


BEDFORDSHIRE BENEFITS NETWORK

19 March 2025

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UNIVERSAL CREDIT MANAGED MIGRATION

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MANAGED MIGRATION

Managed migration timetable

- We should now be at the point where mostly only ESA(IR) and/or HB claimants are left to migrate to UC
- DWP plan is for last migration notices to go out by end of 2025.

Tax Credits

- A reminder that Tax Credit claims are closing for good on 6 April 2025. All Tax Credit claimants should have already had their migration notices.
- However, there are outstanding mandatory reconsiderations and appeals against Tax Credit decisions.
- And those delaying reporting changes of circumstances could lose out on transitional protection

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MANAGED MIGRATION

Pensioners

- Reminder that some pensioners on Tax Credits are being allowed to claim UC instead of Pension Credit.
 - *Correction: working pensioners from Tax Credits are told to claim UC, rather than having a choice*
- This is normally because they are working and the more generous earnings disregards on UC mean they would be worse off on PC while in work
- Plan is to turn to adding Housing Benefit to Pension Credit from 2026

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Stats up to Dec 2024

- Nearly 1,598k people in 1,124k households sent migration notices
- 1,068k people in 763k households claimed UC
- 400k households awarded transitional protection
- 356k individuals sent migration notices did not claim UC

MANAGED MIGRATION

Discussion

- What issues have we seen in the last 6 months?
- Please share your experiences

BENEFIT UPDATES

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“GET BRITAIN WORKING” GREEN PAPER

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GREEN PAPER

- Restricting access to PIP by requiring claimants to be awarded at least 4 points in one activity to qualify the daily living component – from Nov 2026
- Scrap the WCA, with extra money on UC linked instead to PIP entitlement
- End reassessments for those with no prospect of ever working again
- Increase face-to-face assessments for PIP
- Raising minimum age to claim PIP to 18
- *Addition: Creating a new unemployment insurance benefit to replace new style JSA and ESA*

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GREEN PAPER

Government is proposing:

- Freezing LCWRA element until 2030 at £97pw
- New claimants entitled to LCWRA after April 2026 will only get £50pw extra instead
- Increasing the standard allowance to £98pw from April 2026
- Write in law that trying work will not trigger a reassessment of the LCWRA element, to give confidence to try work out
- Excluding under 22s from LCWRA element

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UNIVERSAL CREDIT OTHER NEWS

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Deductions

- Max % of deductions to be set to 15% from April, down from 25%
- Max rent arrears deduction also set to 15%, down from 20%
- Managed Payment to Landlord: court found the process involving social landlords unlawful as claimant is not given any chance of protesting the deduction. DWP working on solution.
- Priority of deduction of Child Maintenance from Universal Credit to be increased

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Some other changes to regulations

- Regular prompts for UC claimants to declare if they've had any changes of circumstances
- Surplus earnings rule to stay at £2,500 for another year
- Transitional element: from 1 June 2025, award of UC Housing Costs element will no longer erode transitional element if previously entitled to Housing Benefit for specified accommodation

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Caselaw

- SSWP v MJ (UC)
- Claimant was getting transitional SDP element and Carer's Element
- She was placed in LCWRA group and awarded LCWRA element
- This meant she lost Carer's Element, and the whole award of LCWRA element was used to erode her transitional SDP element in full.
- Decision was to find this unlawful
- Court ruled that erosion should be difference between Carer's Element and LCWRA (which is what was actually gained by the change in circumstances).

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OTHER BENEFIT NEWS

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STATUTORY SICK PAY

- Confirmation of previously announced plans to extend SSP:
- Those earning less than the lower earnings threshold (£125 per week from April) will be entitled to SSP at a lower rate, or 80% of their earnings, whichever is lower.
- SSP will also be payable from day 1 instead of waiting days
- **NB:** Employment Rights bill still working its way through parliament

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CHILDREN

- Free breakfast clubs for school children to be trialled from April 2025
- Child Benefit and Guardian's Allowance backdating for refugees to be limited to three months max from 7 April 2025.
- Also from 7 April 2025, a parent under 16 will no longer be required to provide a national insurance number to claim Child Benefit.
- Previous government announced plans to assess Child Benefit based on household earnings instead of individual from April 2025, but this has been scrapped by current government

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HOUSING BENEFIT

Housing Benefit in Specified Accommodation

- Consultation open on proposals to limit Housing Benefit claims for specified accommodation to licensed properties only. Intended to stop claims being paid to unscrupulous landlords setting up poor quality or fake supported accommodation schemes whilst charging exorbitant rents.

Other Housing

- LHA rates frozen for 25/26.
- DHP budgets the same as last year
- **NB:** Household Support Fund extended for another year

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OTHERS

Pensions

- Deadline of 5 April 2025 to make voluntary NI contributions to fill gaps in record to maximise State Pension.
 - After this, will only be able to pay towards last 6 years.

Benefit Up-rating

- 1.7% increase from April for most benefits
- 4.1% for state pension and pension credit
- Benefit Cap frozen again

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FRAUD, ERROR AND DEBT BILL

Fraud, Error and Debt Bill

- Removes need for court order to enforce collection
- DWP could apply to court to revoke licence of non-payer
- Banks to identify and flag to DWP where someone may not qualify for benefits they receive

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