

## **Move to Universal Credit – Insight on Income Support, Housing Benefit and initial Employment and Support Allowance cohort activity**

### **Executive Summary**

Since April 2024, DWP have notified households receiving wider legacy benefit combinations of the need to move to Universal Credit. This paper provides insight to the ongoing learning for the UC Programme and is the fourth in a series of insight documents. Our key learnings during this time are:

- People receiving Income Support or Employment and Support Allowance are more likely to seek help to make a claim to Universal Credit.
- Friends and family, or the Move to UC dedicated helpline are the main sources of support to claim Universal Credit.
- Individuals claiming Housing Benefit or a DWP legacy benefit are more likely to claim Universal Credit, compared to those receiving tax credits only.
- Most people contacted through the enhanced support journey are planning to make a claim but have yet to do so.
- Employment Support Allowance only households (including those also claiming Housing Benefit), who were part of the small discovery exercise in the summer, have either made to claim to Universal Credit, or are being supported through the enhanced support journey. No claims have been closed without a claim having been made.

### **Introduction**

The replacement of six legacy benefits by Universal Credit (UC) has been a large and complex undertaking. Moving those that remain on legacy benefits through Move to UC ensures that DWP replaces out of date services, with a service that optimises the use of technology to engage with people flexibly. UC provides stronger, tailored support and adapts to people's circumstances, removing the need for customers to have their income disrupted as their circumstances change.

Since April 2022, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has focused its attention on moving the households which remained on legacy benefits to UC. There are currently around 2.1 million households on legacy benefits who are in scope to move to UC.

During the programme we have published three insight documents setting out our learning to date:

- in January 2023, we published 'Learning from the Discovery Phase', sharing our learning and outcomes from the first 499 Migration Notices that were issued.
- in August 2023, we published 'Learning from Initial Tax Credit Migrations' which set out insights from migrating Tax Credit-only customers as well as the improvements we made to the migration process in light of our learnings.

- in February 2024, we published 'Move to Universal Credit – Insight on Tax Credit migrations and initial Discovery activity for wider benefit cohorts'. This set out further research undertaken to understand why not all tax credit customers are making the move to UC. The publication also gave the initial insights on the Discovery work the programme had done on the wider benefit cohorts before we started to invite them in April 2024. This built on the initial Discovery work for wider cohorts completed in 2022. This also enabled us to learn, iterate and improve our approach at a small scale to support the migration of these groups at scale.

From April 2023 to March 2024, the focus was on inviting people to claim UC that are solely in receipt of Working Tax Credit and/or Child Tax Credit. In April 2024, we moved into the next phase of Move to UC, and we started to invite households in receipt of other combinations of legacy benefits to UC.

Between April 2024 and June 2024, we invited households on Income Support or households on Housing Benefit & Tax Credits. Households on Income Support may be in receipt of a combination of benefits, for example, an Income Support recipient could also be claiming Housing Benefit and/or Child Tax Credit.

In June 2024, the Department started further small-scale Discovery work looking at households receiving Employment and Support Allowance or Employment and Support Allowance with Housing Benefit, in preparation for future migrations.

At the beginning of July 2024, we introduced more benefit combinations into the journey and started to invite Employment and Support Allowance with Tax Credits to move to UC. We invited those on Housing Benefit only from the middle of July 2024.

From the end of August 2024, we invited those on Jobseekers Allowance to Move to UC. In November 2024, we will be inviting households on Employment and Support Allowance Only or households on Employment and Support Allowance with Housing Benefit.

