



Department  
for Work &  
Pensions

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For the attention of:  
Chief Executives,  
Revenue and Benefits Managers  
GB Local Authorities

23 November 2017

*Dear Colleague*

## **UNIVERSAL CREDIT**

Yesterday in his Budget speech the Chancellor set out a series of changes designed to address the issues raised recently about Universal Credit. Today the Secretary of State has made a statement to Parliament on these measures and a number of other changes we will be making to the system. This letter summarises the changes for councils/stakeholders and the implications for the roll out plan for Universal Credit.

Four main changes were announced. The first involves tackling the fact that short stays in Temporary Accommodation cannot be reflected in Universal Credit monthly assessments. This issue was raised by councils first onto Universal Credit Full Service, like Croydon and I am grateful to those councils for working with us, over the last few months, on the solution. What Ministers have decided to do is to legislate for stays in Temporary Accommodation to be paid through Housing Benefit. This change requires secondary legislation to be passed by Parliament and we hope to have the regulations in place by April 2018. This change ought to address the financial concerns raised by councils,

The other changes concern the first assessment period and the issues faced by claimants at the start of their claim. First, the 7 waiting days will be abolished. Subject to the passage of legislation we will introduce this change in February 2018. Second, we will, again subject to the passage of the necessary legislation, introduce from April 2018 a transition to Universal Credit housing payment of two weeks for anyone transferring across from Housing Benefit. That will provide additional help claimants and landlords in the first Assessment Period. Third, we will extend the period of repayment for new advances to 12 months and allow claimants to receive up to 100% of their notional entitlement. This change does not need enabling legislation and we will implement it from January 2018.

All these changes, taken together provide additional help in the first assessment period as claimants move onto Universal Credit and address the budgeting issues affecting a minority of claimants. As many councils have been lobbying for change I hope they will be welcomed.

As people who run projects and programmes yourself, you will recognise that these changes involve a change of scope. In order to accommodate those the Secretary of State today has announced two changes to the published roll out plan.

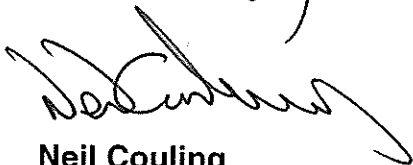
First, in order to make the necessary system changes for the Universal Credit Full Service I have had to defer for three months the development of some features designed to support the expansion at 60 jobcentres a month from February. Accordingly for three months from February we will expand the UCFS at a revised rate of 10 jobcentres a month, then 41 in May and then to around 60 a month thereafter, with a break for August, as normal, before completing national coverage by the end of December 2018. For many councils this will mean a slight change to the date you will join UCFS, full details are attached at Annex 1.

Second, the Universal Credit Live Service, which is being steadily replaced by the roll out of the Full Service, has a very limited shelf-life ending in December 2018. It would not represent value for money for taxpayers to invest in the system changes, required by these policy announcements, for such a short duration. Accordingly I have agreed with Ministers that in Live Service areas we will curtail the flow of new Universal Credit cases from the end of December. Whilst this will not affect any existing claimants already on Universal Credit it will mean that any new claims will, until UCFS is commenced locally, be made to legacy benefits and tax credits.

We shall of course, for those councils affected, follow up with local discussions about how to implement this change smoothly and amend the necessary guidance on gov.uk. And making extra funding available for the additional costs of administering these changes under new burdens principles.

I hope this is helpful and you can see how we have responded to feedback and the learning derived from those councils first onto Universal Credit. I look forward to working with you all on completing the roll out of Universal Credit to this revised timetable. If you have any queries please do not hesitate to get in touch.

*Yours Sincerely*



**Neil Couling**  
Director General  
Universal Credit Programme

## Annex 1 - Revised Universal Credit Rollout Schedule

### February 2018

Ayr	Blackburn	Brixton
Girvan	Gloucester	Clapham Common
Coalville	Cardiff Alex House	
Accrington	Cardiff Charles Street	

### March 2018

Ashton-under-Lyne	Falkirk	Ealing
Hyde	Grangemouth	Palmers Green
Lincoln	Barking	
Maesteg	Acton	

### April 2018

Airdrie	Rhyl	Ashton in Makerfield
Bellshill	Slough	Ipswich
Cumbernauld	Wigan	
Motherwell	Leigh	

### May 2018

Bathgate	Rochdale	Maidenhead
Livingston	Middleton	Folkestone
Dumfries	Heywood	Chatham
Stranraer	Huyton	Gravesend
Annan	Kirkby	Scarborough
Stowmarket	Walthamstow	Whitby
Diss	Barnet	Selby
Rushden	Hendon	Killingworth
Newark	Edmonton	North Shields
Bridgnorth	Basingstoke	Wallsend
Market Drayton	Bodmin	Jarrow
Oswestry	Newquay	South Shields
Shrewsbury	Truro	Bracknell
Whitchurch	St Austell	

