

An Update on Universal Credit (UC) – January 2019

1. Housing Costs for 18 to 21-year olds

The previous Regulations which allowed the restrictions on 18-21 years old receiving Universal Credit Housing Costs were revoked with effect 31 December 2018. From this date, all 18-21-year olds will be entitled to Universal Credit Housing Costs being included in their UC assessment where a rental liability exists.

This will end the requirement for mitigation via the Scottish Welfare Fund for those claimants who were not awarded Universal Credit Housing Costs under the previous restrictions.

2. Severe Disability Premium

From the 16 January 2019 any claimants who are entitled and remain entitled to a Severe Disability Premium (SDP) (including those who have had a break in claim but have been entitled within the last month) will remain on their existing legacy benefit, or they can claim another legacy benefit relevant to their change of circumstance. Where the claimant is no longer entitled to SDP then they would have to contact UC to make claim (other exceptions permitting – see paragraph 4).

SDP is an amount paid to severely disabled people as part of the following legacy benefits:

- Jobseeker's Allowance (Income Based)
- Employment and Support Allowance (Income Related)
- Income Support
- Housing Benefit

Claimants also need to be in receipt of one of the following disability benefits, and live alone (or be classed as living alone including where partner who qualifies for SDP) and no-one must be in receipt of Carer's Allowance or the UC Carer Element for caring for them:

- Disability Living Allowance (DLA) care component at the middle or high rate
- Personal Independence Payment (PIP) daily living component at the standard or enhanced rate
- Attendance Allowance or Constant Attendance Allowance
- Armed Forces Independence Payment (AFIP)

Standard SDP rules apply to a claimant's entitlement. Examples of when a claimant may lose entitlement to SDP would be; losing entitlement to a qualifying disability benefit, another person claiming Carer's Allowance or forming a new couple.

Most claimants may not know they are receiving SDP within their legacy benefit. Additional questions will be put on UC claim forms, and there will be liaison between the Department of Work and Pensions to identify any cases where a UC claim is made in error.

3. Households with 3 or more children

From 1 February 2019, the HB gateway for households with 3 or more children will be closed. All new claims for housing costs should be signposted to UC to make a claim and no longer taken for a legacy benefit. *Exceptions still apply see below.*

4. Revised lists of who can claim Housing Benefit

From 19 September 2018 until 15 January 2019

- Claimant is of Pension age
- Claimant is living in Temporary Accommodation (Housing Costs only paid via HB)
- Claimant is living in Supported Specified Exempt Accommodation (Housing Costs only paid via HB)
- The Claimant has 3 or more children in their household

From 16 January 2019 until 31 January 2019

- Claimant is of Pension age
- Claimant is living in Temporary Accommodation (Housing Costs only paid via HB)
- Claimant is living in Supported Specified Exempt Accommodation (Housing Costs only paid via HB)
- The Claimant has 3 or more children in their household
- The Claimant is entitled to Severe Disability Premium (see paragraph 2)

From 1 February 2019

- Claimant is of Pension age
- Claimant is living in Temporary Accommodation (Housing Costs only paid via HB)
- Claimant is living in Supported Specified Exempt Accommodation (Housing Costs only paid via HB)
- The Claimant is entitled to Severe Disability Premium (see paragraph 2)