

Benefit Bulletin: Big benefit changes and news

Produced by the Active Inclusion Service, Newcastle City Council

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let's talk
money

The move to Universal Credit – latest news

Universal Credit is replacing six 'legacy benefits' such as Housing Benefit and Tax Credits.

The 'Managed Migration' roll out has finally started.

There are three main ways that people are ending up on Universal Credit:

1. Claim

It is perfectly possible for people to claim Universal Credit at any time. Obviously, it's important to make sure it's the right thing to do.

2. 'Natural Migration'

Those on 'legacy benefits' have a change in circumstances and have to claim Universal Credit. Again, they should check to make sure they should claim. This has been happening for years now but there are still many on 'legacy benefits' (11,000 in Newcastle).

3. 'Managed Migration'

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) write to those still on 'legacy benefits' inviting them to claim Universal Credit and informing them that their 'legacy benefits' will stop after 3 months. This is called a 'Migration Notice'

In April this year the DWP started to send Migration Notices to those on Tax Credits and no other 'legacy benefit' – area by area. Next year they will write to those on other 'legacy benefits'.

Are the DWP sending Migration Notices to Newcastle residents? We have created a new webpage specifically about this called:

[I get Tax Credits \(Working Tax Credit or Child Tax Credit\) and live in Newcastle. Do I have to claim Universal Credit?](#)

The DWP are notifying Local Authorities about two months in advance so we will update our information and send out communications as soon as we hear.

Our other webpages give more details about:

[The move to Universal Credit](#)

[Where to get support in Newcastle with Universal Credit](#)

[Universal Credit](#) (a simple guide)

[Universal Credit more detailed guide](#)

Introduction to Benefits – training

For staff and volunteers supporting Newcastle residents

If you want to get a basic idea about:

- how benefits work
 - how to help people get what they're entitled to and to avoid problems
 - where you and residents can get support and information on benefits
- then sign up for this free live course on Teams:

Available dates:

- Tue 26 September 2023. 2-4.30pm
- Wed 13 December 2023. 2-4.30pm
- Wed 20 March 2024. 2-4.30pm

Further information and how to register:

www.newcastle.gov.uk/financialinclusionforprofessionals

or [direct link to the courses](#)

If you are dealing with someone's benefit or simply have a question...

And you work or support residents in Newcastle... ring **Newcastle Council's Welfare Rights consultancy line**. It could save you time and help you know what to do next.

Details in [Information for professionals and volunteers - financial inclusion](#)

Where to get benefit and debt advice in Newcastle

The **latest** version of **Where to get benefit and debt advice in Newcastle**, can be found on the Newcastle City Council website page: [Benefit advice services in Newcastle and benefit offices](#) and includes details on the Welfare Rights Service's Public advice line.

Childcare costs improvements

From 28 June, the DWP 'will raise the amount that parents in Great Britain can claim back monthly for their childcare costs on Universal Credit to £951 for one child and £1,630 for two or more children...

At the same time, the Government will help eligible parents cover the costs for the first month's childcare when they enter work or significantly increase their hours, removing one of the most significant barriers to parents working...'

See DWP press release: [Massive boost to childcare payments marks first step in largest ever expansion of childcare](#).

And legislation [The Universal Credit \(Childcare\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2023 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

The date of £150 Disability Cost of Living payment

The DWP announced that more than 6 million disabled people in the UK will receive a one-off lump sum payment of £150 between 20 June and 4 July.

For more details, see the [webpage](#) from Contact, a Government [press release](#) and the legislation: [The Social Security \(Disability Additional Payment Day\) Regulations 2023 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#).

More details and support about the cost of living

See the Government's [Cost of Living Payments webpage](#), a [Stakeholder toolkit](#) and [internal guidance memo](#) and the Council's webpage [Cost of living support | Newcastle City Council](#)

See also the Local Government Association's [cost of living hub](#) that has been designed to share best practice and help councils to support their residents with the rise in the cost of living.

Gov.uk Verify replaced by gov.UK One Login

Many services which used Gov.UK Verify have moved to Gov.UK One Login, which enables users to prove their identity and access central Government services online.

See [GOV.UK One Login \(sign-in.service.gov.uk\)](#) , [About - GOV.UK One Login \(sign-in.service.gov.uk\)](#), the [Closure of Gov.UK Verify - Hansard - UK Parliament](#)

People arriving from Sudan

From 15 May those arriving from Sudan, including UK nationals and those with a valid UK immigration status, are exempt from residency tests to ensure they can access benefits, social housing, and homelessness assistance on arrival in the UK.

See details from the Government: [UK Nationals arriving from Sudan to have access to benefits - GOV.UK](#)

Legislation:

- [The Social Security \(Habitual Residence and Past Presence\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2023 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- [The Child Benefit \(General\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2023 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

And guidance:

- [A6/2023: The Social Security \(Habitual Residence and Past Presence\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- [ADM memo 10-23: Sudan HRT & PPT Exemption \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
- [DMG Memo 05-23: Sudan HRT & PPT Exemption \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

Work related activity and sanctions – recent statistics

Several benefits such as Universal Credit require *some* claimants to undertake certain levels of work-related activities. Failure to carry these out can lead to a cut in benefit called a ‘sanction’. These activities are agreed in the Claimant Commitment.

