

Universal Credit – Autumn Budget Announcement November 2017

Key changes to:

- advance payments system
- tenant entitlement to Universal Credit
- a slow-down in the roll-out of Universal Credit Full Service.

From January 2018 those who need it, and who have an underlying entitlement to Universal Credit, will be able to access up to a month's worth of Universal Credit within five days via an advance. The period of recovery will be extended from six months to twelve months for all types of advance payment. Advances will continue to be interest free. New claimants in December will be able to receive an advance of 50% of their monthly entitlement at the beginning of their claim and a second advance to take it up to 100% in the New Year, before their first payment date. It will be possible to apply for an advance online.

From February 2018 the removal of the seven-day waiting period so that entitlement to Universal Credit starts on the first day of application.

From April 2018 those already on Housing Benefit will continue to receive their award for the first two weeks of their Universal Credit claim. This will be unrecoverable, automatic and received early in the first assessment period.

To support these changes, from December 2017 the Live Service will no longer take any new claims. If not living in a Full Service area, claimants will be asked to claim legacy benefits or tax credits.

The gateway direct for new claims for families with more than 2 children onto legacy benefits will also be extended until January 2019. The Government will roll out Universal Credit more gradually between February and April 2018, and roll-out to all jobcentres will be complete in December 2018.

New Free Phone Universal Credit telephone numbers

With effect from the 29th November 2017 telephone calls to Universal Credit will be free, the details are below –

Live Service	0800 328 9344
Full Service	0800 328 5644
Payment Services (Claimants)	0800 328 0172
Text phone	0800 328 1344