

Universal Credit – information for staff on support arrangements

Introduction of Universal Credit

Universal Credit is a means tested benefit for working age people who are on low incomes, working, seeking to work or unable to work. It will eventually replace the following benefits and tax credits. If people are already receiving these benefits, they do not need to claim Universal Credit.

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

Universal Credit is introduced in Newcastle on 27 April 2015, but only for single people who would previously have been eligible to make a new claim for Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA). There are some exemptions to this which can be found on the Universal Credit page on the [Newcastle City Council website](#). This is part of a national roll out of Universal Credit for new claimants applying for JSA taking place between February 2015 and March 2016 in all jobcentres and local authorities. We don't yet have a date for when couples and families and people claiming other means tested benefits will be included in Newcastle.

Support for Newcastle residents to make a Universal Credit claim online

Universal Credit claims have to be made online on the Government's website at www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) state that the online claim form should take approximately 20 to 40 minutes to complete.

If a resident does not have home internet access or needs a PC in order to complete their claim, details of where they can get free or low cost access to computers, training and support in Newcastle can be found at:

- www.getonlinenewcastle.co.uk (searchable by postcode and access type)

If a resident needs support to complete the online Universal Credit claim because they can't use a computer, they can visit their local jobcentre where an advisor can help them. Alternatively, you can book them a 'Universal Credit online claim form appointment' where a member of Council staff will support them to complete the online claim. These sessions are available at City, East End and West End Libraries at specific bookable time slots during the week. Please note that these sessions are only for residents who can't make a claim online without support. They should not be used for residents who would like some support but who could do it themselves.

- **To book a resident onto a 1:1 session for support to complete a Universal Credit claim online, phone 0191 277 4100.** If you are working in a library setting and have access to the internal 'L' Drive, use the 'Universal Credit' tab on the Internet Taster booking sheets for City, East and West End Libraries.

When you make the booking you will need to:

- Give the resident's name and telephone number, and the service you work for
- Give the resident the information about what to bring (see overleaf)

Residents must have certain information with them before they start the online claim because it must be completed in one go as the application can't be saved partway through and returned to at a later time. **Please make sure that they are aware of this and, where possible, provide**

them with a copy of the DWP information sheet – [Making a Universal Credit claim](#) – which tells them that they need to have the following with them:

- their postcode
- their National Insurance number
- their email address and telephone number
- details of the bank, building society or credit union account they want Universal Credit paid into (name, sort code and account number)
- their rent agreement (if they have one)
- details of their savings or other capital
- details of any income that is not from work, e.g. from an insurance plan
- details of any other benefits they are getting

If a resident is not able to attend a 1:1 session at one of the above libraries, for example because of health issues or caring commitments, they should phone the national Universal Credit helpline on 0345 600 0723 and their claim will be taken over the telephone.

Once they have made the claim, the jobcentre will give them an appointment which they should attend so that they can confirm their details and go through their work related requirements (called their 'Claimant Commitment').

Budgeting support for Newcastle residents who are in receipt of Universal Credit

Universal Credit brings the following changes which could affect the way that claimants manage their money:

- a single household payment
- a monthly payment
- a housing element paid directly to the resident, meaning that they will be required to pay their rent to their landlords themselves.

If you have contact with a resident who is claiming Universal Credit and needs support with budgeting as a result of the above changes, ask them to speak to their Jobcentre Plus work coach who will refer them into budgeting support if they think they need it. If a resident has spoken to Jobcentre Plus and believes that they still need support with budgeting as a result of Universal Credit, you can contact the following services. You will need to give the resident's name and contact details and state that they are in receipt of Universal Credit and need personal budgeting support.

- **If they are a Your Homes Newcastle (YHN) tenant**, contact YHN by:
Email universal.credit@yhn.org.uk
Phone – Molly Dunne on 0191 277 1163 or Emma Ogle on 0191 278 7727
- **For other residents**, contact the Money Matters team in the Newcastle City Council Active Inclusion Service by:
Email moneymatters@newcastle.gov.uk
Phone – 0191 277 1050
Residents can also go to the Housing Advice Centre (112 Pilgrim Street, NE1 6SQ) – 10am to 12pm and 1pm to 4pm Monday to Friday (except Wednesday mornings)

Further information about Universal Credit is available on the [Newcastle City Council website](#) . For queries about the above support arrangements, contact:

Claire Horton, Active Inclusion Service, Newcastle City Council
Tel: 0191 211 6049 Email: claire.horton@newcastle.gov.uk

This information was accurate at the time of writing (27 April 2015)