Two pieces of advice about sanctions:

1. Professionals supporting claimants should check if the Claimant Commitment is reasonable and if not, should request it be reviewed. Thus avoiding sanctions happening in the first place
2. If a sanction has taken place, it can be challenged. Get advice...
 - Professionals and volunteers: [Financial inclusion information for professionals and volunteers](#)
 - Residents: [Benefit advice services in Newcastle and benefit offices](#)

Sanction statistics

The DWP provide statistics on benefit sanctions and Dr David Webster from Glasgow University provides an analysis. See the latest on [CPAG’s website](#)

Claimants should be given an opportunity to make representations before a third-party deduction is made

An amount of benefit can be deducted to pay off a debt like fuel arrears. A court found the DWP were wrong to make the deduction without allowing the claimant to make representations. See the [court decision](#)

DWP guidance on vulnerable people and DWP home visiting service

The DWP can arrange a home visit in certain circumstances. Details: [Support visits if you need help to claim benefits](#)

Temporary Jobcentre office closes

The temporary Jobcentre office in Pilgrim Street – the Spire – closed on 23 June.

Deadline for voluntary National Insurance contributions extended to April 2025

The government is giving people more time to pay National Insurance contributions towards their State Pension - to fill gaps. Details: [Deadline for voluntary National Insurance contributions extended to April 2025](#)

Latest UC data for Newcastle, NE and GB

At 11 May 2023 DWP statistics show that there were **34,850 people on Universal Credit in Newcastle**. A slight increase on last **DWP revised** figures. An increase of 441% since **6,441** at April 2017 (70 months). A 51% increase since **23,032** at March 2020.

This is broken down by jobcentre and conditionality group in this table:

Conditionality regime	Newcastle City Jobcentre	Newcastle East Jobcentre
Searching for work	6,510	1,804
Working – no requirements	4,271	996
Working – with requirements	3,913	1,159
No work requirements	9,531	2,748
Planning for work	550	133
Preparing for work	2,115	752
Total	26,898	7,587

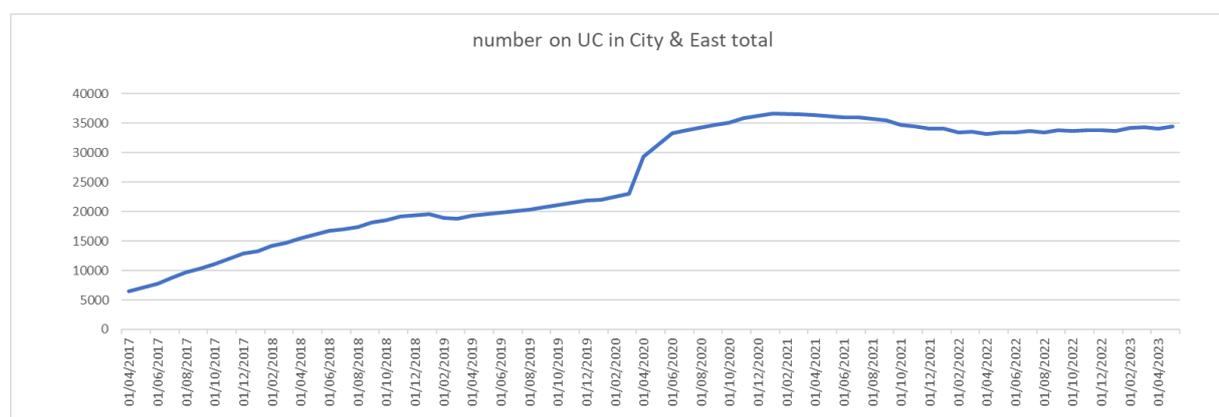
The roll out of Universal Credit households compared with legacy benefits

Universal Credit is replacing six 'legacy benefits'

Area	Households		
	On UC	On legacy	% on UC
Newcastle	30,399	10,893	74%
NE	250,440	106,412	70%
GB	5,000,750	2,181,629	70%

Latest figures at February 2023.

Table. People on Universal Credit in Newcastle since 2017



Further support, information and training

Find our **earlier Benefit Bulletins** on our [website page for professionals and volunteers](#) and for **more information on benefit changes**, see our website page [Changes to the benefits system](#) which includes a **timeline of the main benefit changes**

More details about benefits, including those mentioned above, can be found on [our welfare rights and money advice website pages](#), including benefit self-help factsheets

Find **Where to get advice in Newcastle** on the [benefit advice services website page](#)

For details of our 'live' **training on Teams** and **e-learning modules** for professionals such as 'Introduction to Benefits' and 'Universal Credit', see our [website page for professionals and volunteers](#)

Professionals can get phone advice from [the Council's Welfare Rights' consultancy line](#)

You can subscribe to the DWP information for professionals in [Touchbase](#)

This Benefit Bulletin was written by the Active Inclusion Service at Newcastle City Council. It is normally provided bi-monthly and at times of important benefit changes and news. It is as accurate as possible at the time of writing

We also write a regular email for advisers and interested others, with quick benefit news and information. Email clive.davis@newcastle.gov.uk to go on the mailing list

We also produce a weekly **Active Inclusion Newcastle e-bulletin** which provides a brief update on financial inclusion and homelessness prevention issues. If you want to receive this, or for more details, email activeinclusion@newcastle.gov.uk