



## Benefits Newsletter June 2016

### 1. Universal Credit

#### Universal Credit in Action

The DWP has produced a video which demonstrates how the full version (digital version) of Universal Credit works. This has currently been introduced in Bath, Bridgwater, Croydon, Great Yarmouth, Hounslow, Lowestoft, Musselburgh, Newcastle, Purley, Rugby, Southwark, Sutton or Thornton Heath. See

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7Km4IXfVJB1n8SQUmkJD0Q>

#### Latest UC Stats

The latest statistics published by the DWP show that 262,728 people were on the Universal Credit caseload across the UK, as of 12<sup>th</sup> May 2016. Of these, 105,146 (40%) were in employment and 157,580 (60%) were not in employment.

In North Staffordshire the figures of UC claimants have continued to steadily increase since UC was introduced in Stoke on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2016. In Stoke-on-Trent there were 462 claims for UC between 14<sup>th</sup> April and 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2016 and there are currently 569 UC claimants on the UC caseload whose claim for UC has been awarded; this has increased from 448 in April 2016 (27% increase).

Local Authority	New Claims 14 <sup>th</sup> April – 2 <sup>nd</sup> June 2016	Caseload 12 <sup>th</sup> May 2016		
		Total	Not in emp	In emp
Stoke-on-Trent	462	368	207 (36%)	569
Newcastle	127	271	191 (41%)	461
Staffs Moorlands	13	68	42 (39%)	109
<b>Total</b>	<b>602</b>	<b>703</b>	<b>442 (39%)</b>	<b>1141</b>

\*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.

#### 47% of claimants on the UC caseload in North Staffordshire are under 25

under 25s	Not in employment	In employment	Total
Stoke-on-Trent UA	163	94	257
Newcastle-under-Lyme	123	100	223
Staffordshire Moorlands	40	18	58
<b>Total</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>536</b>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/universal-credit-29-apr-2013-to-5-may-2016>

For link to interactive map see <http://dwp-stats.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Viewer/index.html?appid=82116e01690d4e8584014362d67900c6>

## DWP Universal Credit Technical Guides

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Universal Credit Programme, is producing a series of Technical Guides to provide detailed information on the more complex areas of Universal Credit.

The first of these guides is available on GOV.UK and provides detailed information on Tax Credits Debt in Universal Credit. From April 2016, Tax Credit claimants who move from tax credits to Universal Credit may have any tax credits debt transferred to DWP to consider recovery from their on-going Universal Credit payments. See

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tax-credits-debt-in-universal-credit/tax-credits-debt-in-universal-credit--2>

## Universal Credit – Long Hello

A report by Citizens Advice Scotland highlights the difficulties caused by the delays in receiving UC and calls for a one-off non-repayable assessment period payment of £160 to be offered to all UC claimants. See

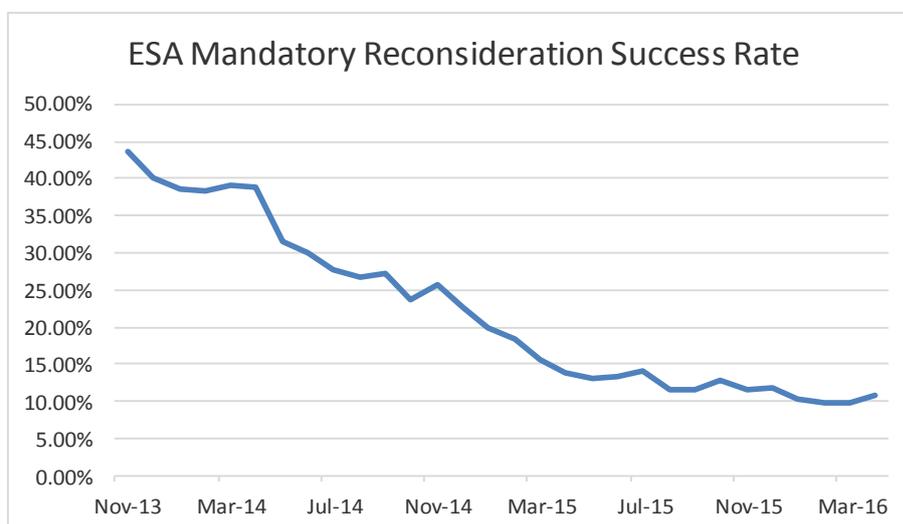
<http://www.cas.org.uk/news/new-benefits-change-causing-serious-detriment-vulnerable-scots>

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/patrick-butler-cuts-blog/2016/jun/09/debt-and-food-banks-the-legacy-of-universal-credits-long-hello>

## 2. ESA

### Mandatory Reconsideration Statistics

- Since the introduction of the Mandatory Reconsideration process in Oct 2013 the number of successful MRs for ESA has steadily declined. In Nov 2013 43.75% of ESA MRs resulted in a revised decision, however the latest statistics show that in the year up to April 2016 the success rate was only 11%.
- However in April 2016 45% of Mandatory Reconsiderations which considered if the claimant should be in the ESA Support Group rather than the WRAG were successful.