DWP have published Official Statistics on Move to UC on a quarterly basis ([Move to Universal Credit statistics - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/move-to-universal-credit-statistics))

## **Overview**

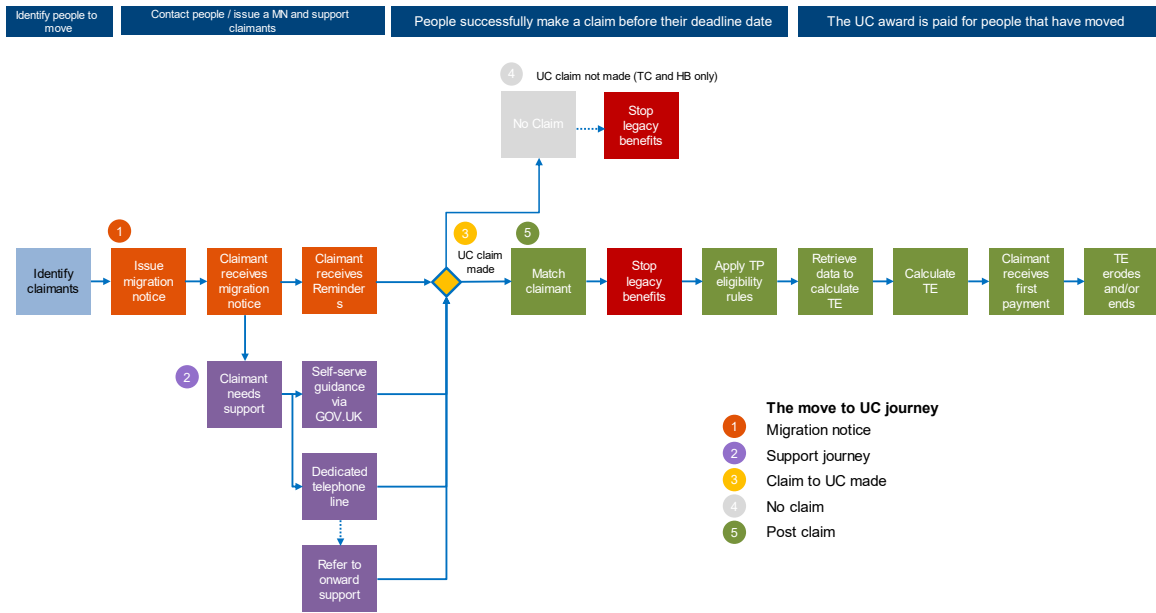
Our last publication in February 2024, was focused on the tax credit migrations and the initial Discovery activity. This publication will look at the following areas:

1. Early evidence from the migration of legacy benefits that we have been scaling up since April 2024. This will be focused on people who are on Income Support and Housing Benefit and Tax Credits.
2. Migration Notices sent between April and September 2024.
3. Claim rates based on Migration Notices sent up until May 2024.
4. Extensions issued up until September 2024.

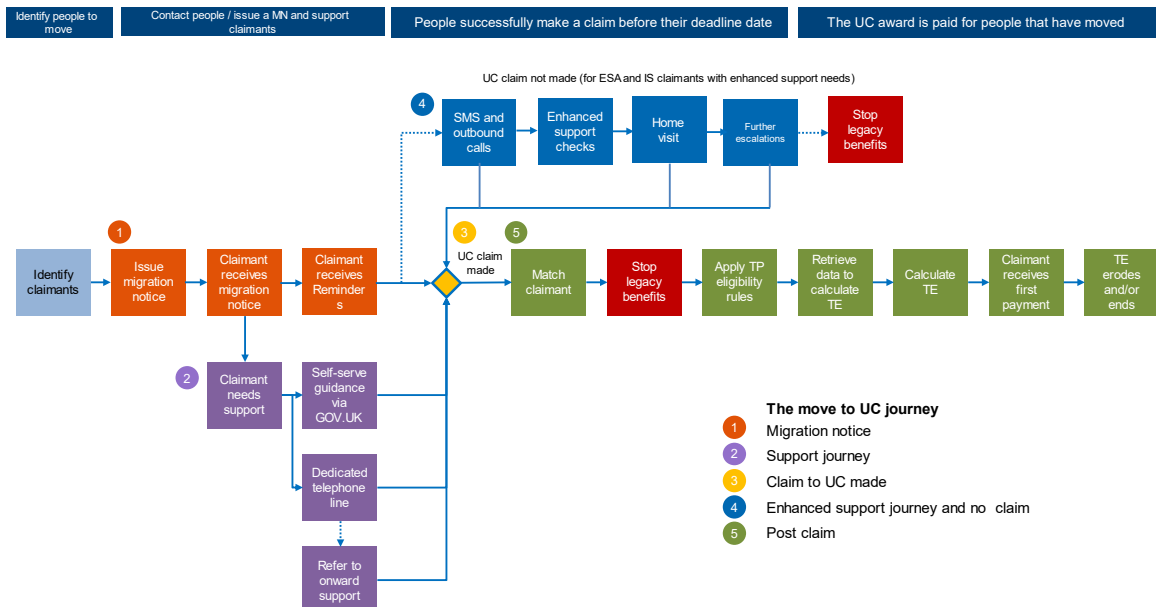
Please note, that this publication will not include any further Insight into the tax credit only migrations and the reasons for no-claims. A separate research publication is being produced to provide Insight into this area.