## June 2018

Helston	Leicester New Walk	Ashford
Penryn	Leicester Wellington St	Kingston
Penzance	Skegness	Twickenham
Redruth	Alfreton	Redbridge
Haywards Heath	Belper	Marylebone
Crawley	Heanor	Abergavenny
Horsham	Hanley	Caldicott
Bristol Temple St	Longton	Chepstow
Bishopsworth	Hereford	Merthyr Tydfil
Bedminster	Leominster	Holyhead
Bridgend	Ross on Wye	Llangefni
Porthcawl	Darlington	Amlwch
Colwyn Bay	Durham	Ammanford
Llandudno	Chester le Street	Carmarthen
Banff	Newton Aycliffe	Llanelli
Fraserburgh	Spennymoor	Buckie
Peterhead	Keighley	Elgin
Eyemouth	Bradford Westfield House	Forres
Hawick	Bradford Eastbrook Court	Blairgowrie
Galashiels	Finsbury Park	Perth
Dereham	Barnsbury	
Leicester Charles St	Romford	

## July 2018

Winchester	Hessle	Ebbw Vale
Andover	Rotherham	Cheetham Hill
Worthing	Maltby	Wythenshaw
Littlehampton	Dinnington	Prestwich
Bognor	Loughborough	Bury
Chichester	Coventry Cofa Court	Penrith
Barnstaple	Derby City	Carlisle
Bideford	Staveley	Clacton
Honiton	Spalding	Canvey
Tiverton	Barrow	Rayleigh
Colchester	Chorley	Stratford
Harwich	St Helens	Canning Town
Harrow	Leyland	Bromley
Canterbury	Preston	Dartford
Forest Hill	Congleton	Middlesbrough East
Thornaby	Macclesfield	Middlesbrough
Billingham	Bangor	Houghton le Spring
Stockton	Dolgellau	Washington
Goole	Porthmadog	Southwick

Bridlington	Pwllheli	Sunderland
Beverley	Abertillery	

### September 2018

Caerphilly	Louth	Renfrew
Bargoed	Gainsborough	Govan
Blackwood	Bromsgrove	Laurieston
Aberystwyth	Malvern	Newlands
Cardigan	Atherstone	Barrhead
Haverfordwest	Matlock	Garston
Milford Haven	Buxton	Belle Vale
Pembroke Dock	Glossop	Eccles
Newton Abbot	Mansfield	Irlam
Torquay	Thetford	Worsley
Totnes	Boston	Salford
Brixham	Kirkwall	Kendal
High Wycombe	Lerwick	Cosham
Portsmouth	Stornoway	Exeter
Horefield	Campbeltown	Aylesbury
Shirehampton	Dunoon	Chesham
Newport	Helensburgh	Lewes
Hythe	Oban	Newhaven
Wandsworth	Rothesay	Ringwood
Wisbech	Paisley	Lymington
Ely	Johnstone	

### October 2018

Wester Hailes	Machynlleth	Walsall Bridle Court
Leith	Guisley	Brownhills
High Riggs	Morley	Willenhall
Clydebank	Pudsey	Kingswood
Dumbarton	Seacroft	Yate
Aberdeen	Leeds Southern House	Ryde
Partick	Leeds Park Place	Aldershot
Springburn	Cambridge	Alton
Hackney	Huntingdon	Bordon
Hoxton	Cromer	Farnborough
Letchworth	Norwich	Redhill
Stevenage	Felixstowe	Epsom
Hertford	Leiston	Guildford
Woolwich	Woodbridge	Woking
Brecon	Kettering	Wood Green

Llandrindod Wells	Nottingham Loxley House	Tottenham
Newtown	Bulwell	Luton
Welshpool	Nottingham Central	Hayes
Ystradgynlais	Leamington Spa	Uxbridge
Barry	Worcester	Bexleyheath
Penarth	Walsall Bayard House	

### November 2018

Cramlington	Tipton	Stafford
Ashington	West Bromwich	Leighton Buzzard
Morpeth	Kings Lynn	Biggleswade
Berwick	Northampton	Tonbridge
Sheffield Bailey	Beeston	Maidstone
Sheffield Cavendish court	Arnold	Harlesden
Chapelton	Sleaford	Fareham
Toxteth	Evesham	Gosport
Williamson Square	Kidderminster	Havant
Bolton Great Moor St	Telford	Weybridge
Bolton Blackhorse St	Nelson	Staines
Aberdare	Clitheroe	Camberley
Llantrisant	Rawtenstall	Loftus
Pontypridd	Stockport	Guisborough
Porth	Wellingborough	Redcar
Tonypany	Ashfield	Eston
Treorchy	Shirebrook	Hemsworth
Caernarfon	Burton	Pontefract
Oldbury	Swadlincote	Castleford
Smethwick	Cannock	Wakefield

### December 2018

Castlemilk	Blackpool	Newcastle Under Lyme
Drumchapel	St Annes	Hull Britannia House
Shettleton	Fleetwood	Blyth
Chelmsford	Everton	Bedlington
Loughton	West Derby	Hexham
Hemel Hempstead	Mildenhall	Alnwick
Borehamwood	Newmarket	Sheffield Hillsborough
Wembley	Fakenham	Sheffield Woodhouse
Kentish Town	North Walsham	North Kensington
Milton Keynes	Kids Grove	