

## Important benefit changes and news – timeline ‘Welfare Reforms’

Below is an overview of the main benefit changes and news from 2011 onwards, which is when the present Welfare Reforms began, mainly introduced by the 2010 and 2015 governments.

**Click here to go to** [2012](#), [2013](#), [2014](#), [2015](#), [2016](#), [2017](#), [2018](#), [2019](#), [2020](#) and beyond.

You can find more details on benefit changes and welfare reform on our website page: [www.newcastle.gov.uk/welfarereform](http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/welfarereform), where you can also read and sign up for our Benefit Bulletin. You can find out about how we are responding to these changes in the report ‘[Newcastle’s response to the Government’s welfare reforms](#)’ which was presented to [reports to cabinet](#). The information here is as accurate as possible at the time of writing, August 2020.

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Date	Change	Notes and sources
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2011

<b>January 2011</b>	<b>Health in Pregnancy Grant – abolished</b>  Is a one off payment of £190. It is paid to most women who are at least 25 weeks pregnant and meet other criteria. It is abolished from January 2011. However women who reach the 25 <sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy before 1 Jan 2011 will still be able to get it.	<a href="#">Budget 2010</a>  Coalition Govt: <a href="http://programmeforgovernment.hmg.gov.uk/obs-and-welfare/index.html">http://programmeforgovernment.hmg.gov.uk/obs-and-welfare/index.html</a>  <a href="#">BBC</a>  <a href="https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/RP10-66/RP10-66.pdf">https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/RP10-66/RP10-66.pdf</a> page 1
<b>January 2011</b>	<b>Support for mortgage interest</b> Temporary reduced waiting time to 13 weeks extended till January 2013. Then will increase back to 39 weeks. This was further delayed till April 2016	<a href="#">Budget 2010</a> , <a href="#">Spending Review 2010</a> and <a href="#">Autumn Statement 2011</a>  <a href="#">Summer Budget 2015</a> and the <a href="#">Budget 2016</a>
<b>January 2011</b>	<b>Child Trust Fund – cut</b> Government contributions for a new child will stop. They were already reduced to £50 in August 2010.	<a href="#">Budget 2010</a>  <a href="#">IPPR Research</a> Saving of just over £500 m a year.
<b>April 2011</b>	<b>Child Benefit</b> rates frozen for 3 years	<a href="#">Budget 2010</a> Projected to save almost £3bn by 2015
<b>April 2011</b>	<b>Housing Benefit</b> Baby element of family premium cut	<a href="#">Spending Review 2010</a> SI.2010/2449 £10.50 a week loss
<b>April 2011</b>	<b>Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) support group expanded</b> include individuals awaiting or between courses of certain types of chemotherapy, as well as individuals with significant disability due to impaired mental function in the areas of; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness of hazards</li> <li>• Coping with change</li> <li>• Coping with social engagement</li> <li>• Appropriateness of behaviour with other people</li> </ul>	

<p><b>April 2011</b></p>	<p><b>Local Housing Allowance (LHA) (HB for private tenants) changes for new claimants</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Removal of the 5 bedroom rate, so max help is for a 4 bedroomed property (Private sector mainly affecting London)</li> <li>• LHA weekly rates capped so cannot exceed £250 (for 1 bedroomed property), £290 (2 bed), £340 (3 bed), £400 (4 bed) (Private sector mainly affecting London)</li> <li>• LHA rates set at the 30th percentile of rents in each 'broad rental market area' rather than the median 50<sup>th</sup> percentile (brought forward from October 2011) Non dependant deductions increased in line with prices, reversing the freeze since 2001 (social and private sector)</li> <li>• Extra room allowed for a carer and disabled child</li> </ul> <p><b>The £15 weekly LHA excess scrapped</b> This extra was where claimants could keep up to £15 if they found a property that was cheaper than the LHA rate. This is abolished. Existing recipients will keep the extra until the anniversary of their claim. <a href="#">Gov.uk webpage</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Budget March 2010</a></p> <p><a href="#">Emergency Budget June 2010</a></p> <p><a href="#">Spending Review 2010</a>: 2010-15</p> <p>Regs: 2010/2835 &amp; 2836</p> <p>Confirmed in budget 2011</p> <p>(3,000 in Newc losing £4 - £34 HB a week)</p>
<p><b>April 2011</b></p>	<p><b>Pensions and pension age</b> <b>Retirement Pension raised</b> in line with the higher of either earnings, prices or 2.5%. Part of the 'triple guarantee'</p> <p><b>State Pension Age</b> equalisation increase accelerated</p>	<p><a href="#">Budget March 2010</a> coalition Govt</p>
<p><b>April 2011</b></p>	<p><b>Working age benefits uprated with lower Consumer Price Index rather than more generous Retail Price Index</b></p>	<p><a href="#">Budget March 2010</a> coalition Govt Cut of £5,840 pa by 2014/15</p>

<b>April 2011</b>	<b>Tax Credits</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help with child care costs cut from 80% to 70% (loss of £30 a week with 2 or more children or £17.50 with one child – WRB219)</li> <li>• Income taper reduced from 39% to 41% (cut of £765m pa by 2014/15)</li> <li>• £25,000 earnings disregard reduced to £10,000 then £5,000 in April 2013 (up to £450m cut)</li> <li>• Older people can claim WTC</li> <li>• Basic and 30 hour elements of Working Tax Credit frozen for 3 years</li> <li>• Child element increased by £30</li> <li>• CTC baby element removed (£275m cut pa by 2014/15)</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Budget 2010</a> and <a href="#">Spending Review 2010</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Average TC cut £1,000+ a yr</li> <li>• 27,700 on Tax Credits in Newcastle (£5m lost)</li> <li>• Nationally, £6.5b Tax Credits goes unclaimed</li> </ul>
<b>6 April 2011</b>	<b>Grandparents and other family members to get NI contributions credits</b> if they look after grandchildren or other family members aged under 12	Budget 2009, Para 5.61
<b>11 April 2011</b>	<b>Disability Living Allowance</b> Higher rate mobility extended to those with severe visual impairment	Welfare Reform Act 2009 SI.2010/1651 Up to 23,00 estimated to benefit
<b>April 2011</b>	<b>Pension Credit</b> The maximum savings credit frozen for 4 years and threshold for qualifying increased so less people eligible	<a href="#">Spending Review 2010</a>
<b>11 April 2011</b>	<b>Sure Start Maternity Grant now only for first child</b>	<a href="#">Budget 2010</a>  SI.2011/100
<b>1 June 2011</b>	<b>Work related activity introduced for ESA</b>  Sanctioned if fail to take part without good reason	Welfare Reform Act t2007 S.13  SI.2011/1349
<b>June 2011</b>	<b>Work Programme</b> Rolled out nationally	

<b>18 July 2011</b>	<b>Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit – new prescribed disease</b>  Bronchiolitis obliterans added to the list of prescribed diseases in relation to occupations involving the manufacture of diacetyl, or food flavouring containing diacetyl, or food to which such food flavouring is added.	SI.2011/1497
<b>September 2011</b>	<b>Educational Maintenance Allowance – abolished in England</b> up to £30 pw, replaced by smaller bursaries	<a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsbeat/article/15272526/what-impact-has-scraping-ema-had">http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsbeat/article/15272526/what-impact-has-scraping-ema-had</a>
<b>September 2011</b>	<b>Free school meals extension to more children stopped</b>	<a href="#">Emergency budget June 2010</a>  Pre budget report: (para 5.31)
<b>September 2011</b>	<b>Incapacity Benefits reassessed under Employment and Support Allowance (ESA).</b>  Process which started in September 2011 due to end in 2014 or later	Newcastle claimants estimated to lose a total loss of £5.38 million by 2014.  See our factsheets on ESA and also what to do if you are unhappy with an ESA decision <a href="#">on our website</a>
<b>October 2011</b>	<b>Work related conditionality extended to lone parents with a child aged 5 and above</b>	<a href="#">Budget 2010</a>

2012

<p><b>January 2012</b></p>	<p><b>Local Housing Allowance cut</b>          Bedsit rate for single under 25's extended to under 35's.           Existing exemptions apply.          Brought forward from April 2012</p>	<p><a href="#">Spending Review 2010</a>           Est. 344 in Newc losing £31 a wk           £215 pa cut by 2014/15</p>
<p><b>1 April 2012</b></p>	<p><b>New Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit disease</b>   <b>'Carpet knee'</b> New Industrial injury for osteoarthritis of knee for carpet fitters and carpet and floor fitters</p>	<p>SI.2012/645</p>
<p><b>2 April 2012</b></p>	<p><b>Local Housing Allowance - bedroom rates frozen</b>           Set annually – each April – rather than monthly and with reference to CPI and at the 30th percentile of available rents. This is anticipation of the changes in 2013.</p>	<p><a href="#">Spending Review 2010</a></p>
<p><b>April 2012</b></p>	<p><b>Contribution based ESA (for those who have paid National Insurance) stops after 1 year</b>           Some exceptions</p>	<p><a href="#">Spending Review 2010</a>           Income drop by up to £91 a week for some</p>

<p><b>6 April 2012</b></p>	<p><b>Tax Credits</b></p> <p>The Child Tax Credit – child element increase by £4 a week for each child aged one and two promised by the previous Govt in its March 2010 Budget is abolished by new Government</p> <p>Once a claimant’s income reaches £40,000 (called the second threshold figure) their Tax Credits will stop. This is because the taper that would gradually reduce TC above that amount is removed.</p> <p>The WTC 50 plus element abolished</p> <p>Backdating claims and for certain changes in circumstances reduces from 3 to 1 month</p> <p>Falls in income of up to £2,500 will be ignored. Meaning TC will not be increased for the first £2,500 fall in income</p> <p>Working Tax Credits - couples with children have to work 24 rather than 16 hours a week - April 2012 (exemptions). <a href="#">See our factsheet on exemptions.</a></p> <p>Child Tax Credit family element income threshold removed so that Tax Credits will taper earlier</p> <p>WTC amounts frozen</p> <p>CTC and disability elements of Tax Credits uprated in line with lower Consumer Price Index (saving the govt £995 million by 2016-17)</p>	<p><a href="#">Budget 2010</a> and <a href="#">Spending Review 2010</a></p> <p><a href="#">Autumn Statement 2011</a></p>
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<p><b>1 May 2012</b></p>	<p><b>Contribution based ESA limited to one year</b></p> <p>Before this change, claimants received the benefit so long as they satisfied the conditions.</p> <p>Claimants who are already on this benefit at the point of change will have their existing time on it counted. So, for example, some on it for 6 months before April will only have 6 months left.</p> <p>This rule only applies to those in the work related activity group. Any period in the support group of ESA does not count towards the 365 days.</p>	<p><a href="#">Spending Review 2010</a>: 2010-15</p> <p>DWP impact assessment reckons around 700,000 people to lose their entitlement by 2015/16.</p>
<p><b>May 2012</b></p>	<p><b>Contribution based ESA in Youth abolished</b></p> <p>The “ESA in youth provision” which allows a young person aged 16 to 19 and up to 25 in some cases, get ESA without having to satisfy the contribution conditions is abolished. Those getting contribution based ESA due to these youth rules will also see it stopped after one year as above.</p>	<p><a href="#">Budget 2011</a></p>
<p><b>May 2012</b></p>	<p><b>Lone parents – no Income Support once youngest child turns 5</b> Unless other reason for IS. Was 7. Otherwise JSA.</p>	<p><a href="#">Emergency budget June 2010</a></p>
<p><b>22 October 2012</b></p>	<p><b>Sanctions increase – Jobseekers Allowance</b> Benefits like Jobseekers Allowance are cut for a claimant’s failure to comply with certain work-related activities. Three tier sanctions introduced ranging from 4 weeks to 3 years</p>	<p><a href="#">Report to Parliament</a></p>
<p><b>October 2012</b></p>	<p><b>Civil penalties for overpayment of benefit and claimant caused it</b></p> <p><b>Fixed rate penalty £50 added to total amount of overpayment</b></p> <p>A civil penalties will apply if you are overpaid a benefit and you have negligently given incorrect information or evidence, and you fail to take steps to rectify the error, and the error causes an overpayment, or you fail to provide information or evidence or fail to notify a change in your circumstances without a reasonable excuse.</p>	<p><a href="#">DWP Impact Assessment</a></p> <p><a href="#">Details</a></p>

<b>October 2012</b>	<b>Simple Payment Service</b> To replace the benefit cheques system	Replaced by <a href="#">Payment Exception Service</a>
<b>3 December 2012</b>	<b>Sanctions for those on the sick - Employment and Support Allowance</b> Three tier sanctions for people on the sick increased	<a href="#">Report to Parliament</a>

**2013**

<b>January 2013</b>	<p><b>Child Benefit cut</b> Withdrawn from higher earners £50 - £60,000 a year. Equivalent charge made on their tax allowance.</p> <p>Where a person has an income between £50,000 and £60,000, the charge applied to their income tax will be 1% of the Child Benefit paid for every £100 of income between £50,000 and £60,000. The income tax charge will always be less than the amount of Child Benefit. Where a person has an income of over £60,000 the charge will be equal to the full amount of Child Benefit payable. Couples with a combined income of over £50,000 will not be affected, unless either one of them has an individual income of over £50,000.</p>	<a href="#">Spending Review 2010</a> , <a href="#">Budget 2012</a>
<b>April 2013</b>	<p><b>Housing Benefit ‘under occupancy’ rule or removal of ‘spare room subsidy’ or ‘bedroom tax’ introduced</b> = cut in the rent that’s eligible for HB. If: 1 spare bedroom = 14% (av HB cut £12/wk), 2 spare bedrooms = 25% (av HB cut £22/wk)</p>	<p><a href="#">Budget 2010</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6,000 YHN tenants affected.</li> <li>• Some exceptions</li> <li>• Extra discretionary housing payment for hardship</li> <li>• Average loss £676 a year £13 a week</li> </ul>
<b>April 2013</b>	<b>Local Housing Allowance uprating changed to lower to Consumer Price Index</b>	<a href="#">Budget 2010</a>
<b>April 2013</b>	<p><b>Tax Credits</b> Income disregard falls from £10,000 to £5,000</p>	<a href="#">Budget 2010</a>
<b>April 2013</b>	<b>Reduction in uprating for most working age means tested benefits and Tax Credits and Child Benefit to 1% for 3 years</b>	<p><a href="#">Autumn Statement 2012</a> Estimated savings £3.5bn + by 2023-24 (OBR)</p>
<b>1 April 2013</b>	<b>Legal Aid removed from welfare benefits work</b>	<p><a href="https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-21668005">https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-21668005</a></p> <p><a href="https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN06645">https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN06645</a></p>
<b>April 2013</b>	<p><b>Universal Credit</b></p> <p>First and limited introduction of Universal Credit in some areas for new claims from single working age claimants</p> <p>Ultimate aim to replace six working age mean tested benefits</p>	Details <a href="http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/universalcredit">www.newcastle.gov.uk/universalcredit</a>

<p><b>8 April 2013</b></p>	<p><b>Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for those aged 16 - 64 starting to be replaced by Personal Independence Payment (PIP). Pilots</b></p> <p>First new claims available for PIP in limited areas</p>	<p><a href="#">Budget 2010</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10,860 in Newcastle</li> <li>• Based on government plan to cut DLA bill by 20%</li> <li>• 1,944 in Newcastle expected to lose £5m a year</li> <li>• Connected benefits lost (extra IS, Carers Allowance etc)</li> </ul>
<p><b>April 2013</b></p>	<p><b>Council Tax Benefit – cut and devolved to local councils</b></p> <p>Funding cut by 10%</p> <p>Most working age people will need to pay at least 8.5% of bill before getting CT support. Some possible local scheme exemptions</p>	<p><a href="#">Spending Review 2010</a></p>
<p><b>April 2013</b></p>	<p><b>Social Fund – cut and devolved to local councils, called ‘Local Welfare Assistance’</b></p> <p>Social Fund grants and crisis loans scrapped and replaced with local schemes (shortfall £150k). Budgeting loans and non-discretionary parts of the Social Fund, like Funeral Payments continue.</p> <p>In Newcastle two schemes: Crisis Support Scheme &amp; Supported Independence Scheme</p>	<p><a href="#">Welfare Reform Act 2012</a></p> <p>Summary: <a href="#">CPAG</a> , <a href="#">Parliamentary briefing paper</a>.</p>

<p><b>April 2013</b></p>	<p><b>Household benefit cap</b></p> <p>Some benefits limited to average wage</p> <p>e.g. unemployed family with 6 children could lose all Housing Benefit due to the benefit cap</p> <p>Average loss £83 a week, about 100 families in Newcastle</p> <p>Exemptions: pension age, WTC, DLA, in ESA support group</p> <p>Phased in from April to September</p> <p><b>Cap reduced November 2017</b></p>	<p><a href="#">Spending Review 2010</a></p> <p>Cap: £500 a week or £26,000 a year for a couple with children. It is £350 for a single person without children.</p> <p><b>Government impact assessment on CAP (Jan12):</b></p> <p>67,000 households impacted 2013/14, and 75,000 in 2014/15. Of those, 220,000 children and 90,000 adults will be affected by cap in 2013/14.</p> <p>Av cut £83 per week, median reduction is around £56 per week</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exempt: pension age, DLA and war widows and WTC recipients - so incentive to work. <i>Autumn statement 2012 - Supported exempt accommodation housing payments ignored – but DHP cut by £25m from 13-17</i></li> <li>• 9 month grace for newly unemployed (been working 12 months)</li> <li>• Extra £130m DHP for those unable to move immediately</li> </ul>
<p><b>June 2013</b></p>	<p><b>Personal Independence Payment (PIP) replacing DLA</b></p> <p>New claims for DLA treated as claims for PIP across GB</p>	<p><a href="#">Budget 2010</a></p>

<b>October 2013</b>	<b>Mandatory Reconsideration introduced</b>  For many benefits a 'Mandatory Reconsideration' must be requested if a claimant disagrees with a benefit decision. If unhappy with that decision, the claimant can appeal to an independent tribunal. Before this change the claimant could simply appeal.  This is extended to more benefits April 2014	<a href="#">Report to Parliament</a>
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**2014**

