



## *In-depth Briefing*

### **Universal Credit Update January 2018**

This update includes information received from DWP at the CHC and DWP Roundtable meeting, the Social Rented Sector Strategic Landlord DWP meeting, and the DWP Wales Stakeholder Board meeting.

#### **Waiting days**

The removal of the 7 day waiting period will be introduced on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2018. New claims on or after this date will not be subject to waiting days.

#### **Advance Payments**

As of 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2018 new claimants and claimants transferring from legacy benefits are able to apply for an Advance payment for up to 100% of the estimated *total* monthly UC award for the household.

After a claimant makes their new UC claim online they are required to attend an interview at their local Jobcentre – this is usually 3-5 days after making their claim. At this interview, they will be told about Advances and how to apply for one. The Advance can be applied for the same day and will then be paid into the claimants bank account within 72 hours. The Advance can be paid sooner if the claimant is desperate.

New claimants will need to explain to their work coach or the Universal Credit helpline advisor that they are in financial need in order to claim an Advance. Those moving from legacy benefits do not need to be in financial need in order to apply for an Advance. If the advance is agreed, the work coach or helpline adviser will explain how much they will get, how much they will have to pay back each month and the date when the first payment is due.

The Advance is recovered over a period of up to 12 months and claimants can opt to repay them over a shorter period. If a claimant experiences difficulty in repaying the advance over the 12 month period, the repayment time can be extended to 15 months. The first repayment will come out of the first full payment. Under exceptional circumstances, for example if the claimant can't afford the repayments or will fall into debt, repayments can be delayed for up to three months.

If it is determined that the claimant is not entitled to UC, after they have been paid the Advance, this will be treated as an overpayment and will be recovered.

#### **Housing Benefit run on**

From 11<sup>th</sup> April 2018 those in receipt of Housing Benefit prior to applying for Universal Credit will receive an additional two week housing benefit payment. This *will not* impact on the level of Advance that a claimant can apply for, i.e. a claimant can still apply for up to 100% advance including their housing cost.



If HB is paid directly to the claimant, they will receive their HB payment to either credit their rent account, or to use for daily living expenses until their first UC payment

If HB is paid directly to landlords but they are in arrears, the transition to UC Housing payment will be credited to the claimants' rent account, and this will either reduce the level of arrears or clear the level of arrears and place the account in credit – if in credit, the claimant can choose to reduce the amount of their next rent payment

If HB is paid directly to landlords and they are not in arrears, the transition to UC Housing payment places the account into credit – the claimant can then choose to make a reduced rent payment to clear any outstanding balance and return the account to a nil balance

### **Rent changes**

For **Live Service** claimants the process for reporting rent changes will be the same as last year. DWP will set a cut-off date for returning rent schedules and you will receive further information on this in the next couple of weeks. If you are not sure if claimants are on live or full service, please send through the rent schedules anyway.

For **Full Service** areas DWP are still in the process of developing the system for rent changes. The ambition is for the claimant to be prompted to complete a 'to-do' from 1<sup>st</sup> April to submit the rent change. This will only prompt a rent verification if it is outside of an upper and lower threshold. DWP will be working with Welsh Government and CHC to determine this threshold in light of the devolved Welsh Government Rent Policy for 2018/2019.

We have raised with DWP that our members will notify tenants of the rent changes before 1<sup>st</sup> April and so it would be more suitable if the claimant were able to action the 'to do' when they receive the letter from their landlord. We would encourage you to ensure that your rent letters state that the change will require the tenant to complete an action on their UC claim to notify DWP of the rent change.

### **APA payment changes**

CHC notified you at the end of last year that DWP are exploring alternative payment options to improve the frequency of payments to landlords. The ambition is for the payment to landlord to be co-terminus with the payment to the claimant. This is still in the pipeline although there is no progress to update at present.

### **Managed Migration**

Managed migration from legacy benefits to Universal Credit is scheduled to commence in July 2019 to be completed by March 2022. It is estimated that 3.7 million individuals will be moved onto UC as part of the migration. 46% of managed migration households are expected to be in receipt of Housing Benefit.

Those migrating will be treated as brand new Universal Credit claim, however transitional protection will be in place which will erode over time.

Managed migration will be tested in the Summer 2018 and DWP are hoping to provide 12 months' notice to areas that will begin this process from July 2019.



### **Trusted partner status and landlord portal**

The rollout of the landlord portal and trusted partner status has been slowed due to the budget announcements and the February to April phase will be used to enrol a small numbers of landlords whilst at the same time building important improvements identified by those landlords already operating the portal.

Social landlords do not need to take any action because, as per the October to December roll out phase, DWP Account Managers will contact landlords when appropriate to discuss Trusted Partner/Portal enrolment. The February – April phase will include landlords who are based in areas where UC full service has already been introduced.

In terms of the requirements and expectations on landlords with Trusted Partner Status DWP have confirmed that this is a light-touch approach, and landlords are trusted to make decisions as to whether a MPTL is the best course of action at that moment in time.

### **Untidy tenancies**

It has been drawn to the attention of CHC and DWP that landlords are experiencing issues with the processing and management of claims for untidy tenancies. At the CHC and DWP roundtable in January we raised examples and DWP confirmed that the Partnership Manager should be treated as the escalation route in the first instance, where a ‘common sense approach’ should be followed. We have included the contact details for all partnership managers at the end of this briefing.

