

Mon 03rd May 2021 - Issue.41 (Fortnightly)

Rent arrears fall but homeless applications on the rise

Social landlord rent arrears have fallen to their lowest level since April 2020, according to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

Read article [HERE](#)

Benefit uprating 2021-2022

The DWP advises that increases to universal credit rates apply from the first day of the first assessment period which commences on or after 12 April 2021, while increases to income support, income-based jobseeker's allowance, income-related employment and support allowance and state pension credit apply from the first day of the first benefit week to commence on or after 12 April 2021.

[DMG Memo 4/21](#) and [ADM Memo 5/21](#)

Free lateral flow test kits will be available for anyone without symptoms

From tomorrow (Monday) everyone in Scotland will be able to access rapid coronavirus (COVID-19) testing, even if they have no symptoms.

www.gov.scot/news/regular-rapid-testing-for-everyone/

Customers reminded to look out for tax credits renewals packs



HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) is sending out about 2.5 million annual renewals packs to tax credits customers from this week. Customers should check their details in the renewal pack and report any change in circumstances to HMRC.

The packs will be sent out over the next 6 weeks and all customers should receive their pack by 4 June.

HMRC recognises that many tax credits customers will have been affected by the pandemic and may have earned less money than in previous years. It is important that customers check the details contained in their annual renewal pack are correct, including income details.

Renewing online is quick and easy. Customers can log into GOV.UK to check on the progress of their renewal, be reassured it is being processed and know when they will hear back from HMRC. Customers can also use the HMRC app on their smartphone to:

- renew their tax credits
- check their tax credits payments schedule
- find out how much they have earned for the year

If there is a change in a customer's circumstances that could affect their tax credits claims, **they must report the changes to HMRC**. Circumstances that could affect tax credits payments include changes to:

- living arrangements
- childcare
- working hours
- income (increase or decrease)

Customers do not need to report any temporary falls in their working hours as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19). They will be treated as if they are working their normal hours until the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme closes.

www.gov.uk/government/news/customers-reminded-to-look-out-for-tax-credits-renewals-packs

May bank holiday - DWP

On Monday 31 May Jobcentre Plus offices and phone lines will be closed.

Payment dates have been brought forward. Customers due to be paid on Monday 31 May will be paid on Friday 28 May. If the expected payment date is not shown, customers will get their money on their usual payment date.

Attendance Allowance claim form

Last updated: 19 April 2021

Use the Attendance Allowance claim form to apply for financial help for your personal care if you're disabled and State Pension age or older.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/attendance-allowance-claim-form

Easy read: Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

Last updated: 19 April 2021

These easy read guides explain how you can get help from Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and how to claim it.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/about-pip-what-it-is-and-how-to-claim-it-easy-read-guide

New Style Employment and Support Allowance

Last updated: 26 April 2021

You may be able to claim New Style Employment and Support Allowance with, or instead of Universal Credit, depending on your National Insurance record.

www.gov.uk/guidance/new-style-employment-and-support-allowance

Advice for decision making: staff guide

Last updated: 19 April 2021

Advice for DWP decision makers on Universal Credit, PIP and contribution-based JSA and ESA for people who are eligible for Universal Credit.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/advice-for-decision-making-staff-guide

The DWP has added new medical guidance on post-Covid Syndrome to its staff guide on disability living allowance (DLA) for children.

Updated guide advises that a 12-month award is appropriate for children with disablement solely caused by the illness

In updated [Medical guidance for DLA decision-makers \(child cases\)](#) issued today - that contains background information for DWP staff on the most common medical conditions relevant to claims for DLA for children - the DWP includes guidance for the first time on post-Covid syndrome (Long Covid), advising that for children who remain unwell after the usual three to four week recovery period for Covid-19 -

'It is those children who have significant functional impairment at 12 weeks and do not seem to be recovering, who may have entitlement to DLA Child.

Always consider the qualifying period and prospective test when assessing needs in a claim for DLA Child.

A child does not have to have had a positive test result to be diagnosed with the syndrome. Testing has not always been easily available.'

In addition, the DWP advises that decision-makers are now able to record 'coronavirus Covid-19' on the DLA computer system -

- as a primary condition if the main cause of disability is the 'after effects' of Covid-19 or if a severe disability has developed solely due to Covid-19, for example, following a stroke or kidney failure; and
- as one of several unrelated disabilities, in the order that each disability is considered to contribute most to the day-to-day disablement.

The guidance also suggests that a 12-month award is appropriate for children with disablement solely caused by post-Covid syndrome. For those children where post-Covid syndrome is a secondary condition, DWP staff are advised to determine the duration of awards for the primary disability as appropriate, on a case-by-case basis.