# 1. Learning from Move to UC since April 2024

A diagram illustrating the simplified managed migration customer journey for Housing Benefit and Tax Credits is shown below.



A diagram illustrating the simplified managed migration customer journey for Income Support and Employment and support Allowance is shown below. Due to the additional vulnerabilities identified for these groups, an enhanced support journey has been put in place – more detail on this is outlined below.



Our evaluation is focused on learning as much as we can to develop the service. This evidence is set out below in 4 core themes:

- the migration notice support and contact
- the claim process
- the enhanced support journey

### Migration Notices

From April 2024, we have sent migration notices to the following number of households by benefit combination each month, up to the end of September 2024:

**Table 1 - Number of migration notices sent to households in Great Britain, Apr-24 to end September 2024**

	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24
Child Tax Credit only	251	1,566	407	159	6,021	1,153
Working Tax Credit only	341	2,773	884	225	1,735	11,459
Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit	2,258	14,637	3,926	1,188	22,504	3,073
Housing Benefit only	..	..	..	21,084	1,211	522
Employment and support Allowance only	..	..	249	..	..	1,439
Income Support only	..	3,039	12,370	38	1,064	31
Jobseekers Allowance only	..	..	..	..	29	5,071
Child Tax Credit and Housing Benefit	5,917	5,116	3,087	71	149	55
Child Tax Credit and Employment and support Allowance	..	..	..	3,297	4,408	813
Child Tax Credit and Income Support	3,687	2,538	40	21	673	37
Child Tax Credit and Jobseekers Allowance	..	..	..	..	16	309
Working Tax Credit and Housing Benefit	4,105	1,870	834	18	20	192
Housing Benefit and Employment and support Allowance	..	..	252	..	..	4,439
Housing Benefit and Income Support	..	4,452	22,789	75	462	85
Housing Benefit and Jobseekers Allowance	..	..	..	..	72	10,381
Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit and Housing Benefit	31,894	28,776	18,160	233	438	152
Child Tax Credit and Housing Benefit and Employment and support Allowance	..	..	..	26,893	32,143	5,363
Child Tax Credit and Housing Benefit and Income Support	33,203	21,826	188	113	988	111
Child Tax Credit and Housing Benefit and Jobseekers Allowance	..	..	..	..	86	1,974
<b>Total</b>	<b>81,650</b>	<b>86,604</b>	<b>63,172</b>	<b>53,409</b>	<b>72,012</b>	<b>46,660</b>

‘..’ indicates nil or negligible

Statistical Disclosure Control has been applied to all figures in the table

Source: DWP Stat-Xplore

The migration notice has been adjusted for people claiming DWP benefits and Housing Benefit. During previous testing, we found that customers could often get overwhelmed, so we have streamlined the letter and make the key information as clear as possible. Feedback, from customers by the telephone contact we have had so far, has provided reassurance that the migration notice is understood, and individuals are aware that they need to make a claim to UC and by when.