<p><b>4 January 2014</b></p>	<p><b>Food vouchers for benefit delays</b></p> <p>“A person experiencing severe financial hardship, caused by issues such as benefit delays or being ineligible for a JCP crisis loan, will be given a voucher by JC+ office that can be exchanged at a foodbank for three days' worth of food.”</p> <p>“An individual can be given three vouchers in a row during one particular period of hardship, and can be helped three times in a year, meaning a total of nine vouchers a year can be given out per person.”</p> <p>Foodbanks will be operated from 79 food banks across the country run by the Trussell Trust, a Christian charity.</p>	<p>Pilots now, rolled out nationally in April 2011</p>
<p><b>1 January 2014</b></p>	<p><b>Increased restrictions to benefits for migrants</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 month wait for income based Jobseeker’s Allowance (JSA) for new European Economic Area (EEA) and some UK national arrivals (who are returning from more than a short period abroad). This also extends to Child Benefit and Child Tax Credit from July 2014</li> <li>• 6 months (91 days from 10 November 2014) after the start of their award of JSA they will have a ‘Genuine Prospect of Work’ assessment. The assessments will check the evidence that the claimant provides to determine whether they have a genuine prospect of work, in which case a limited extension to JSA may be granted.</li> </ul> <p>See 1 July 2014 for the combined impact of these changes with those in March and April. Note there are some exemptions to these rules.</p>	<p>To receive income based JSA many newly arrived claimants have to satisfy the Habitual Residence Test. In December 2013 the Habitual Residence Test was changed and claimants now have to provide more individual answers about themselves before the test is passed, such as whether their (lack of) English language skills may be a barrier to finding work.</p> <p>See DWP guidance <a href="#">HB Circular A6/2014</a> and <a href="#">Memo DMG 15/14</a>. See also the <a href="#">guidance on exemptions from the 3 months residence requirement and</a></p> <p>See a <a href="#">CPAG article</a> and <a href="#">information from Parliament</a>.</p>

<p><b>1 March 2014</b></p>	<p><b>New earnings test for migrants</b></p> <p>Access to some benefits is restricted for EEA migrants if they don't earn at least £150 a week for the last 3 months – equivalent to working 24 hours a week at the national minimum wage. If they earn below this amount, they will have to prove the work was 'significant.'</p> <p>See 1 July 2014 for the combined impact of these changes along with those in January and April. Note the some exemptions to these rules</p>	<p>Announced by DWP on <a href="#">21 February 2014</a></p> <p>See also this <a href="#">Government guide</a>.</p>
<p><b>April 2014</b></p>	<p><b>Benefit uprating</b> Housing Benefit e.g. LHA only to increase by 1% for two years</p>	<p><a href="#">Autumn Statement 2012</a></p>
<p><b>April 2014</b></p>	<p><b>Council Tax Support (CTS)</b> Help reduced for some due to reductions in Government funding</p>	<p>More details: Council Tax Support <a href="#">update</a> The City Council <a href="#">CTS website page</a></p>
<p><b>1 April 2014</b></p>	<p><b>No automatic Housing Benefit for new EEA migrant jobseekers claiming income based JSA</b></p> <p>EEA jobseekers will no longer be able to have automatic access to Housing Benefit just because they are claiming income-based JSA. The Government says that these changes do not affect UK and Irish Republic nationals, EEA migrants 'genuinely' employed or self-employed, or EEA nationals who have been working in the UK, and are subsequently made redundant so long as they retain their worker or self-employed status.</p> <p>See 1 July 2014 for the combined impact of these changes along with those in January and March. Note the exemptions to these rules.</p>	<p>DWP guidance: <a href="#">HB Circular A6/2014</a> and <a href="#">April 14 Touchbase magazine</a></p> <p>Legislation: <a href="#">SI. No. 539/2014</a></p> <p>Consultation by <a href="#">SSAC</a> ends 30 May 2014</p> <p>See a <a href="#">CPAG article</a> and <a href="#">information from Parliament</a>.</p>



<p><b>6 April 2014</b></p>	<p><b>Mandatory reconsideration before an appeal against a benefit decision – extended to more benefits</b></p> <p>Before an appeal against a benefit decision can be made to an independent tribunal, claimants first have to ask the benefit office to reconsider their decision. This new requirement for a ‘mandatory reconsideration’ was brought in October 2013 for many benefits. It is now extended to Tax Credits, Child Benefit and Guardians Allowance.</p> <p>NB ‘mandatory reconsideration’ is another name for ‘any grounds revision’</p>	<p>More details from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Benefit bulletin October 2013</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">DWP guidance</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Child Poverty Action Group</a> article</li> <li>• <a href="#">The legislation</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>9 April 2014</b></p>	<p><b>End of interpreting service at the Jobcentre</b> except for claimants judged to be vulnerable.</p>	<p><a href="#">DWP press release</a></p>
<p><b>28 April 2014</b></p>	<p><b>New measures for the unemployed</b></p> <p><b>Increased work related activity for lone parents</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tailored work focused interviews for lone parents with child aged 1 to 4 years old.</li> <li>• Mandatory work related activity for lone parents with children aged 3 and 4 years old.</li> </ul> <p><b>English language requirement</b> Claimants will be screened for their English speaking and could be mandated to attend English language training.</p>	<p>Announced in <a href="#">HM Treasury’s Spending Round 2013 on 26 June 2013</a></p> <p>The <a href="#">legislation</a> and DWP guidance: <a href="#">DM Memo 9/14</a> and <a href="#">DMG 11/14</a></p> <p>DWP <a href="#">Stakeholder Bulletin</a> and <a href="#">Touchbase magazine April 2014</a></p> <p>More details in <a href="#">April 2014 Benefit Bulletin</a></p>

	<p><b>Help to Work scheme</b> For those unemployed for three years or leaving the Work Programme, the following three elements which may be applied to the claimant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Mandatory Intervention Regime (MIR)</b> – Personalised adviser support through increased interventions.</li> <li>• <b>Daily Work Search Review</b> – Claimants will be required to complete a period of up to three months of daily work search reviews at the Jobcentre to ensure they are undertaking the requirements and meeting conditionality for benefit.</li> <li>• <b>Community Work Placements</b> – Externally contracted provision will consist of a work placement that is of benefit to the community for up to 30 hours a week and supplemented by up to 10 hours of jobsearch.</li> </ul> <p><b>Quarterly work search interview</b> Claimants will have to attend a 20 minute interview every 13 weeks.</p>	<p>Announced by <a href="#">HM Treasury on 30 September 2013</a></p> <p>More details: <a href="#">DWP press release</a> <a href="#">BBC news</a> <a href="#">Government press release</a></p> <p>Travel expenses will be paid for extra visits to the Jobcentre.</p> <p>See also the introduction of the claimant commitment and other work related requirements at the end of 2013 in the <a href="#">October 13 Benefit Bulletin</a></p> <p><a href="#">DWP statistics</a> show average of 485 adverse JSA sanctions made in Newcastle between October 2012 and September 2013.</p> <p>Other figures show sanctions for <a href="#">lone parents</a> and an increase in sanctions for <a href="#">ESA claimants</a></p>
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<p><b>28 April – October 2014</b></p>	<p><b>Day one conditionality for Jobseekers</b></p> <p>Jobseekers expected to be more work ready on day one of their claim. For example, having an email address, a suitable CV, a Universal Jobmatch account.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where they do not meet these criteria they will be expected to complete this activity at the earliest opportunity, with training support where required.</li> <li>• There may be weekly work search reviews for some jobseekers and quarterly reviews of their work search activity.</li> </ul> <p><b>Weekly work search reviews</b> As decided by Jobcentre Plus ‘coaches’ (previously called advisers)</p>	<p>Phased in between 28 April and October 2014.</p> <p>More details: DWP <a href="#">Stakeholder Bulletin</a> and <a href="#">Touchbase magazine April 2014</a></p>
<p><b>May 2014</b></p>	<p><b>Zero hours contracts</b></p> <p>Work and Pensions Minister Esther <a href="#">said in Parliament</a> that Jobcentre Plus guidance stipulates that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Claimants should not be mandated to apply for a job offering a zero hours contract.</li> <li>• No sanction action will be taken if claimants refuse or fail to apply.</li> <li>• A person leaving a zero hours contract job will not be sanctioned if they leave that job voluntarily or lose it through their misconduct.</li> </ul> <p>On 6 May <a href="#">the Government said</a>: “under (Universal Credit), Jobcentre ‘coaches’ would be able to ‘mandate to zero-hours contracts’, although they would have discretion about considering whether a role was suitable.”</p>	
<p><b>20 May 2014</b></p>	<p><b>Carers Allowance</b></p> <p>The earnings threshold where Carers Allowance is not payable is increased from £100 to £102 a week.</p>	<p>Announced in Budget 2014 as described in <a href="#">April 2014 Benefit Bulletin</a></p>

<p><b>30 June 2014</b></p>	<p><b>The new Child Maintenance Service begins to replace the Child Support Agency</b></p> <p>Parents will now have the choice to make their own maintenance arrangements between themselves or use the new Child Maintenance Service.</p>	<p><a href="#">Government press release</a></p>
<p><b>1 July 2014</b></p>	<p><b>3 month wait for Child Benefit and Child Tax Credit for new migrant jobseekers</b></p> <p>Many new migrants who are not working will have to live in the UK for three months before they can get Child Benefit and Child Tax Credits. From then, they will receive those benefits – if entitled – for 6 months (91 days from 10 November 2014) but after that will have to be working or have genuine prospects of finding work. There are exceptions such as workers, self-employed people and others.</p>	<p>DWP <a href="#">press release</a></p> <p>See the <a href="#">legislation</a></p> <p>See the similar change on 1 January 2014 for Jobseeker's Allowance</p>

<p><b>1 July 2014</b></p>	<p><b>Benefits to end for some EEA migrants</b></p> <p>From 1 July 2014, European Economic Area (EEA) migrants who have been claiming income based Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) for 6 months will have to provide to Jobcentre Plus ‘compelling evidence’ they have a genuine chance of employment. Government guidance says this means a written job offer. If so, they may have their JSA extended for 3 months till the job starts. If not, their JSA will stop. This rule was brought in 1 January 2014. See also the change on 10 November 2014.</p> <p>What does this mean for Housing Benefit entitlement?</p> <p>If income based Jobseekers Allowance stops, their passport to receive Housing Benefit also stops. In which case they will then – in most cases - only be able to claim Housing Benefit if they have a job or be self-employed. The work also has to be genuine and effective. This is due to the rule that came in 1 April 2014, where such people could not claim and get Housing Benefit on the basis of receiving income based Jobseekers Allowance.</p> <p>There may be limited exceptions to some of the above, such as relying on a family member or being in an exempt category.</p>	<p>DWP guidance: <a href="#">HB Circular A6/2014</a> and <a href="#">April &amp; July 14 Touchbase magazine</a></p> <p>Legislation: <a href="#">SI. No. 539/2014</a></p> <p>Consultation by <a href="#">SSAC</a> ends 30 May 2014</p> <p>See a <a href="#">CPAG article</a> and <a href="#">information from Parliament</a>.</p> <p>See also the <a href="#">Citizens Advice guide on coming from abroad and claiming benefits</a></p>
<p><b>1 July 2014</b></p>	<p><b>HM Revenue &amp; Customs (HMRC) replaces enquiry centres with new service for those who need extra help</b></p> <p>The new service provides a central telephone contact, specialised advice and face to face service if required and closer work with voluntary and community organisations.</p>	<p>Announced by <a href="#">HM Revenue &amp; Customs on 12 February 2014</a></p> <p>Details from <a href="#">Gov.uk</a></p>

<b>21 July 2014</b>	<b>Relaxed JSA rules for newly homeless</b>  The JSA requirement to be available and look for work is temporarily relaxed for those who have just become homeless and are suffering a domestic emergency, so long as they are looking for accommodation. Jobcentre Plus Work Coaches (formerly Advisers) have discretion over to whom and for how long it should apply.	See <a href="#">the legislation</a> and <a href="#">DWP guidance (PDF)</a> .
<b>28 July 2014</b>	<b>Universal Credit extended to some couples in the North West of England pilot areas</b>	<a href="#">Government press release</a> See the <a href="#">legislation</a>
<b>31 August 2014</b>	<b>Child Tax Credits</b>  HMRC now have to be notified annually (by 31 August) of children over 16 remaining in further education – otherwise Child Tax Credits will stop.	See HMRC website about <a href="#">continuing to get Child Tax Credit when your child turns 16</a>
<b>September 2014</b>	<b>Universal Credit rolls out to more North West of England areas</b>	<a href="#">ADM Memo 16/14</a> is available from gov.uk
<b>October 2014</b>	<b>Tax Credits overpayments</b>  Tax Credit awards can now be reduced to repay overpayments from previous claims. The amount recovered will not be more than 25% of their current tax credit payments. Claimants who already have arrangements to repay their debts will not be affected by this change.	Details from <a href="#">DWP Touchbase article</a> and advice from <a href="#">Revenuebenefits</a> website.
<b>October 2014</b>	<b>Annual increase in the National Minimum wage</b>	<a href="#">National Minimum Wage rates page</a>

<p><b>27 October 2014</b></p>	<p><b>The waiting period for Jobseeker’s Allowance and Employment and Support Allowance is extended from 3 to 7 days.</b></p> <p>This means there is no entitlement to these benefits for the first 7 days of a new claim. To be clear, it is not a delay in payment but a period of no entitlement to that benefit.</p>	<p>Announced in <a href="#">HM Treasury’s Spending Round 2013 on 26 June 2013</a></p> <p>More details of this change can be found on the <a href="#">Government legislation website</a> and also see the <a href="#">TUC view on the change</a>.</p> <p>See <a href="#">September 2014 benefit bulletin</a> for more details including exceptions</p>
<p><b>10 November 2014</b></p>	<p><b>Further benefit restrictions for EEA migrants</b></p> <p>The six months amount of Jobseekers Allowance for EEA jobseekers is reduced to 91 days – than after that they will have to show ‘compelling’ evidence of genuine prospects of work to receive more. If this happens you could also lose your Child Benefit and Child Tax Credit unless exceptions apply. However, there are exceptions and the period may be longer in some cases, such as retained workers who have become involuntarily unemployed.</p>	<p>For more information see the <a href="#">Government internal guidance on this change</a>, the <a href="#">explanation behind the new rules</a> and the Citizens Advice website pages: <a href="#">EEA nationals - claiming benefits as a jobseeker</a> and <a href="#">Coming from abroad and claiming benefits</a>.</p> <p>See also the <a href="#">guidance on exemptions from the 3 months residence requirement</a></p> <p><a href="#">Budget 2014</a></p>

<b>2015</b>		
<b>2015</b>	<p><b>Universal Credit</b>  Rolled out across the country for new claims from single Jobseekers.</p> <p>New claims to the 'legacy benefits' that Universal Credit is replacing will be closed from 2017 (later extended to mid 2018, then 2023, 2024). From then, people remaining on those 'legacy benefits' will be migrated across to Universal Credit. The process will be completed in 2024</p>	<p><a href="#">Announced in September 2014</a></p> <p><a href="#">Link to the DWP information describing this roll out</a></p> <p><a href="#">More details on our Universal Credit webpage</a></p>
<b>2015</b>	<p><b>Cap on total welfare spending</b></p> <p>to be agreed at each future <a href="#">Parliament</a>  And the uprating of many benefits based on Consumer Price Index</p>	Announced in the <a href="#">Autumn Statement 2013</a>
<b>26 January 2015</b>	<p><b>Personal Independence Payment (PIP) roll out</b></p> <p>The following existing DLA claimants in <b>Newcastle</b> will be 'invited' to claim PIP if -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the DWP receives information about a change in their care or mobility needs;</li> <li>• their fixed term award of DLA is due to expire on or after 15 June 2015;</li> <li>• the claimant turns 16;</li> <li>• the DLA claimant aged between 16 – 64 voluntarily wants to claim PIP.</li> </ul> <p>A claim for PIP must be made otherwise DLA will cease.</p>	<p>See the updated <a href="#">Timetable for PIP replacing DLA</a> from gov.uk.</p> <p>The roll out continues to <a href="#">other areas in the UK</a> from 30 March 2015.</p> <p>Full roll out to remaining DLA claimants begins October 2015 through to late 2017 or 2018</p>
<b>March 2015</b>	<p><b>Employment and Support Allowance medical assessments</b> to be carried out by the company MAXIMUS instead of ATOS.</p> <p>ATOS will continue to provide assessments for Personal Independence Payments.</p>	See the <a href="#">Government press release announcing the change</a>



<b>30 March 2015</b>	<b>New rules about repeat claims for ESA</b>	See <a href="#">April Benefit Bulletin 2015</a> for more details.
<b>April 2015</b>	<b>Pensions advice service</b>  Citizens Advice and the The Pensions Advisory Service will provide telephone advice in time for major reforms to the pensions system to help people understand their options as they approach retirement age.	<a href="#">Citizens Advice press release</a>  See also the website: <a href="http://www.pensionwise.gov.uk">www.pensionwise.gov.uk</a>
<b>April 2015</b>	<b>Funding from Government for Local Welfare Schemes was due to end now but was continued.</b>  These are the localised schemes which replaced parts of the discretionary Social Fund.	See Newcastle schemes: <a href="#">Supporting Independence Scheme</a> and <a href="#">Crisis Support Scheme</a>
<b>April 2015</b>	<b>Tax Credits payments for mid-year changes stopped</b>  - where a claimant has already received their full annual entitlement. This will prevent claimants building up overpayments that must be repaid at a later stage.	From <a href="#">Autumn Statement 2013</a> Saving £65m in 2015/16
<b>5 April 2015</b>	<b>Changes to maternity and adoption leave and pay – Shared Parental Leave</b>  For those whose baby is due – or they adopt a child - on or after 5 April 2015, the father or partner can – if eligible - receive Shared Parental Leave (SPL) and Statutory Shared Parental Pay (ShPP) if the mother gives up some of her Maternity Pay and leave.  Example: A mother could end her maternity leave after 12 weeks, leaving 40 weeks (of the total 52 week entitlement) available for SPL. If both the mother and her partner are eligible, they can share the 40 weeks. They can take the leave at the same time or separately.	<a href="#">Government guidance</a>