The guidance on post-Covid syndrome is available on page 742 of the updated [Medical guidance for DLA decision-makers \(child cases\): staff guide](#).

 GOV.UK

[Home](#) [Benefits](#) [Carers and disability benefits](#)

Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for children

Managed migration to Universal Credit pilot paused

The pilot scheme that made a slow start in Harrogate in 2019 has been paused until April 2022. The Work and Pension Select Committee has written to the DWP asking for the details behind this decision, which was announced in an Office for Budget Responsibility document.

The letter can be found here: <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/5264/documents/52838/default/>

SE v Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (PIP) (Final decision): [2021] UKUT 79 (AAC)

Upper Tribunal Administrative Appeals Chamber decision of Judge Ward on 22 March 2021.

Read the full decision in [CPIP/1653/2019 final decision](#).

Judicial Summary

The interim decision SE v SSWP (PIP) [2021] UKUT 1 (AAC) ruled on the interpretation of activities 8 and 10. The present decision remakes the decision under appeal. Its wider significance is in highlighting the potential relevance of Employment Support Allowance assessments to Personal Independence Payment cases where people with learning disabilities claim points under those activities.

Published 20 April 2021

Face-to-face assessments to resume for health and disability benefits

In line with the latest public health guidance and adhering to strict safety protocols, DWP plans to begin reintroducing face-to-face assessments for health and disability benefits.

People will be invited for their appointments by letter, which will clearly set out what to expect at their appointment.

Face-to-face assessments will take place alongside existing paper-based assessments, and telephone assessments (for Work Capability Assessments and Personal Independence Payments), which will continue to take place where suitable.

[Find out more](#)

Working Tax Credit £500 payment

HMRC have released further details regarding the one-off £500 payment which will be made to eligible tax credit claimants. A reminder – this payment replaces the ongoing uplift which was introduced due to COVID-19.

HMRC have confirmed that:

- Claimants do not need to make a separate claim
- Eligibility will be confirmed either by text message or letter
- Payment should be received into the same bank account that tax credits are paid into by 23 April 2021
- The payment is not subject to Income Tax or National Insurance and does not need to be reported in a self-assessment declaration.
- The payment does not count as income for Housing Benefit.

For more information, visit [One-off £500 payment](#)

Universal Credit statistics 29 April 2013 to 11 March 2021

Data for people on Universal Credit is available in [Stat-Xplore](#) on a monthly basis.

These monthly experimental statistics include the total number of people who are on Universal Credit at 11 March 2021.

www.gov.uk/government/statistics/universal-credit-statistics-29-april-2013-to-11-march-2021

[2021] EWHC 1085 (Admin)

High Court rules that government's 'no recourse to public funds' policy unlawfully fails to safeguard and promote the welfare of children

www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/Admin/2021/1085.html

Further extension of period over which Covid-19-related easements to benefit rules remain in force

rightsnet

New regulations have been issued that extend the expiry dates for Covid-19-related easements in relation to employment and support allowance (ESA), jobseeker's allowance (JSA), carer's allowance, and means-tested benefit entitlement for prisoners on temporary release.

In force from 12 May 2021, the *Social Security (Coronavirus) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2021* (SI.No.476/2021) further extend the expiry dates of provisions within

- the *Employment and Support Allowance and Universal Credit (Coronavirus Disease) Regulations 2020* ([SI.No.289/2020](#));
 - the *Social Security (Coronavirus) (Further Measures) Regulations 2020* ([SI.No.371/2020](#)); and
 - the *Social Security (Coronavirus) (Prisoners) Regulations 2020* ([SI.No.409/2020](#))
- in response to the continuing outbreak of Covid-19 in Great Britain.

As a result -

- provisions treating ESA claimants affected by Covid-19 as having limited capability for work without being required to provide medical evidence or undergo a work capability assessment, and removing the need for waiting days, are extended by six months to 12 November 2021;
- provisions that enable certain persons affected by Covid-19 to continue in receipt of JSA without any period of sickness/isolation counting as a short or an extended period of sickness will remain in place until 31 August 2021;
- the expiry of provisions applying in England and Wales designed to ensure financial support continues during the pandemic for claimants receiving carer's allowance is extended to 31 August 2021 so that carers are not penalised for following government advice to self-isolate (**equivalent provisions have already been made in Scotland** where carer's allowance is a devolved benefit); and
- provisions that enable individuals on temporary release from prison to access means-tested benefits during the period of release that were due to expire on 12 May 2021 are extended to 31 August 2021 - however, the easement is also narrowed to ensure that prisoners on temporary release do not establish entitlement if released for non-Covid reasons.

