

If you call or write to us,  
please use this reference:

[www.gov.uk/universal-credit](http://www.gov.uk/universal-credit)

## Your benefit cap grace period

Please fill in your grace period declaration form

---

Dear

There's a limit on the total amount of benefit that most people aged 16 to 64 can get. This is called the *benefit cap*.

The benefit cap may apply to your household. This is because the total amount of your household benefits cannot be more than the amount of the benefit cap. By *household* we mean you, your partner, if you have one, and any dependent children or qualifying young people that live with you. This means your Universal Credit award may go down.

Depending on your circumstances, your Universal Credit payments might not be lowered by the benefit cap for up to 9 months. This is called a *grace period*. You may be able to get a grace period but we need some more information from you.

Please fill in the **Grace period declaration form** with this letter and send it back to us in the envelope provided to see if you can get a grace period.

To see if you can get a grace period, please fill in the declaration form and send it back to us in the envelope provided within 14 days of the date of this letter.

For general information, you can call the Universal Credit helpline on:

Telephone:  
**0800 328 9344**

Textphone:  
**0800 328 1344**

Our opening hours are 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday.

## What we mean by a grace period

The benefit cap will not apply to your Universal Credit payments for up to 9 months if:

- **in the last 9 months**

- you, your partner, or any ex-partner either of you were living with, have stopped working, or
- your household earnings have fallen below £520 in any month since 1 April 2017 or below £430 in any month up to 31 March 2017

and

- **for the 12 months before** that happened, your household (including you, your partner and any ex-partners either of you were living with) had total earnings of £520 or more each month since 1 April 2017 or £430 or more each month for any period up to 31 March 2017.

If you are able to get a grace period, this will give you time to take steps to stop the benefit cap from applying to you. For example, if you or your partner find work and earn over £520 each month, or increase your earnings to £520 or more each month, the benefit cap will not apply to your household.

If your circumstances stay the same at the end of your grace period, the benefit cap will apply to your household and your Universal Credit award will go down.

## What this means for you

**While we wait for this form to be returned to us, we will pay or will already have paid Universal Credit to you at your normal rate. If you are not able to get a grace period and the benefit cap does apply to your award then you may have been overpaid. We will contact you if you have been overpaid and will arrange for you to pay back any overpaid amount.**

## How you can find out more

- Find out more information about the benefit cap by going to **[www.gov.uk/benefit-cap](http://www.gov.uk/benefit-cap)**
- Call the Universal Credit helpline to find out general information about the benefit cap, and about the help we can give you. The telephone number is on the first page of this letter.

## Change of circumstances

You must tell Universal Credit **straight away** on **0800 328 9344** or by post if there is a change in your circumstances. If you give wrong or incomplete information or you don't report changes straight away you may be paid more or less money than you should. You could also be prosecuted or need to pay a financial penalty. You will have to pay back overpaid money when told to do so.

## If you need help managing your money

There is support available that offers free, independent advice about how to make the best of your money, including budgeting, dealing with debt and saving money on your household bills. To find out more, speak to your work coach or go to

**[www.gov.uk/universal-credit/getting-help](http://www.gov.uk/universal-credit/getting-help)**

## More help and information

If you need to ask advice about your housing, contact your local authority. To contact your local authority visit **[www.gov.uk/find-your-local-council](http://www.gov.uk/find-your-local-council)** or look in your local phone book.

Yours sincerely,

Office manager

## Equality and diversity

We are committed to treating people fairly, regardless of their disability, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, transgender status, marital or civil partnership status, age, religion or beliefs. Please contact us if you have any concerns.

---

## Call charges

Calls to **0800** numbers are free from BT land lines but you may have to pay if you use another phone company, a mobile phone or if you are calling from abroad.

---

## How to fill in the declaration form

If you are claiming Universal Credit as a single person, you need to complete **Part 1: Single claim**.

If you are claiming Universal Credit as a couple, both of you need to complete **Part 2: Joint claim**.

### Information about ex-partners

If either you or your partner have separated from somebody in the last 9 months and during the time that you or your partner were living with them they either:

- stopped work, or
- continue to be in work

the grace period may still apply to you.

### Earnings information

When we talk about earnings, we mean your earnings after tax, National Insurance and pension contributions.

We also count any payments of Statutory Maternity Pay, Statutory Sick Pay or Statutory Adoption Pay as earnings when we look at whether you can get a grace period.