<p><b>27 April 2015</b></p>	<p><b>Universal Credit roll out for some in Newcastle</b></p> <p>From 27 April 2015, new claims from single jobseekers without children living in Newcastle will be taken as a claim for Universal Credit if their income is low enough. Roll out continues in other areas at other times.</p>	<p><a href="#">See City Council Universal Credit page</a></p> <p><a href="#">DWP information on roll out from 2016</a></p>
<p><b>27 April 2015</b></p>	<p><b>Jobseekers Allowance annual verification</b></p> <p>After receiving income-based jobseeker's allowance for more than 12 months, claimants will be sent an 'Annual Verification' to complete and confirm their claim details. If it not returned within 28 days a reminder will be sent. If there is no response after that the claim may be suspended.</p>	<p>See <a href="#">March 2015 DWP Touchbase magazine</a></p>
<p><b>9 May 2015</b></p>	<p><b>EEA nationals and genuine prospect of work</b></p> <p>In January 2014, a 'Genuine Prospect of Work' test was applied to certain new JSA claims from EEA nationals. At some stage, from 9 February 2015, certain remaining EEA nationals who were entitled to income based JSA prior to January 2014, will be given three months' notice that this test will be applied to them. This means it will begin to take effect from May 2015.</p>	<p>For more details, see the guidance <a href="#">DMG Memo 2/15</a>.</p>
<p><b>10 June 2015</b></p>	<p><b>EEA nationals and Universal Credit</b></p> <p>New rules seek to prevent nationals of European Economic Area (EEA) states, who are Jobseekers, and their family members, from entitlement to Universal Credit.</p>	<p>For more details about those who are and are not entitled, see the <a href="#">regulation</a> and the <a href="#">correspondence between the Social Security Advisory Committee and the Secretary of State</a>.</p>

<p><b>13 July 2015</b></p>	<p><b>Personal Independence Payment (PIP) roll out extended to more people</b></p> <p>At some stage, from this date the remainder of existing DLA claimants - aged 16 to 64 on 8 April 2013 - will be asked to claim PIP. The aim was this process would be finished by 2017 or 2018 but it still continues in 2019.*</p> <p>From 26 January 2015, existing DLA claimants were asked to claim PIP if certain circumstances applied.</p> <p>The Government have announced a small scale roll out for remaining adult DLA claimants.</p>	<p>See for example, our <a href="#">July 2015 Benefit Bulletin</a> for more details.</p> <p><a href="#">See DWP timetable</a></p> <p><a href="#">See Government statement</a></p> <p>The <a href="#">Office for Budget Responsibility</a> (OBR) reckoned in 2019 that the introduction of PIP has cost more than a continuation of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) would have done. “The government assumed initially that PIP would be fully rolled out by 2015-16 and that it would cost 20% less than DLA would have done.</p> <p>* And in it’s <a href="#">Economic and fiscal outlook – March 2019</a> the OBR reckons that “the full PIP roll out has been delayed and we now assume that it will not be completed until February 2021...”</p>
<p><b>31 July 2015</b> and every year</p>	<p><b>Tax Credits renewal - deadline</b></p> <p>This is the deadline for claimants to renew their Tax Credits award by. Otherwise their award may stop.</p>	<p><a href="#">More advice from LITRG</a></p>
<p><b>3 August 2015</b></p>	<p><b>Universal Credit – Seven waiting days introduced</b></p> <p>Where there is no entitlement to UC for the first seven days after a claim. Exceptions apply.</p> <p><b>This was abolished</b> from February 2018 by autumn 2017 budget</p>	<p>More details from our <a href="#">July 2015 Benefit Bulletin</a> and <a href="#">DWP guidance which includes the exceptions</a></p> <p><a href="#">Autumn 2017 budget</a></p>

<p><b>30 August 2015</b> and every year</p>	<p><b>Child staying on in education - deadline</b> This is the deadline for claimants to let Child Tax Credits <u>and</u> Child Benefit offices know if their 16-year-old child is staying on in certain education or training in order to continue receiving these benefits.</p>	<p>More details from Gov.uk about <a href="#">Child Tax Credits</a> and <a href="#">Child Benefit</a>.</p>
<p><b>Autumn 2015</b></p>	<p><b>Winter Fuel Payment</b>  Cut for those UK citizens living in some hotter European Countries (such as expats)</p>	<p>Announced in <a href="#">HM Treasury's Spending Round 2013 and the Autumn Statement 2013</a> Saving £30m</p>
<p><b>October 2015</b></p>	<p><b>NEETS</b>  Before claiming Universal Credit, Jobseekers who are aged 18 to 24 and not in education, employment or training “will participate in a period of intensive activity and job search support at the start of their benefit claim.”</p>	<p>On page 89 of the <a href="#">2014 autumn statement</a>.</p>
<p><b>October 2015 and probably till late 2017 or 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Personal Independence Payment (PIP) roll out</b> <b>Replacement for Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for adults.</b>  <i>“From October 2015, PIP will be rolled out across Great Britain to claimants that have a long-term or indefinite award of DLA.”</i>  This follows the earlier roll out of Personal Independence Payment (PIP) from January and July 2015 where existing DLA claimants were invited to claim PIP in certain circumstances.  It means that <b>at some stage</b> (until late 2017 or 2018) those remaining DLA claimants - who were born after 8 April 1948 and are 16 or over – who have a long term or indefinite award - will receive a letter from the DWP telling them their DLA will come to an end and they can claim PIP.  It is important that claimants read these letters from the DWP and understand the time limits in making a claim for PIP.</p>	<p>Government website '<a href="#">DLA is ending</a>' and <a href="#">toolkit for staff</a>  <a href="#">PIP handbook</a>  <a href="#">Disability Rights uk guide to PIP</a>  See the City Council <a href="#">Benefit Bulletins in July and December 2015</a></p>

October 2015	Annual increase in the National Minimum wage	<a href="#">National Minimum Wage rates page</a>
1 October 2015	<p><b>The upper permitted work limit for Employment and Support Allowance</b> and other incapacity benefits rises from £104 to £107.50 a week.</p> <p>The lower limit remains at £20.</p>	Connected with minimum wages above
1 November 2015	<p><b>Health Costs and Universal Credit – new earnings threshold</b></p> <p>Below which universal credit recipients automatically qualify for help with health costs - free NHS prescriptions, dental treatment, sight tests, and optical vouchers, and free wigs, free fabric supports, and assistance with the costs of travel to an NHS appointment on referral by a doctor, dentist or optician.</p> <p>Two levels of thresholds are introduced:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the lower threshold sets the entitlement for those who do not have a child and/or limited capability for work (or limited capability for work related activity) element included in their universal credit award, and is limited to those with no earnings or net earnings not exceeding <b>£435 per month</b>; and</li> <li>• the higher threshold sets the entitlement for those who do have a child and/or limited capability for work (or limited capability for work related activity) element included in their universal credit award, and is limited to those with no earnings or net earnings not exceeding <b>£935 per month</b>.</li> </ul>	<a href="#">SI.No.1776/2015</a> is available from <a href="http://legislation.gov.uk">legislation.gov.uk</a>
December 2015	State Pension Credit can be claimed online	<a href="#">DWP Touchbase</a>

<p><b>January 2016</b></p>	<p>Jobcentre Plus support for schools to be rolled out</p> <p>The scheme will -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• offer 12 to 18 year old pupils insight into the world of work and advice on options like traineeships and apprenticeships; and</li> <li>• offer work experience opportunities so that young people can gain direct insights into what potential employers are looking for.</li> </ul> <p>The initiative will be gradually rolled out across England and each school will decide what level of support advisers offer to their pupils, which could include setting up work experience placements, one-to-one advice and group-led Q&amp;A sessions.</p>	<p>DWP press release <a href="#">Jobcentre Plus support rolled out to schools</a></p> <p><a href="#">Evaluation of Jobcentre Plus Support for Schools programme: National roll-out evaluation</a> from gov.uk said to concentrate more on those at risk of becoming not in education, employment or training NEET</p>
<p><b>March 2016</b></p>	<p><b>New Tax Credits online service</b></p> <p>HM Revenue &amp; Customs (HMRC) has launched a <a href="#">new digital service for Tax Credits claimants</a> that allows them to check their next Tax Credits payment details online.</p>	<p>The service will be updated over the coming months to allow claimants to report changes in their circumstances online.</p>

<p><b>April 2016</b></p>	<p><b>Reductions in Tax Credits and Universal Credit</b>          Various changes affecting families with children, some earners and a general lowering of amounts from April 2016.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 'reward' in Universal Credit for working - called the 'work allowance' - is reduced from 11 April 2016. It means that as income goes above one of two set 'work allowance' thresholds, a claimant's maximum Universal Credit may be withdrawn at a quicker rate. See <i>right for details</i>.</li> <li>• The annual amount of increased wages in the tax year that is ignored (like an annual earnings disregard) is reduced from £5,000 to £2,500.</li> <li>• Note, the reductions in Working Tax Credit announced in the Summer Budget 2015 were rescinded. This was the threshold drop from £6,420 to £3,850, the Child Tax Credit only threshold drop from £16,105 to £12,125 and the taper rate - at which excess income over threshold is withdrawn - increases from 41% to 48%.</li> </ul>	<p>Announced in the <a href="#">Summer Budget 2015</a> and revised by the <a href="#">Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015</a>.</p> <p>After the rescinded Tax Credit cuts, the <a href="#">Institute for Fiscal Studies</a> say the Government will still reach its target of <a href="#">£12 billion cuts to welfare by 2020</a>. They estimate that in steady state Universal Credit will now involve 2.6 million (about 11,538 est. in Newcastle) working families being an average of £1,600 a year worse off than under the current system, while 1.9 million (about 8,431 est. in Newcastle) will be £1,400 a year better off.</p> <p>From 11 April 2016, the Universal Credit work allowance thresholds (the amount of earnings you can keep before your benefit begins to be withdrawn at 65% or 'tapered') are reduced in two ways: Several thresholds are reduced to two: £397 a month for those without housing costs and £192 a month for those with housing costs. These thresholds are removed for claimants who are fit for work and without children - so that UC is reduced as soon as they start earning (the taper is applied immediately). Before the change, the work allowance thresholds applied to all Universal Credit claimants.</p> <p>The Resolution Foundation believe <a href="#">these cuts to UC undermine work incentives</a>.</p> <p><a href="#">See DWP guidance on this</a></p>
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<p><b>April 2016</b></p>	<p><b>Childcare costs under Universal Credit increases</b>          More help with childcare costs will be available under Universal Credit from 11 April 2016. The maximum support is increasing from 70% to 85% of eligible childcare costs (up to a maximum of £646.35 a month for one child and £1,108.04 for two or more children)</p>	<p><a href="#">Explanation of the change</a> and <a href="#">DWP leaflet 'Universal Credit and your family'</a></p>
<p><b>April 2016</b></p>	<p><b>Working age benefits freeze for four years till April 2020</b>          Most benefits will not be increased at this April annual uprating for four years. Disability elements and pension age benefits protected.</p> <p>Local Housing Allowance rates which limit private sector Housing Benefit according to family make up and area are also frozen for four years.</p>	<p>Announced in the <a href="#">Summer Budget 2015</a></p> <p>The <a href="#">Institute for Fiscal Studies</a> (IFS) say that 13 million families will lose £260 a year on average (7.4 million in work will lose £280 a year on average).</p> <p>See also <a href="#">Shelter blog</a>.</p>
<p><b>April 2016</b></p>	<p><b>Reduced housing support for working age benefit claimants</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The wait for <a href="#">mortgage interest help</a> is extended from 13 to 39 weeks.</li> <li>• <b>Backdating of Housing Benefit will be reduced for claimants</b> from the present 6 or 3 months to 1 month</li> <li>• <b>Reduction in social housing rents by 1% a year</b> for 4 years with a deferral for supported accommodation.</li> </ul>	<p>Announced in the <a href="#">Summer Budget 2015</a> and the <a href="#">Budget 2016</a></p> <p><a href="#">The regulations introducing the 39 week increase.</a></p> <p><a href="#">In a letter to the social Security Advisory Committee Lord Freud believed lenders will 'forebear'.</a></p> <p><a href="#">Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015</a> on 25 November 2015.</p> <p><a href="#">Housing Benefit backdating change in guidance HB A3/2016</a></p>



<p><b>April 2016</b></p>	<p><b>Help with the cost of the Council Tax bill</b>  In addition to <a href="#">Council Tax discounts, reliefs and exemptions</a>, the <a href="#">Council Tax Reduction scheme</a> can help towards the bill. It can be claimed from the council.</p> <p>From April 2016, working age people can claim Council Tax Reduction on up to 85% of the bill. It is 100% for pensioners. Those who have claimed will receive bills explaining the amounts. The help of up to 80% of the bill for disabled people does not apply from this date.</p>	<p>More details from the City Council's <a href="#">Council Tax Reduction scheme</a></p>
<p><b>April 2016</b></p>	<p><b>Mandatory work activity scheme ends</b></p>	<p><a href="#">Independent article</a></p>
<p><b>1 April 2016</b></p>	<p><b>Restrictions on local welfare assistance for certain people from abroad</b></p> <p>Changes to Immigration Rules mean that from 1 April 2016 local welfare assistance constitutes 'public funds' so recourse to such assistance will breach the 'no recourse to public funds' law.</p> <p>It means that people who have 'no recourse to public funds' on their passports... will be breaking their 'leave to remain' in the country if they get help from the Newcastle crisis support scheme or supporting independence scheme.</p> <p>Local welfare assistance replaced parts of the discretionary Social Fund in 2013</p>	<p><a href="#">Statement of changes to the Immigration Rules: HC877, 11 March 2016.</a></p> <p>"if an application has been made for entry clearance or leave to enter or remain before 6 April 2016, the application will be decided in accordance with the Rules in force on 5 April 2016."</p>

<p><b>1 April 2016</b></p>	<p><b>The National Minimum Wage for those aged 25 and over to be increased to the 'National Living Wage' rate of £7.20 an hour</b></p> <p>The National Minimum Wage rates for others, will increase in October 2016. From April 2017, the government will align the National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage cycles so that both rates are amended in April each year.</p> <p>The permitted work earnings limit for claimants on Employment and Support Allowance is increased to £115.50 a week so that those working at least 16 hours a week on the living wage can still do permitted work (16 x £7.20 = £115.20).</p>	<p>Announced in the <a href="#">Summer Budget 2015</a> with further details in the <a href="#">Budget 2016</a></p> <p>See the Government <a href="#">National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage</a> page</p> <p>However, the £110 a week earnings limit for Carers Allowance has not (yet) been increased which means that those carers working 16 hours a week and now earning the new living wage will lose their Carers Allowance</p>
<p><b>1 April 2016</b></p>	<p><b>Possible reductions in Housing Benefit for those who take out or renew a social sector tenancy on or after 1 April 2016.</b></p> <p><b>In April 2019 those social sector tenants will see their Housing Benefit capped at the levels applied to those in the private sector.</b></p> <p>Housing Benefit helps tenants with their rent. For those in the private sector, this is called <a href="#">Local Housing Allowance</a> but it is capped depending on the family make up and location. These limits will be applied from <b>April 2019</b> to those <b>Housing Benefit</b> claimants who renew or take out a new YHN or housing association tenancy on or after <b>1 April 2016</b> and all <b>Universal Credit</b> claimants regardless of tenancy start date. For supported housing, local authorities will administer a top up fund to meet the shortfall.</p>	<p><a href="#">Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015</a> and the <a href="#">Budget 2016</a></p> <p><a href="#">DHP will be payable</a></p> <p><a href="#">Analysis has been provided to Parliament January 2016</a></p> <p><a href="#">Modelling impact by Nat Housing Federation</a></p> <p>The date of implementation was deferred from April 2018 to April 2019 and a top up fund for supported housing was announced in the <a href="#">Autumn Statement 2016</a></p> <p>Also see 1 April 2019</p>

<p><b>4 April 2016</b></p>	<p><b>Terminally ill people transferring to Personal Independence Payment</b></p> <p>New rules mean that most people who are classed as ‘terminally ill’ and are transferring from Disability Living Allowance to Personal Independence Payment will not have the minimum 28 days wait. This applies to the 99% of the people whose PIP will be higher than their DLA award.</p>	<p><a href="#">Link to the legislation explanation</a> and <a href="#">DWP guidance</a></p>
<p><b>6 April 2016</b></p>	<p><b>Single Tier flat rate “New Style” State Pension introduced</b></p> <p>To replace the basic and additional pensions for those who reach state pension age on or after 6 April 2016. (i.e. men born on or after 6 April 1951 and women born on or after 6 April 1953).</p> <p>Those reaching pension age before 6 April 2016 will remain on the current scheme (even if they defer claiming their pension until after 6 April 2016).</p> <p>The flat rate will start at £155.65 a week, which is just higher than the basic Pension Credit for a single person.</p> <p>The new state pension is based on the claimant’s National Insurance (NI) record. Satisfying 35 years’ contributions means a full pension. Satisfying 10 – 34 years will get them a proportion.</p> <p>People can be credited with NI contributions when they can’t work and for example, claim certain benefits.</p>	<p>Part of the ‘Triple guarantee’. From budget 2013 and the <a href="#">Pensions Act 2014</a></p> <p>More details on these websites: <a href="#">Age UK</a>, the <a href="#">Government</a> and <a href="#">Money Advice Service</a></p> <p>The <a href="#">Government say</a> that around three quarters of people will have notionally higher income under new state pension.</p> <p><a href="#">Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015</a> on 25 November 2015.</p> <p><a href="#">Check your National Insurance record online</a> or call HMRC on 0300 200 3500. People aged 50 or over can get a <a href="#">State Pension forecast</a> or ring 0345 3000 168</p>

