

Important benefit changes and news – timeline ‘Welfare Reforms’

From 2020

Below is an overview of the main benefit changes and news from 2020. Click to go to [2021](#), [2022](#), [2023](#), [2024](#).

See our other document listing the main benefits changes from 2011 to 2019 on [Changes to the benefits system](#)

The present Welfare Reforms began in 2011, mainly introduced by the 2010 and 2015 governments.

You can find more details on benefit changes and welfare reform on our website page: www.newcastle.gov.uk/welfarereform


To keep on top of benefit changes sign up to receive our bi monthly Benefit Bulletins www.newcastle.gov.uk/financialinclusionforprofessionals

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NB this does not include benefit changes in other countries such as Scotland, that have some additional or different benefits

The information here is as accurate as possible at the time of writing, March 2023.

Date	Change	Notes and sources
6 January 2020	<p>Planned date for HM Courts and Tribunals Service in the North East to relocate to Newcastle's Civic Centre, which will include social security appeal tribunals.</p> <p>Delayed from Summer 2019</p>	<p>Press release</p> <p>A masterplan has been developed for next phase of the Civic Centre refurbishment programme, and these plans are now live on the council's planning portal.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>MVH update 271119.doc</p> </div>
March 2020	<p>Jobcentres to open weekday evenings and Saturdays</p> <p><i>Note the very limited access to Jobcentres during the pandemic detailed below</i></p>	<p>DWP announcement</p>
March 2020	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>Many new, temporary benefit changes introduced to support people during the pandemic. Most of them were introduced in March and to last for three months unless extended. Most of them are listed on the website coronavirus and benefits. Some were included in the Budget 2020 and extended in Budget 2021.</p> <p>As there were so many changes and extensions, the information here is general, mainly including the announcements and main changes. Their detail and detail of the extensions are in the website coronavirus and benefits and also Benefit Bulletins</p>	<p>Coronavirus General note</p> <p>More details on the website coronavirus and benefits.</p> <p>More details also from the 'Further Measures' regulations SI 371/2020 which introduced this and other measures and government guidance.</p> <p>See also Coronavirus: Withdrawing crisis social security measures by House of Commons Library</p>

<p>March 2020</p>	<p>Self-employed Income Support Scheme (SEISS)</p> <p>This government scheme allows the self-employed to claim a taxable grant where they have lost trading/partnership trading profits due to coronavirus initially covering March, April and May, worth 80% of trading profits up to a maximum of £2,500 per month. The scheme was extended to include a second, third and fourth grant with Budget 2021 announcing a final fifth grant which covered the period from May 2021 to September 2021</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>More details on the website coronavirus and benefits.</p> <p>Budget 2021</p>
<p>March 2020</p>	<p>Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS)</p> <p>If a business has had to close or scale back due to coronavirus this government scheme helps employers keep staff on the payroll until the pandemic passes, rather than lay them off, and pay 80% of their wages of up to £2,500 a month. The scheme was extended from June to 31 October 2020 and then to 30 September 2021 where it will be phased out</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>More details on the website coronavirus and benefits.</p>
<p>March 2020</p>	<p>Working Tax Credit improved access</p> <p>To get WTC you have to work a certain number of hours. Temporary drops below these hours are ignored for four weeks but the government announced this would be extended for the duration of the CJRS or SEISS and specifically ended 25 November 2021.</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>More details on the website coronavirus and benefits.</p>
<p>March 2020</p>	<p>Government announces extra funding to councils increase Council Tax support</p> <p>The government recommended that the £500 million they gave to councils in the budget to support vulnerable people during the outbreak should be towards a further reduction in residents' annual council tax bill of £150 probably in the form of increased benefit.</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>Budget 2020.</p> <p>More details</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • on the website coronavirus and benefits. • in the city council's page Coronavirus - Information relating to Council Tax.

<p>March 2020</p>	<p>Universal Credit. No need to attend a Jobcentre as part of a claim for those affected by coronavirus</p> <p>This relaxation was removed July 2020 with telephone interviews for example and moving back to allowing safe visiting of Jobcentres in 2021 and 2022.</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>Budget 2020.</p> <p>More details on the website coronavirus and benefits.</p>
<p>March 2020</p>	<p>Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)</p> <p>Claimants 'affected by coronavirus' do not have to serve the seven waiting days for claiming ESA and do not have to provide a fit note. Contribution based New style ESA claims were made available online (updated guidance).</p> <p>ESA claimants who are affected by coronavirus treated as sick without having to provide medical evidence or undergo a work capability assessment – are extended till 12 November 2021. Does not apply to UC</p> <p>Ongoing reassessments of those on ESA and face to face appointments at the Jobcentre have been suspended but restarted in July with telephone assessments</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>Budget 2020.</p> <p>More details on the website coronavirus and benefits.</p> <p>See SI.No.476/2021</p>
<p>March 2020</p>	<p>Jobseekers Allowance (JSA)</p> <p>JSA is a benefit for those who are fit for work. For three months from 30 March 2020 work search and availability for work requirements were suspended, along with face to face interviews at the Jobcentre - unless for unavoidable reasons.</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>More details on the website coronavirus and benefits.</p> <p>See Claimants are asked to apply online as jobcentres limit access from gov.uk</p>

<p>March 2020</p>	<p>Carers Allowance</p> <p>Carers can retain their Carers Allowance if they have a temporary break in caring. This applies to breaks in caring due to the carer or cared for person getting coronavirus or being isolated due to coronavirus. The government has also confirmed that emotional support counts for Carers Allowance. Extended to 31 August 2021 by SI.No.476/2021</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>More details on the website coronavirus and benefits.</p>
<p>March 2020</p>	<p>Tribunal Service changes</p> <p>Goes remote. Telephone and video appeals and so on</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>See government webpage and tribunals guidance from Courts and Tribunals Judiciary</p> <p>More details on the website coronavirus and benefits.</p>
<p>13 March 2020</p>	<p>Statutory Sick Pay</p> <p>Various improvements including paid if self-isolating due to coronavirus, paid from day one</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>Budget 2020. More details on the website coronavirus and benefits.</p>
<p>13 March 2020</p>	<p>Self Employed and Universal Credit - MIF</p> <p>The Minimum Income Floor (MIF) – where a certain income from self-employment is assumed – was temporarily suspended for those ill or self-isolating due to coronavirus and from 6 April, suspended by Budget 2021 for all self-employed people – until 31 July 2021 and be gradually phased in from August with jobcentre Work Coaches having the discretion not to apply it if the earnings of the resident claiming Universal Credit continue to be affected by coronavirus (COVID-19).</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>Budget 2020.</p> <p>More details on the website coronavirus and benefits.</p>

<p>20 March 2020</p>	<p>Isolation note</p> <p>A temporary alternative to the fit note, called an isolation note, was also introduced on 20 March 2020 to be used for the duration of the outbreak. 'As isolation notes can be obtained without contacting a doctor, this will reduce the pressure on GP surgeries and prevent people needing to leave their homes'.</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>More details on the website coronavirus and benefits.</p> <p>See Online isolation notes launched - providing proof of coronavirus absence from work</p>
<p>23 March 2020</p>	<p>Visiting Jobcentres</p> <p>From 23 March all requirements to attend jobcentres were suspended for three months, which may be extended. Most contact is via phone or the Universal Credit online journal. Visits can be arranged for exceptional purposes: "If you cannot get online, phone us for help and we will only see people face to face in our jobcentres if invited".</p> <p>See further developments below</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>More details in the press release</p> <p>More details on the website coronavirus and benefits.</p>

<p>24 March 2020</p>	<p>Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and other disability and sickness benefits</p> <p>Disability benefits and the incapacity for work test in ESA or Universal Credit usually involve regularly having to prove you satisfy the health conditions with regular reviews, reassessments, appointments with health professionals and claiming within time limits. For a temporary period initially for three months from March 2020, reviews and reassessments and face to face assessments for most disability benefits were suspended and awards due to expire are being extended. When a claim for PIP is made, the claimant is sent a PIP2 form to provide evidence of their health conditions. The deadline for returning the PIP2 claim form was extended for three months and an electronic version of the PIP2 form was created as well as the paper version.</p> <p>Assessments via telephone started in July 2020</p> <p>Some face to face assessments started in May 2021.</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>Budget 2020.</p> <p>Press release</p> <p>See the DWP's press release and updated guidance.</p> <p>See also the DWP guidance on new legislation that allows for medical assessments in person, over the phone and by video from 25 March 2021: ADM Memo 4/21 and DMG Memo 3/21.</p> <p>More details on the website coronavirus and benefits.</p>
<p>26 March 2020</p>	<p>Help with housing</p> <p>the government announced emergency housing measures such as suspending new evictions from rented accommodation and possession proceedings in the court for a temporary period. This was in addition to the three-month mortgage 'holiday'. This was extended on 22 May 2020: The Financial Conduct Authority has published new guidance which enables home owners to extend a mortgage holiday for a further three months. This was further extended in some form into 2021.</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>More details on the website coronavirus and benefits.</p>

30 March 2020	Work search requirements and sanctions Those claiming new style Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) or Universal Credit who are fit and able to work usually have work search requirements which includes being 'able and willing to immediately take up a job'. Those on old style JSA have to be 'available for work' and 'actively seeking work'. These requirements were suspended , initially for three months from 30 March 2020 and claimants will be contacted by the jobcentre instead. Some conditionality and requirements to 'attend' phone interviews started in July 2020	Coronavirus More details on the website coronavirus and benefits .
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<p>April 2020</p>	<p>Benefit and Tax Credits uprating</p> <p>Includes:</p> <p>The basic amount of Working Tax Credit (WTC) and Universal Credit was increased by £20 a week from 6 April 2020. Budget 2021 continued the UC £20 a week till September 2021. The £20 for WTC ended in April 2021 but was replaced by a one-off £500 grant.</p> <p>The increased amount of WTC is ignored as income by Housing Benefit</p> <p>Local Housing Allowance:</p> <p>The maximum rent that is eligible for LHA is ‘capped’ at the 30th ‘percentile’ of local area market levels. This was frozen by the Budget 2015 but has been ‘reset’ - in other words increased, so that more Housing Benefit will be payable from 6 April 2020. The amount varies for each area. Secretary of State told the Lords Economic Affairs Committee on 2 June that the increase was a “permanent uplift.”</p> <p>One rule that stops you getting Carer’s Allowance is if you earn a certain amount. This has increased from £123 to £128 a week.</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>Announcement by Dr Thérèse Coffey 4.11.19</p> <p>Tax Credit, Child Benefit and Guardian’s Allowance uprating announcement</p> <p>The benefit uprating details can be found on our benefit information webpage or in the DWP guidance memos: ADM Memo 3/20 and DMG Memo 5/20</p> <p>Statement in house about Local Housing Allowance 13Jan20</p> <p>Proposed changes</p> <p>Equality analysis & explanation by gov on LHA change</p> <p>Benefit Bulletins</p> <p>Budget 2021</p> <p>Guidance on how WTC payment will work from the Government and from revenuebenefits</p>
<p>April 2020</p>	<p>The national minimum wage to be increased</p> <p>To £9 an hour for those aged 25 and over. Called ‘National Living Wage.’</p>	<p>Announced in the Summer Budget 2015</p> <p>See the Government National Minimum Wage page</p>