Further research on how people understand and respond to the migration notice is happening now. This has been undertaken for those who have been sent migration notices issued between April and June 2024.

### **Support and Contact**

A range of support is available to help people successfully make their UC claim, including:

- A dedicated Move to UC telephone helpline
- Universal Credit website: [www.gov.uk/dwp/move-to-uc](http://www.gov.uk/dwp/move-to-uc)
- Comprehensive guidance on [GOV.UK](http://GOV.UK)
- A new gov.uk website dedicated to supporting households move to UC [Move to Universal Credit - Move to Universal Credit \(ucmove.campaign.gov.uk\)](http://Move to Universal Credit - Move to Universal Credit (ucmove.campaign.gov.uk))
- Face-to-face support in local Jobcentres
- Independent support through [Help to Claim](#), delivered by Citizens Advice, in partnership with Citizens Advice Scotland, which provides practical tailored support to enable individuals to make a new claim to UC or move from legacy benefit
- Ability to make a telephone claim

DWP is investing up to a further £15m in Help to Claim to support Employment and Support Allowance customers moving to Universal Credit. This means that free confidential and impartial support will continue to be available to help people make a new Universal Credit claim and manage their claim, up to receiving their first correct payment.

### **Assisted Digital Survey**

The Assisted Digital Survey is a short online survey that UC customers are asked to complete at the end of the UC claim declaration. This survey has been valuable at providing insight into how much each audience requires help with their claim. The results have been similar to the findings in Discovery, in that individuals previously on Income Support or Employment and Support Allowance are more likely to require help with their claim.

The main reasons for requiring help are again the same as what we reported in the previous publication. The key themes are as follows:

- answering questions

- getting set up
- a lack of digital access
- language barriers around reading/writing
- health condition

Amongst the Employment and Support Allowance cohort, having a health condition came through more strongly as the barrier to making a claim. This aligns with the characteristics that we know about the Employment and Support Allowance group.

The main source of help for customers to make a claim for UC came from friends and family, followed by support from the dedicated Move to UC helpline.

### The claim process

The claim rate by legacy benefit can be found in the table below (it is recommended that claim and non-claim rates are calculated using the cohort of customers sent a migration notice where at least four months have elapsed. For this analysis, this would consist of migration notices sent up to the end of May 2024, amongst which, 99.8% of customers have completed the Move to UC process):

**Table 2 – Claim rate by legacy benefit** (based on all migration notices sent up to end May 2024)

	Made a claim to UC	MNs sent (to end May-24)
Child Tax Credit only	65%	42,147
Working Tax Credit only	47%	80,848
Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit	71%	436,454
Housing Benefit only	74%	279
Employment and support Allowance only	92%	160
Income Support only	92%	3,339
Jobseekers Allowance only	98%	55
Child Tax Credit and Housing Benefit	93%	11,047
Child Tax Credit and Employment and support Allowance	88%	42
Child Tax Credit and Income Support	95%	6,242
Working Tax Credit and Housing Benefit	90%	5,983
Housing Benefit and Employment and support Allowance	97%	197
Housing Benefit and Income Support	96%	4,967
Housing Benefit and Jobseekers Allowance	96%	159
Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit and Housing Benefit	94%	60,746
Child Tax Credit and Housing Benefit and Employment and support Allowance	97%	308
Child Tax Credit and Housing Benefit and Income Support	97%	55,114
Total	73%	708,091

Statistical Disclosure Control has been applied to all figures in the table

Source: DWP Stat-Xplore

As mentioned in the previous publication, these figures are encouraging and support our earlier findings that individuals on wider legacy benefit cohorts have a higher likelihood to claim compared to those claiming Tax Credits only. In line with previous

