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## Universal Credit

### Personal Legal Services

**Universal Credit (UC) is a benefit for people of working age. This means you must be under the age when you can make a claim for Pension Credit, yet above the age of 18.**

You don't have to be out of work to get UC. You may be able to get it if you're working, looking for work, sick or disabled, or caring for children or a disabled person. If you find work, you won't lose all your UC if your earnings or hours of work increase. Instead, your UC will go down as your earnings go up.

You'll have to meet various conditions to get UC. These include accepting a claimant commitment. This is a document that says what you'll have to do to prepare for work, find work, get better paid work, or work more hours. For example, you may have to go to interviews to help you find work or apply for jobs. Jobcentre Plus will administer UC. UC will eventually replace many existing benefits, which will be abolished.

UC is being introduced in a very limited number of areas only from April 2013, and rolled out gradually in more areas after this. UC is not taxable and will be paid monthly.

### Which benefits will UC replace?

UC will eventually replace the following benefits and tax credits:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credit
- Working Tax Credit
- Housing Benefit
- Budgeting loans. An advance payment of UC will replace these.

However, you can get Housing Benefit and UC at the same time if you live in one of the following types of accommodation:

- Certain kinds of accommodation to help you lead a more settled way of life
- Certain kinds of accommodation where you get care, support or supervision
- Certain kinds of temporary accommodation for people who have left home because of domestic violence
- A local authority hostel in some cases.

UC can't help specifically with your housing costs if you're in one of these types of accommodation, but Housing Benefit can, so you may have to claim Housing Benefit as well as UC.

## People from European Economic Area countries

If you're not a British citizen and you're from a European Economic Area (EEA) country, you'll often be in the 'all work-related requirements' group for UC, even if you're one of the people who is normally in one of the other groups.

## UC - which work-related requirements do you have to meet?

When you claim UC, you normally have to meet certain work-related requirements. These are the things you'll have to do to help you get back into work, or to find more or better paid work.

Your work-related requirements will depend partly on which work-related group you're in. There are rules about which work-related group you should be in. These depend on your personal circumstances. Jobcentre Plus has to follow these rules.

## The 'no work-related requirements' group

People in this group include people who:

- Are already working and their earnings are high enough
- Have limited capability for work and work-related activity – this applies to some people who are sick or disabled
- Are responsible for a child aged under one
- Are caring for a severely disabled person
- Are pregnant or have recently given birth. This means that it must be between 11 weeks before and 15 weeks after your due date
- Have reached the age when they can claim Pension Credit.

## The 'work-focused interview only' group

If you're in this group, you'll have to meet the work-focused interview requirement. This means taking part in one or more work-focused interviews to help you find or stay in work.

You won't have to meet any other work-related requirements. This means you won't have to look for work, be available for work or prepare for work.

## Who is in the 'work-focused interview only' group?

You'll be in this group if you're:

- Responsible for a child aged one or two
- A foster parent, although this only applies in some cases
- Caring for a child in certain other circumstances.

If you're already working and your earnings are high enough, you'll be in the no work-related requirements group instead.



“We have been afforded the comfort, confidence and have been assured of complete peace of mind, knowing that our interests had been placed in the best possible hands, from the acceptance of our case, through to conclusion.”

**Mr and Mrs Howard**

## The 'work preparation' group

Jobcentre Plus will put you in this group if you have capability for work. You may be in this situation if you have an illness or disability that limits the work you can do.

If you're in the 'work preparation' group, you may have to meet the work preparation requirement. This means taking steps to get you ready for work. These include things like taking part in training or work experience.

If you're in the 'work preparation' group, you may also have to meet the work-focused interview requirement. This means taking part in one or more work-focused interviews to help you find or stay in work.

People in the 'work preparation' group don't have to meet the work search requirement or the work availability requirement. This means you won't have to search for work or be available for work. If you're already working and your earnings are high enough, you'll be in the no work-related requirements group instead.

## The 'all work-related requirements' group

If you're in this group, you'll normally have to meet the work search requirement and the work availability requirement. The work search requirement involves taking action to get work.

The work availability requirement means you have to be able and willing to do paid work immediately. This includes going for a job interview. If you're in the 'all work-related requirements' group, you may have to meet the work-focused interview requirement and the work preparation requirement as well.

## Who is in the 'all work-related requirements' group?

People in this group will include anyone who isn't in one of the other work-related groups. Most unemployed people who are capable of working will be in this group.

## What if you're already working?

You can still be in the 'all work-related requirements' group if you're already working. If you're already working, your work search requirement may involve taking action to get better-paid work or work more hours. However, if you're already working and your earnings are high enough, you'll be in the no work-related requirements group instead.

## Exemptions from meeting the work-related requirements

You might be temporarily exempt from meeting the work search requirement and the work availability requirement. In some cases, victims of domestic violence don't have to meet any work-related requirements.

## How to work out which work-related group you're in

Jobcentre Plus may have told you which work-related group you're in. If they haven't, you can contact them and ask them.

Your claimant commitment can help you work out which work-related requirements you have to meet and which group you're in. Your claimant commitment is a document that sets out your work-related requirements.

## What if Jobcentre Plus has put you in the wrong work-related group?

Jobcentre Plus can only put you in a work-related group if you meet the conditions for that group. You'll need to check the conditions for the groups to work out which one you should be in.

If you don't meet the conditions for going into a work-related group, Jobcentre Plus can't put you in it. If they've put you in the wrong group, you can challenge them.

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