

# Universal Support: Help to claim

At Citizens Advice Universal Credit is our fastest growing advice area. Since the roll out began we've helped over 175,000 people with Universal Credit issues.

The majority of people who come to us for help with Universal Credit need help in making their initial claim. We've designed a new service which meets this need and it will be available in England and Wales from April 2019. Citizens Advice Scotland will deliver a parallel service in Scotland.

## The service

### Step 1: Multi- channel 'no wrong door' access



Our service will be available, face-to-face, over the phone and online through webchat and online content - to allow clients to access support in the way that's right for them. They can be sign-posted or referred by other support agencies or self-refer.



### Step 2: Individual needs assessment

However clients come into our service we'll start by assessing their individual needs to make sure they can get access to the right level of support in the way that's right for them



### Step 3: Support to start a Universal Credit claim



### Step 4: Completing a claim and getting ready for first payment

Depending on their level of need this might include help to:

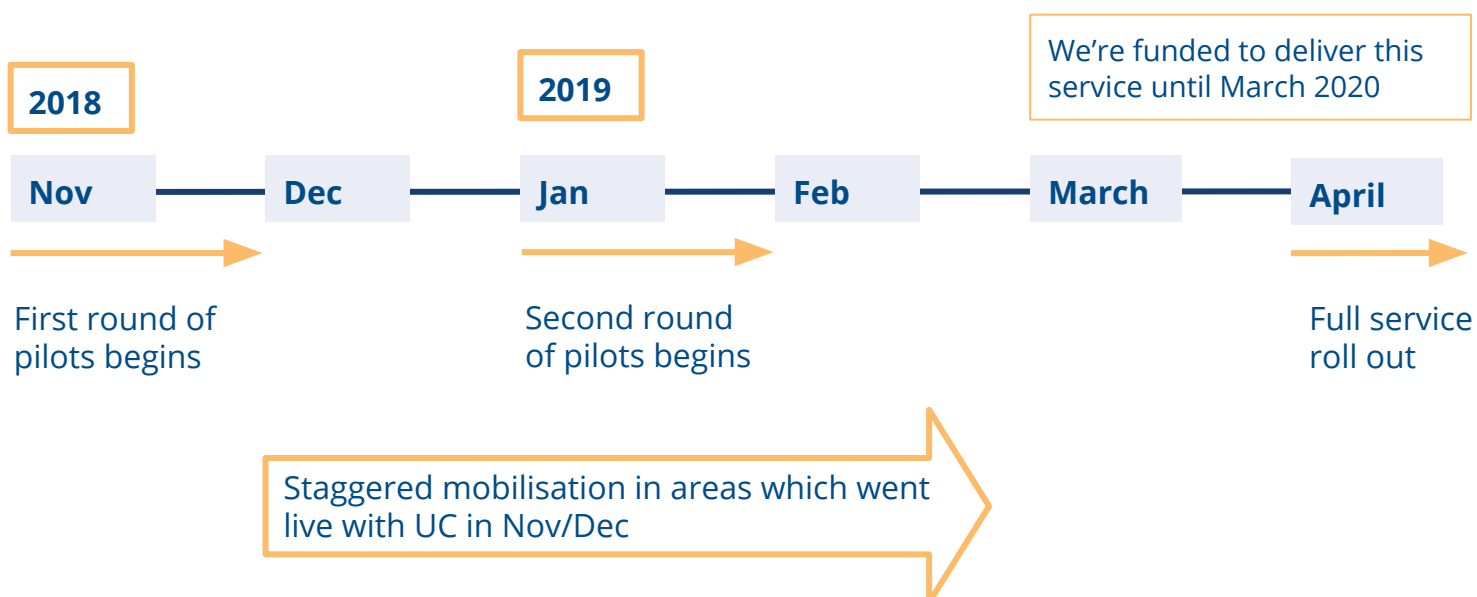
- Check whether a client should be applying for Universal Credit
- Set up an email address or Universal Credit account
- Work through claim to-dos
- Access Universal Credit phone claim service or DWP home visit support
- Verify their identity
- Provide additional evidence
- Prepare for the practicalities of a monthly payment
- Access adaptations such as direct payments to landlords and conditionality easements
- Apply for additional financial support



### Step 5: Access to longer term support

Our help to claim service supports clients to make their initial Universal Credit claim. We can also support them with other issues in their lives by signposting or referring clients to other services - within Citizens Advice or through other organisations.

## Timeline



## Working with partners



### No wrong door

We'll support clients through this service based on their needs - whatever route they come to us by. As our service goes live across the country local Citizens Advice will be in touch to build upon existing local relationships and referral pathways.



### Ensuring a smooth client journey

Between now and March 2019 we'll begin rolling out and testing our service through our pilots. We'll also be mobilising the service early in areas where Universal Credit is going live in November or December. During this period our service will be available alongside existing assisted digital and personal budgeting Universal Support. We'll work closely with local delivery services to ensure that clients can make the most of both services over this time period.



### Sharing best practice and insight

Strong working relationships will be key to the success of this service. We've built this into our model with a network of Best practice leads who will be in place in early 2019 (1 per Jobcentre district). They'll gather information about how Universal Credit and the Help to Claim service is performing, develop relationships with local stakeholders and share ideas, insight and best practice at a regional and national level.

We'll continue to use our evidence to raise our concerns about Universal Credit and influence policy change. If you'd like to know more about our Universal Credit work please get in touch at [universalcredit@citizensadvice.org.uk](mailto:universalcredit@citizensadvice.org.uk).