<p>April 2020</p> <p>Further delayed to April 2024</p>	<p>Universal Credit higher ‘surplus earnings’ rule</p> <p>This was delayed for a further year due to coronavirus and a further year by the Spring Budget 2023 to 2024</p> <p>Earnings over £2,500 a month when payments stop due to income being too high are carried forward to the next Universal Credit monthly assessment. If these, and normal earnings, are still over the limit, people have to re-claim Universal Credit when their earnings are low enough. The plan in Budget 2018 was to reduce this from £2,500 to £300 from April 2020 but it was delayed for a year and Budget 2021 announced the amount of £2,500 will continue till April 2022 when it will drop to £300, but this was delayed till 2023 by Autumn Budget 2021</p> <p>The measure would have meant many more people being brought into this rule. More details about surplus earnings are available from gov.uk</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>Announced in the Budget 2018 paragraph 5.38 Budget 2020.</p> <p>More details on the website coronavirus and benefits.</p> <p>Budget 2021</p> <p>Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021</p> <p>Spring Budget 2023 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p> <p>Legislation: Welfare Reform Act 2012 regulations - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p>
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<p>April 2020</p>	<p>Funding supported housing</p> <p>The government had proposed to replace Housing Benefit with Local Authority funding for supported housing but those plans have been dropped. Services including women’s refuges have expressed their relief. For more details see All supported housing funding to be retained in welfare system from gov.uk</p> <p>The abandoned proposals: In its response to its consultation, the government outlined a ‘new approach’ which included three funding groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A ‘sheltered rent’ for sheltered and extra housing - funded in the welfare system • A Local Grant Fund for short term and transitional supported housing funded locally • Housing Benefit and Universal Credit to continue fund 100% of housing costs (rent inclusive of eligible services charges) for long term supported housing 	<p>Government response to the Communities and Local Government and Work and Pensions Committees Joint Report: Future of supported housing October 2017</p> <p>For more information see Funding for supported housing from gov.uk</p>
<p>6 April 2020</p>	<p>Parental bereavement leave and pay when a child dies</p> <p>Employees who suffer the death of a child aged under 18 years old, or a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy, will be entitled to two weeks of leave and pay if they meet certain rules.</p>	<p>Announced in the Budget 2018</p> <p>More details from ACAS</p>

<p>6 April 2020</p>	<p>Self Employed and Universal Credit MIF</p> <p>The Minimum Income Floor (MIF) – where a certain income from self-employment is assumed – was temporarily suspended for those ill or self-isolating due to coronavirus and from 6 April, suspended for all self-employed people.</p> <p>Budget 2021 announced MIF will continue till the end of July 2021 and be gradually phased in from August with jobcentre Work Coaches having the discretion not to apply it if the claimant’s earnings continue to be affected by coronavirus.</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>Budget 2020.</p> <p>More details on the website coronavirus and benefits. See also Benefit Bulletins</p> <p>Budget 2021</p> <p>This was put into law by legislation and explained in the DWP’s guidance and their explanation to the Social Security Advisory Committee in July 2021.</p>
<p>8 April 2020</p>	<p>Funeral Expenses Payment increased</p> <p>The maximum amount available increased from £700 to £1000</p>	<p>Benefit claimants to get more cash to help with funeral costs</p>
<p>3 April 2020</p>	<p>Deductions from benefits</p> <p>From 3 April 2020, deductions from benefits like recovery of overpayments were suspended for three months, as were direct deductions to pay third parties for debts like fuel arrears until 10 May 2020.</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>More details on the website coronavirus and benefits.</p>
<p>8 April 2020</p>	<p>Prisoners</p> <p>The law was amended to allow prisoners on temporary release due to coronavirus to claim certain benefits and for others to claim for them. Applies till 12 November 2020, then was extended by regulation again till 13 May 2021, then till 31 August 2021 by SI.No.476/2021</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>See DWP guidance A8/2020, DMG Memo 07/20 and ADM Memo 05/20 See also prisoners released early due to coronavirus and benefits by CPAG</p> <p>More details on the website coronavirus and benefits.</p>

<p>9 April 2020</p>	<p>Universal Credit ‘don’t call us - we’ll call you’</p> <p>due to the massive increase in people claiming Universal Credit but not being able to get through on the phone, the DWP redirected 10% of its staff to deal with Universal Credit claims and created the system ‘Don’t call us we’ll call you’, where people just need to make the claim online and they will be contacted by the Jobcentre.</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>More details on the website coronavirus and benefits.</p>
<p>16 April 2020</p>	<p>Universal Credit – verification method extended</p> <p>Verification of identity during the Universal Credit claim is usually done through certain online services. On 16 April 2020, this was expanded to include Government Gateway which people may already be on.</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>More details on the website coronavirus and benefits.</p>
<p>20 April 2020</p>	<p>New Style ESA can now be claimed online</p>	<p>https://www.gov.uk/employment-support-allowance</p>
<p>21 April 2020</p>	<p>Video Relay Service for British Sign Language users introduced for Universal Credit</p> <p>Also introduced for several other benefits and extended November 2020</p>	<p>https://main.signvideo.me/app/8/10982</p> <p>Check you can use the service: https://youtu.be/Osx7FFxFpNY</p> <p>Disability Rights UK</p>
<p>22 April 2020</p>	<p>Post Office</p> <p>When notified by the DWP, the Post Office will make an urgent cash delivery payment for those shielding and vulnerable</p> <p>NB. DWP will stop new benefit and pension claimants from using the Post Office Card Account from 30 November 2022 for DWP benefits and 5 April 2022 for HMRC benefits.</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/how-to-have-your-benefits-paid</p> <p>More details on the website coronavirus and benefits and updates via Benefit Bulletins</p>

7 May 2020	<p>Maternity Allowance changed</p> <p>to allow furloughed women to satisfy earnings rule - during coronavirus – or more specifically the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme which was extended to September 2021 in Budget 2021.</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>DWP staff guidance</p>
7 May 2020	<p>Appeal tribunals - for benefit appeals</p> <p>'If you have a hearing listed, we will contact you and anyone else involved to discuss any changes, you do not need to contact us.'</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>Guidance</p>
7 May 2020	<p>Pension Credit can now be claimed online</p> <p>Save time for DWP as staff have been transferred to dealing with the massive increase in Universal Credit claims</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>DWP press release</p>
11 May 2020	<p>Recognising a call from the DWP</p> <p>A message from the DWP to claimants:</p> <p>"As you are aware, all Jobcentres have had to close their doors during the coronavirus pandemic and we have been contacting you via Journal Message or phone call and this has been from a private or withheld number.</p> <p>We know that many people are cautious of answering these calls for security purposes. To assist you in recognising a call from Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) either the Jobcentre or Service Centre, a new telephone number will appear on your phone from 06/05/2020 when we call you. It is 0800 023 2635.</p> <p>For ease, we suggest you add this number to your contacts and rename it to ensure you recognise when we are calling. You will not be able to call us on this number; it is an automated message only.</p> <p>The contact number to call Universal Credit has not changed, it is 0800 328 5644."</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>More details on the website coronavirus and benefits.</p>

<p>13 May 2020</p>	<p>Universal Credit - form for landlord to request direct payment goes online</p> <p>The Universal Credit default is that help it includes with rent but that that amount could instead be requested to go direct to the landlord. The form UC47 is now online</p>	<p>See also government guidance: Universal Credit and landlords and Universal Credit: Alternative Payment Arrangements</p>
<p>21 May 2020</p>	<p>Universal Credit surplus earnings rule – auto reclaim</p> <p>The UC surplus earnings rule generally means that after a UC is refused due to too much income, some ‘surplus earnings’ are carried over to the next UC assessment period and the claimant usually has to keep applying for UC each month until the surplus earnings have ‘worn out’ or reduced enough for UC to be payable again. From 21 May 2020, those on Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme or Self-Employment Income Support Scheme where this happens and automatic reclaim will take place, where UC claim is automatically considered.</p> <p>The amount of £2,500 will continue till April 2023 when it will drop to £300.</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>Legislation The Universal Credit (Coronavirus) (Self-employed Claimants and Reclaims) (Amendment) Regulations 2020</p> <p>Guidance Memo ADM 10/20</p> <p>Details in our Benefit Bulletins</p> <p>See Budget 2021 and Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021</p>

<p>21 May 2020</p>	<p>Self-employment and capital</p> <p>DWP have confirmed that money put aside for the purpose of paying a tax bill for a business will be disregarded if it is in a business bank account or you can provide evidence to show why it put aside. This is based on the rule that business assets can be disregarded as the claimant's personal capital.</p> <p>In addition, regulations introduced from May 21 2020, introduce a disregard for any payment made to a claimant carrying on a trade, profession or vocation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In relation to a furloughed employee under the job retention scheme; or • By way of a grant or loan to meet the expenses or losses of the trade, profession or vocation in relation to the outbreak of coronavirus. <p>Such payments can be disregarded in the calculation of the claimant's capital for a period of 12 month from the date on which it is received. We are seeking confirmation about which grants are covered by the second bullet point.</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>https://revenuebenefits.org.uk/universal-credit/guidance/entitlement-to-uc/capital-rules/</p> <p>Regulations http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2020/522/contents/made</p> <p>Guidance https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/891880/adm10-20.pdf</p>
<p>June 2020 April 2021</p>	<p>Personal Independence Payment (PIP)</p> <p>For PIP claimants whose condition is unlikely to change, a minimum review award length of 18 months will take effect from June 2020.</p> <p>The Office for Budget Responsibility's November report has revealed (paragraph A.37) that the Government plan in Budget 2020 to introduce a minimum award length for PIP of at least 18 months has been delayed until April 2021.</p>	<p>Budget 2020.</p>