---

**You must sign, date and complete this declaration form and return it in the envelope enclosed within 14 days of the date of this letter. Failure to do so will mean that we are unable to consider a grace period at this time, and the benefit cap may apply to your next Universal Credit award.**

# Grace period declaration form

## Part 1: Single claim

### Personal details

Name

National Insurance (NI)  
number

Letters

Numbers

Letter

### Work history

#### Are you currently employed?

You are treated as in employment for any period you received Statutory Sick Pay, or were on maternity leave, paternity leave, adoption leave or shared parental leave.

Have you had a job that ended in the last 9 months?

No ☐ Answer the question below.

Yes ☐ Go to the next **main question** at the bottom of this page.

No ☐ Go to the next page.

Yes ☐ When did your employment end?

 /  / 

In the 12 months immediately before this date, were your total household earnings £520 or more each month, or £430 or more each month for any period up to 31/3/17?

This includes the earnings of any partner you were living with.

No ☐ Go to the **Declaration**.

Yes ☐ Go to the next page.

Have your total household earnings fallen below £520 per month since 1 April 2017, or below £430 per month for any period up to 31/3/17?

No ☐ Go to the **Declaration**.

Yes ☐ When did the earnings reduce?

 /  / 

In the 12 months immediately before this date, were your total household earnings £520 or more each month, or £430 or more each month up to 31/3/17?

This includes the earnings of any partner you were living with.

No ☐ Go to the **Declaration**.

Yes ☐ Go to the next page.

# Grace period declaration form continued

## Part 1: Single claim continued

### About your ex-partner

Have you lived with and separated from a partner in the last 9 months?

No ☐ Please go to the **Declaration**.

Yes ☐

Your ex-partner's name

Their National Insurance (NI) number

Letters		Numbers						Letter
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

When did you separate from your ex-partner?

In the 12 months immediately before this date, were your total household earnings £520 or more each month, or £430 or more each month up to 31/3/17? This includes the earnings of your ex-partner and any previous ex-partners that you lived with during this time.

No ☐

Yes ☐

### Your ex-partner's work history

If your ex-partner stopped working whilst you were living with them, what date did your ex-partner's employment end?

Your ex-partner is treated as in employment for any period they received Statutory Sick Pay, or were on maternity leave, paternity leave, adoption leave or shared parental leave.

In the 12 months immediately before this date, were your total household earnings £520 or more each month, or £430 or more each month up to 31/3/17? This includes the earnings of your ex-partner and any previous ex-partners that you lived with during this time.

No ☐

Yes ☐

Now please sign the Declaration.

# Grace period declaration form continued

---

## Part 1: Single claim continued

### Declaration

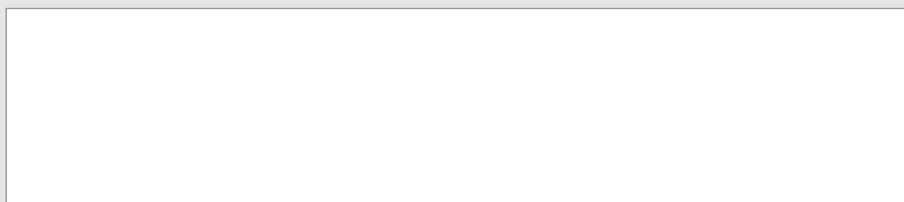
Please read and sign the statement below:

**I have read and understood** the information that is required.

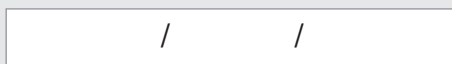
**I declare** the information I have given on the form is correct and complete.

**I understand** that if I give information that is not correct, any grace period may be stopped and you may take legal or other action against me.

Your signature



Date



**If you have answered the questions in Part 1 for a single claim, and signed the Declaration above, send this form back to us.**

**Use the envelope we have sent you. It does not need a stamp.**

## Part 2: Joint claim

### Personal details

Your name

Your National Insurance (NI) number

Letters	Numbers	Letter
<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Your partner's name

Their National Insurance (NI) number

Letters	Numbers	Letter
<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

### Work history

**Are you or your partner currently employed?**

You or your partner are treated as in employment for any period you received Statutory Sick Pay, or were on maternity leave, paternity leave, adoption leave or shared parental leave.