[SI.No.476/2021](#) is available from legislation.gov.uk

Personal Independence Payment: Coronavirus

Question for Department for Work and Pensions



Question (UIN 180553, tabled on 13 April 2021)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 21 January 2021 to Question 139055 on Personal Independence Payment: coronavirus, whether his Department plans to automatically apply extensions to all personal independence payments claimants, including those with a fixed term period decision awarded at a tribunal where a decision on their new award could not be made before they reach their end award date.

Answered on 19 April 2021 by Justin Tomlinson

As referenced in my previous answer, as part of its response to the Covid-19 situation, in Spring 2020 the Department extended award dates for existing PIP claims. We restarted the PIP award review process in July.

New decisions made since then will not have had their awards extended. However, we are aware that some claimants on fixed term awards without a review date are now falling out of payment before we have been able to make a decision on renewal claims they have made. We are prioritising these cases to ensure we can make a decision as quickly as possible.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-04-13/180553>

Update on the work the DWP is undertaking to reimburse certain married people, widows and over-80s



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Statement made on 21 April 2021 UIN HCWS933

Statement

I wish to update the House on the State Pension correction activity that is addressing historical errors, that were unaddressed by successive Governments, following on from my statement on 4 March.

We are fully committed to ensuring that any historical errors are addressed as quickly as possible to ensure that individuals receive the State Pension they are rightfully due in law. While I am pleased to report that good progress has been made in the examination of cases, this is a complex and resource intensive process requiring the clerical examination of many thousands of State Pension records.

The Department already has a dedicated team of over 150 people working on the correction activity. Throughout 2021/22 we intend to increase significantly the capacity of the team with the recruitment of an additional 360 staff. We expect this additional resource will speed up the correction activity, with the aim to complete the exercise by the end of 2023.

However, it is important to note that estimates on the numbers affected, and costs, are currently based on highly complex scans of the computer system, analysis of DWP administrative data and very small samples of cases randomly selected and reviewed. They are highly uncertain and will be further refined by our analysts as the correction activity progresses and we are able to base estimates on management Information gathered from cases actually reviewed and corrected.

Individuals who are in the affected groups do not need to contact the Department. We are in the process of issuing letters to all those found to be underpaid in accordance with the law, explaining how much they will be receiving in arrears and the reasons for the change to their State Pension rate.

The Department will publish further information on the progress of the State Pension correction activity around the time of the next fiscal event.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2021-04-21/hcws933>

Envelope colour change

From 5 April some DWP system-generated customer notifications will be sent in white rather than manila (brown) envelopes.

This requirement is driven by a change in the way Royal Mail sorts bulk post.

The new system requires a legible barcode to be printed onto the envelope. Testing has shown printing onto our manila envelopes regularly fails.

The white envelopes will be marked 'important post-please open'.

Benefits and pensions for UK nationals in the EU, EEA or Switzerland

Last updated: 28 April 2021

This guidance explains the rights of UK nationals in the EU, the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland to benefits and pensions.

www.gov.uk/guidance/benefits-and-pensions-for-uk-nationals-in-the-eea-or-switzerland

Guidance where claimants are unable to undertake a telephone assessment for PIP



In response to an FOI request.

Some claimants are not able to undertake a telephone assessment because of their health condition/disability, having no access to a phone or because they encounter persistent phone connection issues which makes completing a telephone assessment impossible.

Claimant unable to undertake a Telephone Assessment

also [COVID Clinical Telephone Assessment & Related Filework Guidance for Work Capability Assessments](#)

Dated 10 March 2021



DISABILITY ASSISTANCE

Personal independence payment, disability living allowance and attendance allowance will transfer to the Scottish Government. When they transfer, you'll continue to get benefit but if you live in Scotland it will be paid by Social Security Scotland, the new agency delivering Scottish benefits. The Scottish Government plans to make changes to how these benefits operate as it develops the new disability assistance.



Disability living allowance for children will be the first of these benefits to transfer, followed by personal independence payment and then attendance allowance. The new Scottish benefit replacing disability living allowance for children will be called child disability payment. The plan to introduce child disability payment in summer 2020 was delayed due to the coronavirus outbreak. The Scottish Government has announced that Social Security Scotland will start taking applications for child disability payment from 26 July 2021 in three local authority areas (Dundee City, Perth and Kinross and the Western Isles) and then it will be rolled out across Scotland for new claims from autumn 2021. Read the [Scottish Government announcement](#) on this.

