

Universal Credit (UC)

The purpose of this information sheet is to provide a brief update for members on Universal Credit and how this will affect claimants, when Full Service is rolled out across the district starting in October.

What is UC and Full Service?

UC is a benefit for people of working age on a low income or out of work. It is replacing 6 existing benefits:

- Job Seekers Allowance (income based)
- Employment and Support Allowance (income related)
- Income Support
- Housing Benefit (currently administered by SDC)
- Working Tax Credit
- Child Tax Credit

Council Tax Support is not included in UC and claimants will need to make a separate application

UC has been around in the district since June 2015 (as Live Service) but the impact for Housing Benefit has been minimal and has largely only affected non-dependants (grown-up children still living in a benefit claimant's household).

Full Service UC will come in gradually for a broader range of claimants but there will be no mass change as yet. It will become more widely available for couples and families but only for new claims or where circumstances change; for example losing a job and having to claim Job Seekers Allowance or Employment and Support Allowance.

Instead of receiving different benefits claimants will receive just one payment a month in arrears to cover all of them. The majority of payments will be made directly to the claimant as part of the Government's drive to make people more responsible for their own money, however direct payment of housing costs for vulnerable customers can be negotiated between the DWP and the landlord.

Further information is available at www.gov.uk/universal-credit

Who is affected?

- claimants who are of working age
- claimants who have a change in circumstances, such as separation or formation of a couple
- changes such as pregnancy, birth of a child or changes to a child's status

Simon Killen, Revenue and Benefits Manager
Ext: 4013
Email: simon.killen@stroud.gov.uk

COMMUNITY SERVICES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE
INFORMATION SHEET C-2017/18-003
13 JULY 2017

- claimants who have a change in employment status and need to claim Job Seekers Allowance or Employment and Support Allowance
- new claimants

Who isn't affected in October?

- Pensioners
- self employed
- those in supported accommodation (vulnerable customers who require support)
- families with more than 2 children
- claimants in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIP)
- Claimants in postcode area GL2, GL3, GL4 and GL12 will move across between November 2017 and February 2018 as Full Service rolls out to other areas of the county.

Migration of existing claimants

Existing benefit claimants will be moved across to UC but this will not start until July 2019 and be completed by March 2022. In the meantime only new claimants and those whose circumstances change will move into UC.

Some key headlines of what are we doing?

- Some of our own council tenants are already being paid their Housing Benefit direct as a pilot in readiness for UC
- The Benefit team are working closely with Tenant Services, Housing Advice and Council Tax teams
- We are building partnerships with JobCentrePlus
- Hosting DWP UC Full Service roll out presentation for Gloucestershire Councils
- Hosting a landlord forum to deliver a presentation on UC
- Site visit arranged to visit Bath, one of the original Full Service pilot sites,
- Internal project group set up
- Assisted digital support
- Personal advice and budgeting support for individual claimants
- Staff awareness training

What next?

- Members briefing in September
- Members information evening - TBA
- Further UC Information Sheets

Simon Killen, Revenue and Benefits Manager
Ext: 4013
Email: simon.killen@stroud.gov.uk