<p>1 June 2020</p> <p>Delayed to 1 August 2020</p>	<p>Proposal to means test TV license</p> <p>Up to this date, those 75 or over could get a free TV license. From this date, the rule is that they or their partner also have to be on Pension Credit</p> <p>Th introduction of this has been extended to 31 July 2020 due to the impact of coronavrius</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>More details from TV licensing</p>
<p>24 June 2020</p>	<p>Third party deductions</p> <p>Deductions for rent arrears and service charge payments included in the rent must be stopped if -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the claimant's earned income or 2. in the case of joint claimants, their combined earned income <p>equals or exceeds the work allowance for three assessment periods immediately preceding the date on which the next deduction could be made.</p>	<p>https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/380/schedule/6 - para 7</p> <p>https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/906652/admd2.pdf</p> <p>Was always in legislation, acted on from this date.</p>
<p>July 2020</p>	<p>Claimant commitment</p> <p>Interviews – over the phone – reintroduced</p> <p>As with Jobseeker's Allowance, work search and availability for work requirements were also reintroduced from July 2020 and, as with ESA, the requirement to take part in telephone assessments was introduced from 2 November 2020.</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>Claimant Commitment by DWP</p> <p>Question and answer in Parliament</p>

<p>22 July 2020</p>	<p>Two-week benefit run-on for more benefits</p> <p>From July 2020, when someone claims Universal Credit they will be able to keep two weeks' worth of their Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or income-related Employment and Support Allowance. This follows on the same measure that was introduced for Housing Benefit claimants from April 2018.</p> <p>It applies when someone who is on one of those benefits (called 'legacy benefits') wants to claim Universal Credit or has a change in circumstances that means they may have to.</p>	<p>Announced in the Budget 2018 paragraph 5.34.</p> <p>Legislation SI.No.1152/2019 – later corrected by SI.No.826/2020 and SR.No.165/2020 to confirm it's 14 not 13 days</p> <p>Details in our Benefit Bulletins</p>
<p>1 August 2020</p>	<p>Shielding and SSP</p> <p>The guidance for 'clinically vulnerable' people changed. They are no longer able to claim SSP (unless they are self-isolating under current guidelines or ill) on the basis that they cannot work because they are required to shield.</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>More details on SSP from Low Incomes Tax Reform Group (LITRG).</p>
<p>1 August 2020</p>	<p>TV licenses for over 75's to be means tested</p> <p>Up till 31 July 2020, those 75 or over can get a free TV license. The BBC will add an extra rule where they or their partner have to be on Pension Credit to get the free license.</p> <p>This rule was due to come in on 1 June but was extended to 1 August 2020 due to the impact of coronavirus</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>More details from TV licensing</p>

<p>5 August 2020</p>	<p>Increased barrier for disabled students to get Universal Credit</p> <p>From 5 August 2020, a new rule applies where, as well as having to satisfy other rules such as being on a disability benefit, a disabled student has to have had a ‘limited capability for work’ decision on or before their Universal Credit claim.</p> <p>The ‘limited capability for work’ (LCW) test is used to prove incapacity or sickness used in Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit.</p> <p>Disability Rights UK have explained this extra hurdle for disabled students creates a ‘catch 22’ where Universal Credit is refused for a student not previously on ESA because they haven’t got LCW, thus preventing them having a LCW test.</p> <p>The advice for the moment is for the student to apply for New Style ESA which will get them the LCW test before they apply for Universal Credit.</p>	<p>Legislation</p>
<p>1 September 2020</p>	<p>New Kickstart Scheme</p> <p>The Kickstart Scheme provides funding to employers to create six month job placements for 16 to 24 year olds. Kickstart ended in late 2021</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p>
<p>23 September 2020</p>	<p>Universal Credit self-employed earnings MIF ‘grace period’ extended to more people</p> <p>Grace period fully implemented now</p> <p>NB the MIF was suspended due to coronavirus. More details on the website coronavirus and benefits.</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>See ‘3 and 16 October 2019’ for more details</p> <p>More details from revenuebenefits and entitledto</p>

<p>28 September 2020</p>	<p>Test and Trace payment</p> <p>The Test and Trace Support Scheme of a £500 payment was introduced on 28 September 2020 for residents on low incomes unable to work from home who lost income because of coronavirus (COVID-19). The scheme is now closed.</p>	<p>On 22 February 2022, the Government announced the end of most of the measures in the Living with COVID-19 report. Included below is an explanation of the main measures and dates of their cessation.</p> <p>More detail can be found on the coronavirus and benefits website page and the Expiry of the Coronavirus Act's temporary provisions from the House of Commons Library.</p>
<p>October 2020</p>	<p>State Pension age is now 66 for men and women</p> <p>From December 2018 the State Pension age for both men and women increased to reach 66 by now.</p>	<p>Part of the Pensions Act 2011</p> <p>More details and calculate your State Pension age and Pension Credit age</p>
<p>October 2020</p>	<p>DLA past presence test for children</p> <p>Following a Judicial Review challenge, the past presence test reverts back to 26 out of 52 weeks. The Government had increased it to 104 out of 156 weeks in 2013.</p> <p>The past presence test is where – after a period abroad, a child has to have lived in the country for a certain length of time. Now 6 months.</p>	
<p>November 2020</p>	<p>Carers Allowance</p> <p>Carers can continue to get Carer's Allowance if there is a temporary break in care because they or the person they're caring for have coronavirus or are self-isolating. This will apply until 13 May 2021 and further extended till 31 August 2021 by SI.No.476/2021</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>Regulation 9 of The Social Security (Coronavirus) (Further Measures) Regulations 2020 (SI 2020/371)</p> <p>Extended to 13 May 2021 by The Social Security (Coronavirus) (Further Measures) (Amendment) and Miscellaneous Amendment Regulations 2020 (SI 2020/1201).</p>

<p>2 November 2020</p>	<p>Health assessments – responsibility to ‘attend’</p> <p>Earlier this year, health assessments under the ‘work capability assessment’ for ESA and Universal Credit were carried out over the phone, but with a ‘light touch’ if the claimant didn’t take part. From 2 November 2020, this changed and DWP appointment letters make it clear that claimants must attend and take part in their phone interview. If they don’t, they will be given the chance to explain but, ultimately, their benefit may be sanctioned (reduced) or stopped.</p>	<p>DWP’s Touchbase, Update - Claimants must attend telephone health assessments, 6 November 2020</p>
<p>16 November 2020</p>	<p>Universal Credit payment period</p> <p>Payment period can be readjusted to maintain a monthly pattern. For example, where two wages fall in the same UC month (assessment period). Prior to this, adjustments were manual, now they are automatic.</p>	
<p>25 November 2020</p>	<p>Universal Credit run on</p> <p>When someone reaches pension age, they can carry on getting UC during the assessment period they are in. This helps to avoid a gap waiting for Pension Credit</p>	
<p>24 December 2020</p>	<p>Statutory Sick Pay legislation amended</p> <p>People who have to self-isolate because they have coronavirus symptoms, have tested positive or are a household contact of a person who has coronavirus, are deemed to be incapable of work for the full period for which they have to isolate, and allow notification to be given orally over phone or in person.</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>SI.No.1638/2020</p>
<p>2021</p>		

<p>2021</p>	<p>PIP assessment and work capability assessment under ESA and UC to be amalgamated</p> <p>“I have established the Health Transformation Programme to undertake the significant task of transitioning the currently separate work capability assessment for ESA and universal credit, and the PIP assessment services into one unified, integrated service from 2021. To support this, we are developing a single digital platform. An integrated approach will allow for a more joined-up claimant experience across these benefits, which takes account of the multiple interactions an individual may have with DWP.”</p>	<p>Amber Rudd's Health and Disability Announcement in parliament.uk</p> <p>At March 2021 we await further details</p>
<p>January 2021</p>	<p>Jobcentre Plus office availability and reduced opening times</p> <p>The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) temporarily reduced their opening times from 10am to 2pm.</p> <p>“This temporary change means we can continue providing safe, essential services for those who need to come into the jobcentre and who are unable to interact with us on the phone or digitally. The opening hours of our phone lines remain as they were...”</p> <p>The main contact with the DWP and Jobcentres remains by telephone and for Universal Credit, the online journal. The DWP said that Jobcentres continue to remain open in a limited way “to provide essential services and support to those whom we cannot help in any other way” and “jobcentre staff will still meet vulnerable customers including those fleeing domestic abuse”.</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>Press release Jobcentre guidance on new national COVID restrictions.</p> <p>Returned to normal times from 12 April 2021</p>

<p>January 2021</p>	<p>Migrants' access to benefits</p> <p>The government is aligning EEA migrants' access to non-contributory benefits with non-EEA nationals. This will apply to EEA migrants arriving in the UK under the new immigration system, from January 2021, with the EU Settlement Scheme – extended to 30 June 2021 for applications for settled status and pre settled status. Late claims will be allowed for special reasons</p>	<p>Budget 2020.</p> <p>See the Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal) Bill 2019-21</p> <p>Details on the Home Office staff guidance.</p> <p>See details from the independent Free Movement: Late applications to the EU Settlement Scheme.</p> <p>Further information and sources of help are available on the Newcastle City Council website.</p> <p>Also, see these two internal guides from the DWP: ADM Memo 8/21 and DMG Memo 7/21</p>
<p>January 2021</p>	<p>Stop export of Child Benefit</p> <p>The government is stopping the export of Child Benefit payments made in respect of children living overseas. This will apply to EEA migrants arriving in the UK under the new immigration system, from January 2021.</p>	<p>Budget 2020.</p>
<p>15 January 2021</p>	<p>Tax Credit reviews</p> <p>Reviews (in effect, mandatory reconsiderations) may be carried out at any time where a claimant has been awarded a qualifying disability benefit affecting the amount of tax credit, even where the claimant is no longer entitled to tax credit, subject to a requirement that the reconsideration is requested within a month of the decision awarding the qualifying benefit.</p>	<p>The Tax Credits Reviews and Appeals (Amendment) Order 2021, SI No.44</p>

<p>26 January 2021</p>	<p>Protection from Universal Credit for the ‘more disabled’ to end</p> <p>From 16 January 2019 those who are entitled to the ‘severe disability premium’ in with the legacy benefits that Universal Credit is replacing, have been prevented from claiming Universal Credit in order to protect them from dropping down to a lower amount of Universal Credit. When this protection ends on 26 January 2021, an extra transitional amount can be paid to compensate for the loss.</p> <p>If they have the choice, our advice is always to get a benefit check to compare the options. See our pages Benefit advice services in Newcastle and Check your entitlement to benefits online.</p> <p>More detail: The Severe Disability Premium is an extra amount in someone’s legacy benefit if they also get a disability benefit at a certain rate, have no one <i>receiving</i> Carers Allowance for caring for them and no non dependents live in the same house.</p>	<p>Budget 2020.</p> <p>See the legislation SI.No.10/2019 and DWP guidance ADM memo 1/19</p> <p>More details from Disability Rights UK and CPAG and Benefit Bulletins</p>
<p>April 2021</p>	<p>Personal Independence Payment (PIP)</p> <p>For PIP claimants whose condition is unlikely to change, a minimum review award length of 18 months will take effect from April 2021.</p> <p>The Office for Budget Responsibility’s November report has revealed (paragraph A.37) that the Government plan in Budget 2020 to introduce a minimum award length for PIP of at least 18 months has been delayed until April 2021.</p>	<p>Budget 2020.</p> <p>Office for Budget Responsibility</p>
<p>April 2021</p>	<p>Benefits uprating</p> <p>Benefit cap amount is not increased so more brought under the benefit cap</p>	<p>From the government website</p> <p>Analysis by the House of Commons Library.</p>