<p><b>6 April 2016</b></p>	<p><b>Pension Credit reductions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Savings credit</b> is one part of Pension Credit for those who have small savings or an extra pension. Entitlement to savings credit ends for those who reach state pension age on or after 6 April 2016, which means men born on or after 6 April 1951 and women born on or after 6 April 1953. It also ends for ‘mixed age’ couples * unless one of them has continuously been on it since before 6 April 2016.</li> <li>• <b>Assessed income periods</b> (where increases in income or savings are ignored for a period following an award of Pension Credit) will be closed for new Pension Credit claimants and phased out for current claimants between 1 April 2019 and 14 July 2020 and will instead end at fixed dates between 14 July 2016 and 14 April 2018.</li> <li>• PC only paid up to for 4 weeks for those outside UK</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">SI.No.1529/2015</a> from legislation.gov.uk</p> <p>Also: <a href="#">Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015</a> on 25 November 2015.</p> <p>* ‘Mixed aged’ couple means one is below pension credit age and the other is above pension credit age.</p> <p>See the <a href="#">legislation enacting this change</a> and Feb 2019 <a href="#">DWP information sheet</a>. page 4</p>
<p><b>1 May 2016</b></p>	<p><b>Removal of the ‘family Premium’ in Housing Benefit</b></p> <p>This applies to new claimants or existing claimants who have a new first child or reclaim Housing Benefit.</p>	<p>Announced in the <a href="#">Summer Budget 2015</a></p> <p>The family premium is an extra element in HB for those with a child. Principally it is for those who do not get full ‘passported’ HB due to receipt of an income related benefit. Details in the <a href="#">legislation</a> and <a href="#">guidance</a>.</p>

<p><b>25 May 2016</b></p>	<p><b>The full Universal Credit system is rolled out to claimants in the area covered by Cathedral Square Jobcentre Plus office.</b></p> <p>The 'full service' roll out in this area will take place in three ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. If someone makes a claim for one of the 6 'legacy benefits' that Universal Credit is replacing, they will have to claim Universal Credit. * This will have to be <a href="#">online</a> but Jobcentre provide a helpline 0345 600 4272 - which is available Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm.</li> <li>2. If someone is already on one of the legacy benefits but has a change in circumstances that necessitates a new claim, they will be told to claim Universal Credit, but see our table on our <a href="#">Universal Credit webpage</a></li> <li>3. If someone is already on Universal Credit - because for example, they already had to claim it as a single person - they will be moved onto the full Universal Credit system at some stage - in the future.</li> </ol> <p>The Government say that after the transition process has completed in mid-2018, remaining existing claimants will be transferred ('migrated') to Universal Credit. <a href="#">This process will be completed by 2022</a>. This has slipped some years.</p> <p>* A caveat to 1. above is that new claims on or after 6 April 2017 for Universal Credit from families with more than two children will be directed to Tax Credits until 2018. <a href="#">More details on this delay, which was announced by the Work and Pensions Secretary to Parliament</a></p>	<p><a href="#">DWP details of the roll out</a> and <a href="#">their internal guidance</a>.</p> <p><a href="#">DWP evidence to the Public Accounts Committee 7 Dec 2015</a></p> <p><a href="#">More details on our Universal Credit webpage</a></p> <p>This is the list of 'legacy' benefits that Universal Credit is replacing:  Income-related Employment and Support Allowance  Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance  Income Support  Housing Benefit  Child Tax Credit &amp; Working Tax Credit</p>
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<p><b>25 June 2016</b></p>	<p><b>Personal Independence Payment (PIP) medical reassessments change</b>  PIP can be reassessed quite regularly with people being sent to face to face assessments to see if their condition has changed.</p> <p>From now, claimants asked to complete a shorter form to explain their disability (where they should include supporting evidence). Only if the decision maker cannot make a decision based on that will s/he then arrange a face to face assessment.</p>	<p>This follows feedback from claimants and representatives that under the existing process a face-to-face assessment isn't always necessary.</p> <p>The form is called 'How your disability affects you form' (AR1).</p>
<p><b>29 June 2016</b></p>	<p><b>Disability benefits PIP and DLA are no longer suspended for under 18 year olds going into hospital</b>  Normally, after someone has been receiving in-patient care in hospital their Personal Independence Payment (PIP) or Disability Living Allowance (DLA) is suspended after a certain period. For those aged under 16 the period is 84 days. For those aged 16 or over it's 28 days.</p> <p>Now for those who are under 18 when they enter hospital, their DLA or PIP is not suspended and continues.</p> <p>It is assumed therefore that Carers Allowance and associated premiums also continues so long as the other qualifying rules are satisfied.</p>	<p>Link to the legislation <a href="#">SI.No.556/2016</a> and the accompanying '<a href="#">Explanatory Memorandum</a>'.</p> <p>This follows the Supreme Court's judgement <a href="#">Cameron Mathieson v Secretary of State for Work and Pensions</a>.</p> <p>For more information see the DWP guidance <a href="#">DMG memo 14/16</a> and <a href="#">ADM memo 16/16</a>.</p>
<p><b>21 July 2016</b></p>	<p><b>Child Benefit and Guardian's Allowance can be paid into more types of accounts, such as Credit Unions</b>  This already applies to other social security benefits</p>	<p><a href="#">The new regulation</a> is available from <a href="#">legislation.gov.uk</a></p>

<p><b>28 July 2016</b></p>	<p><b>Going abroad for a bit</b>  Housing Benefit can be paid whilst temporarily away from home for up to 13 weeks or 52 weeks in limited circumstances. However for those who go abroad temporarily the period is reduced to 4 weeks. The 4 weeks limit is also applied to Pension Credit. Longer periods are allowed in various circumstances such as those going abroad for medical treatment, the death of a child or family member and for Housing Benefit only: fleeing domestic violence and member of the armed forces. Other exceptions also apply.</p>	<p>Delayed from April to May 2016 in the <a href="#">Budget 2016</a> and further delayed to Summer 2016 in DWP guidance <a href="#">HB bulletin G4/2016</a>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Link to the legislation</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">DWP guidance on how it applies to Housing Benefit</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">DWP guidance on how it applies to Pension Credit</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>31 July 2016</b> and each year</p>	<p><b>Tax Credits renewal - deadline</b>  This is the deadline for claimants to renew their Tax Credits award by. Otherwise their award may stop.</p>	<p><a href="#">More advice from LITRG</a></p>
<p><b>30 August 2016</b></p>	<p><b>Child staying on in education - deadline</b>  This is the deadline for claimants to let Child Tax Credits <u>and</u> Child Benefit offices know if their 16 year old child is staying on in certain education or training in order to continue receiving these benefits.</p>	<p>More details from Gov.uk about <a href="#">Child Tax Credits</a> and <a href="#">Child Benefit</a>.</p>
<p><b>October 2016</b></p>	<p><b>The National Minimum Wage rates from October 2016.</b>  This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 21 to 24 year olds (from £6.70 to £6.95 per hour)</li> <li>• 18 to 20 year olds (from £5.30 to £5.55 per hour)</li> <li>• 16 to 17 year olds (from £3.87 to £4.00 per hour)</li> <li>• apprentices (from £3.30 to £3.40 per hour)</li> </ul> <p>The government will align the National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage cycles so that both rates are amended in April each year. This will take effect from April 2017.</p>	<p>See the <a href="#">ACAS website for more details</a>.</p>
<p><b>1 November 2016</b></p>	<p><b>Help with Healthy Start under Universal Credit</b>  The rules for getting help with the Healthy Start Scheme food and vitamins under Universal Credit are introduced</p>	<p>The <a href="#">new rules</a>  Details from the <a href="#">Healthy Start website</a>.</p>

<p><b>Phased introduction, from 7 November and 26 December 2016</b></p>	<p><b>Household benefit cap lowered</b>  This means that more people will see their total benefits limited.</p> <p>The Government will introduce the cap in a phased way.</p> <p>The cap is the total amount of benefits that working age people can receive. This change reduces the ceiling from the previous weekly £500 to £385 for those with children or couples without children and from £350 to £258 for single people without children. The amounts are higher in London.</p> <p>A letter from the DWP to Local Authorities in July stated that “... the benefit cap changes will start to be implemented from 7 November 2016 and this will be managed over a number of weeks”. The new lower cap will apply on 7 November to those already capped. Those who are not capped will have the new lower cap applied at different dates depending where they live. In Newcastle, this will be from 26 December 2016.</p> <p><b>More exemptions</b>  From 7 November 2016 all households which include someone entitled to Carer’s Allowance,* the carer’s element of Universal Credit or Guardian’s Allowance are added to those who are exempt from the cap. Announced in the <a href="#">Budget 2016 para 2.73</a>. The current exemptions will continue to apply.</p>	<p>For more details, see for example, our <a href="#">July 2015 Benefit Bulletin</a> and <a href="#">DWP guidance</a>. Announced in the <a href="#">Summer Budget 2015</a></p> <p><a href="#">Government impact assessment</a></p> <p><a href="#">DWP guidance on the cap, including the exemptions</a></p> <p>The National Housing Federation <a href="#">calculate</a> that couples with more than two children would be affected. For example, a couple with three children paying average rent in a private North East property would have a shortfall of £33 a week for two bedrooms and £39 a week for three bedrooms and so on.</p> <p>* This includes those who have what is called an ‘underlying entitlement’ to Carers Allowance. This is where Carers Allowance is claimed but not awarded because another similar ‘earnings replacement’ benefit like Retirement Pension is being paid.</p> <p>New benefit cap and Universal Credit <a href="#">ADM memo 27/16</a> is available from gov.uk</p>
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<p><b>Early 2017</b></p>	<p><b>‘Tax Free Childcare’ replaces employer supported childcare vouchers – phased in</b>          Available to people who have an annual income under £150,000 and are not receiving help with childcare on Tax Credits or Universal Credit and other rules.</p>	<p><a href="#">Government press release March 2013</a></p> <p>More details from the <a href="#">Family and Childcare Trust</a> and in the <a href="#">Budget 2016</a></p> <p>More details on <a href="#">childcare help in Newcastle</a></p>
<p><b>2017</b></p>	<p>From 2017, local areas <b>including the North East</b>, “will work with the DWP to co-design employment support for harder-to-help claimants”.</p>	<p>See <a href="#">Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015</a> (paragraph 2.55) on 25 November 2015.</p>
<p><b>8 February 2017</b></p>	<p><b>The full Universal Credit system is rolled out to claimants in the area covered by Coquet House Jobcentre Plus office (Newcastle East).</b></p> <p>See 25 May 2016 for details of how this roll out of ‘full service’ Universal Credit will work.</p>	<p>See the <a href="#">statement to Parliament by the Work and Pensions Secretary on the roll out</a> and the <a href="#">latest list of the roll out by DWP</a>.</p> <p>More details in our <a href="#">Universal Credit web page</a></p>
<p><b>15 March 2017</b></p>	<p><b>The full Universal Credit system is rolled out to claimants in the area covered by Condercum House Jobcentre Plus office (Newcastle West). <i>This completes the roll out of Full Service Universal Credit to all three Newcastle jobcentres.</i></b></p> <p>See 25 May 2016 for details of how this roll out of ‘full service’ Universal Credit will work.</p>	<p>See the <a href="#">statement to Parliament by the Work and Pensions Secretary on the roll out</a> and the <a href="#">latest list of the roll out by DWP</a>.</p> <p>More details in our <a href="#">Universal Credit web page</a></p>
<p><b>16 March 2017</b></p>	<p><b>Personal Independence Payment criteria change</b></p> <p>The government have changed the PIP criteria to reverse the effect of two court decisions in order to return the rules to their original intention.</p>	<p>See the <a href="#">DWP press release</a> and the <a href="#">legislation</a> which brings in these changes.</p> <p><a href="#">See the PIP factsheet from Disability Rights UK which also describes these changes.</a></p> <p>See also a report for the debate in parliament on these <a href="#">Changes to Personal Independence Payment regulations</a></p>

<p><b>31 March 2017</b></p>	<p><b>Existing Work Programme contracts to come to end</b></p> <p>The <b>Work and Health Programme</b> (WHP) for those with health conditions or disabilities and unemployed for over two years - will replace the Work Programme and Work Choice but not until 'late, or October 2017'. In the meantime Jobcentre Plus will support all other JSA claimants up to their eligibility on WHP.</p> <p>The DWP said the budget for the WHP will be about £130million by 2020, which compares with the <a href="#">£2.8bn cost</a> of the Work Programme between 2011 and 2016.</p> <p>The LGA have said that: "Through devolution deals, the Government has committed to work closely with seven areas. Each will develop Employment and Skills strategies and contract package areas (CPAs) will be aligned to the geographic areas. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• co-commission WHP with Greater Manchester and London</li> <li>• co-design WHP with the combined authorities of Sheffield, Tees Valley, Liverpool, West Midlands, and the <b>North East</b>." </li></ul>	<p>Announced in the <a href="#">Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015</a>.</p> <p>More details and commentary in the <a href="#">Learning and Work Institute</a> website, <a href="#">reform</a>, <a href="#">PublicFinance</a>, <a href="#">TES press release</a>, <a href="#">Vonne on the WHP in the North East</a> and an <a href="#">LGA background note</a>.</p>
<p><b>April 2017</b></p>	<p><b>The Government's plans for higher income social housing tenants to pay market rents (called 'pay to Stay') that was due to be introduced now has been withdrawn</b></p> <p>The plan – which underwent various changes - was that social landlords could charge higher earnings market or near market rents.</p>	<p>On 21 November 2016, the Government announced that the mandatory pay to stay scheme would not be introduced and that local authorities and housing associations "will continue to have local discretion." <a href="#">Parliamentary briefing</a></p> <p>Originally announced in the <a href="#">Summer Budget 2015</a>, revised in the <a href="#">Budget 2016</a> para 2.305. See a <a href="#">Parliamentary research briefing</a> and <a href="#">Insidehousing</a>.</p>
<p><b>1 April 2017</b></p>	<p>The government will <b>align the National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage cycles</b> so that both rates are amended in April each year from April 2017 rather than in October and April.</p>	<p>Announced in the <a href="#">Budget 2016</a> para 2.66 <a href="#">The new rates from GOV.UK</a></p>

<p><b>1 April 2017</b></p>	<p>In March 2018, the Government announce this measure will be withdrawn. Budget 2018 announced this would be on 31 December 2018</p> <p><b>Removal of housing costs help in Universal Credit for new claims from out of work 18 to 21 year olds, who are single and subject to ‘all work related requirements’</b></p> <p>Exemptions apply such as being ‘vulnerable’, unable to live with parents, disabled, have children, is earning enough or been working in last 6 months up to a certain level (in which case a limited 6 months exemption applies), or in <a href="#">supported accommodation</a> (for which Housing Benefit is still payable). The full list of exemptions are in the ‘explanatory memorandum’ to the <a href="#">regulation</a>.</p> <p>It applies to new claimants and not for example those already on Housing Benefit or UC housing costs.</p> <p>However, if there is a break in claim, the housing costs will be removed. The ‘explanatory memorandum’ says that in such cases and where an exemption does not apply, the claimant should be able to get work - with support from the ‘youth obligation’ or return home.</p> <p>The ‘<b>youth obligation</b>’ for under 21 year olds with stronger ‘day one’ work requirements and an increase in apprenticeships, which <a href="#">according to Homeless Link</a> will be introduced in ‘<a href="#">full service</a>’ <a href="#">Universal Credit areas</a>. Further details of the ‘youth obligation’ by Employment Minister Damian Hinds <a href="#">in a letter to the Work and Pensions Committee</a></p>	<p>29.3.18, Work and Pensions Secretary Esther McVey <a href="#">written ministerial statement</a> <a href="#">Chair of the Work and Pensions Committee</a> <a href="#">comments</a></p> <p><a href="#">Commons Library explanation</a></p> <p><b>Earlier information on the original plan:</b></p> <p>Announced in the <a href="#">Summer Budget 2015</a> and laid in regulation <a href="#">SI.No.252/2017</a></p> <p><a href="#">Explanatory Memorandum</a> to the regulations</p> <p>Useful <a href="#">Parliamentary briefing</a>, includes the exemptions that will apply and includes comment on the potential impact of the measure.</p> <p><a href="#">DWP guidance Memo ADM 6/17</a> attempts to explain the exemptions and uses case law examples.</p> <p>In 2015, the government said it will <a href="#">not apply to those in supported accommodation</a>.</p> <p>This measure went ahead despite <a href="#">reports of pressure on the government to abandon it</a></p> <p>On 16 March 2017 a Parliamentary scrutiny committee <a href="#">referred the regulations for the special attention of the House of Commons</a> following a submission from “Shelter raising some concerns about how the policy will operate in practice, particularly the “Catch 22” situation of those who cannot receive benefit</p>
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<p><b>1 April 2017</b></p>	<p><b>Benefit cap earning exemption – amount increased!</b></p> <p>The earnings exemption from the benefit cap in Universal Credit is changed from the monthly set amount of £430 to 16 times the national living wage hourly rate converted to monthly rate = £520 a month</p>	<p><a href="#">Regulation 2017 SI No. 138</a></p>
<p><b>1 April 2017</b></p>	<p><b>Bedroom Tax change</b></p> <p>The ‘spare room subsidy’ for social housing, also known as the ‘bedroom tax’, reduces the amount of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit housing element by 14% if you are deemed to have one spare bedroom. It is 25% for two or more spare bedrooms. There are various rules about how bedrooms are counted.</p> <p>From 1 April 2017, <a href="#">new rules</a> allow for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an extra bedroom for a disabled child or non-dependant needing overnight care by a non-resident person or persons</li> <li>• an extra bedroom for a severely disabled couple who can’t share a bedroom</li> </ul> <p>This was brought in due to a <a href="#">Supreme Court</a> decision which found that not to allow such people a bedroom was unjustified discrimination.</p> <p>Clarification of how this is applied by Local Authorities can be found in the DWP guidance <a href="#">HB Circular A3/2017</a> and <a href="#">ADM Memo 5/17</a>. For example, the kinds of disability benefits required and how to consider whether a couple might need a spare bedroom.</p>	<p>Legislation for <a href="#">Housing Benefit</a> and for <a href="#">Universal Credit</a>.</p> <p>In November <a href="#">HB Circular A3/2017</a> said new regulations would be laid following the judgment of the Supreme Court in <a href="#">[2016] UKSC 58</a>.</p> <p>More details from <a href="#">Carers UK</a></p>

