



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Universal Credit Update

February 2020

UC *Universal
Credit*

Opening up work_

Current Position with UCFS

January statistics show there are **2,792,007** people on UC.

Scotland

244,824	39.2% looking for work
	27.4% no work related requirements
	25.2% in work
	8.1% planning or preparing for work

Landlord Portal Update

Alignment of payment of rent with payment of UC award to claimant

Testing has been successful and agreement given to roll out. Roll-out plans are being developed, landlords will be given a notice period of their start date. FAQs are being drawn up to share with landlords

This improvement removes the issue of landlords receiving 12 payments to cover 13 rental periods.

This will involve Social Landlords receiving a daily schedule of their tenants housing cost payments – although daily landlord can elect to view this daily, weekly, monthly. More information will follow

Recent Announcements

Local Housing Allowance rates

- From April 2020 LHA rates will be updated – an increase of 1.7% in line with wider benefit uprating. In addition, since 2011 we have provided over £1billion in Discretionary Housing Payment funding, enabling local authorities to protect the most vulnerable claimants and supporting households to adapt to housing support reforms.
- We recently announced an extra £40 million in Discretionary Housing Payments for 2020/21, helping to tackle the most acute affordability pressures in the private rented sector.

Universal Credit Transition Fund

- £23million has been secured with a view to developing a package of measures to improve services and support for the most vulnerable customers.
- A £10million transition fund for outreach programmes to help vulnerable people claim Universal Credit as a route into work. We are undertaking work to develop the key criteria, eligibility and metrics, and identifying the appropriate delivery mechanism for the fund.
- **The fund will be available to partner organisations, including charities, from April 2020 and we will update stakeholders as soon as further information is available.**

Recent Announcements

Annual Rent Changes: -

- Claimants continue to be responsible for informing UC of any changes to their housing costs.
- We have improved the claimant 'To-do' process ' Update your Housing Costs' – this will ask for responses to a number of questions to establish any changes to rent/service charges.
- Dependent on the response, the claimant will be prompted to declare & confirm their new housing costs
- At a recent landlord workshop, the following paragraph was identified as particularly helpful example to support claimants enter the correct information in the 'To-do'.

If you claim Universal Credit

From the 1st April 2020 your new rent charge will be (£95.05) and your eligible service charge will be (£14.95) charged (weekly). Please report this change to DWP on, or as soon after, the 1st April 2020.

Move to UC (Managed Migration)

- ❖ Pilot went live in Harrogate on 24 July.
- ❖ SDP payments have been reviewed. Customers will receive payments of up to £405 per month alongside UC award
- ❖ This is an increase from the previous proposed maximum of £360
- ❖ Anyone currently receiving SDP whose circumstances change, will remain on legacy benefits

DWP Housing Improvement Working Group Refresh

- Since the beginning of December 19 group membership has been fully refreshed and now includes active representation from Policy, Programme, Operations, L&D, Quality, Analysts and national SIL teams. This group are working closely together to drive improvement and have accelerated momentum of our key priority areas.
- We have also reinstated our Scottish Group.

A look ahead – next steps

- Launch of Bite Sized Products incorporating customer scenarios
- Building our capability focusing on reducing errors, building knowledge on tenancies, homelessness & vulnerabilities, and other accommodation
- Improving our communications

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