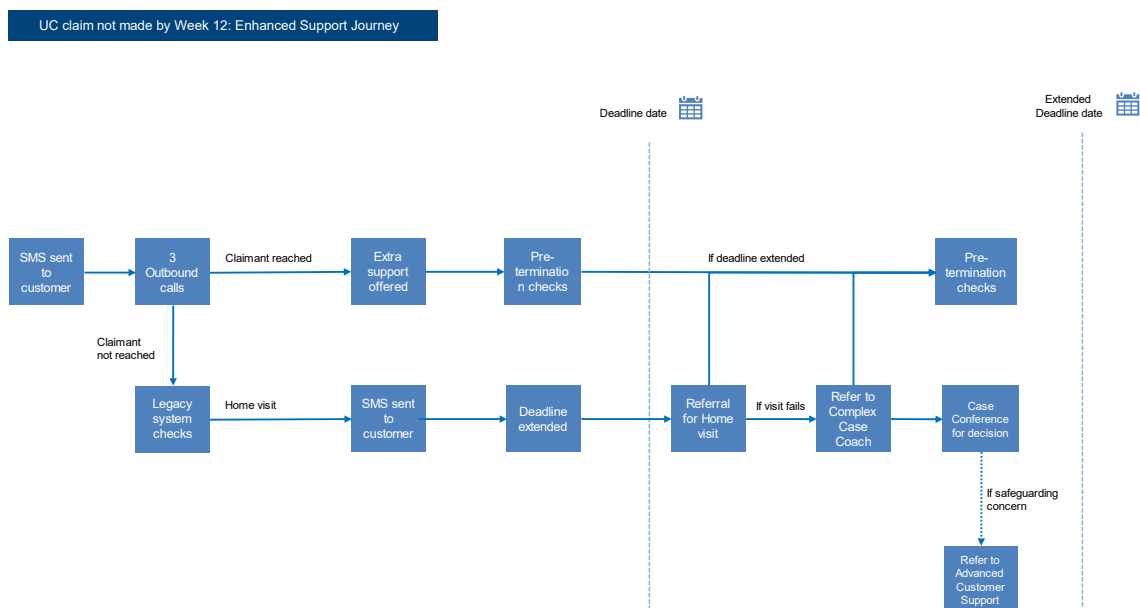
findings, we have seen a higher proportion claiming nearer to the deadline date, suggesting that people are leaving it to later in the migration period to make a claim.

Please note, that some households in the Employment and Support Allowance (500) are still in the enhanced support journey and have received an extension. No one in this group has yet had their legacy benefits terminated. More details on the enhanced support journey can be found in the section below.

## 2. The Enhanced Support Journey

As mentioned previously, as a result of the anticipated higher support needs and vulnerability of some groups that are due to migrate in 2024/25, we have introduced an enhanced support journey for households on Income Support and Employment and Support Allowance. The enhanced support journey starts in week 12, before the deadline date. It involves different interventions ranging from outbound calls, system checks, home visits and contact with support organisations in the local community.

An outline of the enhanced support journey can be found below.



### SMS message and Outbound calling (starts in week 12)

During the conversation that the agent has with the customer, they identify if they have received the migration notice and if they plan to make a claim. Most individuals said they had received the migration notice. Most also planned to claim but very few yet had started their claim. This is reflected in the overall claim rates with households leaving it to later in the process and near to the deadline to make a claim.

**For households where the outbound calling was unsuccessful (i.e. they were unable to talk to us, someone else answered the call or no contact)**

If we were unable to reach the customer by the outbound call, different approaches were taken depending on if they were on Income Support or Employment and Support Allowance. For those on Income Support, system checks were then conducted to establish the need for a home visit. All those on Employment and Support Allowance, were referred for a home visit. A household would then be notified by text message that they were being referred for a home visit. The household is then referred to the home visit team where they make 2 attempts to visit the customer's address. An extension is applied to allow time for the visit to take place.