<p><b>3 April 2017</b></p>	<p><b>The 52-week limit for the ‘permitted work’ rule is removed</b></p> <p>This allows people on the sick such as those on Employment and Support Allowance to try out work for an indefinite period. NB their earnings cannot exceed £115.50 a week for 2016/17 and £120 a week for 2017/18.</p> <p>Also announced, an <b>additional £15 million each year to help those on the sick</b> on Employment and Support Allowance and equivalent in Universal Credit with the costs of preparing for work and improve the process for reassessing claimants with deteriorating conditions in the work related activity group.</p>	<p>Announced in the <a href="#">Budget 2016</a> para 2.70 and enacted in regulation <a href="#">SI 2017/205</a></p> <p>See <a href="#">DWP guidance</a> on this change and see <a href="#">more details about permitted work</a>.</p> <p>Please note, there is no permitted work rule in Universal Credit, which does not have an hours of work limit.</p>
<p><b>3 April 2017</b></p>	<p><b>Loss of £29 a week for those on the sick claiming ESA</b></p> <p>Removal of the ‘work related activity’ component in Employment Support Allowance and its equivalent in Universal Credit for new claimants.</p> <p>Existing claimants receiving the component can continue to receive it but can lose it if reassessed. In which case a mandatory reconsideration followed by an appeal may be necessary.</p> <p>Those in the Support Group will continue to get the support component and its equivalent in Universal Credit.</p> <p>See also the <a href="#">changes</a> to ESA exempt work and hardship payments</p> <p><b>The additional related (hidden) cut to under 25 year olds has been reversed.</b> <a href="#">Disability Rights UK explanation</a></p>	<p>Announced in the <a href="#">Summer Budget 2015</a> and enacted in regulation <a href="#">SI 2017/204</a>. <a href="#">Details explained in DWP guidance</a></p> <p><a href="#">Parliamentary report</a> March 2017 The Government have said that <a href="#">existing claimants who undergo the ESA assessment (work capability assessment) after April 2017 will continue to get the component</a></p> <p>In November 2016, a <a href="#">House of Commons debate</a> unanimously agreed that this change should be delayed but it has continued.</p> <p><a href="#">Briefing to Parliament 23 January 2017 explaining the rule</a></p>

<p><b>3 April 2017</b></p>	<p><b>Increased conditionality extended to those with younger children</b></p> <p>Parents claiming Universal Credit whose youngest child turns 3 years old will have to be fully available for work and work activity, and those whose youngest child turns 2 years old should take part in work preparation as well as work focused interviews.</p>	<p>Announced in the <a href="#">Summer Budget 2015</a> and enacted in regulation <a href="#">SI 2017/204</a>.</p> <p>To understand work related requirements and avoid sanctions, see our sanctions <a href="#">leaflet</a> and <a href="#">training</a>.</p>
<p><b>6 April 2017</b> Delayed from 2016</p>	<p><b>Bereavement Support Payment</b></p> <p>Replacing the Bereavement Payment scheme, the new bereavement support payment is set at two rates -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A standard rate for those who do not qualify for the higher rate – with monthly payments of £100 for a period of 18 months following the date of death, plus an extra payment of £2,500 for the first month, and</li> <li>• A higher rate for pregnant women or those entitled to child benefit – with monthly payments of £350 for a period of 18 months following the date of death, plus an extra payment of £3,500 for the first month.</li> </ul> <p>Key points include the loss of the Widowed Parents Allowance for those with children, the replacement of the initial lump sum payment, the continuation of help for the 18 months – which unlike present payments will be ignored by <a href="#">Universal Credit</a> and the <a href="#">benefit cap</a>, and a simplification of the national insurance contribution conditions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regulations <a href="#">SI.No.297/2017</a> and <a href="#">SR.No.44/2017</a> bring into force <a href="#">section 30 of the Pensions Act 2014</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Guidance</a> about how it is treated as income by Housing Benefit (HB Circular A6/2017)</li> </ul> <p><b>Background:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a <a href="#">Parliamentary research briefing</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Consultation ended 2011</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Parliamentary report 2013</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Part of the Pensions Act 2014</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">2017 date from 2014 autumn statement</a>.</li> <li>• <a href="#">June 2016, House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee investigation and reports on Bereavement Benefit proposals which it 'broadly welcomes'</a></li> </ul>



<p><b>6 April 2017</b></p>	<p><b>Major reductions in Tax Credits and Universal Credit</b></p> <p><b>2 child limit</b></p> <p><b>For Child Tax Credit (CTC):</b></p> <p>The amount paid for children in Child Tax Credit (CTC) (about £53 a week per child) is <b>restricted to two children</b> – unless they were born before 6 April 2017 or an exemption applies - see below.</p> <p>Put another way, this element will no longer be awarded for third and subsequent children born on or after 6 April 2017 unless exempt. This will apply where separate people form a couple – they will only receive the element for children born before 6 April 2017.</p> <p><b>For Universal Credit:</b></p> <p><b>People who claim Universal Credit on or after 6 April 2017 and have three or more children</b> will be told they cannot claim Universal Credit - <i>unless they have been on UC in the last six months or claim as a single person after splitting up less than a month ago.</i> Instead, for an interim period, they will be directed to claim the benefits that Universal Credit is replacing such as Tax Credits and Housing Benefit and Jobseekers Allowance (called 'legacy benefits'). In which case, the above rule for Child Tax Credit will apply.*</p> <p><b>Then from 'end of January 2019' (date of November 2018 changed by autumn Budget 2017),</b> Universal Credit claims will be taken from people with three or more children, except they will probably not get an amount for more than two children, regardless of child's date of birth (unless for example, the child is born before 6 April 2017 and they have been on UC or legacy benefits in last 6 months or an exemption applies).</p> <p><b>Those already on UC at 6 April 2017:</b></p>	<p><b>Announced</b> in the <a href="#">Summer Budget 2015</a> (para 2.103) and enacted in the <a href="#">Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016</a> (section 13 – for CTC and section 14 for UC).</p> <p><b>Regulations</b>, which also include the exceptions for <a href="#">Child Tax Credits</a> and for <a href="#">Universal Credit</a></p> <p><b>Government guidance</b> on the UC change:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detailed for '<a href="#">stakeholders</a>' and</li> <li>• Less detailed for <a href="#">the public</a> which includes the form to complete to prove rape.</li> <li>• Form to claim exemption for "...<a href="#">a child conceived without your consent</a>."</li> <li>• <a href="#">Support for a child who is informally living with you</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Guidance to Housing Benefit staff</a></li> <li>• The government say additional information will be provided about the rules at the end of the November 2018 nearer the time.</li> <li>• <a href="#">DWP slides</a></li> <li>• Internal DWP guidance <a href="#">Memo ADM 10-17</a></li> </ul> <p><b>DWP guidance – for claimants and professionals e.g. social workers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Support for a child who is informally living with you</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Support for a child conceived without your consent</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Universal Credit and families with more than 2 children: information for claimants</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Other guidance and commentary</b></p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• who already have three or more children are not affected unless they have a 6 month break in claim.</li> <li>• who then have a third or subsequent child on or after 6 April 2017 will only receive UC for the first two children unless an exemption applies - as described below.</li> <li>• However, if people become responsible for a child born before 6 April 2017, through adoption or as part of a friend and family care arrangement, and they already have a second child born on or after 6 April 2017 they won't automatically get an extra amount for the new child added.</li> </ul> <p>The <b>disabled child element, help with childcare costs and free school meals</b> however, will still be payable even if it is the one born before 6 April 2017 that satisfies the rules for them.</p> <p><b>Exemptions</b> to the general rule restricting the child element for a third or subsequent child include when the child is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• born in a multiple birth e.g. twins (the first born will not be paid for if the claimant already has two or more children but all others in the multiple birth will be);</li> <li>• adopted - in some cases;</li> <li>• living with family or friends as their carers, such as 'kinship care'; or</li> <li>• likely to have been conceived as a result of non-consensual sex, or at a time when the claimant was subject to ongoing control or coercion by the other parent of the child.</li> </ul> <p><b>The family element withdrawn</b></p> <p>In CTC the family element (worth £545 a year) and the equivalent in Universal Credit (the first child element) is withdrawn for those who start a family on or after 6 April 2017. Those who had children before that date continue to get it.</p> <p><b>Other benefits</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Revenuebenefits</a> blog and the changes in their <a href="#">Child Tax Credit</a> and <a href="#">Universal Credit</a> sections</li> <li>• See our <a href="#">web page on Universal Credit</a> and <a href="#">benefit bulletins</a> for updated information</li> </ul> <p><b>Impact</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These two reforms are targeted at families with children and make savings (benefit reductions) of £2,040m in GB, which extrapolates to £9.13m in Newcastle.</li> <li>• Impact from <a href="#">Parliamentary briefing</a> pages 33-34.</li> <li>• According to the <a href="#">Institute for Fiscal Studies</a> with such changes, the government will reach its target of <a href="#">£12 billion cuts to welfare by 2020</a>.</li> </ul> <p>* <a href="#">The delay (or redirection to legacy benefits) was announced by Work and Pensions minister Damian Green to Parliament</a> and incorporated into the above legislation.</p> <p>See also the <a href="#">Westminster Hall debate</a> from Hansard.</p> <p><b>Consultation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Universal Credit and Child Tax Credit: exceptions to the 2-child limit</a> by government</li> <li>• <a href="#">Exceptions to the limiting of the individual Child Element of Child Tax Credit and the Child Element of Universal Credit to a maximum of two children</a> from Children's Society</li> </ul>
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	In Housing Benefit, the family premium was withdrawn for new claims in May 2016. The two child limit is also mirrored in Housing Benefit and other legacy benefits.	
<b>10 April 2017</b>	<b>Earners allowed to keep more Universal Credit</b>  From now a claimant will lose 63 pence instead of 65 pence of Universal Credit for every pound he or she earns.	Announced in the <a href="#">Autumn Statement 2016</a>  Laid in legislation <a href="#">SI.No.348/2017</a> and DWP guidance <a href="#">ADM memo 4/17</a>
<b>10 April 2017</b>	<b>Carers Allowance earnings rule increase</b> One rule for Carers Allowance is that you are not earning too much. This amount is increased from £110 to £116 a week.  For example, if you work 16 hours a week at the national minimum wage (£7.50 for those aged 25 and over) it takes you above the £116.	The legislation: <a href="#">SI.No.386/2017</a>  See this guidance from Low Incomes Tax Reform Group on <a href="#">what does and does not count as earnings for Carers Allowance</a> .  See the other updating to <a href="#">Tax Credits</a> and <a href="#">benefits</a> . Also in <a href="#">guidance</a> to Housing Benefit sections. The <a href="#">Joseph Rowntree Foundation report</a> that the freeze of Tax Credits and working age benefit rates has contributed towards an increase in numbers living below the Minimum Income Standard.
<b>31 July 2017</b> and each year	<b>Tax Credits renewal - deadline</b> This is the deadline for claimants to renew their Tax Credits award by. Otherwise their award may stop.	<a href="#">More advice from LITRG</a>
<b>1 August 2017</b>	<b>Free school meals and Universal Credit in Scotland</b> Earnings threshold introduced to get free school meals for those on Universal Credit.  A threshold has not yet been introduced for the rest of GB so simply being entitled to Universal Credit gives entitlement to Free school meals.	<a href="#">Legislation</a>  <a href="#">Scottish Government website</a>

<p><b>September 2017</b></p>	<p><b>Free childcare increased</b></p> <p>Free childcare during term time for all three and four year olds increases from 15 to 30 hours per week for parents who work and earn at a certain level.</p> <p>The government say this is “worth around £5,000 a year per child. The Government will implement this extension of free hours early in some local areas from September 2016.”</p>	<p>See</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Parliamentary document</a></li> <li>• the <a href="#">Budget 2016</a></li> <li>• the <a href="#">Childcare Bill: policy statement</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Newcastle City Council Childcare information</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>29 September 2017</b></p>	<p>Work Capability Assessment by a health professional will not apply to those with greater health problems in the following way:</p> <p>Those in the ESA support group and equivalent in Universal Credit who have a work capability assessment after 29 September 2017 will be told they will not be reassessed again if they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have a severe, lifelong disability, illness or health condition</li> <li>• are unlikely to ever be able to move into work</li> </ul>	<p>For more details, see '<a href="#">Employment and Support Allowance and Universal Credit: changes to the Work Capability Assessment</a>' from gov.uk and <a href="#">the guidance on the new criteria</a> from <a href="#">Disability Rights UK</a>.</p>
<p><b>23 October 2017</b></p>	<p><b>Help for sanctioned claimants who are homeless or have a mental health condition</b></p> <p>Help for sanctioned claimants who are homeless or have a mental health condition Claimants on certain benefits are expected to take part in some level of work related activity. Failure to comply can mean a cut in benefit called a 'sanction'. From 23 October 2017, sanctioned Jobseeker Allowance claimants who are homeless* or have a mental health condition will be added to other vulnerable groups who <a href="#">have immediate access to hardship payments</a>, rather than waiting two weeks.</p>	<p>See <a href="#">the rule</a> which brings in this change and the <a href="#">explanation</a>.</p> <p>* <a href="#">Replying to the SSAC, the DWP said</a> the definition was broad enough to capture 'sofa surfers' and will include such examples in their internal guidance.</p> <p><a href="#">Internal guidance</a> includes advice on mental impairment</p>

<p><b>Autumn 2017</b></p>	<p><b>Work and Health Programme to replace the Work Programme and Work Choice</b></p> <p>Much of the detail is yet to be decided on the replacement for these two schemes which support the unemployed and sick back into and in work</p>	<p>Announced in the <a href="#">Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015</a>.</p> <p>More details in the <a href="#">Learning and Work Institute</a> website, <a href="#">Guardian summary</a>, a <a href="#">Parliamentary briefing (Dec 2016)</a> and the <a href="#">Work and Pensions Committee</a> view. <a href="#">DWP press release 2016</a></p>
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**2018**

<p><b>1 January 2018</b></p>	<p><b>No new ‘live service’ claims for Universal Credit</b></p> <p>‘Live service’ is a limited kind of Universal Credit which has been available to new claims from single people. No new claims for it will be possible from 1 January 2019. Existing recipients will continue to get it but until ‘full service’ Universal Credit is introduced in an area, any new claims will instead have to be made for ‘legacy benefits’ (which are the benefits that are being replaced by Universal Credit).</p>	<p>For more details see the <a href="#">Autumn Budget 2017</a> web page and the <a href="#">further statement</a> by David Gauke Secretary of State for Work and Pensions in the House of Commons.</p> <p>Internal DWP guidance explaining the change:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">HB Bulletin U4/2017</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Memo ADM 1/18</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>January 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Universal Credit advanced payments</b></p> <p>Advanced payments of Universal Credit are loans that can be paid if there is a delay in the Universal Credit payment which is causing financial hardship for example, during a new claim.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From January 2018, claimants can get a full months’ worth of Universal Credit within five working days</li> <li>• In the meantime, from December, claimants can get 50% of their Universal Credit</li> <li>• From Spring 2019, people will be able to request an advice payment online</li> <li>• The recovery period can be extended from 6 to 12 months - if this is what a claimant wants</li> </ul>	<p>For more details see the <a href="#">Autumn Budget 2017</a> web page and the <a href="#">further statement</a> by David Gauke Secretary of State for Work and Pensions in the House of Commons.</p> <p><a href="#">DWP guidance</a> following regulations</p>
<p><b>14 February 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Seven waiting days in Universal Credit removed</b></p> <p>Introduced on 3 August 2015, some new claims to Universal Credit claimants had to wait seven days before any entitlement began. This has been removed.</p>	<p>Announced in <a href="#">autumn 2017 budget</a></p> <p><a href="#">DWP guidance</a> following regulations</p>

<p><b>20 March 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Government ‘Payment Exception Service’ replaces the Simple Payment service</b>  Claimants who are unable to open a bank, building society, Post Office or credit union account may receive their benefit payments by the ‘Payment Exception Service’. This replaced the ‘Simple Payments’ service.</p> <p>People will still receive payment the same way (SMS text or card) and will continue to be paid through PayPoint outlets. “New customers who are unable to open and / or manage a bank or other account will be paid by the HM Government Payment Service from 1 February 2018. They will be given the option to be paid by text or pdf email containing a voucher or card.”</p>	<p>For further details, see the <a href="#">gov.uk webpage on this new service</a> and also see the Citizens Advice webpage on <a href="#">Payment of benefits and tax credits</a> and the DWP letter which is reproduced in an appendix to the <a href="#">March 2018 Benefit Bulletin</a></p>
<p><b>April 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Benefit uprating</b>  Most Social Security benefits from 9 April 2018</p> <p>Notable changes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Carers Allowance earning limit which prevents a claim increases from £116 to £120 per week</li> <li>• The basic and new state pension will be increased by the government’s ‘triple lock’ commitment</li> <li>• Benefits linked to the additional costs of disability, and for carers, are increased by the annual rise in prices</li> <li>• The majority of working-age benefits have been frozen at their 2015/2016 levels for four years under the <i>Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016</i>.</li> </ul>	<p>Social Security Benefits: <a href="#">SI.No.281/2018</a> and <a href="#">SI.No.332/2018</a> from legislation.gov.uk  Housing Benefit: <a href="#">HB Circular A10/2017</a> from gov.uk</p> <p>Tax Credits and Guardians Allowance: <a href="#">SI.No.344/2018</a> from legislation.gov.uk</p> <p>Carers allowance: <a href="#">SI.No.280/2018</a> from legislation.gov.uk</p> <p>See the <a href="#">written statement to the House of Commons</a> and the <a href="#">proposed benefit and pension rates 2018 to 2019</a> available from gov.uk</p>