<p>April 2021</p>	<p>Council Tax support changes</p> <p>Newcastle City Council's means tested Council Tax Reduction scheme is now called the 'Council Tax Support Scheme' or CTS for short.</p> <p>Newcastle City Council are increasing the non-dependant deduction for the working age Council Tax Support Scheme to £3.25 per non dependant from April 2021.</p> <p>Newcastle City Council are to give extra help to some residents with their Council Tax bills in addition to the usual discounts and means tested Council Tax Support Scheme.</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>Council's website page: Council Tax – How much will I pay?</p> <p>Details in March 2021 Benefit Bulletin</p>
<p>April 2021</p>	<p>Working Tax Credit</p> <p>The basic amount of WTC was increased by £20 a week from 6 April 2020. Following a lot of pressure to continue this from April 2021, Budget 2021 announced that from April 2021 this extra support for WTC claimants would be in the form of a £500 one-off payment.</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>Guidance on how this will work from the Government and from revenuebenefits</p>
<p>April 2021 (brought forward from October 2021)</p>	<p>Maximum recovery from Universal Credit for fines, arrears and other deductions reduced</p> <p>There is an overall maximum percentage rate for all debts and deductions that can be taken from a Universal Credit payment. From April 2021, the government will reduce the maximum rate from 30% to 25% of the standard allowance.</p> <p>Budget 2021 brought this forward from October to April 2021</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>Budget 2021</p> <p>Budget 2020</p> <p>This follows a reduction in the rate from 40% to 30% in October 2019 - announced in Budget 2018</p> <p>Government guidance: Find out about money taken from your Universal Credit payment</p>

<p>April 2021 (brought forward from October 2021)</p>	<p>Universal Credit advance payment recovery period extended</p> <p>When someone claims Universal Credit, they can ask for an ‘advance payment’ (a loan) to help during the wait for the first payment. From October 2021, the period this can be recovered will be extended from 12 to 16 months.</p> <p>When someone claims Universal Credit, they can ask for an ‘advance payment’ (a loan) to help during the wait for the first payment. Now, the period this can be recovered will be extended from 12 to 24 months.</p> <p>Budget 2021 brought this forward from October to April 2021</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>Announced in the Budget 2018 paragraph 5.36</p> <p>Budget 2020</p> <p>This replaces the announcement in Budget 2018 that the recovery period would be extended to sixteen months.</p> <p>Guidance: Universal Credit advances</p> <p>Budget 2021</p>
<p>1 April 2021</p>	<p>Shielding and SSP an ESA</p> <p>Shielding for clinically extremely vulnerable people was paused from 1 August 2020 then reintroduced from 5 November 2020 for periods of national and tiered lockdown. Since January 2021 clinically extremely vulnerable people have been advised they no longer needed to shield and from 1 April 2021 are no longer entitled to Statutory Sick Pay or Employment and Support Allowance on that basis.</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>Gov.uk information</p>
<p>April 2021</p>	<p>Medical assessments</p> <p>The DWP announced a timetable for the resumption of face-to-face assessments, initially for those who cannot access the other methods such as telephone and video assessments. This was from 12 April for Industrial Injuries and from May 2021 for Personal Independence Payment and work capability assessments for Universal Credit and Employment and Support Allowance.</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>See the DWP’s press release and updated guidance.</p> <p>See also the DWP guidance on new legislation that allows for medical assessments in person, over the phone and by video from 25 March 2021: ADM Memo 4/21 and DMG Memo 3/21.</p>

<p>12 April 2021</p>	<p>Jobcentre Plus offices</p> <p>From Jobcentre Partnership Manager: “From 12 April 2021, in line with the UK Government’s Roadmap to ease lockdown restrictions, face-to-face appointments restarted in England and Wales. ... Jobcentres are open to all customers who need to see their work coach whilst priority will be given to new customers and young people (aged 18-24) who are at risk of long-term unemployment.” And offices will be revert to their normal opening hours – that’s 9 – 5 in Newcastle.</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>Partnership information</p>
<p>May 2021</p>	<p>Medical assessments</p> <p>The DWP announced a timetable for the resumption of face-to-face assessments, initially for those who cannot access the other methods such as telephone and video assessments. This was from 12 April for Industrial Injuries and from May 2021 for Personal Independence Payment and work capability assessments for Universal Credit and Employment and Support Allowance.</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>See the DWP’s press release and updated guidance.</p> <p>See also the DWP guidance on new legislation that allows for medical assessments in person, over the phone and by video from 25 March 2021: ADM Memo 4/21 and DMG Memo 3/21.</p> <p>The following government guidance has also been updated to include the possibility of conducting an assessment ‘in person’:</p> <p>New Style Employment and Support Allowance</p> <p>New Style Employment and Support Allowance: detailed guide</p>

<p>May 2021</p>	<p>Deductions from Universal Credit to repay fines limited</p> <p>To maximum of 5% of the UC standard allowance</p> <p>Following a High Court judgement brought by Shelter and others, the Government updated its Benefit overpayment recovery staff guide to say recovery for fines is limited to a maximum of 5% from the Universal Credit standard allowance. Appendix 4</p>	<p>This is detailed in the Benefit and pension rates 2021 to 2022.</p>
<p>31 May 2021</p>	<p>Child Benefit to continue</p> <p>New rules allow Child Benefit to continue in payment after a young person leaves education early due to exam cancellations due to coronavirus (COVID-19).</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>See the regulation SI.No.630/2021 which came into force on 31 May 2021.</p>
<p>June 2021</p> <p>Brought forward from October 2023</p>	<p>The Local Housing Allowance (LHA) one-bedroom shared accommodation rate – exemption extended</p> <p>Help with rent under Housing Benefit and Universal Credit for private tenants - called Local Housing Allowance – is restricted for some tenants aged up to 35 years to the average amount for a bedsit – known as the ‘shared accommodation rate’. There are several exemptions from this rule, such as care leavers up to their 22nd birthday. The exemption will be extended to their 25th birthday. Also, the present exemption for 25 to 35-year olds who have been in a homeless hostel for at least three months is extended to those under 25. Those who are exempt have the higher one-bedroom rate applied instead.</p> <p>These measures have been brought forward from October 2023 to June 2021 by Budget 2021</p> <p>See also the exemption extension for victims of domestic abuse or modern slavery from October 2022</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>Budget 2020</p> <p>Budget 2021</p> <p>Government guidance ADM memo 10/21: Changes to the Exceptions to the Shared Accommodation Rate.</p> <p>See DWP: Care Leaver Covenant offer</p> <p>This ‘offer’ from the DWP has useful information about the extra help they provide to people leaving the care of the local authority. Department for Work and Pensions: Care Leaver Covenant offer.</p>

<p>31 July 2021</p>	<p>Self Employed and Universal Credit MIF reintroduced</p> <p>The Minimum Income Floor (MIF) – where a certain income from self-employment is assumed – was temporarily suspended for those ill or self-isolating due to coronavirus and from 6 April, suspended for all self-employed people.</p> <p>Budget 2021 announced MIF will continue till the end of July 2021 and be gradually phased in from August with jobcentre Work Coaches having the discretion not to apply it if the claimant’s earnings continue to be affected by coronavirus.</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>Budget 2020.</p> <p>More details on the website coronavirus and benefits. See also Benefit Bulletins</p> <p>Budget 2021</p> <p>This was put into law by legislation and explained in the DWP’s guidance and their explanation to the Social Security Advisory Committee in July 2021.</p>
<p>August 2021</p>	<p>New Tribunal Service in Newcastle Civic Centre</p>	<p>Newcastle Civil, Family and Tribunals Centre officially opens its doors - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p> <p>Newcastle Civil & Family Courts and Tribunals Centre - Find a Court or Tribunal - GOV.UK (find-court-tribunal.service.gov.uk)</p>
<p>31 August 2021</p>	<p>Carers and coronavirus change</p> <p>Carers can retain their Carers Allowance if they have a temporary break in caring. This applies to breaks in caring due to the carer or cared for person getting coronavirus or being isolated due to coronavirus. This will apply until 31 August 2021 by this regulation SI.No.476/2021</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>More details on the website coronavirus and benefits. See also Benefit Bulletins</p> <p>Its ending was confirmed in a DWP 'Touchbase' on 10 September 2021.</p>

<p>15 September 2021</p>	<p>Benefits for resettled Afghans</p> <p>Including, new regulations have been issued that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exempt specified persons who have come to the UK from Afghanistan from the requirement to satisfy the habitual residence test (HRT) or the past presence test (PPT) for means-tested benefits and disability and carer benefits. • have been issued that exempt specified persons who have come to the UK from Afghanistan from the prior residence requirement in order to be entitled to child benefit. 	<p>CPAG-Afghan-briefing-Sep-2021.pdf</p> <p>SI.No.1034/2021 and SI.No.1039/2021</p>
<p>End September 2021</p>	<p>Various coronavirus support due to end</p> <p><i>But keep checking our webpages and Benefit Bulletins in case of changes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal Credit Minimum Income Floor. See above • The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme • Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme - 'furloughed' • Universal Credit £20 uplift. See below • COVID Local Support Grant and Winter Grant Scheme funding to support vulnerable households - extended from 21 June to 30 September 2021 • The £500 support payment scheme was extended to 30 September 2021. It was initially to run till 31 January 2021. 	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>More details on the website coronavirus and benefits. See also Benefit Bulletins</p> <p>See also Coronavirus: Withdrawing crisis social security measures from House of Commons library</p>
<p>September / October 2021</p>	<p>Universal Credit</p> <p>Additional £20 uplift a week ended</p> <p>Specifically, Regulation 2021/313 said it will 'apply in (Universal Credit) assessment periods that end before 6 October 2021'. DWP will be informing claimants about it.</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>Budget 2021 extended it from April 2021 to September 2021</p> <p>See April 2020 when it was introduced</p>

<p>1 October 2021</p>	<p>New sanctuary scheme exemption from the “bedroom tax”</p> <p>Claimants are exempt from the “bedroom tax” from 1 October 2021 if their home has been adapted under a domestic violence Sanctuary Scheme.</p> <p>Follows European Court of Human Rights judgment in JD and A v The United Kingdom that the bedroom tax unlawfully discriminated against a woman living in a sanctuary scheme home.</p>	<p>For more details see DWP guidance and Government legislation SI.No.991/2021.</p>
<p>18 October 2021</p>	<p>Government to stagger repayment of benefit arrears for vulnerable claimants – if claimant agrees</p> <p>“In extremis a risk to their lives, for example, those with serious addiction issues, where having large sums of money at any one time might lead to tragic consequences.</p>	<p>See SI.No.1065/2021</p>
<p>29 October 2021</p>	<p>Deductions for court fines from Universal Credit limited to 5%</p>	<p>See this regulation SI.No.1077/2021</p>