Personal independence payment will be replaced by a benefit called adult disability payment. This will be piloted from spring 2022, with a roll out from summer 2022. Attendance allowance will be replaced by a benefit called pension age disability payment, with no dates announced yet for when applications for this will start. Read the [Scottish Government announcement](#) on these developments.

ELIGIBILITY

There will be few changes to the eligibility rules at the point that disability benefits transfer. The Scottish Government is consulting on changes it might make in the longer term.

One planned change to eligibility is that you'll be able to get disability living allowance until you reach age 18 instead of 16. Currently, young people in Scotland who get disability living allowance who are due to turn 16 from September 2020 will not be invited to claim personal independence payment and will be able to continue getting disability living allowance up to the age of 18. However, they will also be able to choose to apply to the DWP for personal independence payment before reaching 18 until the Scottish Government launches child disability payment, if they choose to do so.

Another planned change is that you'll be able to get maximum entitlement if you're terminally ill whatever your life expectancy. At present, maximum support for care needs is for terminally ill people with six months' life expectancy.

WHAT YOU'LL GET

If you get personal independence payment, disability living allowance or attendance allowance at the point they become Scottish benefits, you'll see no change to the amount of your benefit.

HOW YOU'LL APPLY AND BE ASSESSED

Now, you claim personal independence payment, disability living allowance and attendance allowance from the [Department for Work and Pensions](#). When they become Scottish benefits, you'll apply to Social Security Scotland.

Under Social Security Scotland, assessments won't be done by private companies. The Scottish Government plans to have fewer face-to-face assessments and longer awards. You could be asked to attend an assessment but you'll be told why that's the only practical way to get the information needed.

HOW YOU'LL BE PAID

Now, your disability benefit is paid by the Department for Work and Pensions into your bank account, building society or credit union account. When it becomes a Scottish benefit, it will be paid by Social Security Scotland.

<https://cpag.org.uk/scotland/welfare-rights/scottish-benefits/disability-assistance>



<http://citizensrightsproject.org>



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citzrights

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St Margaret's House | 151 London Rd | Edinburgh | EH7 6AE

Citizens' Rights Project Research Briefing

EU citizens' access to welfare benefits and pensions

Prepared by Nina Miller Westoby, University of Glasgow. Nina Miller Westoby is a socio-legal researcher based at the University of Glasgow. She specialises in EU free movement of persons law and gender equality, UK public law and Brexit.

Introduction

This paper addresses a number of questions relating to the welfare benefits and pension entitlements of European Union citizens who began living in Scotland (or the UK) before the end of the transition period (31 December 2020) and who continue to live here.

The Withdrawal Agreement (WA) governs the rights of this group of Union citizens. The rights of Union citizens who move to Scotland after the end of the transition period are governed by the UK-EU Trade and Co-operation Agreement, in particular the Protocol on Social Security Co-ordination, this paper does not look at the rights under the UK-EU Trade and Co-operation Agreement.

Statement on late application EUSS government guidance

STATEMENT:

We are glad the Home Office has issued EUSS guidance with a 'reasonable grounds' to applying late policy, while there are still a few months to the deadline.

Those of us working in this field now better understand what is likely to happen in July. It is very important and welcome that the Home Office is emphasising that it is looking for reasons to grant Pre-Settled or Settled status and will give the benefit of the doubt to late applicants, at least for the time being.

The Home Office has rightly highlighted that children, the elderly and incapacitated and those in controlling domestic or employment relationships need special attention – Settled has voiced concerns about those in elderly care and delays at embassies and consulates for national document renewals. It is helpful that the Home Office recognises that there will be a wide variety of other compelling and compassionate reasons why someone may have missed the deadline which should be considered.

As we get close to the deadline, we may yet face a situation where it would be better to extend the deadline, but until we reach that point, this guidance is a step in the right direction

<https://settled.org.uk/en/2021/04/01/statement-on-late-application-euss-government-guidance/>

Settled Status Advice for Those from Outside the EU (Non-EU)

If you are from outside the EU, you may be able to apply if:

- you're a family member of an EU, EEA or Swiss citizen;
- you're the family member of a British citizen and you lived outside the UK in an EEA country together;
- you're the family member of a British citizen who also has EU, EEA or Swiss citizenship and who lived in the UK as an EU, EEA or Swiss citizen before getting British citizenship;
- you used to have an EU, EEA or Swiss family member living in the UK;
- you're the primary carer of a British, EU, EEA or Swiss citizen;
- you're the child of an EU, EEA or Swiss citizen who used to live and work in the UK, or the child's primary carer.