<p><b>April 2018</b> <i>Delayed till September 2018</i></p>	<p><b>Help to save</b> Designed to help people on low income save more, with an additional contribution from Government.</p> <p>A full rollout of the scheme has been due to be implemented “by April 2018 at the latest”, but this has now been delayed until September 2018. The HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) said trial period started in January 2018. Delay reported in <a href="#">BBC</a> and <a href="#">Moneywise</a></p>	<p>Announced in the Budget 2016 <a href="#">IFS report 15 August 2016</a> including lowered costs</p> <p>Details of scheme from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <a href="#">government</a> on gov.uk</li> <li>• <a href="#">The Money Advice Service</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>April 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Class 2 National insurance contributions paid by self-employed abolished</b> The government will reform Class 4 NICs, so that self-employed individuals continue to build entitlement to the State Pension and other contributory benefits.</p>	<p>See para 1.166 in the <a href="#">Budget 2016</a></p>
<p>1 April 2018</p>	<p><b>Council Tax Reduction Scheme changes to a different system</b> The Council have changed the support that can be provided. For example the amount of support people get depends on what income or benefit band they fit in, how savings and other incomes are taken into account (e.g. disability benefits are ignored as income) and a flat rate deduction for non-dependants.</p>	<p>See the Council’s webpage explaining the <a href="#">new 2018/19 scheme</a></p>
<p><b>1 April 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Free school meals – new Universal Credit earnings limit</b> Following a consultation, the government decided to introduce an earnings threshold from 1 April 2018, where anyone earning £7,400 a year net or more will not be able to claim Free School Meals. Until that date, anyone receiving Universal Credit is able to claim Free School Meals regardless of how much they earn. Plus their entitlement to Free School Meals will be protected up to at least 2022, even if their earnings rise above that threshold.</p>	<p>For more details on the new rules see the <a href="#">consultation and the government response</a> and the <a href="#">legislation</a>.</p> <p><a href="#">Guidance and protections</a></p> <p>Research by <a href="#">IFS</a></p>

<p><b>2 April 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Funeral Expenses Payments Scheme improvements</b></p> <p>People on certain means tested benefits like Income Support or Universal Credit can get some help towards funeral costs they may be responsible for. Here is a list of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting evidence for a funeral payment application can be made electronically</li> <li>• The time for claiming a payment is extended from 3 to 6 months, and</li> <li>• The contributions from charities, friends and relatives towards the cost of the funeral from the payment will now be ignored</li> <li>• A shorter application form for children’s funerals</li> </ul>	<p>Legislation: <a href="#">SI No.61/2018</a></p> <p>Government guidance: <a href="#">DMG Memo 3/18</a> and <a href="#">ADM Memo 7/18</a></p> <p>More details on the <a href="#">Funeral Expenses Payment</a> scheme</p>
<p><b>6 April 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Sure Start Maternity Grant improvement</b></p> <p>This grant gives £500 for people on certain benefits towards the costs of a new baby unless there is another child under 16 in the household – although exceptions apply.</p> <p>However, a new exception is allowed if the older child is not the birth child of the claimant or their partner at the time of the claim and that child was over 12 months old when the claimant first became responsible for them. This will help where the older child is adopted or in a non-parental care arrangement.</p> <p>The amendment also means that claimants who receive DWP loans for mortgage interest only, can qualify for a Sure Start Maternity Grant.</p>	<p>See the <a href="#">The Loans for Mortgage Interest and Social Fund Maternity Grant (Amendment) Regulations 2018</a> SI No.307</p> <p>More on the <a href="#">Sure Start Maternity Grant</a> from gov.uk</p> <p>See also the extension of the time limit for claiming this grant to six months from 18 October 2018</p>



<p><b>6 April 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Help with mortgage interest for benefit claimants ends on 5<sup>th</sup> April and changes to the offer of a repayable loan from a third party lender (private company) on 6<sup>th</sup> April</b></p> <p>The loans are secured against the claimant's property and have to be repaid once the property is sold or transferred and have to reapply for a loan for any new property*. Help for existing claimants also stops and they are invited to request this help.</p> <p>* On 12 June 2019, the government <a href="#">announced</a> that 'disabled people and others' will be able to continue their existing loan.</p>	<p>Announced in the <a href="#">Summer Budget 2015</a></p> <p>See the <a href="#">new rules</a>, the <a href="#">updated guidance</a> on the gov.uk page and our <a href="#">changes for housing related benefits</a> web page.</p> <p>Amendment regulations <a href="#">SI.No.307/2018</a> is available from legislation.gov.uk</p> <p>Government guidance: <a href="#">DMG Memo 5/18</a>, <a href="#">ADM Memo 8/18</a> and <a href="#">ADM Memo 9/18</a></p>
<p><b>11 April 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Temporary accommodation and Universal Credit</b></p> <p>A problem with Universal Credit being paid monthly was that those staying in temporary accommodation less than that were not getting any help with the rent. To fix this, the government have decided that from April 2018 people can claim Housing Benefit for periods in temporary accommodation - just like those in supported accommodation and other 'specified accommodation.</p>	<p>For more details see the <a href="#">Autumn Budget 2017</a> web page and the <a href="#">further statement</a> by David Gauke Secretary of State for Work and Pensions in the House of Commons.</p> <p>DWP guidance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Memo ADM 4-18</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">UC Bulletin UC1/2017</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">HB Circular A2/2018</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>11 April 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Housing Benefit two-week run-on for new Universal Credit claimants from April 2018</b></p> <p>When people who are on Housing Benefit claim Universal Credit, their Housing Benefit stops and the inbuilt delay in waiting for their first payment of Universal Credit can cause problems with rent not being paid. From April 2018, they will receive the equivalent of two additional weeks of Housing Benefit early on in their Universal Credit claim.</p>	<p>For more details see the <a href="#">Autumn Budget 2017</a> web page and the <a href="#">further statement</a> by David Gauke Secretary of State for Work and Pensions in the House of Commons.</p> <p>DWP guidance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Memo ADM 4-18</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">HB Circular A2/2018</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">HB Circular G5/2018</a></li> </ul>

<p><b>31 August 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Closure of Newcastle West Jobcentre, Condercum House, West Road</b></p> <p>The work is taken over by Newcastle City Jobcentre, Cathedral Square, Newcastle City Centre.</p> <p>This date was changed from 15 December 2017, March 2018 and sometime in May 2018.</p>	<p>See the Government <a href="#">update on the future of DWP jobcentres</a>. The Minister for Welfare Delivery, Caroline Nokes MP <a href="#">described the support</a> that would be available.</p> <p>See our page on <a href="#">benefit office contact details</a> for further information</p>
<p><b>September 2018</b> Delayed from April 2018</p>	<p><b>Help to save scheme</b></p> <p>Certain claimants can get up to 50p for every £1 they save.</p> <p>It is available to people entitled to Working Tax Credits or Universal Credit - earning £542.88 a month or more. After two and four years, you get a payment of up to 50% of what you have saved. The account lasts for four years and if it combines with other savings to reach £6,000 or more it can reduce your Universal Credit.</p>	<p>Announced in the Budget 2016 and see the <a href="#">IFS report 15 August 2016</a></p> <p>Details of scheme from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <a href="#">government</a> on gov.uk</li> <li>• <a href="#">The Money Advice Service</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Contact</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">OBR</a> "Our October forecast assumed 195,000 accounts would be opened by the end of 2018-19, but by the end of January there were only 90,450 live accounts. We have therefore lowered our forecast for spending on top-ups by around 50 per cent from 2020-21 onwards, when the first accounts mature.</li> </ul>
<p><b>20 September 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Submit your Personal Independence Payment appeal online</b></p> <p>People living in Yorkshire/Humber and North East England areas appealing against PIP decisions, can now do so online via <a href="https://www.gov.uk/appeal-benefit-decision/submit-appeal">https://www.gov.uk/appeal-benefit-decision/submit-appeal</a></p> <p>If you want to appeal other benefits, you can download the appeal form from this website to complete and send by post as normal.</p>	<p><a href="#">More details from HM Courts &amp; Tribunals Service news item</a> and <a href="#">a speech by the Senior President of Tribunals</a></p>

<p><b>18 October 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Sure Start Maternity Grant</b> The time for claiming this payment is extended from three to six months</p>	<p><a href="#">View the amendments</a> and the DWP guidance <a href="#">ADM Memo 20/18</a> and <a href="#">DMG Memo 13/18</a></p>
<p><b>November 2018</b> <i>Now February 2019</i></p>	<p>This was the date when the two-child policy – already introduced for Child Tax Credits from April 2017 – was to be introduced for Universal Credit claims.  However, this has been moved to 1 February 2019 by the Autumn Budget 2017</p>	<p>For more details see the <a href="#">Autumn Budget 2017</a> web page and the <a href="#">further statement</a> by David Gauke Secretary of State for Work and Pensions in the House of Commons and the 1 February 2019 entry below.</p>
<p><b>28 November 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Two child limit – kinship carers exception – date given</b>  The ‘two child limit’ was introduced from April 2017 where benefits like Child Tax Credits would not be paid for a third or more children, except in a limited set of exceptions, including the ‘rape clause’. From this date, nonparental carers and adopters will be added to the list of those who are fully exempt from the ‘two child limit.’</p>	<p>Date announced in the <a href="#">Budget 2018</a> View the regulations <a href="#">SI.No.2018/1129</a> and <a href="#">SI.No.2018/1130</a> covering Tax Credits and see a <a href="#">summary by Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG)</a>.</p>
<p><b>6 December 2018</b></p>	<p><b>Age for claiming Attendance Allowance and Personal Independence Payment is changing</b>  From now the qualifying age to claim Attendance Allowance is ‘State Pension age’. Likewise, the date for claiming Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is up to the day before your State Pension age.  So, as State Pension age depends on your date of birth and is also rising, <b>in order to know whether you should be claiming Personal Independence Payment or Attendance Allowance</b>, you will need to check your State Pension age on the <a href="#">online calculator</a> from gov.uk.</p>	<p>The law on this is in section 83 of the <a href="#">Welfare Reform Act 2012</a> and section 64(1) of the <a href="#">Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992</a>. Here is a <a href="#">timetable</a> from gov.uk showing all the various changes to State Pension ages, depending on date of birth.  See also details from <a href="#">Parkinson’s website</a>.</p>

<b>31 December 2018</b>	<b>Universal Credit housing costs reinstated for 18-21 year olds.</b>  In April 2017, the government stopped 18 to 21 year olds getting housing costs in their Universal Credit, unless they came under an exemption. In <a href="#">March 2018</a> they said this rule would be removed but it is only in the Budget 2018 and the following <a href="#">legislation</a> that a date has been given when this change takes effect. Until then, the rule still applies as explained in the Department for Work and Pensions <a href="#">guidance</a> .	Date announced in the <a href="#">Budget 2018</a> policy costings. Regulations <a href="#">SI.No.1129/2018</a>
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**2019**

<p><b>16 January 2019</b></p>	<p><b>The severely disabled and Universal Credit</b></p> <p>Claimants receiving the '<b>severe disability premium</b>' in their 'legacy benefit' will not be able to make a new claim for Universal Credit until they are told to under 'managed migration' – when they will receive transitional protection.</p>	<p>See the legislation <a href="#">SI.No.10/2019</a> and DWP guidance <a href="#">ADM memo 1/19</a> and <a href="#">LA Welfare Direct lite 9/2019</a></p> <p>See a summary of the announcements in the <a href="#">November 2018 DWP Touchbase magazine</a> and <a href="#">recent Benefit Bulletins</a></p> <p>Written answers in Parliament on <a href="#">transitional payments</a> and <a href="#">safeguards</a></p>
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<p><b>1 February 2019</b></p> <p><i>The date was moved from November 2018 to this date</i></p>	<p><b>Universal Credit – two child policy</b></p> <p><b>This applies to areas where full service Universal Credit has been rolled out</b></p> <p><b>New claims for Universal Credit:</b>  A two-child limit applies, irrespective of the date of birth of children in the family. In other words, the amounts allowed for children in Universal Credit is limited to two children. Exceptions may apply, for which see April 2017.</p> <p>Between April 2017 and (now) 31 January 2019, new claims for Universal Credit from families with more than two children will be told to claim Child Tax Credits (and other ‘legacy’ benefits) instead.</p> <p><b>Pre-existing Universal Credit claims:</b>  Families that are already on Universal Credit at April 2017, who already have three or more children are not affected. They will not have their benefit cut if they remain on Universal Credit (but note the exemption for some returning to Universal Credit before a 6 month break)</p> <p>Families that are already on Universal Credit at April 2017, who have a third or subsequent child born on or after 6 April 2017 will only receive Universal Credit for the first two children – unless an exception applies.</p> <p>The above is based upon Damien Green’s statement. We await legislation for the definitive details.</p>	<p>For more details on the change of date, see Guidance Memo 02/19 via <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advice-for-decision-making-staff-guide">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advice-for-decision-making-staff-guide</a></p> <p>Legislation <a href="#">SI.No.2019/27</a></p> <p>See also the <a href="#">Autumn Budget 2017</a> web page and the <a href="#">further statement</a> by David Gauke Secretary of State for Work and Pensions in the House of Commons.</p> <p>The policy was originally announced in the <a href="#">Summer Budget 2015</a> (para 2.103) and included in the <a href="#">Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016</a> (section 13 – for CTC and section 14 for UC) applied to Child Tax Credits and the equivalent child elements in Universal Credit. However, <a href="#">Work and Pensions minister Damian Green announced to Parliament</a> that Universal Credit claims from such families will be directed to claim Tax Credits (and other ‘legacy benefits’) until November 2018</p> <p>“... we will direct new claims from families with more than two children to Tax Credits until November 2018 [<i>now moved the end of January 2019</i>]. Thereafter, new claims from families with more than two children will be taken through Universal Credit. Families already on Universal Credit who have a third child after April 2017 will remain on Universal Credit and receive two child elements.”</p> <p><a href="#">New 31 January 2019 date in guidance</a></p> <p><b>More government guidance:</b></p>
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		<p><a href="#">Support for a child who is informally living with you</a></p> <p><a href="#">Support for a child conceived without your consent</a></p> <p><a href="#">Universal Credit and families with more than 2 children: information for claimants</a></p>
<b>1 February 2019</b>	<p><b>Pension Credit includes child amounts</b></p> <p>As Child Tax Credit (CTC) disappears new regulations allow Pension Credit to include similar amounts for children from 1 February 2019.</p> <p><a href="#">CPAG</a> explain (August 2018 newsletter), ‘the lower rate for disabled children is less than half the amount in CTC, as in UC. The way pension credit is calculated could also leave people significantly worse off. For example, a single person with a pension income of £16,000 who is responsible for two children would currently be entitled to maximum child tax credit, but would not get any pension credit, even when two child amounts are included.’</p>	<a href="#">Pension Credit regulation 2018 No. 676</a>
<b>April 2019</b>	<p><b>National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage rates</b></p> <p>The rates change every April</p>	<a href="http://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates">www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates</a>
<b>April 2019</b>	<p><b>Universal Credit work allowance improved</b></p> <p>Within the Universal Credit calculation is how earnings are treated. The more you earn, the less Universal Credit you get. This work allowance was cut for some people in April 2016. From April 2019, the work allowance is improved so that more people will be able to keep more of their earnings. The amount will depend on their individual circumstances.</p>	For more details, see the <a href="#">Budget 2018</a> paragraph 5.32

<p><b>April 2019</b></p>	<p><b>Housing Benefit for social sector tenancies limited to private sector levels – called Local Housing Allowance</b></p> <p><b>This change will not now apply</b>  In October 2017, the Prime Minister told Parliament that the Government’s model to support and sustain supported housing will be published on 31 October 2107, and:  “...as part of our response to the review, we will not be applying the local housing allowance cap to supported housing; indeed, we will not be implementing it in the wider social rented sector. The full details will be made available when we publish our response to the consultation.”</p> <p><b>The change was to be</b> that from April 2019, Local Housing Allowance limits be applied to the Housing Benefit of social sector housing tenants (local authorities and housing associations) where a new tenancy is taken out or renewed after 1 April 2016. For Universal Credit claimants, it would be applied regardless of the tenancy start date.</p> <p>For supported housing a local authority administered top up should help towards the shortfall. This is a change from the earlier announcement for supported housing which simply delayed implementation.</p> <p><a href="#">Local Housing Allowance</a> is a limit on the amount of rent that is eligible for Housing Benefit depending on family make up and location.</p>	<p>For more information, see the <a href="#">Prime Minister's statement</a> in Parliament and a <a href="#">Supported housing update</a> from gov.uk.</p> <p><b>Original details on the proposed change:</b>  <a href="#">Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015</a> amended (delayed) by the <a href="#">Autumn Statement 2016</a></p> <p><a href="#">DHP will be payable</a></p> <p><a href="#">Analysis has been provided to Parliament January 2016</a></p> <p><a href="#">Modelling impact by Nat Housing Federation</a></p> <p>The date of implementation was deferred from April 2018 to April 2019 and a top up fund for supported housing was announced in the <a href="#">Autumn Statement 2016</a></p>
<p><b>1 April 2019</b></p>	<p><b>Government to fund Citizen Advice to provide support to Universal Credit claimants instead of Local Authorities</b></p> <p>Known as ‘Universal Support’ the government had funded Local Authorities to provide some level of support to Universal Credit claimants.</p>	<p>First announced 1 October 2018 by the <a href="#">Secretary of State for Work and Pensions</a> and a <a href="#">Government press release</a></p>



