

## Universal Credit Partner FAQ

These frequently asked questions (FAQs) can be used to support any conversations you are having with customers, if a question/answer is not on this list please email [universalcredit@23red.com](mailto:universalcredit@23red.com) and we will try our best to answer it quickly.

### 1. What is “Move to UC”?

Move to UC refers to how the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is moving households on older legacy benefits to the new single benefit system of Universal Credit.

The legacy benefits affected are:

- Child Tax Credit
- Working Tax Credit
- Housing Benefit
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance, and
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance

### 2. What do affected individuals need to do?

The move will not be automatic. Legacy benefit customers will be sent a letter from the DWP informing them of a specified date by which they will need to apply for Universal Credit (UC), should they wish to continue to receive financial support. This letter – called a Migration Notice – also provides details of some of the support available to help them make their move. Individuals claiming tax credits and of State Pension Age will be sent either a letter to apply for Universal Credit or Pension Credit, depending on their circumstances.

Individuals do not need to take any action until they receive this letter.

### **3. When is this all happening?**

The Department began sending Migration Notices to Income Support customers and those claiming tax credits with Housing Benefit from April 2024, with Housing Benefit only customers and Employment Support Allowance with Child Tax Credit customers being invited from July 2024. Jobseeker's Allowance customers and State Pension Age customers receiving Working Tax Credit or Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit have been invited to claim Universal Credit from September 2024.

Those on Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) only or those on ESA with Housing Benefit, will start to receive Migration Notice letters from October 24.

Affected households may be in receipt of a combination of benefits, for example an Income Support recipient could also be claiming Housing Benefit and/or Child Tax Credit.

### **4. Where can we tell people to go to for more help and support?**

A range of support is available to help people successfully make their claim, including:

- The Move to UC website – [gov.uk/ucmove](https://gov.uk/ucmove)
- Face-to-face in local Jobcentres
- A dedicated Move to Universal Credit telephone helpline (telephone number will be on a customers Migration Notice)
- Comprehensive guidance on [gov.uk](https://gov.uk)
- Help to Claim, delivered independently by Citizens Advice, in partnership with Citizens Advice Scotland, to help people with their actual application
- Check who can help you in your local area at - [advice.local.uk](https://advice.local.uk)

We would encourage partners to highlight these additional forms of support as part of ongoing conversations and activity with customers.

## **5. Is anyone exempt from moving to Universal Credit?**

Exemptions can only be made in exceptional circumstances. Parliament has legislated to introduce Universal Credit and end legacy benefits, including Tax Credits. When customers receive a Migration Notice letter, they will need to make a claim by their deadline date to continue receiving financial support.

Where appropriate to do so, the DWP can extend the deadline date. Customers should advise the DWP why they need an extension, and it will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

## **6. What are the processes for those with additional support needs?**

We are aware that customers have different support needs and there are those who require more support to claim than others. That's why a range of support is in place to help people make the transition.

In addition to the support set out in question 4 above, a suite of additional products has been developed as part of the campaign and has been included in the toolkit and on the Move to UC website. Partners can download these from the website at the following [link](#) and we would encourage you to use and share them as part of your interactions with customers.

Products include an explainer video, step-by-step guides on the application process and wider accessible formats such as British Sign Language videos. We encourage partners to highlight these additional forms of support as part of ongoing conversations and activity with customers.

## **7. Will people only be contacted by letter, or digitally as well?**

Everyone who is required to move will receive a Migration Notice letter in the post, informing them that they need to make a claim for Universal Credit before their deadline date (their deadline date will be on their letter).

## **8. What happens if someone misses their claim deadline?**

Customers must claim Universal Credit by their deadline date to continue receiving financial support. Migration Notices give customers a deadline date of 3 months to make their claim, with a number of reminders sent during this period if a claim is yet to be made.

Extensions can be considered if someone needs more time, and a range of support is available where needed to help customers make their claim. Please get the customer to contact the helpline (number on their Migration Notice) if this is needed.