<p>3 November 2021</p>	<p>Work related requirements extended to more benefits</p> <p>Work related requirements and sanctions have been extended to these two contributory benefits: ‘New Style’ Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) and ‘New Style’ Employment and Support Allowance (ESA).</p> <p>‘This week a change was made to bring the obligations in new style JSA and ESA benefits in line with those in Universal Credit</p> <p>This will mean that, as is the case for Universal Credit claimants, if someone in receipt of new style JSA and ESA fails to do what they have agreed to in their Claimant Commitment without good reason - such as having or caring for a child, or a change to a health condition - their payments may be reduced for a set period. This is known as a sanction.</p> <p>All Claimant Commitments are tailored to a person’s personal circumstances and local jobs market, and claimants affected by this change are being informed of the introduction of the new process. Sanctions are only applied as a last resort when a claimant is not engaging with the commitment they have made. If someone disagrees with a decision they can ask for it to be looked at again.’</p>	<p>Details from Department for Work and Pension (DWP) guidance LA Welfare Direct 11/2021 and their partner information Touchbase</p>
<p>24 November 2021</p>	<p>Universal Credit increases</p> <p>The ‘earnings taper rate’ will be changed from 63% to 55%. It means that working claimants will be able to keep an extra 8p for every £1 of net income they earn.</p> <p>The ‘work allowance’ will be increased by £500 a year. This means that some claimants will be able to keep more of their earnings.</p>	<p>Announced in the Autumn Budget 2021</p> <p>The Universal Credit Regulations 2013 brought in the above measures from 24 November 2021, earlier than the 1 December date in the Autumn Budget.</p> <p>See also DWP guidance ADM memo 20/21</p> <p>See our Universal Credit webpage</p>

<p>25 November 2021</p>	<p>Working Tax Credit</p> <p>The coronavirus Working Tax Credit (WTC) easement that allowed people to work less than the normal hours ended on 25 November 2021.</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>See DWP press release</p>
<p>15 December 2021</p>	<p>Rules tighten the exclusion of disabled students claiming Universal Credit</p> <p>The Government have legislated to limit disabled students from claiming Universal Credit where they have been ‘determined to have limited capability for work on a date before the person starts undertaking a course of education’.</p>	<p>See the summary by Disability Rights UK and Revenuebenefits.</p>
<p>2022</p>		
<p>1 January 2022</p>	<p>Disregard for historical abuse and Windrush schemes</p> <p>DWP disregard of Windrush Redress Scheme payments, including Harms Way payments by means tested benefits</p>	<p>See ADM memo 21/21: Disregard for historical abuse and Windrush schemes</p>
<p>26 January 2022</p>	<p>Temporary extension to the SSP self-certification period to 28 days and fit note easement for benefits till 26 Jan</p> <p>In response to a request for all government departments to help release capacity in General Practice the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has put in place two temporary changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • extending the self-certification period for Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) from 7 to 28 days, by delivering regulations which come into force on 17 December 2021 • applying an easement so that fit notes are not required for benefit purposes <p>Both changes expire on 26 January 2022</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>LA Welfare Direct lite 12/2021 - GOV.UK</p> <p>See here too Universal Credit: Health conditions and disability guide - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p> <p>And here New Style Employment and Support Allowance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p> <p>The legislation bringing this in SI.No.1453/2021</p>

<p>February 2022</p>	<p>Healthy Start</p> <p>‘We’re launching a digital scheme that offers a prepaid card to those applying for Healthy Start instead of paper vouchers. This card will be automatically topped up every 4 weeks with your payment.’</p>	<p>NHS Healthy Start paper voucher holders – apply for your new prepaid card now (nhsbsa.nhs.uk)</p> <p>FAQ’s The new Healthy Start Scheme – Get help to buy food and milk (Healthy Start)</p>
<p>8 February 2022</p>	<p>Jobseekers have to widen their work search after 4 weeks rather than the previous 3 months</p> <p>In January 2022, the Government announced a New jobs mission to get 500,000 into work called ‘Way to Work’ including the requirement for jobseekers ‘to search more widely for available jobs from the fourth week of their claim, rather than from three months as is currently the case.’ Failure to do so will result in a sanction.</p>	<p>See the guidance and the legislation that brought this in from 8 February 2022</p>
<p>15 February 2022</p>	<p>New exemption from the Claimant Commitment for terminally ill people</p> <p>When someone claims benefits like Universal Credit or Employment and Support Allowance, they normally have to attend a Claimant Commitment interview which involves agreeing to some level of work-related activity. People are exempt from the Claimant Commitment if they lack capacity to accept a Claimant Commitment and where there are exceptional circumstances in which it would be unreasonable to expect a person to accept a Claimant Commitment. From 15 February 2022 terminally ill people were added to the exemptions list</p>	<p>See U3020 and U3027 in ADM Chapter U3: ESA claimant responsibilities - the claimant commitment (publishing.service.gov.uk)</p> <p>Amending regulation The Universal Credit and Employment and Support Allowance (Claimant Commitment Exceptions) (Amendment) Regulations 2022 (legislation.gov.uk)</p>

22 February 2022	Coronavirus measures The Government announced the end of most of the measures	Coronavirus See Living with COVID-19 report . More detail can be found on the coronavirus and benefits website page and the Expiry of the Coronavirus Act's temporary provisions from the House of Commons Library.
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<p>March 2022</p>	<p>Various coronavirus support due to end</p> <p><i>But keep checking our webpages and Benefit Bulletins in case of changes</i></p> <p>- Waiting days for ESA Normally when claiming ESA you have to wait 7 days before payment. For those affected by coronavirus, ESA is payable from day one rather than waiting the normal 7 'waiting' days. This removal of the 'waiting days' was extended to 12 May 2021 by this regulation (see internal guidance ADM Memo 25/20 and Touchbase) and then extended further to 12 November 2021 by this regulation. Then further extended to 24 March 2022.</p> <p>- Limited capability for work test for Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and Universal Credit (UC) The 'limited capability for work' test in ESA is carried out under the 'work capability assessment' and determines whether a person has scored enough points in order to get ESA. This test also applies to Universal Credit with some differences. In March 2020, regulations stipulated that for ESA and Universal Credit, anyone 'affected by coronavirus' could be treated as having 'limited capability for work' until 12 November 2020. Regulations in October 2020 extended this period to 12 May 2021 and then further extended it to 12 November 2021 by this regulation for ESA but not for Universal Credit. See the Universal Credit section below for more details. Then further extended to 24 March 2022.</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>More details on the website coronavirus and benefits. See also Benefit Bulletins</p> <p>This date was extended by The Employment and Support Allowance and Universal Credit (Coronavirus Disease) (Amendment) Regulations 2021.</p> <p>On 22 February 2022, the Government announced the end of most of the measures in the Living with COVID-19 report.</p>
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<p>March 2022</p>	<p>Support for those fleeing the Ukraine Crisis</p> <p>The Government have two schemes to help those fleeing the conflict in the Ukraine:</p> <p>The Homes for Ukraine Scheme - led by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, provides £350 a month for those who are able to host those fleeing the conflict in Ukraine in their homes. See Homes for Ukraine: guidance for councils – gov.uk</p> <p>Ukraine Family Scheme - led by the Home Office, allows applicants to join family members or extend their stay in the UK. See Ukraine Family Scheme visa – gov.uk</p> <p>Rules have been changed to allow those fleeing the conflict in Ukraine to be able to live, work and study in the UK and access benefits and public funds. For more information see the Social Security (Habitual Residence and Past Presence) (Amendment) Regulations 2022 No. 344. However, the impact on the benefits of the 'host' of the Home for Ukrainians Scheme is different to the impact on the family member 'host'. Councils are supporting the hosts and those fleeing the conflict in Ukraine.</p>	<p>See the Homes for Ukraine' scheme and a statement to Parliament on 16 March where a Government minister said: "They will have full and unrestricted access to benefits, healthcare, employment and other support."</p> <p>In a statement to Parliament on 22 March the Work and Pensions Secretary said "We are also ensuring that those who have stepped up to sponsor a Ukrainian individual or family do not see their household benefit entitlements affected as a result."</p> <p>Further information from the Homes for Ukraine' scheme: FAQ and see Support for Ukraine - Newcastle City Council.</p>
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<p>March 2022</p>	<p>Cost of living measures</p> <p>Spring Statement 2022 - 13 March 2022</p> <p>The chancellor announced measures to help with the cost of living crisis (there were no direct benefit announcements). Some of the measures were updated by the Government on 26 May 2022.</p> <p>Support for energy bills - the council tax rebate 2022-23: billing authority guidance - 16 March 2022</p> <p>In the Support for energy bills - the council tax rebate 2022-23: billing authority guidance, in March 2022, the Government announced a “package of support known as the Energy Bills Rebate to help households with rising energy bills in 2022-23”. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A £200 discount on energy bills this autumn - a loan to be paid back automatically over the next five years. This has been doubled and changed into a grant – by the Government on 26 May 2022 • A £150 Council Tax Rebate for households in England in council tax bands A to D, and £144 million to councils to determine discretionary help for those not eligible for the rebate – to be administered by Local Authorities. The rebate will be ignored as capital for 12 months and ignored as income by Council Tax Reduction schemes. Information about the scheme can be found at www.newcastle.gov.uk/supportforenergybills • a further £500 million extension of the Household Support Fund to help people with the rising cost of essentials till September 2022. This is extended a further six months by the Government on 26 May 2022 • A £10 proposed increase on the Warm Home Discount and an extension of eligibility for the Winter Fuel Payment this autumn. See also the additional Pensioner Cost-of-Living Payment 	<p>Cost-of-living crisis</p> <p>See Spring Statement 2022 and the Government announcement on 26 May 2022</p>
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	announced by the Government on 26 May 2022	
28 March 2022	<p>Tribunal service</p> <p>Social Security and Child Support Tribunals will begin to use the Video Hearing Service from 28 March for remote hearings – including for advisers!</p>	<p>www.gov.uk/government/publications/video-hearings-service-join-from-a-corporate-network</p> <p>www.gov.uk/guidance/hmcts-video-hearings-service-guidance-for-joining-a-hearing</p>
April 2022	<p>Changes to Newcastle Council Tax Support</p> <p>In 2020-21 working age people in receipt of Council Tax Support received £150.00 from the Council towards their council tax and in 2021-22 they received £160.00. This resulted in over 16,000 zero bills being issued.</p> <p>In responding to the financial impact of coronavirus (COVID-19), the Council is changing the Council Tax Support scheme for working age people to provide additional financial support to some of the most vulnerable people living within our neighbourhoods. A consultation took place in Autumn 2021 and closed 12 December 2021.</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>Council’s website page: Council Tax – How much will I pay?</p> <p>Details in December 2021 Benefit Bulletin</p> <p>More details on help for residents paying Council Tax: Coronavirus – Information relating to Council Tax.</p> <p>More details on the proposed scheme can be found here.</p>
April 2022	Benefit uprating	See the new rates on Benefits information Newcastle City Council