<p><b>15 May 2019</b></p>	<p><b>Mixed age couples – Universal Credit and Pension Credit</b></p> <p>Universal Credit is for people of working age. Those above that age are of ‘State Pension age’ and can claim Pension Credit and/or Pension age Housing Benefit. State Pension age and Pension Credit qualifying age can be worked out on the <a href="http://gov.uk/online-calculator">gov.uk online calculator</a>.</p> <p>Before this change ‘mixed age’ couples *, where one person is of State Pension age and the other person is younger than that, can choose whether to claim Pension Credit and Pension Age Housing Benefit or Universal Credit. Usually, Pension Credit is more generous.</p> <p>The <a href="#">government announced</a> that from 15 May 2019 this will change for those making a new claim to Universal Credit. From that date, to be entitled to Pension Credit and or Pension age Housing Benefit, both adults will have to be of State Pension age. Otherwise, Universal Credit – and its work-related conditionality – will apply. Some people who</p> <p>* Pension Credit and Pension age Housing Benefit can be claimed three months late. So, claims by such couples up to 14 August 2019 can ask for their Pension Credit and/or Pension age Housing Benefit claim(s) to be backdated to before the change – and they will be awarded so long as they satisfied the conditions for the benefit.</p>	<p>Legislation <a href="#">SI.No.2019/37</a>  DWP guidance <a href="#">DMG Memo 1/19</a>  DWP guidance on Housing Benefit <a href="#">A3/2019</a></p>
<p><b>31 May 2019</b></p>	<p><b>Fewer Personal Independence Payment reviews for some older people</b></p> <p>The <a href="#">March Benefit Bulletin</a> reported that new PIP claimants over pension age will only get a light touch review every 10 years. This is extended to existing PIP claimants.</p>	<p><a href="#">Government statement</a></p>


<p><b>12 June 2019</b></p>	<p><b>Help with mortgage interest for benefit claimants</b></p> <p>Loans replaced extra benefit to help with mortgage costs from April 2018, and that the loans have to be repaid once the property is sold or transferred and have to reapply for a loan for any new property.</p> <p>On 12 June 2019, the government <a href="#">announced</a> that ‘disabled people and others’ will be able to continue their existing loan.</p>	<p><a href="#">Summer Budget 2015</a></p>
<p><b>July 2019</b></p>	<p><b>Universal Credit managed migration to begin - for a small test pilot group</b></p> <p>This is the proposed date when the government begin to test ‘managed migration’ on a small group, where they will be told their ‘legacy benefits’ will stop and they have to claim Universal Credit instead. The process proper will start in January 2020 (changed to November 2020 – in Neil Couling letter - attached) until 2024.</p> <p>Harrogate is the first: <a href="#">Universal Credit pilot to launch in North Yorkshire</a></p>	<p>Regulations: <a href="#">Universal Credit (Transitional Provisions) Regulations 2014</a></p> <p>Announced in the <a href="#">‘managed migration’ statement to the SSAC and draft regulations</a></p> <p>Follows <a href="#">Amber Rudd announcement to the Work and Pensions Committee</a> in December 2018 of a rethink and delay in the managed migration implementation apart from a small sample of 10,000</p> <p><a href="#">DWP guidance</a> on how it works</p>
<p><b>4 July 2019</b></p>	<p><b>Protection for older claimants on DLA</b></p> <p>New rules mean that older claimants over pension age on DLA when asked to claim PIP, will be able to claim PIP rather than AA, and can remain on PIP rather than claim AA after a change in circumstances. Thus helping to retain their mobility component because it does not exist in Attendance Allowance.</p>	<p><a href="#">Legislation.</a></p>

<p><b>23 July 2019</b></p>	<p><b>Children’s Funeral Fund</b> A fund to help with funeral costs for a child.</p> <p>It will pay the fees charged by burial and cremation authorities and some associated expenses related to the funerals of children below the age of 18 and still-born children born after 24 weeks’ gestation, when the funeral takes place in England.</p>	<p><a href="#">Announcement</a> <a href="#">Legislation</a> <a href="#">Government website</a></p>
<p><b>30 August 2019</b></p>	<p><b>Blue Badge extended to those with ‘hidden’ disabilities</b></p> <p>Due for example to the overwhelming psychological stress for some in undertaking a journey.</p>	<p><a href="#">Legislation</a></p> <p>More details from <a href="#">Able Magazine</a>.</p>
<p><b>16 October 2019</b></p>	<p><b>Maximum recovery from Universal Credit for fines, arrears and other deductions reduced</b></p> <p>From October 2019, the government will reduce the maximum rate at which deductions can be made from a Universal Credit award from 40% to 30% of the standard allowance.</p> <p>Further reduced to 20% in October 2021</p>	<p>Announced in the <a href="#">Budget 2018</a> paragraph 5.36</p> <p><a href="#">DWP guidance</a></p> <p>The Universal Credit, Personal Independence Payment, Jobseeker’s Allowance and Employment and Support Allowance (Claims and Payments) Regulations 2013 <a href="#">2013 No. 380</a> Schedule 6 (4)(1)</p>

<p><b>3 and 16 October 2019</b></p> <p><b>Was due July 2019</b></p>	<p><b>Universal Credit self-employed earnings ‘grace period’ extended to more people</b></p> <p>Universal Credit is reduced by different kinds of income in various ways. Self-employed earnings are assumed to be at least at a set amount called the ‘minimum income floor’ which can be difficult for those not actually earning that amount. At the moment, this does not apply to those in the first year of their business.</p> <p>This twelve month ‘grace period’ will be extended to <b>all</b> self-employed people, not just those in the first year of their business, when they claim Universal Credit in the following way.</p> <p>For those on ‘legacy benefits’ who will be involved in ‘managed migration’ to Universal Credit (see below) this will apply at some stage from July 2019, depending on when ‘managed migration’ applies to them.</p> <p>It will apply to those on ‘legacy benefits’ who have to claim Universal Credit due to a change of circumstances (see the ‘triggers’ document referred to above) <b>from September 2020</b>.</p>	<p>Announced in the <a href="#">Budget 2018</a> paragraph 5.35</p> <p><a href="#">The Universal Credit (Childcare Costs and Minimum Income Floor) (Amendment) Regulations 2019</a></p> <p>Explained by <a href="#">Revenuebenefits</a></p>
<p><b>16 October 2019</b></p>	<p>Universal Credit claimants will have an additional month to report childcare costs. Failing that, a report can still be accepted for a further 12 months with good reasons</p>	<p><a href="#">Regulation</a> and announced in <a href="#">Parliament</a></p>
<p><b>27 November 2019</b></p>	<p><b>Benefit sanctions – 3 year maximum reduced to 26 weeks</b></p> <p>If a Jobseeker or some other benefit claimants fails to comply with work related requirements, their benefit may be reduced, called a sanction. For certain third and subsequent failures, this sanction could last for three years. That maximum is reduced to 26 weeks.</p> <p>The 26 weeks limit will also apply to existing sanctions on this date.</p>	<p><a href="#">The Jobseeker’s Allowance and Universal Credit (Higher-Level Sanctions) (Amendment) Regulations 2019</a> and explained in <a href="#">ADM Memo 19/19</a> and <a href="#">DMG Memo 15/19</a>.</p> <p>Confirmed in <a href="#">Budget 2020</a></p>

<p><b>9 December 2019</b></p>	<p><b>A new Industrial Injury</b></p> <p>A new 'disease' of '<b>Dupuytren's contracture</b>' is added to the Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit scheme, which has arisen "...from work for ten years or more in aggregate which involves the use of hand-held powered tools...".</p> <p>The <b>Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit scheme</b> pays a certain amount of Disablement Benefit to those who are injured or disabled through certain kinds of employment. This includes 'processes' (called 'diseases' such as Industrial Deafness, Carpal Tunnel Syndrome) and accidents at work.</p>	<p><a href="#">Regulation</a>. <a href="#">DWP guidance</a>.</p> <p><a href="#">More details about the Industrial Injuries Benefits scheme</a> on gov.uk.</p>
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**2020**

<p><b>6 January 2020</b></p>	<p>Planned date for HM Courts and Tribunals Service in the North East to relocate to Newcastle's Civic Centre, which will include social security appeal tribunals.</p> <p>Delayed from Summer 2019</p>	<p><a href="#">Press release</a></p> <p>A masterplan has been developed for next phase of the Civic Centre refurbishment programme, and these plans are now live on the council's <a href="#">planning portal</a>.</p>  <p>MVH update 271119.doc</p>
<p><b>March 2020</b></p>	<p><b>Jobcentres to open weekday evenings and Saturdays</b></p> <p><i>Note the very limited access to Jobcentres during the pandemic detailed below</i></p>	<p>DWP <a href="#">announcement</a></p>
<p><b>March 2020</b></p>	<p><b>Coronavirus</b></p> <p>Many new, temporary benefit changes introduced to support people during the pandemic. Most of them were introduced in March and to last for three months unless extended. Most of them are listed on the website <a href="#">coronavirus and benefits</a>. Some were included in the <a href="#">Budget 2020</a></p>	<p>General note</p> <p>More details on the website <a href="#">coronavirus and benefits</a>.</p> <p><b>More details</b> also from the '<a href="#">Further Measures</a>' regulations SI 371/2020 which introduced this and other measures and <a href="#">government guidance</a>.</p>
<p><b>March 2020</b></p>	<p><b>Self-employed Income Support Scheme (SEISS)</b></p> <p>This government scheme allows the self-employed to claim a taxable grant where they have lost trading/partnership trading profits due to coronavirus initially covering March, April and May, worth 80% of trading profits up to a maximum of £2,500 per month. The scheme was extended to include a second and final grant covering June, July and August worth 70% of trading profits.</p>	<p><b>Coronavirus</b></p> <p>More details on the website <a href="#">coronavirus and benefits</a>.</p>

<p><b>March 2020</b></p>	<p><b>Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS)</b></p> <p>If a business has had to close or scale back due to coronavirus this government scheme helps employers keep staff on the payroll until the pandemic passes, rather than lay them off, and pay 80% of their wages of up to £2,500 a month. The scheme was extended from June to 31 October 2020 but with some reductions in help.</p>	<p><b>Coronavirus</b></p> <p>More details on the website <a href="#">coronavirus and benefits.</a></p>
<p><b>March 2020</b></p>	<p><b>Working Tax Credit helps top up earnings.</b></p> <p>To get WTC you have to work a certain number of hours. Temporary drops below these hours are ignored for four weeks but the <a href="#">government announced</a> this would be extended for the duration of the CJRS or SEISS.</p>	<p><b>Coronavirus</b></p> <p>More details on the website <a href="#">coronavirus and benefits.</a></p>
<p><b>March 2020</b></p>	<p><b>Government announces extra funding to councils increase Council Tax support</b></p> <p>The government recommended that the £500 million they gave to councils in the budget to support vulnerable people during the outbreak should be towards a further reduction in residents' annual council tax bill of £150 probably in the form of increased benefit.</p>	<p><b>Coronavirus</b> <a href="#">Budget 2020.</a></p> <p>More details on the website <a href="#">coronavirus and benefits.</a></p> <p>More details in the city council's page <a href="#">Coronavirus - Information relating to Council Tax.</a></p>
<p><b>March 2020</b></p>	<p><b>Universal Credit. No need to attend a Jobcentre as part of a claim for those affected by coronavirus</b></p>	<p><b>Coronavirus</b> <a href="#">Budget 2020.</a></p> <p>More details on the website <a href="#">coronavirus and benefits.</a></p>
<p><b>March 2020</b></p>	<p><b>Employment and Support Allowance</b></p> <p>ESA is a benefit for those 'unfit for work'.</p> <p>Payable from day one rather than day eight</p>	<p><b>Coronavirus</b> <a href="#">Budget 2020.</a></p> <p>More details on the website <a href="#">coronavirus and benefits.</a></p>

<p><b>March 2020</b></p>	<p><b>Employment and Support Allowance</b></p> <p>Claimants 'affected by coronavirus' do not have to serve the seven waiting days for claiming ESA and do not have to provide a fit note. Contribution based New style ESA claims were made available online (<a href="#">updated guidance</a>).</p> <p>Ongoing reassessments of those on ESA and face to face appointments at the Jobcentre have been suspended.</p>	<p><b>Coronavirus</b></p> <p>More details on the website <a href="#">coronavirus and benefits</a>.</p>
<p><b>March 2020</b></p>	<p><b>Jobseekers Allowance (JSA)</b></p> <p>JSA is a benefit for those who are fit for work. For three months from 30 March 2020 work search and availability for work requirements were suspended, along with face to face interviews at the Jobcentre - unless for unavoidable reasons.</p>	<p><b>Coronavirus</b></p> <p>More details on the website <a href="#">coronavirus and benefits</a>.</p> <p>See <a href="#">Claimants are asked to apply online as jobcentres limit access</a> from gov.uk</p>
<p><b>March 2020</b></p>	<p><b>Carers benefit</b></p> <p>Carers can retain their Carers Allowance if they have a temporary break in caring. This applies to breaks in caring due to the carer or cared for person getting coronavirus or being isolated due to coronavirus. The government has also confirmed that emotional support counts for Carers Allowance.</p>	<p><b>Coronavirus</b></p> <p>More details on the website <a href="#">coronavirus and benefits</a>.</p>
<p><b>March 2020</b></p>	<p><b>Tribunal Service changes</b></p> <p>Goes remote. Telephone appeals and so on</p>	<p><b>Coronavirus</b></p> <p>See <a href="#">government webpage</a> and <a href="#">tribunals guidance from Courts and Tribunals Judiciary</a></p> <p>More details on the website <a href="#">coronavirus and benefits</a>.</p>



<p><b>13 March 2020</b></p>	<p><b>Statutory Sick Pay</b></p> <p>Various improvements including paid if self-isolating due to coronavirus, paid from day one</p>	<p><b>Coronavirus</b>  <a href="#">Budget 2020</a>.  More details on the website <a href="#">coronavirus and benefits</a>.</p>
<p><b>13 March 2020</b></p>	<p><b>Self Employed and Universal Credit</b></p> <p>Minimum Income Floor – where a certain income from self-employment is assumed – is temporarily suspended for those ill or self-isolating due to coronavirus and from 6 April, suspended for all self-employed people</p>	<p><b>Coronavirus</b>  <a href="#">Budget 2020</a>.  More details on the website <a href="#">coronavirus and benefits</a>.</p>
<p><b>20 March 2020</b></p>	<p><b>Isolation note</b></p> <p>A temporary alternative to the fit note, called an isolation note, was also introduced on 20 March 2020 to be used for the duration of the outbreak. ‘As isolation notes can be obtained without contacting a doctor, this will reduce the pressure on GP surgeries and prevent people needing to leave their homes’.</p>	<p><b>Coronavirus</b>  More details on the website <a href="#">coronavirus and benefits</a>.</p> <p>See <a href="#">Online isolation notes launched - providing proof of coronavirus absence from work</a></p>
<p><b>23 March 2020</b></p>	<p><b>Visiting Jobcentres</b></p> <p>From 23 March all requirements to attend jobcentres were suspended for three months, which may be extended. Most contact is via phone or the Universal Credit online journal. Visits can be arranged for exceptional purposes: "If you cannot get online, phone us for help and we will only see people face to face in our jobcentres if invited".</p>	<p><b>Coronavirus</b></p> <p>More details in the <a href="#">press release</a></p> <p>More details on the website <a href="#">coronavirus and benefits</a>.</p>

<p><b>24 March 2020</b></p>	<p><b>Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and other disability and sickness benefits</b></p> <p>Disability benefits and the incapacity for work test in ESA or Universal Credit usually involve regularly having to prove you satisfy the health conditions with regular reviews, reassessments, appointments with health professionals and claiming within time limits. For a temporary period initially for three months from March 2020, reviews and reassessments and face to face assessments for most disability benefits were <a href="#">suspended</a> and awards due to expire are being extended. When a claim for PIP is made, the claimant is sent a PIP2 form to provide evidence of their health conditions. The deadline for returning the PIP2 claim form was extended for three months and an electronic version of the PIP2 form was created as well as the paper version.</p>	<p><b>Coronavirus</b> <a href="#">Budget 2020</a>.</p> <p><a href="#">Press release</a></p> <p>More details on the website <a href="#">coronavirus and benefits</a>.</p>
<p><b>26 March 2020</b></p>	<p><b>Help with housing</b></p> <p>the <a href="#">government announced</a> emergency housing measures such as suspending new evictions from rented accommodation and possession proceedings in the court for a temporary period. This was in addition to the three-month mortgage 'holiday'. This was extended on 22 May 2020. The Financial Conduct Authority has <a href="#">published new guidance</a> which enables home owners to extend a mortgage holiday for a further three months</p>	<p><b>Coronavirus</b> More details on the website <a href="#">coronavirus and benefits</a>.</p>
<p><b>30 March 2020</b></p>	<p><b>Work search requirements and sanctions</b></p> <p>Those claiming new style Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) or Universal Credit who are fit and able to work usually have work search requirements which includes being 'able and willing to immediately take up a job'. Those on old style JSA have to be 'available for work' and 'actively seeking work'. These requirements were <a href="#">suspended</a>, initially for three months from 30 March 2020 and claimants will be contacted by the jobcentre instead.</p>	<p><b>Coronavirus</b> More details on the website <a href="#">coronavirus and benefits</a>.</p>

<p><b>April 2020</b></p>	<p><b>Benefit and Tax Credits uprating</b></p> <p>Includes:</p> <p>The basic amount of Working Tax Credit (WTC) and Universal Credit was increased by £20 a week from 6 April 2020 for at least one year.</p> <p>The increased amount of WTC is ignored as income by Housing Benefit</p> <p>Local Housing Allowance:</p> <p>The maximum rent that is eligible for LHA is 'capped' at the 30<sup>th</sup> 'percentile' of local area market levels. This was frozen by the Budget 2015 but has been 'reset' - in other words increased, so that more Housing Benefit will be payable from 6 April 2020. The <a href="#">amount</a> varies for each area.</p>	<p><b>Coronavirus</b></p> <p>Announcement by <a href="#">Dr Thérèse Coffey 4.11.19</a></p> <p>Tax Credit, Child Benefit and Guardian's Allowance uprating <a href="#">announcement</a></p> <p>The benefit uprating details can be found on our <a href="#">benefit information</a> webpage or in the DWP guidance memos: <a href="#">ADM Memo 3/20</a> and <a href="#">DMG Memo 5/20</a></p>
<p><b>April 2020</b></p>	<p><b>The national minimum wage to be increased</b></p> <p>To £9 an hour for those aged 25 and over. Called 'National Living Wage.'</p>	<p>Announced in the <a href="#">Summer Budget 2015</a></p> <p>See the Government <a href="#">National Minimum Wage</a> page</p>