<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/esa-work-capability-assessment-mandatory-reconsiderations-data-to-april-2016>

### Tribunal Statistics

**58%** of ESA Tribunals were decided in favour of the claimant in the period Oct-December 2015.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/tribunals-and-gender-recognition-certificate-statistics-quarterly-january-to-march-2016>

### 3. Personal Independence Payment

#### PIP statistics

- the average clearance times for new claims (normal rules) was 13 weeks
- 47 per cent of new claims resulted in a PIP award, while 73 per cent of DLA reassessment claims resulted in an award

#### Mandatory Reconsideration

- 15% of Mandatory Reconsiderations on new claims led to a change in the claimant's award
- 24% of Mandatory Reconsiderations for DLA to PIP cases led to a change in the claimant's award
- in over 60% of reconsiderations the decision was unchanged

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/529079/pip-statistics-to-apr-2016.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/529079/pip-statistics-to-apr-2016.pdf)

#### Tribunals

63% of PIP Tribunals were decided in favour of the claimant in the period Oct-December 2015, this is up from 61% in the previous quarter.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/tribunals-and-gender-recognition-certificate-statistics-quarterly-january-to-march-2016>

#### Muscular Dystrophy UK Report

Muscular Dystrophy UK has published a report about the experiences of people affected by muscle wasting diseases are having when claiming PIP. The report highlights problems caused by changes to way in which the mobility element is assessed, which have resulted in between 400 and 500 adapted vehicles being handed back each week. The report also raises issues faced by many people affected by Muscular Dystrophy including delays in processing claims, cancelled appointments for assessments, lack of disability access at assessment centres and lack of understanding that muscle wasting is a progressive illness. See

<http://www.muscular dystrophyuk.org/app/uploads/2016/06/POL5-D-Disability-report-final.pdf>

#### PIP Interactive Map

The DWP has produced an interactive map showing the current number of PIP claimants in each local authority area. This the information for North Staffordshire.

April 2016	Stoke	Newcastle	Moorlands	Total
Total in payment	5,445	2,113	1,264	8,822
Special Rules	116	63	41	220
Normal Rules	5,329	2,050	1,222	8,601
Reassessment	2,473	935	580	3,988
Caseload on highest level award	1,430	505	302	2,237
Proportion at highest award	27%	25%	25%	26%
Total Registrations	10,746	3,934	2,336	17,016
Total Clearances	10,055	3,694	2,226	15,975
Percentage of decisions awarded	56%	58%	59%	58%

**For interactive map showing latest PIP Stats see**

<http://dwp-stats.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Viewer/index.html?appid=4f2f5d71f682401b9b78ee5c6ea7887e>

## 4. Benefit Cap

The DWP has identified households who are likely to be affected by the reduction in the benefit cap and has written to them to inform them of the impact the cut in the cap from £26,000 a year to £20,000 a year will have on them when it is introduced in autumn 2016. To see a copy of the letter click [here](#).

[http://www.housing.org.uk/latest-updates/tenants-are-being-notified-about-the-impact-of-the-benefit-cap/?mc\\_cid=318f2a7a3d&mc\\_eid=339da5dd41](http://www.housing.org.uk/latest-updates/tenants-are-being-notified-about-the-impact-of-the-benefit-cap/?mc_cid=318f2a7a3d&mc_eid=339da5dd41)

The North Staffs Advice Partnership is holding a meeting on **Weds 29<sup>th</sup> June 2016** at 2pm-4pm in Hanley Library to discuss the implications of the benefit cap. If you would like to attend email [deborah.williamson@snsCab.org.uk](mailto:deborah.williamson@snsCab.org.uk).

## 5. Advicenow Guides

Advicenow is an independent, not-for-profit website, run by the charity 'Law for Life: the Foundation for Public Legal Education.' They have produced a series of very useful guide to help people to deal with benefit problems, the Mandatory Reconsideration Generator is a really useful tool. See links below:

### **Mandatory Reconsideration Generator**

<http://www.advicenow.org.uk/pip-tool>

### **How to deal with a Tax Credit Overpayment**

<http://www.advicenow.org.uk/guides/how-deal-tax-credit-overpayment>

### **How to win a PIP appeal**

<http://www.advicenow.org.uk/guides/how-win-pip-appeal>