<p>April 2022</p>	<p>Post office card accounts for HMRC benefits end</p> <p>The Government want to make people receive their benefits via a bank account or similar account like a Credit Union rather than a Post Office card account.</p> <p>HMRC has advised that they are ending for Tax Credits and Child Benefit on 5 April 2022. Original date was November 2021</p> <p>HMRC are not going to use the Payment Exception Service (like DWP) but will use 'Payout vouchers' for those who don't open a bank account</p> <p>The vouchers which 'are sent by mail or SMS to customers for them to cash at the Post Office, akin to the way that Post Office card account customers withdraw their money from the Post Office.'</p> <p>The end of Post Office card accounts for DWP benefits ends April 2023</p>	<p>HMRC press release</p> <p>Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Pensions and Financial Inclusion, Mr Opperman's written answer from parliament.uk</p> <p>For more information, visit the GOV.UK website and the Money Advice Service.</p> <p>And for updates, see our Benefit Bulletins</p>
<p>April 2022</p>	<p>Help to claim Universal Credit changes</p> <p>The Government had contracted Citizens Advice to provide online, telephone and face to face support for people needing help with their Universal Credit claims. From April 2022, the contract changed (reduced) to telephone and online support only.</p>	<p>The National Association of Welfare Rights Advisers says: "Absence of face-to-face support means the new Help to Claim service will not be fit for purpose".</p> <p>For information about how residents are supported with their Universal Credit claim see the document 'Universal Credit - information on support arrangements' found on the Council webpage: www.newcastle.gov.uk/universalcredit-moredetail.</p>

<p>From 1 April 2022 to 1 April 2023</p>	<p>Fuel direct change</p> <p>Normally, fuel arrears and bills can be paid direct from a person's benefit. 'From 1 April 2022 to 1 April 2023, the DWP introduced a temporary change to the Fuel Direct rules to protect claimants given unprecedented energy prices. During this period, energy suppliers can no longer request new deductions or increased payments from a claimant's benefit to pay for ongoing fuel consumption.'</p>	<p>Cost of living crisis</p> <p>More details: Fuel Direct</p> <p>See Newcastle City Council Cost of Living Support webpage</p>
<p>1 April 2022</p>	<p>New Newcastle Jobcentre Plus site</p> <p>From Jobcentre: 'Jobcentre plus have opened a new site at The Spire, All Saints Business centre, NE1 2ES. The building is located at the bottom of Pilgrim Street next to the Tyne bridge, it is being used for pre-booked interviews with Work Coaches for people aged 18-24, over 50 and the self-employed who would previously have attended Newcastle City Jobcentre. All claimants whose interviews are being moved to the Spire have been contacted so people should know if they need to attend there. All other Jobcentre services and interviews in the city centre will remain at the existing Newcastle City Jobcentre located at Cathedral Square including general enquiries and digital support so nobody should attend the Spire unless they have a booked appointment there. The new site does have a limited number of public computers for customer use but these should only be used by people who can self-serve and who don't require any assistance.</p> <p>The new site does not affect anyone who uses the Newcastle East Jobcentre at Clifford Street in Byker which is open as usual.'</p>	<p>See www.newcastle.gov.uk/benefitcontacts</p>

<p>4 April 2022</p>	<p>Terminal illness and benefits</p> <p>For benefit purposes, you are regarded as ‘terminally ill’ if you have a progressive disease from which your death can “reasonably be expected within six months”. This is extended to 12 months from 4 April 2022 for UC and ESA. If you satisfy these ‘special rules’, you get some benefits quicker, may get a higher rate automatically and don’t have an any work-related activity to do.</p> <p>This applies to Personal Independence Payment, Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance possibly from 3 April 2023.</p> <p>See also ‘Single Service Phone Life in Bereavement’ 11 April 2022</p>	<p>Announced in the Autumn Budget 2021</p> <p>For details of the rule change see the regulation and the Government press release, the Special Rules for End of Life factsheet.</p> <p>And also the Special Rules guide can also be found at www.gov.uk/dwp/special-rules</p> <p>The flow chart to support clinicians with new process sits alongside the guide at DWP factual medical reports: guidance for healthcare professionals - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p> <p>The fact sheet that has been shared widely with stakeholders is attached to this email – this is aimed at organisations that support individuals and their families who are nearing the end of life.</p> <p>The ‘Special Rules’: how the benefit system supports people nearing the end of life - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p>
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<p>6 April 2022</p>	<p>Fit note changes</p> <p>From 6 April, GPs are able to authorise fit notes digitally without the need to print and sign them. This means instead of a handwritten signature in ink, fit notes will have the doctor's name included in the form, which can either be printed or sent digitally to patients.</p> <p>These changes do not otherwise change the purpose and function of the fit note. While this is being rolled out the existing fit note will still be legally valid and should be accepted until we notify that it is being withdrawn.</p> <p>See also change on 1 July 2022</p>	<p>Fit note: guidance for patients and employees</p> <p>Fit note - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p> <p>Fit note: guidance for GPs</p> <p>Fit note: guidance for hospital doctors</p> <p>Fit note Guidance for GPs, employers, hospital doctors and occupational health practitioners on using fit notes (statements of fitness for work).</p>
<p>11 April 2022</p>	<p>Single Service Phone Life in Bereavement</p> <p>From 11 April, the way citizens contact DWP Bereavement Services is changing. Citizens will now be able to access the following bereavement services through a single phone number 0800 151 2012, to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report a death, provide information and find out what support is available following a bereavement; • Make a new or, manage an existing claim for Bereavement Benefit or Bereavement Support Payment • Make a new or, manage an existing claim for Funeral Expenses Payments • Request State Pension updates following the death of a spouse or civil partner 	<p>LA Welfare Direct 5/2022 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p>

<p>26 April 2022</p>	<p>Pause on Fuel Direct deductions from benefits</p> <p>In response to increased fuel costs, new regulations mean the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will not accept from energy suppliers any new requests for third party deductions for gas and electricity arrears, or for increases to existing deductions from Universal Credit, income-based Jobseekers Allowance, income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Pension Credit, or Income Support. The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions Therese Coffey wrote to UK energy suppliers on 31 March 2022 explaining this temporary measure.</p>	<p>Cost-of-living crisis</p> <p>Legislation: The Social Security Benefits (Claims and Payments) (Modification) Regulations 2022</p> <p>Gov guidance: ADM Memo 12/22</p> <p>DMG Memo 9/22</p> <p>See Newcastle City Council Cost of Living Support webpage</p>
<p>May 2022</p>	<p>Disability Living Allowance – claim form changes</p> <p>See link to the new form Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for children claim form - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p>	<p>Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for children: How to claim - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p>

<p>May 2022</p>	<p>The ‘move to’ Universal Credit</p> <p>The Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021 advised that Government expects the roll out of Universal Credit to be completed by March 2025. On 25 April 2022, the Government announced this process will start on a small scale from May 2022, until full roll out by 2024 and later announced this would start with 500 claimants in Bolton and Medway This will involve the start of the ‘managed migration’ process where the DWP will write to legacy benefit claimants telling them they should claim Universal Credit and their legacy benefits will come to an end after some weeks.</p> <p>However, the Autumn Statement 2022 partly revised this by delaying the move to UC for those on ESA only and ESA and HB to 2028/19.</p> <p>‘5.15 - The government is pushing back the managed migration of claimants on income-related Employment and Support Allowance (with the exception of those receiving Child Tax Credit) to UC to 2028.’</p>	<p>Announced in Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021</p> <p>See dedicated webpage called The move to Universal Credit</p> <p>Gov policy paper: Completing the move to Universal Credit - GOV.UK – 25 April 2022</p> <p>New gov webpage: Tax credits and some benefits are ending: claim Universal Credit - GOV.UK – 9 May 2022</p> <p>(Includes Universal Credit Migration Notice helpline Telephone: 0800 169 0328, Relay UK etc)</p>
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<p>26 May 2022</p>	<p>Government cost-of-living measures - announcement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Energy Bills Support Scheme announced in Support for energy bills - the council tax rebate 2022-23: billing authority guidance, in March 2022 confirmed the original amount of £200 has been doubled to £400 and the loan element has been removed. It is non repayable. • There will be a £650 one-off Cost-of-Living Payment for households on means tested benefits paid in two payments – the first from July and the second in the autumn. This includes those on most means tested benefits such as Universal Credit and Tax Credits but not Housing Benefit or Council Tax Reduction. • Those receiving a disability benefit such as Personal Independence Payment and War Pensions Mobility Supplement will receive a one-off Disability Cost-of-Living Payment of £150 in September. Claimants must be in receipt of, or have begun an eventually successful claim for, one of these benefits as of 25th May 2022. This payment can be on top of the £650 payment for those also on means tested payments. • Pensioner households across the UK who receive the Winter Fuel Payment will get a one-off £300 Pensioner Cost-of-Living Payment. It will be paid as a top up of their Winter Fuel Payment in November or December 2022. • The Government is providing an extra £500 million to fund councils to extend the existing Household Support Fund from this October to March 2023. • In addition, in answering questions on these announcements in Parliament (c450), Rishi Sunak also said: "...that next year, [April 2023] subject to the review by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, benefits will be uprated by this September's consumer prices index, which on the current forecast is likely to 	<p>Cost-of-living crisis</p> <p>See Government announcement on 26 May 2022 and the Spring Statement 2022</p> <p>See Newcastle City Council Cost of Living Support webpage</p>
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	<p>be significantly higher than the forecast inflation rate for next year. Similarly, the triple lock will apply to the state pension.”</p>	
<p>July 2022</p>	<p>First instalment of the cost-of-living payment for households on means tested benefit</p> <p>There will be a £650 one-off Cost-of-Living Payment for households on means tested benefits paid in two payments – the first from July and the second in the autumn. This includes those on most means tested benefits such as Universal Credit and Tax Credits but not Housing Benefit or Council Tax Reduction.</p>	<p>Cost-of-living crisis</p> <p>See Government announcement on 26 May 2022</p> <p>See Newcastle City Council Cost of Living Support webpage</p>
<p>1 July 2022</p>	<p>Fit note change</p> <p>From 1 July 2022, more NHS healthcare professionals (e.g. nurses, OT’s, pharmacists, physiotherapists) will be able to legally certify fit notes which the DWP says aims to help ease the pressure on NHS Doctors and GPs</p>	<p>More details in the legislation and press release</p>
<p>September 2022</p>	<p>Disability Cost-of-Living Payment</p> <p>Those receiving a disability benefit such as Personal Independence Payment and War Pensions Mobility Supplement will receive a one-off Disability Cost-of-Living Payment of £150 in September. Claimants must be in receipt of, or have begun an eventually successful claim for, one of these benefits as of 25th May 2022. This payment can be on top of the £650 payment for those also on means tested payments.</p>	<p>Cost-of-living crisis</p> <p>See Government announcement on 26 May 2022</p> <p>See Newcastle City Council Cost of Living Support webpage</p>
<p>September 2022</p>	<p>Universal Credit migration</p> <p>150 Tax Credit recipients in Northumberland invited to claim UC.</p>	<p>Details: www.newcastle.gov.uk/the-move-to-Universal-Credit</p>

