

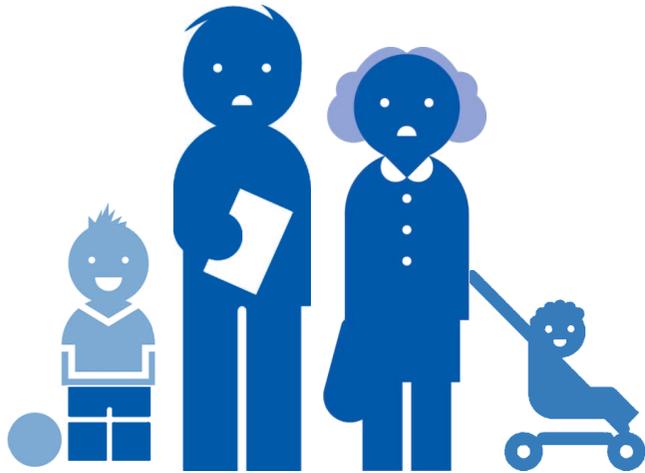
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## When will existing benefit claimants have to transfer to Universal Credit?

If you are currently receiving one of the heritage benefits, you do not have to claim Universal Credit yet.

The DWP plans to transfer existing benefit claimants to Universal Credit sometime after July 2019. It will take until at least 2023 before everyone is transferred.

However, if you have a change of circumstances which requires a



recalculation of your benefit entitlements, for example you move in with a new partner, then you may have to end your current claim for benefits and claim UC instead.

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## Will I lose any of my existing benefit entitlements when I move onto UC?

If you are transferred to UC from your existing benefits by the DWP after 2019, you may be entitled to what is called 'transitional protection', which will make sure your benefits do not go down.

If you are entitled to transitional protection, your UC amount will not increase until the amount of UC you are entitled to is more than the amount you get with the transitional protection.

## For more information about claiming Universal Credit see

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/benefits/universal-credit/before-you-apply/Check-if-youre-eligible-for-Universal-Credit/>

For more information go to [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk) or contact our Citizens Advice Helpline: 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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# Potteries Gold

# Universal Credit

## When will I have to claim?



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## What is Universal Credit?

Universal Credit (UC) is a new benefit which is replacing the following benefits

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Child Tax Credit
- Working Tax Credit
- Housing Benefit

These benefits are now called 'heritage benefits' by the DWP.

## What about other benefits?

All the other benefits such as contributory ESA, Carer's Allowance and Personal Independence Payment are not part of UC. You will still be able to claim these benefits as well as UC.

Contribution-based JSA and contribution-based ESA are now called 'new-style JSA' and 'new-style ESA'.

Pension Credit and Council Tax Support will not become part of Universal Credit.

## When will I have to claim UC?

Before 1<sup>st</sup> January 2018 North Staffordshire was a UC 'live service' area. However, because of changes made to UC in the November 2017 Budget, the DWP is longer accepting any new claims for UC in live service areas.

New claims for Universal Credit will start again when the Full Service UC is introduced in this area.

## What happens now?

If you need to claim benefits before Full Service UC is introduced in your area, you will now have to claim heritage benefits.

**Jobseeker's Allowance**, if you are looking for work.

**Employment and Support Allowance**, if you are unfit for work.

**Income Support** if you are a carer or are a lone parent with a child under the age of 5.

**Child Tax Credit** if you have a low income and have dependant children.

**Working Tax Credit** if you are working and have a low income.

**Housing Benefit** if you are renting your home and have a low income or are claiming JSA, ESA or Income Support.

If you were **receiving UC before 1<sup>st</sup> January 2018** you will continue to receive UC.

However, there are some people who would be better off receiving legacy benefits such as Income Support or Tax Credits.

It may be possible for these people to end their UC claim and to claim the appropriate legacy benefits instead. You should ask for advice before you do this as some people may be worse-off if they end their UC claim.



## When will Full Service UC Start?

From 13<sup>th</sup> June 2018\* **all new benefit claimants** living in Stoke-on-Trent (and people living in Staffordshire Moorlands who use Hanley or Longton Jobcentre) will have to claim Universal Credit instead of making a claim for one of the benefits that UC replaces. The Full Service is introduced in Newcastle Borough in December 2018\* and in rest of Staffordshire Moorlands in September 2018.\*

The only exception to this rule is families who have 3 or more children on the date they claim. These families will be told to claim Tax Credits until January 2019.

## How does Full Service UC work?

People claiming Full Service UC will have to claim on-line and set up a UC account.

The UC account is like an on-line bank account: you will have to use it to see how much UC you have been awarded each month; send and receive messages directly to your Work Coach and report changes of circumstances.

You will need to be able to access your UC account on a regular basis to make sure you do not miss any appointments or other instructions sent to you by your Work Coach.

\* Correct on 1st January 2018

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