If you do fall within these categories, [you can find guidance on how to apply on the gov.uk pages.](#)

You may also be able to find information [in your own language on EU Londoners Hub.](#)

If you do not fall within these categories, it is unlikely you are eligible to apply to the EUSS and we suggest you contact [an OISC accredited immigration advisor](#) to check your status.

<https://settled.org.uk/en/help/non-eu-national-settled-status/>



<http://citizensrightsproject.org>



CitzRights



EURightsProject



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Company limited by guarantee in Scotland, company number SC561815
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EU Family Members

We have been receiving more and more inquiries from EU nationals who want to bring their family members to the UK and are confused about the rules.

We received some clarification from an immigration solicitor:

For joining family members, their applications must be made from outside the UK. No exceptions. They should also travel only after a status is granted. If the child came to the UK before 31/12/20, then it's an in-country application which must be submitted before 30/06/21.

What this means is that if someone tells you that their wife/children/mother, etc. arrived in the UK in 2021 and had not applied for a status before/ EUSS family permit - these family members MUST return to their home countries and apply either for pre-settled status using their biometric documents, OR for an EUSS family permit, and have either of it granted before coming to the UK again.

Otherwise, there are here as visitors and **CANNOT** change their immigration status while being in the UK.

Citizens Rights Project

Rights to benefits and tax credits for European nationals

April 2021

This factsheet gives an overview of the rights of European Economic Area (EEA) nationals and their family members to access benefits and tax credits following the UK's exit from the European Union (EU). The information here is intended to cover the rights during the 'Grace period' between 11pm on 31 December 2020 and 1 July 2021.

The information in this factsheet is relevant UK-wide.

Rights to benefits and tax credits for European nationals



Universal credit couple claims where one member has no recourse to public funds

A how-to guide on universal credit couple claims where one member has no recourse to public funds

This article was originally published on 10 September 2019. It was updated on 4 March 2021.

The universal credit (UC) regulations state that a single claim may be made where one member of a couple is a person subject to immigration control due to having no recourse to public funds (NRPF). This is also confirmed in DWP guidance.

A condition of no NRPF is typically given to those with limited leave as visitors, workers, and the majority of spouses, partners or other family members. EEA/ Swiss nationals and their family members (including non EEA nationals) cannot currently have a NRPF condition and do not require leave to enter or remain in the UK.

As pointed out in the above guidance, the standard allowance used to calculate entitlement to UC is that of a single person. However, the amount of UC awarded will still have regard to any income and capital received and possessed by the disregarded member of the couple with NRPF.

Although the income of the person that has NRPF will be taken into account, this will be subject to the 63% taper and a work allowance if appropriate.

<https://medium.com/adviser/universal-credit-couple-claims-where-one-member-has-no-recourse-to-public-funds-e5aaf9ceac43>

EU Settlement Scheme: EU, other EEA and Swiss citizens and their family members



Home Office

Published for Home Office staff on 6 April 2021

This guidance tells you how, from 6 April 2021, to consider applications made under the EU Settlement Scheme



Articles

Confusion and stigma: half a million people overlooked Universal Credit despite COVID-19

A [new study](#) highlights those who were eligible for Universal Credit at the start of COVID-19 but did not claim it – despite often having sharp falls in income and struggling financially.

The report has been funded by the [Health Foundation](#) and links to our Welfare at a (Social) Distance project; a major national research project funded by the Economic and Social Research Council.

www.distantwelfare.co.uk/post/confusion-and-stigma-half-a-million-people-overlooked-universal-credit-despite-covid-19



Third Force News:
the voice of Scotland's third sector

Data poverty affects families across Scotland

Being data poor means not being able to afford sufficient, private and secure mobile or broadband data to meet essential needs

More than half a million adults in Scotland - a number near equivalent to the population of Glasgow - describe themselves as being data poor, according to research from innovation agency Nesta. The number of 620,000 is equal to 14% of the adult population.

<https://tfn.scot/news/data-poverty-affects-families-across-scotland>



Low Incomes Tax Reform Group
A voice for the unrepresented

SEISS 4 grant – an overview

Published on 23 April 2021

It is welcome news to many self-employed people and partners in trading partnerships that the fourth Self-Employment Income Support Scheme grant (SEISS 4) claim process is now open until 1 June.

This time, some people who started a business during the 2019/20 tax year will be eligible to claim.

However, the way the SEISS 4 grant will be calculated is different to the first three grants.