No ☐ Answer the questions below.

Yes ☐ Go to the next page.

Have either of you had a job that ended in the last 9 months?

No ☐ Go to **Other information**.

Yes ☐ **You** – when did your job end?

**Your partner** – when did your partner's job end?

In the 12 months immediately before this date, were your total household earnings £520 or more each month, or £430 or more each month for any period up to 31/3/17?

This includes the earnings of any ex-partners either of you lived with during this time.

No ☐ Please go to the **Declaration**.

Yes ☐ Go to **Other information**.



# Grace period declaration form continued

## Part 2: Joint claim continued

### Work history continued

**Have your total household earnings fallen below £520 per month since 1 April 2017, or below £430 per month for any period up to 31/3/17?**

No ☐ Go to **Other information**.

Yes ☐ When did the earnings reduce?

 / 

In the 12 months immediately before this date, were your total household earnings £520 or more each month, or £430 or more each month up to 31/3/17?

This includes the earnings of any ex-partners either of you lived with during this time.

No ☐ Go to the **Declaration**.

Yes ☐ Go to the next page.

### Other information

**Have you or your partner lived with and separated from an ex-partner in the last 9 months?**

No ☐ Both you and your partner must now sign the **Declaration**.

Yes ☐ Who has separated from an ex-partner in the last 12 months?

☐ You – fill in **About your ex-partner (claimant 1)** before signing the **Declaration**.

☐ Your partner – fill in **About your ex-partner (claimant 2)** before signing the **Declaration**.

☐ Both of you – you must fill in **About your ex-partner (claimant 1)** and your partner must fill in **About your ex-partner (claimant 2)** before signing the **Declaration**.

# Grace period declaration form continued

## Part 2: Joint claim continued

### About your ex-partner (claimant 1)

Your ex-partner's name

Their National Insurance (NI) number

Letters		Numbers						Letter
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

When did you separate from your ex-partner?

In the 12 months immediately before this date, were your total household earnings £520 or more each month, or £430 or more each month up to 31/3/17?

This includes earnings of that ex-partner and any previous ex-partners that you lived with during this time.

No ☐

Yes ☐ Please go to the **Declaration**.

If your ex-partner stopped working while you were living with them, what date did your ex-partner's employment end?

Your ex-partner will be treated as in employment for any period they

- received Maternity Allowance or Statutory Sick Pay, or
- were on paternity leave or adoption leave.

In the 12 months immediately before this date, were your total household earnings £520 or more each month, or £430 or more each month up to 31/3/17?

This includes earnings of that ex-partner and any previous ex-partners that you lived with during this time.

No ☐

Yes ☐

Now please answer the questions on the next page for claimant 2, if appropriate, then sign the Declaration.

# Grace period declaration form continued

## Part 2: Joint claim continued

### About your ex-partner (claimant 2)

Your ex-partner's name

Their National Insurance (NI) number

LettersNumbersLetter

When did you separate from your ex-partner?

/ /

In the 12 months immediately before this date, were your total household earnings £520 or more each month, or £430 or more each month up to 31/3/17?  
This includes earnings of that ex-partner and any previous ex-partners that you lived with during this time.

No ☐  
Yes ☐ Please go to the **Declaration**.

If your ex-partner stopped working while you were living with them, what date did your ex-partner's employment end?

- Your ex-partner will be treated as in employment for any period they
- received Maternity Allowance or Statutory Sick Pay, or
  - were on paternity leave or adoption leave.

/ /

In the 12 months immediately before this date, were your total household earnings £520 or more each month, or £430 or more each month up to 31/3/17?  
This includes earnings of that ex-partner and any previous ex-partners that you lived with during this time.

No ☐  
Yes ☐

Now please sign the Declaration.

# Grace period declaration form continued

## Part 2: Joint claim continued

### Declaration

Both you and your partner must read and sign the statement below:

**I have read and understood** the information that is required.

**I declare** the information I have given on the form is correct and complete.

**I understand** that if I give information that is not correct, any grace period may be stopped and you may take legal or other action against me.

**Your signature  
(claimant 1)**

**Date**

/

/

**Your partner's signature  
(claimant 2)**

**Date**

/

/

**If you have answered the questions in Part 2 for a joint claim,  
and you and your partner have signed the Declaration above,  
send this form back to us.**

**Use the envelope we have sent you. It does not need a stamp.**