<p>September 2022</p>	<p>Second instalment of the cost-of-living payment for households on some means tested benefit</p> <p>There will be a £650 one-off Cost-of-Living Payment for households on means tested benefits paid in two payments – the first from July and the second in the autumn.</p>	<p>Cost-of-living crisis</p> <p>See Government announcement on 26 May 2022</p> <p>See Newcastle City Council Cost of Living Support webpage</p>
<p>6 September 2022</p>	<p>Automatic extension of PIP awards from 3 to up to 12 months</p> <p>The DWP ‘will automatically be extend existing (Personal Independence Payment) claims awaiting review by up to 12 months and will do this 35 days before their end date. The longer extension provides greater certainty for claimants and in particular help with continuing to access other support for example a blue badge...’</p>	<p>Originally it was to start it October but in a recent email to stakeholders this was moved to the later date.</p> <p>DWP increases automatic extension of existing PIP awards by up to 12 months Disability Rights UK</p>
<p>26 September 2022</p>	<p>Increased in-work conditionality for Universal Credit</p> <p>‘Changes... mean that people will remain in the Intensive Work Search Group until their earnings reach the new higher threshold. This will mean they continue to benefit from weekly or fortnightly meetings one on one with a dedicated Work Coach, for longer. A single claimant earning below £494 per calendar month [12 hours a week at national minimum wage] and couples with combined earnings below £782 per calendar month [19 hours a week at national minimum wage] will be eligible for the support’</p> <p>This is an extension of the Administrative Earnings Threshold rule</p>	<p>Administrative Earnings Threshold to rise for Universal Credit Jobseekers - GOV.UK</p> <p>Explanation What the new Universal Credit rules mean for parent carers of disabled children Contact</p> <p>Further increase in January 2023</p>

<p>1 October 2022</p>	<p>Energy Price Guarantee:</p> <p>Support for households through a cap on the unit rate of electricity and gas. This is the previously announced measure which caps the unit price of gas and electricity so that the typical household pays the equivalent of £2,500 per year until 31 March 2023, beginning from 1 October 2022.</p>	<p>Details in November 2022 Benefit Bulletin</p> <p>Announced in the Autumn Statement 2022</p> <p>See Newcastle City Council Cost of Living Support webpage</p> <p>More help in City Council’s energy advice team’s webpage: www.newcastle.gov.uk/energyadvice</p>
<p>1 October 2022</p>	<p>Victims of domestic abuse and modern slavery and help with rent</p> <p>The help with rent under Housing Benefit and Universal Credit for private tenancies (called Local Housing Allowance) is restricted for some residents aged up to 35 years old to the average amount for a bedsit. This is known as the ‘shared accommodation rate’. There are several exemptions to this rule and the Autumn Budget 2021 brought forward the exemption to victims of domestic abuse and modern slavery from October 2023 to October 2022.</p> <p>Those who are exempt from the ‘shared accommodation rate’ have the higher one-bedroom rate applied instead.</p>	<p>Announced in the Autumn Budget 2021</p> <p>Legislation and guidance A6/2022 and ADM 19-22</p>

<p>November 2022</p>	<p>Get a refund on an old DWP hardship payment recovery</p> <p>People who received a hardship payment from Universal Credit and have already paid it back – might be able to get a refund.</p> <p>Universal Credit hardship payments are loans and are recovered directly from your Universal Credit.</p> <p>If, between 1 January 2014 and 11 January 2021 you asked for that recovery to be waived but the DWP refused, you can ask for that money back.</p> <p>You must apply between 19 December 2022 to 19 June 2023.</p> <p>You need to show that either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • you could not afford to repay the repayment at that time, or • repaying it had a significant effect on your or your family’s health or wellbeing – this means that it caused a health condition or made a health condition worse 	<p>More details and how to apply are on the government webpage Ask DWP to review a previous request to stop (waive) Recoverable Hardship Payment repayments made between 1 January 2014 and 11 January 2021</p>
<p>November 2022</p>	<p>Newcastle East Jobcentre – temporary closure arrangements</p> <p>Newcastle East Jobcentre, Clifford Street, Byker is temporarily closed. Some building work is required to enable the office to be used again, so it will remain closed for some time with a view to reopening around March 2023. In the meantime, Work Coaches from the Jobcentre will be based at the Jobcentre plus office in The Spire at the bottom of Pilgrim Street in the city centre (next to the Tyne Bridge). People who have appointments and would normally attend at Byker should attend The Spire instead and will be informed of this. “Front-of-house” services (e.g. benefit enquiries or digital support) will be delivered from Newcastle City Jobcentre at Cathedral Square, so anyone without an appointment who needs to be seen face-to-face should be directed there.</p>	<p>Details from JCP Partnership Manager</p>

<p>November 2022</p>	<p>Post office card accounts for benefits due to end</p> <p>The Government want to make people receive their benefits via a bank account or similar account like a Credit Union rather than a Post Office card account. The Payment Exception Service will still be available for people who do not have a bank account to collect benefit or pension payments but in the form of vouchers. The end of Post Office card accounts for DWP benefits has been delayed from November 2021 to November 2022 but post office card accounts for HMRC benefits ended April 2022</p>	<p>Press release 9 September 2022 Post Office card accounts closure extended until November 2022 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p> <p>For more information, visit the GOV.UK website and the Money Helper Advice Service.</p>
<p>17 November 2022</p>	<p>Autumn Statement</p> <p>Several benefit and cost of living announcements</p> <p>Details added in this document, where dates provided</p>	<p>Cost-of-living crisis</p> <p>Details in Benefit Bulletin November 2022</p> <p>See Newcastle City Council Cost of Living Support webpage</p> <p>Autumn Statement 2022</p>
<p>December 2022</p>	<p>Pensioner Cost-of-Living Payment</p> <p>Pensioner households across the UK who receive the Winter Fuel Payment will get a one-off £300 Pensioner Cost-of-Living Payment. It will be paid as a top up of their Winter Fuel Payment in November or December 2022.</p>	<p>Cost-of-living crisis</p> <p>See Government announcement on 26 May 2022</p> <p>See Newcastle City Council Cost of Living Support webpage</p>

<p>December 2022</p>	<p>New Household Support Fund</p> <p>The Government have announced further funding for the Household Support Fund. Newcastle City Council has again received in the region of £2.9m.</p> <p>The fund will be used to provide food vouchers to children entitled to free school meals during Christmas school holidays and February half term and will be paid automatically.</p> <p>The Council will use the fund to support residents in receipt of Housing Benefit but who were not entitled to the full £650 cost of living payment from the Government. Those eligible will be contacted by the Council’s Revenue and Benefits department in the next couple of weeks to explain the amount of their entitlement and how they will receive it.</p> <p>There will again be a limited application scheme for hardship payments for residents facing demonstrable financial difficulty, where signed up professionals make the application.</p>	<p>Cost of living crisis</p> <p>Details: www.newcastle.gov.uk/householdsupport</p> <p>See Newcastle City Council Cost of Living Support webpage</p>
<p>2023</p>		
<p>30 January 2023</p>	<p>Increased in-work conditionality for Universal Credit</p> <p>to £617.50 and £988 (15/24 hours at National Minimum Wage)</p> <p>This is an extension of the Administrative Earnings Threshold rule and “As a result of this change, an additional 120,000 part-time workers on Universal Credit are likely to be required to look for extra hours.” Contact</p>	<p>Follows the increases in September 2022</p> <p>Explanation What the new Universal Credit rules mean for parent carers of disabled children Contact</p> <p>Explanation in Parliament and more details from youthemployment.org</p>

<p>9 February 2023</p>	<p>Bereavement Benefits extended to cohabiting couples with children with retrospective effect to 30 August 2018</p> <p>This does not apply to bereaved partners who do not have children.</p> <p>If entitled before this date of 9 February 2023, backdating is possible but you must apply before 8 February 2024 to get the full amount. After that it may be limited to 3 months.</p>	<p>For more information, see the legislation, DWP press release and guidance and information from the childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk</p>
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<p>15 March 2023 Announcement</p>	<p>Transforming Support: The Health and Disability White Paper</p> <p>‘The government’s proposals to help more disabled people and people with health conditions to start, stay and succeed in work.’</p> <p>Proposed measures include:</p> <p>Abolishing the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal Credit work capability assessment (WCA) to decide on incapacity for work and the • Limited Capability for Work Related Activity (LCWRA) element. <p>Instead, using receipt of Personal Independence Payment to include a new Universal Credit health element – paid at same amount as the LCWRA element.</p> <p>Although there will be situations where this element can be paid when PIP is not. For example, ‘due to pregnancy risk, or because they are about to receive are receiving or recovering from treatment for cancer by way of chemotherapy or radiotherapy’ and ‘people who are nearing the end of their life will continue to have fast-tracked access to the benefits system and will be exempt from face-to-face assessments and waiting periods.’</p> <p>There will be transitional protection for those who lose the LCWRA element because they don’t satisfy the reasons for getting the new UC health element.</p> <p>In terms of work-related activity conditionality, “We will also introduce a new personalised approach to employment support and engagement, with the aim of helping people to reach their potential and live a more independent life.”</p> <p>Timescale: ‘on a staged geographical basis no earlier than 2026/27. We would expect the new claims roll-out to be completed within three years (so by 2029 at the earliest), when we would then begin to move the existing caseload on to the new system.’</p>	<p>Announcement and details in:</p> <p>The Spring Budget 2023</p> <p>Spring Budget 2023 factsheet – Disability White Paper - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p> <p>Transforming Support: The Health and Disability White Paper - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p> <p>Earlier plans eg in the green paper:</p> <p>Department for Work and Pensions Outcome Delivery Plan: 2021 to 2022 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p> <p>Health Transformation Programme update: 9 Jul 2020: Hansard Written Answers - TheyWorkForYou</p> <p>Health assessments for benefits: Work and Pensions Committee to question academics - Committees - UK Parliament</p> <p>Some details in Benefit Bulletin March 2023</p>
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	These changes will not apply to Employment and Support Allowance and PIP and UC will remain sperate.	
April 2023	<p>Universal Credit managed migration</p> <p>The Government have said this is the year that managed migration will begin for those on Tax Credits only</p>	<p>Based on government information and a press release :</p> <p>See our webpages:</p> <p>The move to Universal Credit</p> <p>Where to get support in Newcastle with Universal Credit</p> <p>Universal Credit (a simple guide)</p> <p>Universal Credit more detailed guide</p>
April 2023	<p>The National Living Wage</p> <p>will increase from April 2023 by 9.7%. The hourly rate will be £10.42 which represents an annual pay rise worth over £1600 to a full-time worker.</p>	<p>Details in November 2022 Benefit Bulletin</p> <p>Announced in the Autumn Statement 2022</p>