## Extensions

To enable the team to do the home visits, an extension of 4 weeks is applied for the customer. The number of extensions given can be found in the table below.

**Table 3– Number of extensions by benefit type**

	Total	One extension granted to original deadline	Multiple extensions granted to original deadline	No extensions granted to original deadline
Employment Support Allowance only	1,850	66	51	1,729
Employment Support Allowance & Housing Benefit	4,889	71	12	4,802
Income Support only	16,845	1,098	224	15,519
Income Support and Housing Benefit	28,379	2,000	261	26,116
Income Support and Child Tax Credits	7,009	518	201	6,289
Income Support, Child Tax Credits and Housing Benefit	56,516	4,684	1,658	50,168

**Source: Stat-Xplore**

\_The table contains cumulative MNs between Jul-22 and end Sep-24.

- **Case studies**

Households may have a higher or lower entitlement under Universal Credit compared to Employment and Support Allowance. Case studies 1 to 10 provide some illustrative examples based on a number of assumptions around the characteristics of the household. Amounts are rounded to the nearest £1 per month and therefore, totals may not be exact.



In those examples, where the household has a lower entitlement, transitional protection would be applied if a household has moved due to the managed migration process. If the household makes a voluntary move or naturally migrates as a result of a change of circumstance, they may receive the Severe Disability Premium (SDP) transitional element if they were entitled to the SDP on ESA. They may also be entitled to the SDP transitional element additional amount for Enhanced Disability Premium customers (which was payable from 14 February 2024).<sup>1</sup>

### Case study 1 – ESA Support Group customer with SDP and EDP

- Receives Limited Capability for Work and Work-Related Activity (LCWRA) element on UC.
- On ESA, they receive the Support Group, Severe Disability Premium (SDP) and Enhanced Disability Premium (EDP) payments.
- E.g. single customer, over 25 with severe disability, no children, no housing costs, no caring responsibilities, no deductions, & no capital.
- They are not in work so have monthly net earnings of £0.

Monthly amounts	Net Earnings	Benefit before premium	SDP	EDP	SDP Transitional Element / Transitional Protection	Net Income	Difference in UC and legacy awards
Legacy Amount	£0	£599	£353	£90	N/A	£1,042	N/A
UC Amount (natural migration)	£0	£810	N/A	N/A	£231	£1,040	£-2
UC Amount (managed migration)	£0	£810	N/A	N/A	£233	£1,042	£0

If they are migrated to UC from legacy benefits, they receive full transitional protection at the point they move to UC. If they migrate naturally, they receive the SDP transitional element subject to still meeting the eligibility criteria. This also includes the SDP transitional element additional amount for EDP customers payable from 14 February 2024. Without these, they would have a decrease in award because they were eligible for the SDP on legacy benefits which, combined with the EDP and Support Group payment, was higher than the UC LCWRA.

<sup>1</sup> These comparisons depend on how weekly amounts on ESA are converted to monthly. They multiply by 52 and divide by 12 to do this.

## Case study 2 – ESA Support Group customer with SDP and EDP in-work

- Receives Limited Capability for Work and Work-Related Activity (LCWRA) element on UC.
- On ESA, they receive the Support Group, Severe Disability Premium (SDP) and Enhanced Disability Premium (EDP) payments.
- E.g. single customer, over 25 with severe disability, no children, no housing costs, no caring responsibilities, no deductions & no capital.
- They work for 14 hours a week at minimum wage, so have monthly net earnings of £694.