[This article](#) explains what is different and why you might not be eligible for this grant even if you successfully claimed the first three SEISS grants.

- [How is the SEISS 4 grant calculation different?](#)
- [Why am I not eligible for SEISS 4 even though I received the first three SEISS grants?](#)
- [Why am I not eligible for the grant when I started my self-employment in the 2019/20 tax year?](#)
- [Is the claims process for SEISS 4 the same as for previous SEISS grants?](#)
- [Where can I find more information on the SEISS grants?](#)

www.litrq.org.uk/latest-news/news/210423-seiss-4-grant-overview

Welfare trends report – March 2021

March 23rd, 2021

This year's Welfare trends report (WTR) comes at the end of an extraordinary year that has resulted in the highest peacetime deficit in UK history. Virus-related support measures dominate that rise, but welfare spending (as defined in UK statistics, so not including the CJRS and SEISS) has also risen by £20.1 billion or 1.6 per cent of GDP in 2020-21. That rise has been dominated by higher spending on universal credit, where the number of individuals and households receiving the benefit almost doubled this year. And we expect the pandemic to leave spending higher in the medium term too.

[Read the Welfare trends report 2021](#)



£500 payment for working households on tax credits – have you received yours?

Published on 22 April 2021

During April 2021, HMRC are making one-off payments of £500 to certain working households on tax credits. This is part of the Government's response to the coronavirus pandemic. HMRC expect all payments to be made to those who qualify by **23 April 2021**. This article gives a brief overview of the payment and highlights links to our more detailed guidance.

News

Low Incomes Tax Reform Group



£500 payment for working households on tax credits – have you received yours?

(c) Shutterstock.com

What is the payment and why is it being made?

The Government announced in March that they would make a one-off £500 payment to certain working households in receipt of tax credits – broadly equivalent to £20 a week for 6 months. This is instead of the temporary £20 a week increase to the basic element of working tax credit that was in place to 5 April 2021.

Who qualifies for it?

Although the payment is designed to give extra support for the period 6 April 2021 to 30 September 2021, qualification for it is based on the tax credit award in place on 2 March 2021.

Broadly, to qualify, on 2 March 2021 you must have:

- had working tax credit element(s) included in your award calculation and
- been awarded some working tax credit or child tax credit.

I think I qualify. Do I have to claim the payment?

No claim is required for this one-off payment. HMRC will make the payments automatically.

What if I haven't received it?

If HMRC have told you to expect the payment or you think you qualify but you have not received the payment, you should wait until the end of April – once all payments have been made – before contacting HMRC.

Where can I find out more about the payment?

We have published some **[guidance for claimants](#)** which explains more about:

- who qualifies for the payment
- when it will be paid
- how it will be paid
- what to do if you have not received the payment
- how changes of circumstances and income affect the payment, and
- the circumstances in which HMRC can ask for the payment back.

We have also published some more detailed guidance for advisers on our **[specialist website](#)**.



Single Parent FAQs: Universal Credit

Our advice and information team, who work on our Lone Parent Helpline, webchat and Ask a Question feature, receive questions from single parents around Scotland every day. During the Covid-19 pandemic, we've seen a significant rise in requests for advice.

<https://opfs.org.uk/get-involved/news-and-events/blogs/single-parent-faqs-universal-credit/>



Articles

Social Bite

Social Bite will be continuing to provide anyone in need with a breakfast roll and takeaway lunch bag from Monday to Friday, but with different times as we have had to restructure the service to help us open the café to the public from Monday 26th April.



starting from 26th April

**FREE FOOD
TAKEAWAY**

ABERDEEN

BREAKFAST ROLL @ 8AM – 9.30AM

**AFTERNOON @ 2.15PM – 3.30PM
(OR TILL WE RUN OUT OF FOOD)**

**FREE FOOD TAKEAWAY SERVICE
Monday – Friday**

Face masks are required as part of Covid-19 regulations, unless exempt. If you need one, please ask a member of the team

Social Bite, 516 Union Street, Aberdeen, AB10 1TT
social-bite.co.uk
0131 353 0250

PIP guide and benefits factsheets updated 28 April 2021

The factsheets covering DWP benefits have been updated to cover both the annual benefit uprating and the changing rules that apply to the way that the benefits operate in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

Our [Personal Independence Payment guide](#) has been updated as of 21 April 2021. You can download this for free in word or pdf formats.

Factsheets covering wide-ranging and complex benefits, such as [universal credit](#), are broken down into bite-sized (or smartphone-sized) chunks, each covering a different aspect of the benefit.

