Universal Credit – information on support arrangements in Newcastle

Universal Credit in Newcastle

Universal Credit is a means tested benefit for working age people who are on low incomes and working, seeking to work or unable to work. It is replacing the following ‘legacy’ benefits and Tax Credits which are administered by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) and local authorities:

 Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)

 Income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance (JSA)

 Income Support

 Child Tax Credit

 Working Tax Credit

 Housing Benefit

Universal Credit was introduced in Newcastle on 27 April 2015, but only for single people who would previously have been eligible to make a new claim for JSA. This is known as the ‘live service’. On 25 May 2016 Universal Credit was introduced for all residents living in the area covered by Newcastle City Jobcentre making new claims to the above benefits and Tax Credits. This is known as the ‘full service’. It also covers anyone who is on existing benefits or Tax Credits who has a change of circumstance that triggers a new claim to Universal Credit, meaning that their entire household will migrate to the ‘full service’.

The ‘full service’ was introduced at Newcastle East Jobcentre on 8 February 2017 and will be introduced at Newcastle West Jobcentre on 15 March 2017. Until then, Newcastle West Jobcentre has the ‘live service’, meaning that only single people making a new claim for JSA living in that jobcentre area will make a claim for Universal Credit.

Support for Newcastle residents to make a Universal Credit claim online

Universal Credit claims have to be made online on the government’s website at

www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit. The DWP state that the online claim process should take approximately 20 to 40 minutes to complete.

If you don’t have your own access to the internet to complete your claim, details of where you can get free or low cost access to computers, training and support can be found online at www.getonlinenewcastle.co.uk (this is searchable by postcode and type of access).

If you need support to complete the online Universal Credit claim you can ask for this at your local jobcentre, or at your local Customer Service Centre where a benefits officer will be available to support you to get online and to assist with your Universal Credit application. Alternatively, you can book a ‘Universal Credit online claim form appointment’ where a member of Newcastle City Council staff will support you to complete the online claim. These sessions are available at City Library (33 Newbridge Street West, NE1 8AX) at specific bookable time slots during the week. Please note that these sessions are only for residents who can’t make a claim online without support. They should not be used for residents who can make the claim online themselves.

 To book a session for support to complete a Universal Credit claim online, phone 0191 277 4100. If you are a member of Council staff who works in a library and has access to the internal ‘L’ drive, book the session in the ‘Internet Taster 2016’ tab on the Internet Taster booking sheets for City Library. Please ensure that you make it clear that the session is for Universal Credit support and that the organisation who referred the resident is recorded in the notes section.

When you make the booking you need to give your name and telephone number. If you are a member of staff, you need to give the service / organisation you work for. You also need to give the resident the information about what they need to take to the appointment (see overleaf).

If you are not able to attend a support session at City Library, for example because of health issues or caring commitments, you should phone the Universal Credit helpline on 0345 6000 723 to ask

for support to make your claim.

Before you start the online claim you need to have the following information with you. If you live in the Newcastle West Jobcentre area which still only has the ‘live service’ your claim must be completed in one go and can’t be saved partway through and returned to at a later time. If you live in Newcastle City or Newcastle East Jobcentre areas your claim can be saved as you go along and does not need to be completed all at once. For both types of claims you need to have the following information with you:

 Your postcode

 Your National Insurance number

 Details of the bank, building society or credit union account you want Universal Credit to be paid into (including account name, sort code and account number)

 Your rent agreement (if you have one)

 Details of your savings or other capital

 Details of any income that is not from work, e.g. from an insurance plan

 Details of any other benefits you are getting

 Details of your children, including their Child Benefit numbers

You might also need this information for other people who live in your home, e.g. your partner.

Once you have made the online claim, the jobcentre will give you an appointment which you need to attend to confirm your details and to go through your work-related requirements (called your ‘Claimant Commitment’).

Budgeting support for Newcastle residents who are in receipt of Universal Credit

Universal Credit brings the following changes which may affect how you manage your money:

 A single household payment (to one member of the household)

 A monthly payment

 A housing element paid directly to you, because Universal Credit claimants are required to pay their rent to their landlords themselves

If you are claiming Universal Credit and need support with budgeting as a result of the above changes, you should speak to your Jobcentre Plus work coach who will refer you to Personal Budgeting Support if they think you need it. If you have spoken to Jobcentre Plus but have not been referred and you believe that you still need support with budgeting as a result of Universal Credit, you can contact the following services. You need to give your name and contact details and state that you are having budgeting issues as a result of being in receipt of Universal Credit.

 If you are a Your Homes Newcastle (YHN) tenant, contact YHN by:

Email universal.credit@yhn.org.uk

 If you live in any other type of property, contact the Council’s Money Matters team by:

Email moneymatters@newcastle.gov.uk

Phone 0191 277 1050

Non-YHN tenants can also go to the Housing Advice Centre (112 Pilgrim Street, NE1 6SQ) from Monday to Friday from 10.00 am to 12.00 noon and 1.00 pm to 4.00 pm (except for Wednesday mornings)

More information about Universal Credit is available online at www.newcastle.gov.uk/universalcredit

For queries about the above support arrangements, contact:

Claire Horton, Active Inclusion Service, Newcastle City Council

Tel: 0191 211 6049 Email: claire.horton@newcastle.gov.uk

This information was accurate at the time of writing (February 2017)