

Moving to Universal Credit (UC) – ‘Managed Migration’

What is Happening?

Managed Migration is the term used to refer to the final phase of the roll out of Universal Credit (UC).

Universal Credit is a benefit for working-aged people which replaces the six ‘legacy’ benefits listed below by combining them into one single monthly payment.

The government have stated that it plans to complete the Managed Migration process by the end of 2029.

Managed Migration will affect you if you are currently claiming one or more of the following ‘legacy’ benefits:

- Working Tax Credit
- Child Tax credit
- Income Support
- Income-Based Jobseekers Allowance (I-B JSA)
- Income-Related Employment and Support Allowance (I-R ESA)
- Housing Benefit

If you are in receipt of any of the above legacy benefits, you will receive a ‘Migration Notice’ from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) stating that your benefit will be ending and inviting you to make a new claim for Universal Credit instead.

This will happen in stages, and some claimants may not receive a Migration Notice until 2028 (see table below).

Managed Migration Timetable

2023/24	Tax Credit only claimants
2024/25	All other Tax Credit claimants and those on Income Support, Income-based JSA or just Housing Benefit
2028/29	All remaining income-related ESA claimants

If you are receiving Tax Credits only

The DWP have already started the process of Managed Migration for Tax Credit only claimants in many areas of the Country. It is expected that you will receive your Migration Notice sometime after September 2023.

If you are receiving one of the other benefits (instead of, or as well as Tax Credits)

The earliest you will be asked to claim Universal Credit is April 2024. You may need to claim sooner if you have a change of circumstances. If this is the case, always seek advice from a Benefits Adviser before making a new claim to Universal Credit.

If you are receiving Income-Related Employment and Support Allowance

The earliest you will be asked to claim Universal Credit is April 2028. You may need to claim sooner if you have a change of circumstances. If this is the case, always seek advice from a Benefits Adviser before making a new claim to Universal Credit.

What happens when I receive a Migration Notice?

The Migration Notice will explain that your legacy benefit is ending. The letter will include the date your benefit is due to end. This is called the 'deadline day' and it will be three months and one day from the date the notice was issued.

If you are unable to make the claim to Universal Credit before the deadline day, you can ask the DWP for an extension to this deadline.

Important points:

- Do not ignore your Migration Notice!
- Your benefits will end whether you have claimed Universal Credit or not!
- If you are unsure, or need help, get independent advice from a Benefits Adviser.

What happens if I don't claim before the deadline day?

If you have not made your claim by the deadline day, or you have not already agreed an extension with the DWP, your legacy benefits will stop. **It is very important not to ignore your Migration Notice.**

Should I claim Universal Credit before I receive my Migration Notice?

You do not have to make a claim for Universal Credit until you receive your Migration Notice although some changes of circumstance may mean you need to claim earlier.

If you know your circumstances are due to change, seek advice from a Benefits Adviser to find out what your options might be.

You may already be better off on Universal Credit than you are on legacy benefits. It is always worth getting your benefits checked by a Benefits Adviser who will tell you if this is the case.

IMPORTANT: In some circumstances, you may lose money if you claim Universal Credit too early. This might happen where your expected Universal Credit award is *less* than your current legacy benefit award and you claim UC before receiving your Migration Notice.

Transitional Protection

The DWP have stated that if you make your claim to Universal Credit *after* receiving your Migration Notice, you will not immediately lose out on any money provided your personal circumstances have not changed.

The difference between the two amounts is made up through a '**Transitional Element**' which is included in your first Universal Credit Payment. This Transitional Element will continue to be included in future assessments, but certain changes can reduce it or end it altogether.

Transitional Element

A Transitional Element is paid to claimants who:

- Receive a Migration Notice
- Claim UC by their deadline day
- Do not have a change of personal circumstances between receiving the Notice and claiming UC (e.g. form a couple or separate)
- Would be worse off on UC

How do I claim Universal Credit?

Claims for Universal Credit are made online: [gov.uk/universal-credit/how-to-claim](https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit/how-to-claim)

If you are in a couple, both members will need to make their own claim and these will then be linked together.

If you are going to struggle to make and maintain an online claim, you may be able to have an 'offline' claim instead.

If you need support to make the claim, you may be able to get help through a local advice agency or through the Citizens Advice Help to Claim service.

You will need an email address, bank account, and photo ID.

Once you have completed the questions on the claim form, you will need to tick the 'claimant commitment' tab and press 'submit'. You will then need to have your ID verified and attend a New Claim interview at the Job Centre.

When will I receive my first payment?

Universal Credit is paid calendar monthly in arrears. As long as you have provided all the necessary evidence after submitting your claim, you should receive your first payment around five weeks later. You will then receive your ongoing payments on the same date each month.

When is the best time to claim?

If you are going to be worse off on Universal Credit, you should wait for your Migration Notice before claiming. You will then be eligible to receive a Transitional Element in your UC award if you have not had a change in your circumstances (see section on Transitional Protection).

If you are working and paid calendar monthly, it may be best not to make your claim around the time your wages are paid. This is because it can sometimes result in two monthly wages being used when the DWP assess your earnings in your monthly award. You may wish to speak to a Benefits Adviser about this before making your claim.

If you anticipate a significant change in your personal circumstances before your 'deadline day', you should seek advice to discuss what might be the best date for you to start your claim for Universal Credit. For example, you might be expecting a baby, going into full time advanced education, moving home, or anticipating an award of a disability benefit (list is not exhaustive).

What help can I get while waiting for my first payment?

Two week 'run-on'

If you are in receipt of income-related ESA, income-based JSA, Income Support, or Housing Benefit you may be entitled to a two week 'run-on' of these benefits after making your claim to Universal Credit. These payments will be disregarded by Universal Credit when assessing your award.

Advance Payment

You will be able to claim an 'Advance Payment' of Universal Credit, however, this is a loan and will be recovered through deductions from your ongoing award. If you feel you will need an Advance Payment, think carefully about how much you will actually need to get you through to your first payment of Universal Credit.

REMEMBER: your UC award will now include housing costs for your rent in most cases.

Further help and advice:

DWP Migration Notice Helpline

Telephone: **0800 169 0328**
(Mon-Fri 8am to 6pm)

Citizens Advice Help to Claim Service

www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/contact-us/help-to-claim/

Money Helper

www.moneyhelper.org.uk
Telephone: **0800 138 7777**

Advicelocal

www.advicelocal.uk
(Independent advice organisations across the UK)