



BEDFORDSHIRE BENEFITS NETWORK

20/09/2022

Bedfordshire
Advice Forum



UNIVERSAL CREDIT CHANGES

UNIVERSAL CREDIT

Managed migration

- Restarted 9/5/22, small trials in various places, none in Beds yet
- Some rule changes:
 - Couples splitting during migration – one will keep single person claim, the other can stay on legacy benefits. No transitional protection for either
 - Transitional protection – if claimant goes from LCW element to LCWRA element, their transitional protection element is reduced by the difference between LCW and LCWRA elements
 - Students – if a student who was migrated to UC and only entitled due to transitional protection comes off UC and reapplies, they do not retain transitional protection
 - DWP have discretion to extend deadlines and provide extra support for vulnerable and ill struggling to claim UC

UNIVERSAL CREDIT

Administrative Threshold

- The amount claimant needs to earn to avoid work search and work availability requirements.
- Being increased
- Single from £355 to **£494pm**; couples from £597 to **£782pm**
- **NB: This will rise again in January 2023 following the mini-budget on 24 Sep 2022.**

Local Welfare Provision

- Payments now officially ignored as income for UC (gap in legislation closed)



IMMIGRATION RULE CHANGES

UKRAINE

No Habitual Residence Test

- For claimants arriving in UK from Ukraine who claim any of the following:
 - Housing Benefit
 - Pension Credit
 - Universal Credit
 - Personal Independence Payments
 - Attendance Allowance
 - Carer's Allowance
 - Disability Living Allowance,
 - Contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance
 - Contribution-based Employment and Support Allowance

UKRAINE

Homes for Ukraine

- Claimants who accept a Ukraine refugee under this scheme should see no impact on their benefit claims (or tax).
- E.g.:
 - No non-dep deductions/housing cost contributions
 - No change to:
 - bedroom tax
 - LHA rate
 - benefit cap
 - severe disability premium

OTHER IMMIGRATION NEWS

Free School Meals

- Those without recourse to public funds were able to get free school meals during Covid. This has been made permanent.

EEA Nationals

- EEA Nationals without settled status will need to obtain 'indefinite leave to remain' to be able to claim Pension Credit, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction

OTHER BENEFIT NEWS

PERSONAL INDEPENDENCE PAYMENTS

- Due to delays in assessments, claims being extended by 12 months automatically.
 - After 31/10/22 letters to be issued
 - If a statement is required before then (e.g. for vehicle tax exemption), call to request
- DWP to check claims from 21/8/20 due to an Upper Tribunal case.
 - Claimants with hearing impairment who would need an aid while washing or dressing to be alerted to a fire alarm, or those who need supervision as no aid suitable, now entitled to points.
 - Any backdates will be to 21/8/20.

LOCAL HOUSING ALLOWANCE

Shared room rate exemptions

- From 1/10/22, victims of:
 - Domestic abuse
 - Modern slavery
- Will be exempted from the shared room rate on LHA
- Will get 1 bedroom rate instead

BEREAVEMENT

New single phone number – 0800 151 2012

- Call same number for following DWP services:
 - Report a death
 - Find out support available on bereavement
 - Claim a bereavement benefit
 - Claim Funeral Expenses Payment
 - Enquiries about state pension for widow/er or surviving civil partner

MISCELLANEOUS

Fit notes

- From 1/7/22, in addition to doctors can be signed by:
 - Registered nurses
 - Occupational therapists
 - Pharmacists
 - Physiotherapists

COST OF LIVING CRISIS

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Household Support Funds

- On 1/4/22, further £500m agreed for LAs between April and September 2022.
 - 1/3 for pensioner households, 1/3 for households with children
- In May 2022, plans for a further £500m for October 2022 to March 2023 were announced

£150 Energy Costs rebate

- Residents in properties in Council Tax bands A-D eligible for £150 rebate. Generally paid on application, by voucher or discount to council tax bill.
- Discretionary schemes for those not eligible administered by LAs.

COST OF LIVING CRISIS

Fuel Direct

- From 26/4/22 to 1/4/23, energy suppliers cannot apply to DWP for new or amended deductions for energy costs.
 - Claimants can request DWP change amount deducted.
 - Third party deductions for fuel arrears still possible.

Warm Home Discount

- £150 this year
- No applications this year, instead, broad group will be awarded it on government assessment of benefit entitlements and VOA data on property and whether it is likely to be expensive to heat. Core group (pension credit guarantee credit claimants) will get it again.

COST OF LIVING CRISIS

Extra for benefit claims

- £326 paid for claimants entitled to means-tested benefits between 26/4/22 and 25/5/22.
 - Form to complete if missed out wrongly
 - Further £324 due in Autumn
- £150 for claimants of AA, DLA, PIP, Armed Forces Independence Payments, Constant Attendance Allowance or War Pension Mobility Supplement on 25/5/22. Payments started yesterday (20/9/22).
- Extra £300 on Winter Fuel Payment for all pensioners
- £400 to be paid to electricity bills for every household, spread over 6 months between Oct 2022 and March 2023.
 - Discretionary Fund to be made available to those unable to access it.

COST OF LIVING CRISIS

Price Cap

- Announced by our new PM, cap of average bill set to £2,500, with difference in costs to be funded by public funds.
- Prices still twice as high as last year
- E.g. average bill for January will be over £250.

Mini-Budget this Friday

- Watch this space?