education)**

Wales published their consultation on free school meals on 6 June 2018 which closes on 14 September 2018. This mirrors the English system in that they are proposing to introduce an earned income threshold of £7,400 for UC claimants who want to claim free school meals for their children. They are also proposing transitional protection for families affected by the change.

The full consultation can be accessed here - <https://beta.gov.wales/eligibility-free-school-meals>

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## UC Live Service to Full Service Transfers

On 9 July 2018, we wrote to the National Housing Federation, informing the impact on Landlords when claimants transfer from Universal Credit Live Service to Full Service and activity required. Partnership Managers will support landlords in preparing and will be able to provide the dates for when this transfer will take place. More information about UC and landlords can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/universal-credit-and-rented-housing--2>

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## Managed Migration

From 2019 DWP will start to move claimants on one or more of the following benefits to UC:

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

The proposals are set out in the draft Universal Credit (Transitional Provisions) (Managed Migration) Amendment Regulations 2018.

Two consultations were undertaken:

- The first consultation was issued to members of the Local Authority Association Leads, DWP LA Welfare Steering Group and LA Practitioners' Operational Group (POG) members. This provided the regulations and explanatory letter and asked for comments or queries by 3 August 2018.
- The second is the Social Security Advisory Committee who conducted their consultation to help inform the advice it provides to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on the proposals and this consultation closed on 20 August 2018.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/moving-claimants-to-universal-credit-from-other-working-age-benefits>

## **UC Advances on line**

Claimants can now apply for an advance on line. The amount they can borrow will be the same as their first estimated UC monthly payment and needs to be paid back over a 12 month period. The link below provides details of how to apply.

<https://www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk/new-to-universal-credit/help-with-managing-your-money/>

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## **DWP LA Welfare Steering Group**

The DWP LA Welfare Steering Group is responsible for considering and providing a strategic expert view from an LA perspective into all Housing Benefit (HB), Universal Credit, Universal Support and other DWP welfare related matters, to support their on-going development, refinement, implementation and delivery.

Terms of Reference and minutes from previous meetings can be accessed on our LA pages on GOV.UK at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/dwp-local-authority-welfare-steering-group>

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## **LA Practitioners' Operational Group**

The joint DWP and LA POG discusses operational issues relating to Housing Benefit and Universal Credit. It meets on a bi-monthly basis and summary minutes of those meetings are published on our LA pages on GOV.UK at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/dwp-and-local-authorities-practitioners-operations-group>

If you have any questions please email [marion.joass@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:marion.joass@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)

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## Universal Credit Statistics

The latest UC statistics were published on 14 August 2018 and the headline analysis shows

- 1 million claimants now on UC
- Of these, 380,000 (37%) were in employment.

The Universal Credit statistics are published monthly and can be accessed on GOV.UK at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/universal-credit-statistics>

We can also confirm that we have:

- 26 UC Service Centres
- 416 Jobcentres in Universal Credit Full Service

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## Housing Benefit Information

The latest HB General Information Bulletins can be accessed on GOV.UK at -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/housing-benefit-for-local-authorities-bulletins>

The latest HB Direct newsletters can be accessed on GOV.UK at -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/housing-benefit-direct>

Housing Delivery Division intend to replace the existing HB Direct and General Information Bulletin with a new external communication publication which will be called LA Welfare Direct. The first edition will be published in September.

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