<p>April 2023 – moved to April 2024</p>	<p>Universal Credit surplus earnings rule returning to original amount – delayed till next year</p> <p>When a Universal Credit (UC) claimant’s earnings fluctuate and takes them above UC entitlement by over £2,500, the surplus earnings rule may prevent future UC entitlement for a period. The government was to replace the £2,500 amount to £300 on 1 April 2020 but have delayed that to April 2021. It will mean many more people not receiving Universal Credit for longer periods</p> <p>Budget 2021 announced the present amount of £2,500 will continue till April 2022 when it will drop to £300 but this was delayed to April 2023 by Autumn Budget 2021</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>Budget 2020</p> <p>Budget 2021</p> <p>Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021</p>
<p>April 2023</p>	<p>Benefit uprating</p> <p>Autumn Statement confirmed (most) benefits will be updated with up to 10.1%</p> <p>The estimated amount is based upon September’s Consumer Price Index rate of 10.1%.</p> <p>However, Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates are not being updated according to a later ministerial statement. LHA is basically Housing Benefit for private tenants with some differences. Details about LHA.</p> <p>Also Bereavement Support Payment not updated</p> <p>Earlier: In answering questions on the 26 May 2022 announcements, Rishi Sunak said in Parliament (c450): “...that next year, [April 2023] subject to the review by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, benefits will be updated by this September’s consumer prices index, which on the current forecast is likely to be significantly higher than the forecast inflation rate for next year. Similarly, the triple lock will apply to the state pension.”</p>	<p>Cost-of-living crisis</p> <p>Details in November 2022 Benefit Bulletin and our Benefits information webpage.</p> <p>See Newcastle City Council Cost of Living Support webpage</p> <p>Announced in the Autumn Statement 2022</p>

<p>1 April 2023</p>	<p>The Benefit Cap will be increased with inflation</p> <p>The Benefit Cap that limits the total of several working age benefits a family can receive is to be increased by inflation from April 2023.</p> <p>Autumn Statement: ‘The cap will be raised from £20,000 to £22,020 for families nationally and from £23,000 to £25,323 in Greater London, while for single adults it will be raised from £13,400 to £14,753 nationally and from £15,410 to £16,967 in Greater London.’</p>	<p>Cost-of-living crisis</p> <p>Details in November 2022 Benefit Bulletin</p> <p>See Newcastle City Council Cost of Living Support webpage</p> <p>Announced in the Autumn Statement 2022</p> <p>Legislation: The Benefit Cap (Annual Limit) (Amendment) Regulations 2023 (legislation.gov.uk)</p>
<p>1 April 2023</p>	<p>Household Support Fund - round 4</p> <p>covers the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 inclusive</p>	<p>Cost-of-living crisis</p> <p>Guidance: 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024: Household Support Fund guidance for county councils and unitary authorities in England - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p>
<p>3 April 2023</p>	<p>Support for mortgage interest (SMI) improvements</p> <p>SMI is a loan for those on certain benefits to help with mortgage payments (it wasn't a loan before April 2018).</p> <p>From Spring 2023, the waiting time for this loan is reduced from 9 to 3 months. The government is also abolishing the zero earnings rule from April 2023 to allow claimants to continue receiving the loan while in work and on Universal Credit. This rule stopped your loan if you earned during the wait period or when getting the loan, and meant you had to start the 9 months wait again.</p>	<p>Cost-of-living crisis</p> <p>Details in November 2022 and March 2023 Benefit Bulletins</p> <p>See Newcastle City Council Cost of Living Support webpage</p> <p>Announced in the Autumn Statement 2022</p> <p>See the legislation and explanation.</p>

<p>3 April 2023</p>	<p>Terminal illness and benefits</p> <p>For benefit purposes, you are regarded as ‘terminally ill’ if you have a progressive disease from which your death can reasonably be expected within a certain number of months. In April last year it was extended from 6 to 12 months for Universal Credit and ESA. From 3 April this year, the 12 months will apply to Personal Independence Payment, Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance.</p>	<p>See the legislation:</p> <p>The Social Security (Special Rules for End of Life) Act 2022 (Commencement) Regulations 2023 (legislation.gov.uk)</p>
<p>25 April 2023</p>	<p>Cost of living payment (low income benefits and tax credits), paid in 3 parts:</p> <p>If you’re entitled, you will get:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £301 paid between 25 April 2023 and 17 May 2023 for most people on DWP benefits • £300 paid during autumn 2023 for most people • £299 paid during spring 2024 for most people 	<p>Cost of living crisis</p> <p>Cost of Living Payments 2023 to 2024 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p>
<p>Summer 2023</p>	<p>Cost of living payment (disability)</p> <p>Most people will be paid the £150 Disability Cost of Living Payment during summer 2023.</p>	<p>Cost of living crisis</p> <p>Cost of Living Payments 2023 to 2024 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p>
<p>Autumn 2023</p>	<p>Cost of living payment (low income benefits and tax credits), paid in 3 parts:</p> <p>If you’re entitled, you will get:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £301 paid between 25 April 2023 and 17 May 2023 for most people on DWP benefits • £300 paid during autumn 2023 for most people • £299 paid during spring 2024 for most people 	<p>Cost of living crisis</p> <p>Cost of Living Payments 2023 to 2024 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p>

<p>September 2023</p>	<p>More in-work conditionality for Universal Credit</p> <p>In-work conditionality will be increased from September 2023 for Universal Credit claimants whose ‘household income is typically between the equivalent of 15 and 35 hours a week at the national living wage’. They ‘will be required to meet with a dedicated work coach to increase their hours or earnings’</p>	<p>Details in November 2022 Benefit Bulletin</p> <p>Announced in the Autumn Statement 2022</p>
<p>October 2023 June 2021</p>	<p>The Local Housing Allowance (LHA) one-bedroom shared accommodation rate – exemption extension</p> <p>Budget 2021 brought this forward from October 2023 to June 2021</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>Budget 2020</p>
<p>Winter 2023</p>	<p>Cost of Living Payment (pensioner)</p> <p>If you’re entitled to a Winter Fuel Payment for winter 2023 to 2024, you will get an extra £150 or £300 paid with your normal payment from November 2023.</p> <p>You will be sent a letter in October or November telling you how much Winter Fuel Payment you’ll get if you’re eligible.</p>	<p>Cost of living crisis</p> <p>Cost of Living Payments 2023 to 2024 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p>
<p>2024</p>		
<p>Spring 2024</p>	<p>Cost of living payment (low income benefits and tax credits), paid in 3 parts:</p> <p>If you’re entitled, you will get:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £301 paid between 25 April 2023 and 17 May 2023 for most people on DWP benefits • £300 paid during autumn 2023 for most people • £299 paid during spring 2024 for most people 	<p>Cost of living crisis</p> <p>Cost of Living Payments 2023 to 2024 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p>

<p>April 2024</p> <p>Delayed from April 2023 to now</p>	<p>Universal Credit higher ‘surplus earnings’ rule</p> <p>This was delayed for a further year due to coronavirus and a further year by the Spring Budget 2023 to 2024</p> <p>Earnings over £2,500 a month when payments stop due to income being too high are carried forward to the next Universal Credit monthly assessment. If these, and normal earnings, are still over the limit, people have to re-claim Universal Credit when their earnings are low enough. The plan in Budget 2018 was to reduce this from £2,500 to £300 from April 2020 but it was delayed for a year and Budget 2021 announced the amount of £2,500 will continue till April 2022 when it will drop to £300, but this was delayed till 2023 by Autumn Budget 2021 then to April 2024 by the Spring Budget</p> <p>The measure would have meant many more people being brought into this rule. More details about surplus earnings are available from gov.uk</p>	<p>Coronavirus</p> <p>Announced in the Budget 2018 paragraph 5.38 Budget 2020.</p> <p>More details on the website coronavirus and benefits.</p> <p>Budget 2021</p> <p>Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021</p> <p>Spring Budget 2023 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p> <p>Legislation: Welfare Reform Act 2012 regulations - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p>
<p>April 2026 - 2028</p>	<p>State Pension age will gradually rise from 66 to 67</p> <p>- for those born after 1960</p> <p>There are further plans to increase the pension age to 68 in mid-2030s and 69 in late-2040s but a decision on increasing it to 68 will not be considered until the next Parliament State Pension Age Review published - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p>	<p>Part of the Pensions Act 2014 and the Autumn Statement 2013 and DWP guidance</p> <p>See the Gov.uk retirement age page</p> <p>Calculate your State Pension age and Pension Credit age</p> <p>Guidance</p>

<p>2028/29</p>	<p>Universal Credit migration</p> <p>Autumn Statement 2022: ‘The government is pushing back the managed migration of claimants on income-related Employment and Support Allowance (with the exception of those receiving Child Tax Credit) to UC to 2028’</p> <p>As a consequence, the Housing Benefit and Pension Credit merger is also delayed until 2028.</p>	<p>Based on government information and a press release and announced in the Autumn Statement 2022</p> <p>See our webpages:</p> <p>The move to Universal Credit</p> <p>Where to get support in Newcastle with Universal Credit</p> <p>And Benefit Bulletins</p>
<p>2028/29</p>	<p>Incorporating Housing Benefit into Pension Credit – latest date</p> <p>The plan to add help with rent (Housing Benefit) into Pension Credit has been put back to now or later, when Universal Credit fully replaces ‘legacy benefits’. May be called a ‘housing credit’</p> <p>Was previously delayed from October 2023 to 2025</p>	<p>Based on government information and a press release and announced in the Autumn Statement 2022</p> <p>See our webpages:</p> <p>The move to Universal Credit</p> <p>Where to get support in Newcastle with Universal Credit</p> <p>And Benefit Bulletins</p>