Monthly amounts	Net Earnings	Benefit before premium	SDP	EDP	SDP Transitional Element / Transitional Protection	Net Income	Difference in UC and legacy awards
Legacy Amount	£694	£599	£353	£90	N/A	£1,736	N/A
UC Amount (natural migration)	£694	£798	N/A	N/A	£231	£1,723	£-14
UC Amount (managed migration)	£694	£798	N/A	N/A	£244	£1,736	£0

If they are migrated to UC from legacy benefits, they receive full transitional protection at the point they move to UC, and if they migrate naturally, they receive the SDP transitional element. This also includes the Transitional SDP element additional amount for EDP customers payable from 14 February 2024. In the latter case, their entitlement on UC is still going to be slightly lower than their entitlement on ESA, because the UC taper starts to apply once someone earns more than £673 per month.

### Case study 3 – ESA Support Group customer with EDP

- Receives Limited Capability for Work and Work-Related Activity (LCWRA) element on UC.
- On ESA, they receive the Support Group and Enhanced Disability Premium (EDP) payments.
- E.g. single customer, over 25 with severe disability, no children, no housing costs, no caring responsibilities, no deductions & no capital.
- They are not in work so have monthly net earnings of £0.

Monthly amounts	Net Earnings	Benefit before premium	SDP	EDP	SDP Transitional Element / Transitional Protection	Net Income	Difference in UC and legacy awards
Legacy Amount	£0	£599	£0	£90	N/A	£689	N/A
UC Amount (natural migration)	£0	£810	N/A	N/A	N/A	£810	£120
UC Amount (managed migration)	£0	£810	N/A	N/A	N/A	£810	£120

They were not eligible for SDP in the legacy system, but because they were in the Support Group, they get the LCWRA element on UC, which, combined with the UC standard allowance is higher than the ESA personal allowance combined with the Support Group payment and the EDP.

### Case study 4 – ESA Support Group customer with EDP in-work

- Receives Limited Capability for Work and Work-Related Activity (LCWRA) element on UC.
- On ESA, they receive the Support Group payment and Enhanced Disability Premium (EDP) payments.
- E.g. single customer, over 25 with severe disability, no children, no housing costs, no caring responsibilities, no deductions & no capital.
- They work for 14 hours a week at minimum wage, so have monthly net earnings of £694.

<b>Monthly amounts</b>	<b>Net Earnings</b>	<b>Benefit before premium</b>	<b>SDP</b>	<b>EDP</b>	<b>SDP Transitional Element / Transitional Protection</b>	<b>Net Income</b>	<b>Difference in UC and legacy awards</b>
<b>Legacy Amount</b>	£694	£599	£0	£90	N/A	£1,383	N/A
<b>UC Amount (natural migration)</b>	£694	£798	N/A	N/A	N/A	£1,492	£109
<b>UC Amount (managed migration)</b>	£694	£798	N/A	N/A	N/A	£1,492	£109

They were not eligible for SDP in the old system, but because they were in the Support Group, they get the LCWRA element on UC, which, combined with the UC standard allowance is higher than the ESA personal allowance combined with the EDP. However, the difference is slightly smaller than in Case Study 3, because the UC taper starts to apply.

### Case study 5 – ESA Work-Related Activity Group Customer (pre-April 2017)

- Receives Limited Capability for Work (LCW) element on UC because they were in the ESA Work-Related Activity group before April 2017.
- On ESA, they receive the work-related activity (WRA) component, because they applied for ESA before April 2017.
- E.g. single customer, over 25 with non-severe disability, no children, no housing costs, no caring responsibilities, no deductions and no capital.
- They are not in work so have monthly net earnings of £0.

Monthly amounts	Net Earnings	Benefit before premium	SDP	EDP	SDP Transitional Element / Transitional Protection	Net Income	Difference in UC and legacy awards
Legacy Amount	£0	£548	£0	£0	N/A	£548	N/A
UC Amount (natural migration)	£0	£550	N/A	N/A	£0	£550	£2
UC Amount (managed migration)	£0	£550	N/A	N/A	£0	£550	£2

They receive a very similar amount on UC as they did on ESA, because the UC standard allowance combined with the LCW element is slightly higher than the ESA personal allowance combined with the WRA component.

