

# The **Potteries Gold** Post

## **MORE CHANGES TO YOUR BENEFITS THIS APRIL!**

### **EMPLOYMENT AND SUPPORT ALLOWANCE, TAX CREDITS AND UNIVERSAL CREDIT CHANGING SOON.**

The last two PG Post editions looked at changes to **Tax Credits** for larger families and to **Bereavement Benefits**. Here is a quick guide to some of the other things happening this spring, especially to ESA.

### **ESA “Work-Related Activity Component” goes!**

If you make a **new claim** for Employment and Support Allowance on or after **1<sup>st</sup> April 2017**, if the DWP later decide you belong in the **Work-Related Activity Group**, you will no longer be paid the “work-related activity component” of **£29.05 per week**. Instead, you’ll get the same as you were receiving while you were in the initial 13 week **assessment phase**.

So if you are unwell, do not delay making your claim!

If you made your claim **before 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017** and you are already in the work-related activity group, **your benefit will not change**. If you made your claim before 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 but have not yet had your medical assessment, if you are put into the work-related activity group, you should still get the extra component.

People starting their claims after 1<sup>st</sup> April who are later put in the **Support Group** will still get an extra **£36.20 per week support component**. You can ask the DWP to **reconsider** their decision if you think you should be in the Support Group instead, but please get more advice before doing this, as a reconsideration can also lead to you being found **fit for work**.



## **ESA permitted work limit removed.**

It's not all bad news for ESA claimants. From 3 April 2017, if you do **permitted work** and earn between **£20 and £115.20 per week**, you will no longer have to give this work or stop claiming ESA after 52 weeks.

## **ESA sanctions reduced.**

From 3 April 2017, ESA claimants in the **work-related activity group** who are **sanctioned** will receive **80% of their payments**, instead of the current 60%, unless they receive the work-related activity component, when they will remain subject to the 60% rate.

## **Tax Credit Family Element removed.**

People starting a family after April 2017 will no longer be eligible for the **Family Element** in **Tax Credits**. The higher **First Child Element** in Universal Credit will also not be available for new claims from April 2017.

## **Requirements for parents to look for work.**

Parents claiming **Universal Credit** with a **youngest child aged 3**, including **lone parents**, will be expected to **look for work** from April 2017. The age at which they had to look for work before was previously 5.

There are also major changes to Universal Credit for young people aged 16 to 21. We will look at these in our next newsletter.

Don't forget that you can get more advice about your benefits via our **Adviceline** on **03444 111 444**.

Potteries Gold is a **Citizens Advice Staffordshire North & Stoke-on-Trent** project to help people in Stoke-on-Trent cope with changes to the benefit system

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