<p><b>April 2020</b></p> <p><b>Delayed to April 2021</b></p>	<p><b>Universal Credit higher ‘surplus earnings’ rule</b></p> <p><b>This was delayed for a further year due to coronavirus</b></p> <p>Earnings over £2,500 a month when payments stop are carried forward to the next Universal Credit monthly assessment. If these, and normal earnings, are still over the limit, people have to re-claim Universal Credit when their earnings are low enough. The plan in Budget 2018 was to reduce this from £2,500 to £300 from April 2020 but it was delayed for a further year.</p> <p>The measure would have meant many more people being brought into this rule. <a href="#">More details about surplus earnings</a> are available from gov.uk</p>	<p>Announced in the <a href="#">Budget 2018</a> paragraph 5.38</p> <p><b>Coronavirus</b> <a href="#">Budget 2020</a>. More details on the website <a href="#">coronavirus and benefits</a>.</p>
<p><b>April 2020</b></p>	<p><b>Funding supported housing</b></p> <p>The government had proposed to replace Housing Benefit with Local Authority funding for supported housing but <b>those plans have been dropped</b>. Services including women’s refuges have <a href="#">expressed their relief</a>. For more details see <a href="#">All supported housing funding to be retained in welfare system</a> from gov.uk</p> <p><b>The abandoned proposals:</b> In its response to its consultation, the government outlined a ‘new approach’ which included three funding groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A ‘sheltered rent’ for sheltered and extra housing - funded in the welfare system</li> <li>• A Local Grant Fund for short term and transitional supported housing funded locally</li> <li>• Housing Benefit and Universal Credit to continue fund 100% of housing costs (rent inclusive of eligible services charges) for long term supported housing</li> </ul>	<p>Government <a href="#">response to the Communities and Local Government and Work and Pensions Committees Joint Report: Future of supported housing</a> October 2017</p> <p>For more information see <a href="#">Funding for supported housing</a> from gov.uk</p>

<p><b>6 April 2020</b></p>	<p><b>Parental bereavement leave and pay when a child dies</b></p> <p>Employees who suffer the death of a child aged under 18 years old, or a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy, will be entitled to two weeks of leave and pay if they meet certain rules.</p>	<p>Announced in the <a href="#">Budget 2018</a></p> <p>More details from <a href="#">ACAS</a></p>
<p><b>6 April 2020</b></p>	<p><b>Self Employed and Universal Credit</b></p> <p>Minimum Income Floor – where a certain income from self-employment is assumed – was temporarily suspended for those ill or self-isolating due to coronavirus and from 6 April, suspended for all self-employed people</p>	<p><b>Coronavirus</b> <a href="#">Budget 2020</a>.</p> <p>More details on the website <a href="#">coronavirus and benefits</a>.</p>
<p><b>8 April 2020</b></p>	<p><b>Funeral Expenses Payment increased</b></p> <p>The maximum amount available is increased from £700 to £1000</p>	<p><a href="#">Benefit claimants to get more cash to help with funeral costs</a></p>
<p><b>3 April 2020</b></p>	<p><b>Deductions from benefits</b></p> <p>From 3 April 2020, deductions from benefits like <a href="#">recovery of overpayments were suspended for three months</a>, as were direct deductions to pay third parties for debts like fuel arrears until 10 May 2020.</p>	<p><b>Coronavirus</b></p> <p>More details on the website <a href="#">coronavirus and benefits</a>.</p>
<p><b>8 April 2020</b></p>	<p><b>Prisoners</b></p> <p>The law was amended to allow prisoners on temporary release due to coronavirus to claim certain benefits and for others to claim for them. Applies till 12 November 2020</p>	<p><b>Coronavirus</b></p> <p>See DWP guidance <a href="#">A8/2020</a>, <a href="#">DMG Memo 07/20</a> and <a href="#">ADM Memo 05/20</a> See also <a href="#">prisoners released early due to coronavirus</a> and benefits by CPAG</p> <p>More details on the website <a href="#">coronavirus and benefits</a>.</p>

<b>9 April 2020</b>	<b>Universal Credit ‘don’t call us - we’ll call you’</b>  due to the massive increase in people claiming Universal Credit but not being able to get through on the phone, the DWP redirected 10% of its staff to deal with Universal Credit claims and created the system ‘ <a href="#">Don’t call us we’ll call you</a> ’, where people just need to make the <a href="#">claim online</a> and they will be contacted by the Jobcentre.	<b>Coronavirus</b>  More details on the website <a href="#">coronavirus and benefits</a> .
<b>16 April 2020</b>	<b>Universal Credit</b>  Verification of identity during the Universal Credit claim is usually done through certain online services. On 16 April 2020, this was expanded to include <a href="#">Government Gateway</a> which people may already be on.	<b>Coronavirus</b>  More details on the website <a href="#">coronavirus and benefits</a> .
<b>20 April 2020</b>	<b>New Style ESA can now be claimed online</b>	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/employment-support-allowance">https://www.gov.uk/employment-support-allowance</a>
<b>21 April 2020</b>	<b>Video Relay Service for British Sign Language users introduced for Universal Credit</b>  Also introduced for several other benefits	<a href="https://main.signvideo.me/app/8/10982">https://main.signvideo.me/app/8/10982</a>  Check you can use the service: <a href="https://youtu.be/Osx7FFxFpNY">https://youtu.be/Osx7FFxFpNY</a>
<b>22 April 2020</b>	<b>Post Office</b>  When notified by the DWP, the <a href="#">Post Office will make an urgent cash delivery</a> payment for those shielding and vulnerable  NB. DWP will stop new benefit and pension claimants from using the Post Office Card Account from 11 May.	<b>Coronavirus</b>  PO <a href="#">press release</a> 22 April 2020  More details on the website <a href="#">coronavirus and benefits</a> .
<b>7 May 2020</b>	<b>Maternity Allowance changed to allow furloughed women to satisfy earnings rule - during coronavirus</b>	<b>Coronavirus</b>  <a href="#">DWP staff guidance</a>
<b>7 May 2020</b>	<b>Appeal tribunals - for benefit appeals</b>  'If you have a hearing listed, we will contact you and anyone else involved to discuss any changes, you do not need to contact us.'	<b>Coronavirus</b>  <a href="#">Guidance</a>

<p><b>7 May 2020</b></p>	<p><b>Pension Credit can now be claimed online</b></p> <p>Save time for DWP as staff have been transferred to dealing with the massive increase in Universal Credit claims</p>	<p><b>Coronavirus</b></p> <p><a href="#">DWP press release</a></p>
<p><b>11 May 2020</b></p>	<p><b>Post Office</b></p> <p>DWP will stop new benefit and pension claimants from using the Post Office Card Account from 11 May.</p>	<p>See more details on our <a href="#">news webpage</a> and the <a href="#">statement to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions</a></p>
<p><b>11 May 2020</b></p>	<p><b>Recognising a call from the DWP</b></p> <p>A message from the DWP to claimants:</p> <p>"As you are aware, all Jobcentres have had to close their doors during the coronavirus pandemic and we have been contacting you via Journal Message or phone call and this has been from a private or withheld number.</p> <p>We know that many people are cautious of answering these calls for security purposes. To assist you in recognising a call from Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) either the Jobcentre or Service Centre, a new telephone number will appear on your phone from 06/05/2020 when we call you. It is 0800 023 2635.</p> <p>For ease, we suggest you add this number to your contacts and rename it to ensure you recognise when we are calling. You will not be able to call us on this number; it is an automated message only.</p> <p>The contact number to call Universal Credit has not changed, it is 0800 328 5644."</p>	<p><b>Coronavirus</b></p> <p>More details on the website <a href="#">coronavirus and benefits</a>.</p>

<p><b>13 May 2020</b></p>	<p><b>Universal Credit - form for landlord to request direct payment goes online</b></p> <p>The Universal Credit default is that help it includes with rent but that that amount could instead be requested to go direct to the landlord. The form UC47 is now online</p>	<p>See also government guidance: <a href="#">Universal Credit and landlords</a> and <a href="#">Universal Credit: Alternative Payment Arrangements</a></p>
<p><b>21 May 2020</b></p>	<p><b>Universal Credit surplus earnings rule – auto reclaim</b></p> <p>The UC surplus earnings rule generally means that after a UC is refuse due to too much income, some ‘surplus earnings’ are carried over to the next UC assessment period and the claimant usually has to keep applying for UC each month until the surplus earnings have ‘worn out’ or reduced enough for UC to be payable again. From 21 May 2020, those on Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme or Self Employment Income Support Scheme where this happens and automatic reclaim will take place, where UC claim is automatically considered.</p>	<p><b>Coronavirus</b></p> <p>Legislation <a href="#">The Universal Credit (Coronavirus) (Self-employed Claimants and Reclaims) (Amendment) Regulations 2020</a></p> <p>Guidance <a href="#">Memo ADM 10/20</a></p>
<p><b>June 2020</b></p>	<p><b>Personal Independence Payment (PIP)</b></p> <p>For PIP claimants whose condition is unlikely to change, a minimum review award length of 18 months will take effect from June 2020.</p>	<p><a href="#">Budget 2020.</a></p>
<p><b>1 June 2020</b></p>	<p><b>Proposal to means test TV license – <i>delayed to 1 August</i></b></p> <p>Those 75 or over can get a free TV license. The BBC propose an extra rule where they or their partner also have to be on Pension Credit</p> <p>This has been extended to 31 July 2020 due to the impact of coronavirus</p>	<p>More details from <a href="#">TV licensing</a></p> <p><b>Coronavirus</b></p>



<p><b>24 June 2020</b></p>	<p><b>Third party deductions</b></p> <p>Deductions for rent arrears and service charge payments included in the rent must be stopped if -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. the claimant's earned income or</li> <li>2. in the case of joint claimants, their combined earned income equals or exceeds the work allowance for three assessment periods immediately preceding the date on which the next deduction could be made.</li> </ol>	<p><a href="https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2013/380/schedule/6 - para 7">https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2013/380/schedule/6 - para 7</a></p> <p><a href="https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/906652/admd2.pdf">https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/906652/admd2.pdf</a></p> <p>Was always in legislation, acted on from this date.</p>
<p><b>22 July 2020</b></p>	<p><b>Two-week benefit run-on for more benefits</b></p> <p>From July 2020, when someone claims Universal Credit they will be able to keep two weeks' worth of their Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or income-related Employment and Support Allowance. This follows on the same measure that was introduced for Housing Benefit claimants from April 2018.</p> <p>It applies when someone who is on one of those benefits (called 'legacy benefits') wants to claim Universal Credit or has a change in circumstances that means they may have to.</p>	<p>Announced in the <a href="#">Budget 2018</a> paragraph 5.34.</p> <p>Legislation <a href="#">SI.No.1152/2019</a> – later corrected by <a href="#">SI.No.826/2020</a> and <a href="#">SR.No.165/2020</a> to confirm it's 14 not 13 days</p>
<p><b>1 August 2020</b></p>	<p><b>TV licenses for over 75's to be means tested</b></p> <p>Up till 31 July 2020, those 75 or over can get a free TV license. The BBC will add an extra rule where they or their partner have to be on Pension Credit to get the free license.</p> <p>This rule was due to come in on 1 June but was extended to 1 August 2020 due to the impact of coronavirus</p>	<p>More details from <a href="#">TV licensing</a></p> <p><b>Coronavirus</b></p>

<b>September 2020</b>	<b>Universal Credit self-employed earnings ‘grace period’ extended to more people</b>  Fully implemented now	See 3 and 16 October 2019 for more details
<b>October 2020</b>	<b>State Pension age is now 66 for men and women</b>  From December 2018 the State Pension age for both men and women increased to reach 66 by now.	Part of the Pensions Act 2011  <a href="#">More details</a> and <a href="#">calculate your State Pension age and Pension Credit age</a>
<b>2021</b>	<b>PIP assessment and work capability assessment under ESA and UC to be amalgamated</b>  “I have established the Health Transformation Programme to undertake the significant task of transitioning the currently separate work capability assessment for ESA and universal credit, and the PIP assessment services into one unified, integrated service from 2021. To support this, we are developing a single digital platform. An integrated approach will allow for a more joined-up claimant experience across these benefits, which takes account of the multiple interactions an individual may have with DWP.”	<a href="#">Amber Rudd's Health and Disability Announcement</a> in parliament.uk
<b>January 2021</b>	<b>Migrants’ access to benefits</b>  The government is aligning EEA migrants’ access to non-contributory benefits with non-EEA nationals. This will apply to EEA migrants arriving in the UK under the new immigration system, from January 2021.	<a href="#">Budget 2020</a> .  See the <a href="#">Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal) Bill 2019-21</a>
<b>January 2021</b>	<b>Stop export of Child Benefit</b>  The government is stopping the export of Child Benefit payments made in respect of children living overseas. This will apply to EEA migrants arriving in the UK under the new immigration system, from January 2021.	<a href="#">Budget 2020</a> .

<p><b>26 January 2021</b></p>	<p><b>Protection from Universal Credit for the ‘more disabled’ to end</b></p> <p>From 16 January 2019 those who are entitled to the ‘severe disability premium’ in with the legacy benefits that Universal Credit is replacing, have been prevented from claiming Universal Credit in order to protect them from dropping down to a lower amount of Universal Credit. When this protection ends on 26 January 2021, an extra amount can be paid to compensate for the loss.</p>	<p><a href="#">Budget 2020.</a></p> <p>See the legislation <a href="#">SI.No.10/2019</a> and DWP guidance <a href="#">ADM memo 1/19</a></p>
<p><b>April 2021</b></p>	<p><b>Universal Credit surplus earnings rule</b></p> <p>When a Universal Credit (UC) claimant’s earnings fluctuate and takes them above UC entitlement by over £2,500, the surplus earnings rule may prevent future UC entitlement for a period. The government was to replace the £2,500 amount to £300 on 1 April 2020 but have delayed that to April 2021. It will mean many more people not receiving Universal Credit for longer periods</p>	<p><a href="#">Budget 2020.</a></p>
<p><b>October 2021</b></p>	<p><b>Universal Credit advance payment recovery period extended</b></p> <p>When someone claims Universal Credit, they can ask for an ‘advance payment’ (a loan) to help during the wait for the first payment. From October 2021, the period this can be recovered will be extended from 12 to 16 months.</p> <p>When someone claims Universal Credit, they can ask for an ‘advance payment’ (a loan) to help during the wait for the first payment. Now, the period this can be recovered will be extended from 12 to 16 months.</p>	<p>Announced in the <a href="#">Budget 2018</a> paragraph 5.36</p>
<p><b>October 2021</b></p>	<p><b>Maximum recovery from Universal Credit for fines, arrears and other deductions reduced</b></p> <p>There is an overall maximum percentage rate for all debts and deductions that can be taken from a Universal Credit payment. From October 2021, the government will reduce the maximum rate from 30% to 25% of the standard allowance.</p>	<p><a href="#">Budget 2020</a></p> <p>This follows a reduction in the rate from 40% to 30% in October 2019 - announced in <a href="#">Budget 2018</a></p>

<p><b>October 2021</b></p>	<p><b>Recovery of Universal Credit advance payments</b></p> <p>To help people with the five weeks wait for the first Universal Credit payment following a claim, people can claim an advance payment, which is essentially a loan that must be paid back. From October 2021, the government will increase the period for recovering advance payments from twelve months to twenty four months.</p>	<p><a href="#">Budget 2020</a></p> <p>This replaces the announcement in <a href="#">Budget 2018</a> that the recovery period would be extended to sixteen months.</p>
<p><b>November 2021</b></p>	<p><b>Post office card account replaced</b></p> <p>By an ‘alternative payment service’ for claimants who are unable to open a mainstream account</p>	<p>Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Pensions and Financial Inclusion, Mr Opperman's <a href="#">written answer</a> from parliament.uk</p>
<p><b>October 2023 or later</b></p>	<p><b>Incorporating Housing Benefit into Pension Credit – delayed further</b></p> <p>The plan to add help with rent (Housing Benefit) into Pension Credit has been put back to now or later, when Universal Credit fully replaces ‘legacy benefits’. May be called a ‘housing credit’</p>	<p>Announced in the <a href="#">Budget 2018</a></p>
<p><b>October 2023</b></p>	<p><b>The Local Housing Allowance (LHA) one bedroom shared accommodation rate</b></p> <p>LHA is Housing Benefit or Universal Credit housing costs for private tenants under which the rent that is eligible for such help is restricted for certain reasons. The eligible rent for many under 35 year olds is limited to the average rent of a one bedroom shared accommodation (a bedsit) in their area. Some are exempt from this and are allowed the higher level of rent for a one bedroom self contained accommodation. Budget 2020 has added rough sleepers aged 16-24, care leavers up to the age of 25, and victims of domestic abuse and human trafficking to that list of exemptions in order to ‘protect those at risk of homelessness’.</p>	<p><a href="#">Budget 2020</a></p>

<b>2026 - 2028</b>	<b>State Pension age will gradually rise from 66 to 67</b>  And further plans to increase the pension age to 68 in mid-2030s and 69 in late-2040s.	<a href="#">Part of the Pensions Act 2014</a> and the <a href="#">Autumn Statement 2013</a> and <a href="#">DWP guidance</a>  See the <a href="#">Gov.uk retirement age page</a>  <a href="#">Calculate your State Pension age and Pension Credit age</a>
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