If you are experiencing any recurring issues with untidy tenancies, or if you are aware of any claims not being resolved despite escalation to the Partnership Manager, please get in touch with CHC so that we can explore these further with DWP. We need specific case studies and examples of the issues that you and your claimants are experiencing. Please get in touch with Hayley Macnamara at CHC with your examples by end February 2018 so that these can be collated and shared with DWP.

### **Landlords events**

CHC are in the early stages of scheduling Landlord Events with DWP which will give all our members the opportunity to meet with DWP officials and highlight any issues or concerns. In order to ensure that these events meet your needs it would be helpful to know what specific areas of UC you would like to be discussed with officials. Please get in touch with Hayley Macnamara at CHC with your suggestions.

### **Contact**

If you any questions or would like further information on the content of this briefing, please get in touch with Hayley Macnamara at: [hayley-macnamara@chcymru.org.uk](mailto:hayley-macnamara@chcymru.org.uk)



## Partnership Managers Wales

| Local Authority            | Partnership Manager | Tel number   | E mail address   |
|----------------------------|---------------------|--------------|--|
| <b>South West Wales</b>    |                     |              |  |
| Bridgend                   | William Jones       | 07586492743  | <a href="mailto:WILLIAM.JONES1@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK">WILLIAM.JONES1@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK</a>   |
| Carmarthen                 | Menna Davies        | 01269 815547 | <a href="mailto:MENNA.M.DAVIES@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK">MENNA.M.DAVIES@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK</a>   |
|                            | Lucy Jewell         | 01267 323011 | <a href="mailto:LUCY.JEWELL@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK">LUCY.JEWELL@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK</a>         |
| Ceredigion                 | Brian Isaac         | 01970653155  | <a href="mailto:BRIAN.ISAAC@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK">BRIAN.ISAAC@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK</a>         |
|                            | Lucy Jewell         | 01267 323011 | <a href="mailto:LUCY.JEWELL@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK">LUCY.JEWELL@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK</a>         |
| Neath Port Talbot          | Helen Powell        | 07500 094803 | <a href="mailto:HELEN.POWELL4@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK">HELEN.POWELL4@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK</a>     |
| Pembrokeshire              | Alyson Phillips     | 07717 344177 | <a href="mailto:ALYSON.PHILLIPS@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK">ALYSON.PHILLIPS@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK</a> |
| RCT                        | Ian Hargreaves      | 07971 996271 | <a href="mailto:IAN.HARGREAVES2@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK">IAN.HARGREAVES2@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK</a> |
| Swansea                    | Mark Hurry          | 01792 494157 | <a href="mailto:MARK.HURRY@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK">MARK.HURRY@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK</a>           |
| <b>South East Wales</b>    |                     |              |  |
| Blaenau Gwent              | Richard Aston       | 0797 1994927 | <a href="mailto:RICHARD.ASTON@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK">RICHARD.ASTON@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK</a>     |
| Caerphilly                 | Ceri Pritchard      | 0778 6110452 | <a href="mailto:CERI.PRITCHARD@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK">CERI.PRITCHARD@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK</a>   |
| City of Cardiff            | Sue Harris          | 07826 941589 | <a href="mailto:SUE.HARRIS@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK">SUE.HARRIS@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK</a>           |
|                            | Gaynor Williams     | 07891 682609 | <a href="mailto:GAYNOR.WILLIAMS@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK">GAYNOR.WILLIAMS@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK</a> |
| Merthyr Tydfil             | Ceri Pritchard      | 0778 6110452 | <a href="mailto:CERI.PRITCHARD@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK">CERI.PRITCHARD@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK</a>   |
| Monmouthshire              | Sarah Masterton     | 07909 881921 | <a href="mailto:SARAH.MASTERTON@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK">SARAH.MASTERTON@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK</a> |
| Newport                    | Sarah Masterton     | 07909 881921 | <a href="mailto:SARAH.MASTERTON@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK">SARAH.MASTERTON@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK</a> |
| Torfaen                    | Richard Aston       | 07920 783932 | <a href="mailto:RICHARD.ASTON@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK">RICHARD.ASTON@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK</a>     |
| Vale of Glam               | Gaynor Williams     | 07891 682609 | <a href="mailto:GAYNOR.WILLIAMS@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK">GAYNOR.WILLIAMS@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK</a> |
| <b>North and Mid Wales</b> |                     |              |  |
| Anglesey                   | Susan Roberts       | 07717347096  | <a href="mailto:SUSAN.ROBERTS10@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK">SUSAN.ROBERTS10@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK</a> |
| Conwy                      | Susan Roberts       | 07717347096  | <a href="mailto:SUSAN.ROBERTS10@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK">SUSAN.ROBERTS10@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK</a> |
| Denbigh                    | Katie Goodwin       | 01745 455917 | <a href="mailto:KATIE.GOODWIN@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK">KATIE.GOODWIN@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK</a>     |



|         |                 |              |  |
|---------|-----------------|--------------|--|
| Flint   | Katie Goodwin   | 01745 455917 | <a href="mailto:KATIE.GOODWIN@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK">KATIE.GOODWIN@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK</a>     |
| Gwynedd | Eiddwen Borland | 01766 465153 | <a href="mailto:EIDDWEN.BORLAND@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK">EIDDWEN.BORLAND@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK</a> |
| Powys   | Elaine Davies   | 01874 573052 | <a href="mailto:ELAINE.DAVIES1@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK">ELAINE.DAVIES1@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK</a>   |
| Wrexham | Ann Ledsham     | 01978 316080 | <a href="mailto:ANN.LEDSHAM@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK">ANN.LEDSHAM@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK</a>         |
|         |                 |              |  |