So, for example, with universal credit, there is a page that explains [how the benefit is worked out](#). This contains links to pages that cover the various 'amounts' that make up the award of universal credit.

One of these pages covers the '[work capability amount](#)', this in turn links to a page that explains the supporting medical evidence that is needed to provide eligibility for this amount. And the page on the [supporting medical evidence](#) provides a list of all the new types of evidence, such as isolation notes and shielding notes, that can now be accepted in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

The changes to the factsheets were in place on 12 April, the day of the benefit uprating.

View [HERE](#)



Articles

The Resolution Foundation proposes a rethink of benefits

The Resolution Foundation has published a [short report](#) – they call it a ‘briefing note’ – to consider lessons from the crisis for the system of benefits. They make several key points:

- Earnings-replacement is a critically important role of benefits
- The current system of sick pay is inadequate, and forces sick people to go to work when they shouldn't
- The distinction between employees and self-employed people makes no sense
- The general level of benefits is too low
- The safety net needs to reflect housing costs and family size
- Big reforms will inevitably generate problems
- There is going to be an increased demand for support for long-term sickness

[short report](#)

Also: <http://blog.spicker.uk/the-resolution-foundation-proposes-a-rethink-of-benefits/>

Blunt, bureaucratic and broken: how Universal Credit is failing people in vulnerable situations

In December 2020, we published [this report](#) outlining where Universal Credit is failing to support many of our clients and people in vulnerable situations, and the reforms that must be introduced if the system is to adequately support and work for everyone.

People on legacy benefits take discrimination case to High Court

Those claiming benefits such as employment and support allowance - mostly disabled people - did not receive the £20 increase given to Universal Credit claimants in lockdown

The High Court is set to decide if the government acted unlawfully by not giving the two million people claiming so-called legacy benefits the same £20-per-week increase as those on [Universal Credit](#) at the start of lockdown.

Two people on employment and support allowance – one of six “legacy benefits”, which are mostly claimed by disabled people and carers – won the right to challenge the government in court.

The disabled claimants [applied to the High Court for a judicial review](#) over the Department for Work and Pension's failure to give them the same increase as other people on benefits, which they called “discriminatory and unjustified”.

Campaigners, who have long called for the £20-per-week increase to universal credit to both be made permanent and be extended to those on legacy benefits, welcomed the news.

www.bigissue.com/latest/people-on-legacy-benefits-take-discrimination-case-to-high-court/

Boy wins case against Home Office policy of no recourse to public funds

British boy and his Zimbabwean-born mother argued policy denied them access to welfare safety net

A five-year-old boy has won a case against the [Home Office](#) as high court judges declared the government's “no recourse to public funds” (NRPF) policy unlawful for the second time in a year because it drives some families into destitution and breaches the duty to safeguard child welfare. Thousands of children living in poverty are likely to benefit from the ruling.

The [British boy](#) and his Zimbabwean-born mother, who cannot be identified, argued that the NRPF policy denied families like theirs access to the welfare safety net. As a result of Thursday's ruling, children with low-earning migrant parents should be allowed access to essential state support such as housing benefit and universal credit that has previously been denied to them.

www.theguardian.com/politics/2021/apr/29/boy-wins-case-against-home-office-policy-of-no-recourse-to-public-funds



What if an EEA National doesn't apply to the EU Settlement Scheme in time?

Any eligible EEA National who has not applied to the EUSS by the deadline will be unlawfully present in the UK and therefore unable to continue to live, work and claim/continue to claim benefits. Benefits they are entitled to could stop and, if working, they could lose their job.



What is the EUSS?

The EU Settlement Scheme was introduced to protect the rights of those EEA Nationals (and certain family members) who took up residency in the UK before the end of the Brexit transition period.

Eligible EEA Nationals (and their qualifying non EEA family members) are eligible for EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) status if they were resident in the UK by 31st December 2020: they can apply to the EUSS up to 30th June 2021 - known as the 'grace period'.

- If they can show they have been resident in the UK by 30th December 2020 for five or more years they are given Settled Status.
- If they were resident in the UK by 30th December 2020 but cannot show that they have been in the UK five years they are granted Pre-settled Status.

More on the website [here](#).

If you're an EEA or Swiss national living in the UK and you want to stay after 30 June 2021, you should apply to the EU Settlement Scheme.

You need to have been in the UK by 11pm on 31 December 2020 to apply.

During the grace period:

- If they are given Settled or Pre-settled Status they retain their rights to live, work and study in the UK.
- If they have Settled Status they can claim benefits.
- If they have Pre-settled Status AND a 'Right to Reside' (eg as a worker, or retained worker status, family member of one of these) they can claim benefits - see [website](#).

