



Potteries Gold



Benefits Newsletter December 2015

1. Universal Credit

Digital Roll-Out

The Universal Credit Digital Service was rolled out in more areas in Croydon, Sutton and Southwark (SM5 1, SM5 3, SM5 9, SM6 0 and SM6 6) from 2 December 2015 for new claimants. It has already been introduced in SM5 2, SM6 7, SM6 8, CR0 4, SM6 9, CR0 2 and SE1 5. See <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2015/1930/made>

The Universal credit Digital Service is to be rolled out to further five Jobcentres from May 2016 extension of service to Hounslow, Musselburgh, Purley, Thornton Heath and Great Yarmouth

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmhansrd/cm151207/debtext/151207-0001.htm#15120711000030>

Universal Credit Statistics

The latest statistics published by the DWP show that 155,568 people were on the Universal Credit caseload across the UK, as of 12th November 2015. Of these, 51,078 (or 33 per cent) were in employment and 104,408 (or 67 per cent) were not in employment.

In North Staffordshire the figures of UC claimants is gradually increasing

Local Authority	Oct 2015 (r)			Sept 2015 (p)		
	Total	In emp	Not in Emp	Total	In emp	Not in emp
Stoke-on-Trent	27	7	13	23	7	17
Newcastle	251	114	141	297	108	189
Staffs Moorlands	2	7	21	27	7	24
Total	299	128	175	347	122	230

(r=revised, p=provisional)

Figures in this table have had statistical disclosure control applied to avoid the release of confidential data. Totals may not sum due to the adjustments.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/484824/universal-credit-statistics-to-3-dec-2015.pdf

DWP Report 'Universal Credit at Work - December 2015'

The DWP has published a report 'Universal Credit at Work - December 2015' which highlights the positive labour market impacts of Universal Credit.. 'people are moving into work faster, with 113 people moving into work under universal credit for every 100 under the old system.'

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/483029/universal-credit-at-work-december-2015.pdf

DWP Report 'Universal Credit Extended Gateway Evaluation'

A DWP commissioned survey by Ipsos MORI -'Universal Credit Extended Gateway Evaluation' -has found that, although universal credit claimants spent more hours on job search activity than those claiming jobseeker's allowance, they did not apply for significantly more jobs.



The report also outlines a number of aspects of universal credit that might be considered for changes or improvements, including that -

- the five week wait for the first payment was particularly difficult for those with housing costs;
- claimants who were less positive about Jobcentre support reported a lack of personalisation and limited adviser input;
- claimants expressed concerns around the achievability of the job search hours under their claimant commitment;
- although universal credit claimants spent more hours on job search activity than those claiming jobseeker's allowance, they did not apply for significantly more jobs and a greater proportion lost confidence over time that they would find a job within the next three months; and
- claimants did not necessarily understand in advance the scope for universal credit to provide a work incentive or to ease the transition into employment.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/universal-credit-research-with-single-claimants-including-those-with-housing-costs>

2. PIP

Consultation

The DWP has launched a consultation to change entitlement to the PIP Daily Living component for claimants who score the required 8 or 12 points, but only score these points because they need aids and appliances to achieve independent living. These are claimants who score 1 or 2 points because they use aids or appliances on four or more of the following activities; cooking, eating, managing medication, washing and bathing, using the toilet, dressing and undressing, communication, or reading.

The options being considered to change PIP for people in this group are to either

- pay a lump sum to these claimants rather than a monthly or weekly benefit; or
- introduce a new lower rate of daily living allowance for people which would be paid monthly, or
- change the entitlement to the daily living component to state that claimants score some points from a descriptor which does not relate to using aids or appliances; or
- halve the number of points awarded from 2 to 1 for the use of aids and appliances; or
- change the definition of aids and appliances to exclude those that are available at low or no cost or are commonly used by a non-disabled person for the same purpose e.g. electric tin openers

Anyone who scores more than 2 points in any of the descriptors would still be entitled to the existing weekly rate.

Replies to the consultation have to be sent in by 29th January 2016. If you are assisting anyone who may be affected by this change and would like to send in evidence of how any of these changes will impact them; then send it into tina.mendolia@snsfab.org.uk by Friday 22nd January and we will send a response to the DWP.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/public-consultation-launched-on-personal-independence-payments>

Statistics

The DWP has published the latest PIP statistics up to the end of October 2015. 48 % of new claims for PIP and 74% of DLA reassessments are successful. This is a slight drop from September 2015 when it was 49% for new claims and 76% for reassessments. Locally it is between 52% and 54% of new claims which are successful.

The statistics also give details of the success rate of Mandatory Reconsiderations:

- 22,800 new claim reconsiderations (15 per cent) led to a change in the award; and
- 12,200 reassessed DLA claim reconsiderations (32 per cent) led to a change in the award.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/personal-independence-payment-april-2013-to-october-2015>

3. Employment and Support Allowance

A Parliamentary Review has been carried out in conjunction with a seven charities (Leonard Cheshire, Mencap, MIND, MS Society, National Autistic Society, RNIB, and Scope), which looks at the impact of cutting the £30 a week Work-Related Activity element from April 2017.

In the report 'Halving the Gap?' published on 8th December they found that:

- There is no evidence to suggest that reducing ESA for new claimants would help them move closer to work.
- The reduction is likely to make it much harder, as people would find it difficult to be able to afford to take part in things like training, work experience, volunteering and other work related activity
- Reducing ESA would lead to stress and anxiety as people struggled to pay the bills. This would affect people's health and mental health.

<https://disabilitybenefitsconsortium.files.wordpress.com/2015/12/esa-review-december-2015.pdf>

4. Benefit Uprating April 2016

The 2016/17 uprating figures are now available. Most of the income-related benefit amounts have been frozen until April 2020 so there is little change.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/485613/a13-2015.pdf