### Case study 6 – ESA Work-Related Activity Group Customer (pre-April 2017)

- Receives Limited Capability for Work (LCW) element on UC because they were in the ESA Work-Related Activity group before April 2017.
- On ESA, they receive the work-related activity (WRA) component, because they applied for ESA before April 2017.
- E.g. single customer, over 25 with non-severe disability, no children, no housing costs, no caring responsibilities, no deductions and no capital.
- They work for 14 hours a week at minimum wage, so have monthly net earnings of £694.

<b>Monthly amounts</b>	<b>Net Earnings</b>	<b>Benefit before premium</b>	<b>SDP</b>	<b>EDP</b>	<b>SDP Transitional Element / Transitional Protection</b>	<b>Net Income</b>	<b>Difference in UC and legacy awards</b>
<b>Legacy Amount</b>	£694	£548	£0	£0	N/A	£1,242	N/A
<b>UC Amount (natural migration)</b>	£694	£538	N/A	N/A	£0	£1,232	-£10
<b>UC Amount (managed migration)</b>	£694	£538	N/A	N/A	£10	£1,242	£0

If they naturally migrate to UC, they get slightly less on UC than ESA because the UC taper starts to apply on earnings above £673. But if they moved to UC via managed migration, they receive the same amount on UC as they did on ESA at the point they move to UC, because of transitional protection.

### Case study 7 – ESA Work-Related Activity Group Customer (post-April 2017)

- Receives standard allowance only on UC because they were in the ESA Work-Related Activity group after April 2017.
- On ESA, they receive the personal allowance only, because they applied for ESA after April 2017.
- E.g. single customer, over 25 with non-severe disability, no children, no housing costs, no caring responsibilities, no deductions and no capital.
- They are not in work so have monthly net earnings of £0.

Monthly amounts	Net Earnings	Benefit before premium	SDP	EDP	SDP Transitional Element / Transitional Protection	Net Income	Difference in UC and legacy awards
Legacy Amount	£0	£392	£0	£0	N/A	£392	N/A
UC Amount (natural migration)	£0	£393	N/A	N/A	£0	£393	£1
UC Amount (managed migration)	£0	£393	N/A	N/A	£0	£393	£1

They receive a very similar amount on UC as they did on ESA, because the UC standard allowance is broadly equal to the ESA personal allowance.

### Case study 8 – ESA Work-Related Activity Group Customer (post-April 2017)

- Receives standard allowance only on UC because they were in the ESA Work-Related Activity group after April 2017.
- On ESA, they receive the personal allowance only, because they applied for ESA after April 2017.
- E.g. single customer, over 25 with non-severe disability, no children, no housing costs, no caring responsibilities, no deductions & no capital.
- They work for 14 hours a week at minimum wage, so have monthly net earnings of £694.

<b>Monthly amounts</b>	<b>Net Earnings</b>	<b>Benefit before premium</b>	<b>SDP</b>	<b>EDP</b>	<b>SDP Transitional Element / Transitional Protection</b>	<b>Net Income</b>	<b>Difference in UC and legacy awards</b>
<b>Legacy Amount</b>	£694	£392	£0	£0	N/A	£1,086	N/A
<b>UC Amount (natural migration)</b>	£694	£382	N/A	N/A	£0	£1,076	£-10
<b>UC Amount (managed migration)</b>	£694	£382	N/A	N/A	£10	£1,086	£0

If they naturally migrated to UC, they receive slightly less on UC than they did on ESA, because the UC taper starts to apply on earnings above £673. If they are notified to claim UC via managed migration, they get the same amount as they did on legacy at the point they move, because of transitional protection.

### **Next steps**

The Department will continue to steadily increase the number of migration notices being sent to people receiving Employment and Support Allowance over the coming months. The intention will be to send the final notices in early December 2025 and fully move people to Universal Credit and closing legacy benefits by the end of March 2026.