## **9. Will customers be worse off when they move to Universal Credit?**

For households moving to Universal Credit through the managed migration process, all will be assessed for transitional protection at the point they claim Universal Credit. This is an additional amount added to eligible customer's Universal Credit award where their UC entitlement is lower than their total legacy benefits, so that households can adjust to the new benefit system.

Transitional protection is not permanent. It can end when your Universal Credit claim ends or decrease if an existing Universal Credit Element, other than the childcare costs element is increased, or a new Universal Credit Element is awarded.

## **10. What are the benefits of moving to Universal Credit?**

Universal Credit is a personalised and digitally delivered single benefit that has streamlined and simplified the benefits system to support those in work on low incomes, as well as those who are unemployed or who cannot work.

In the publication 'Completing the Move to UC' published April 2022, DWP estimated more than half of (legacy) customers would be better off on Universal Credit and those notified to move through a Migration Notice will be assessed for, and where eligible awarded, transitional protection.

With Universal Credit, you may also be eligible for more financial support to cover other things such as childcare and housing costs. You may get a work coach, who can give you tailored guidance on improving your skills and progressing at work to help you support your family.

## 11. When will the national advertising start?

The latest Move to Universal Credit campaign launched on 18 March 2024 and will run over the course of 2024/25 to support the phased migration roll-out.

## 12. What's the aim of the marketing campaign?

The marketing campaign aims to raise awareness that the move is happening and to prompt customers to apply for Universal Credit after they receive their Migration Notice letter to continue receiving financial support. It also signposts to further information about Universal Credit on [gov.uk/ucmove](https://gov.uk/ucmove) and the wide range of support available on the site to help people prepare for their move.

We understand that this may be a time of uncertainty for customers. Communications aim to explain what is happening in an accessible and compassionate way to help reassure those who may be worried about the change.

## 13. Where will the advertising appear?

The Move to UC advertising campaign includes social media, wider digital, radio, print and out of home advertising. This rich mix of broadcast and targeted channels has been used to help ensure a wide reach to customers.

The main call to action for the advertising is to visit the dedicated campaign microsite – [gov.uk/ucmove](https://gov.uk/ucmove) – which houses more detailed information and support to help prepare customers for their move.

Partner engagement and friends and family also play a key role in raising awareness of the move to Universal Credit, as outlined in the presentation. The advertising encourages DWP customers to look out for their letter from the DWP and signposts to further support available. We need partners to help spread the message about Universal Credit through their networks to support people to have a safe and smooth transition.

## **14. What are the key points in the letter/migration notice for customers?**

The letter will state:

- A deadline for applying for Universal Credit – this will be at least three months from when the letter was sent
- A headline to let customers know the letter is a ‘Universal Credit Migration Notice’
- That the benefits customers currently claim will be replaced by Universal Credit
- A link to the website that customers need to use to make their Universal Credit claim
- A helpline number for support
- Information on Citizen’s Advice’s Help to Claim service
- A link to support available in your local area

## **15. Is there any geographical order to how the letters/migration notices will be sent?**

No, migration notices are sent by benefit type, not according to geographical area.

## **16. What is the size of the audience for each letter drop?**

As migration is happening in phases, and planning for these is ongoing, we are unable to share how many letters will be sent for each group of customers. Publicly available information on the number of customers in receipt of ‘legacy benefits’ can be found [here](#) for both DWP benefits statistics and for HMRC benefits Child and Working Tax Credits Statistics.

## **17. Is there extra support available to help vulnerable customers make their claim?**

Yes, customers moving from Income Support and Income-related Employment and Support Allowance are included in the Enhanced Support Journey, which is available to help the most vulnerable people with their move to UC. This can include support such as telephone calls from the Department for Work and Pensions and home visits.

Other useful links to help support customers with the move include:

- a [checklist](#) to help them prepare for their application
- a [step-by-step video guide](#) showing customers how to apply

## **18. My rent is currently paid directly to my landlord. Will this happen with UC?**

Any housing benefit you previously received will be paid directly into your bank account as part of your UC payment. It's your responsibility to make sure rent payments reach your landlord.

Those in Scotland can opt to have their landlord paid directly. If you think you'll struggle with this, you can ask for a portion of your UC payment to be paid directly to your landlord by contacting the UC helpline.