

UNIVERSAL CREDIT NEWSLETTER

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WHEN IS UNIVERSAL CREDIT COMING?

The Department for Work and Pensions currently plans to rollout Universal Credit to Jobcentres in West Dunbartonshire (Dumbarton & Clydebank) during the month of November 2018. Currently we have no set date in November on which to expect UC to go live.

Alexandria Jobcentre will close on 8th August and merge with the Dumbarton Jobcentre.

The DWP currently plans to have completed the full rollout of UC during the month of December 2018.

UC claims in West Dunbartonshire

Currently there are over 1,000 UC claimants within the West Dunbartonshire Area.

CLYDEBANK

536

DUMBARTON

244

ALEXANDRIA

258

Figures as of 12th April 2018

WHAT WILL UC REPLACE?

When UC Full Service begins it will replace the following means-tested benefits:

- **Income-Related ESA**
- **Income-based JSA**
- **Income Support**
- **Working Tax Credit**
- **Child Tax Credit**
- **Housing Benefit**

Contribution-based JSA and Contributory ESA will remain, but will be known as 'new style' JSA and ESA. Currently claimants in full service UC areas are experiencing difficulty in starting 'New Style' claims and they are having to initiate claims by calling the UC helpline and speaking to UC staff, who are currently sending out paper claim forms to begin the claiming process.

Council Tax Reduction will not be replaced by Universal Credit and will continue to be administered by local authorities. This is something claimants who are used to the current Housing Benefit system will have to be informed of, as they will need to ensure they make a separate claim for Council Tax Reduction along with their UC claim.

WHEN MAY UC AFFECT CURRENT BENEFIT CLAIMANTS?

When UC full service begins, any claimants who have a need to claim a benefit which has been replaced by UC will then move over to the UC system. This will include any benefits replaced by UC which they may already be in receipt of. So for example someone moving from Income Support to JSA and in receipt of Housing Benefit (HB) would see their existing HB award change to UC.

Claimants who are currently in receipt of means-tested benefits will only move over to UC should they report a change in circumstances which would mean they have to claim a benefit which has been replaced by UC.

Current Tax Credit claimants who are in work may also find their Tax Credit claims moved to UC should they report a significant enough change in their circumstances.

THE LOBSTER POT

Once a claimant has been moved on to the Universal Credit system they stay there. There is no scope for them to return to 'Legacy Benefits'. They DWP call this 'The Lobster Pot' once you're in....you're in!

In practice this means that once UC has become live (Full Service), any change in your circumstance which would result in you moving to UC will result in your permanently being in receipt of UC. There will be no scope for you moving back to 'legacy benefits'.

MOVING TO UNIVERSAL CREDIT

When UC Full Service begins, current 'legacy benefit' claimants will then begin being moved to UC, the DWP refer to this as 'Migration'.

There are two ways in which a current legacy benefit claimant can be migrated to UC, these are **Natural Migration** and **Managed Migration**. Claimants who report a change in circumstances will move over to UC via **Natural Migration**. If no significant change in circumstances are reported, a claimant can expect to be moved to UC via **Managed Migration**.

The key difference between these two processes is that claimants who currently have premiums such as the **Severe Disability Premium** applied to the awards will lose these if they undergo **Natural Migration**.

NEWSLETTER FEEDBACK

We hope this first issue of the WDCAB Universal Credit newsletter has been informative. We've kicked things off by providing some of the basic information on what UC will replace and when and how its likely to impact on claimants withing West Dunbartonshire. In the next issue we intend to focus on more in-depth information based on research and information gathered from those currently in full service UC areas.

If you have any questions or suggestions or any feedback in general we can be contacted on david@wdcab.co.uk