From 1st July 2021 everything changes....

EEA Nationals (and their qualifying non EEA family members) will no longer be able to rely on their previous rights to live, work and study in the UK unless they have been granted either Pre-Settled or Settled Status under the

EU Settlement Scheme.

This means that to claim benefits/ continue to claim benefits they must have been granted full Settled Status, or have Pre-settled Status and a 'Right to Reside'.

Does this mean someone's benefits could just stop?

Yes. For instance where an EEA National without an EUSS status is currently in receipt of Universal Credit, then they will cease to be entitled to it from the beginning of the Monthly Assessment Period in which 1st July falls: it may end immediately or if later they will have been overpaid from that date.

If they do not have Settled or Pre-settled Status they will be 'unlawfully present' in the UK. They will lose their right to work and so could lose their jobs; they may even be required to leave the UK.

What about those who are getting UC, have applied to the EUSS, but are still awaiting the outcome on 1st July?

Where someone has applied to the EUSS before 30th June 2021 but has not yet had the outcome, then on 1st July 2021 their entitlement to Universal Credit ends. If they are granted Settled or Pre-Settled Status then they can make a new claim for UC but there will be a gap in their entitlement. So those entitled should apply to the EUSS as soon as possible to avoid this situation.

Those with Indefinite Leave to Remain do not have to apply for Settled Status but can if they want to.

Can people apply to the EUSS after 30th June 2021 if they miss the deadline?

The government has said they will allow late applications ie an extension, if there are 'reasonable grounds' and it is within a 'reasonable period'.

This will be considered on a case by case basis; the Home Office guidance for caseworkers includes examples of what could be 'reasonable grounds': see [this page](#) for more information.

Until such point as they can show reasonable grounds they will be unlawfully present

If they are not granted an extension, they will continue to be 'unlawfully present' in the UK and will need to seek immigration advice to see if there is a way they can be given permission ie leave, to remain in the UK.

Some may be able to leave the UK then apply for a Visa under the new points based immigration system, or some may be able to leave and return as a 'joining family member' if they have an EEA national family member with an EUSS status living in the UK. Or they may need to return to their home country, with support from the government's Voluntary Returns scheme. They will need immigration advice: search for registered Immigration Advisers by postcode [here](#).



If you are an EU, EEA or Swiss Citizen even if you are married to a UK Citizen you have to apply to the Settled Status Scheme

Do all EEA Nationals need to apply by the 30th June deadline?

Some EEA nationals will have been in the UK since before their country of nationality joined the EU, and many of these will have been granted "Indefinite Leave to Remain" under the immigration rules at the time. They will continue to be lawfully present and entitled to benefits. It is worth checking that they can prove this status eg on their passport, Home Office letter or biometric residence card.

Everyone else, including children, needs to apply to the EUSS (if under 18 the parent/ guardian will apply for them).

What about EEA Nationals with Permanent Residence Status?

- Some people with Permanent Residence (PR) Status may well believe that they do not have to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme – but they do.
- PR status will no longer confer any rights to live work, study or claim benefits in the UK from 1st July 2021.

What should we be telling our EEA National tenants / clients?

It is fine to tell EEA Nationals that the EU Settlement Scheme exists as a way to protect their rights, and that it would be a very good idea to look into it. You can say that all Europeans living in the UK must apply by 30th June 2021 to protect their rights to stay in the UK.

But telling an individual that they would (or would not) be eligible for Settled or Pre-Settled Status counts as Immigration Advice, so it is illegal for anyone without the minimum recognised Immigration Advice qualification (OISC level one) to do so.

You can give them details of how to apply, tell them what the qualifying criteria are, and tell them how they would go about challenging a decision they aren't happy with.

If you have Pre-Settled Status it is your responsibility to upgrade to Settled Status when you are eligible



Scottish Statutory Debt Solutions 2020-21 Q4

Accountant in Bankruptcy (AiB) has released official statistics reporting statutory debt solutions and company insolvencies in Scotland for the fourth quarter (January to March 2021) of the financial year 2020-21. This also includes provisional estimates for the financial year 2020-21.

Scottish Statutory Debt Solutions Statistics for 2020-21 Quarter 4

- There were 1,675 personal insolvencies (bankruptcies and protected trust deeds (PTDs)) in Scotland in 2020-21 Q4, 1,486 (47.0%) fewer than in the same quarter in the previous financial year (2019-20 Q4).
- A total of 561 bankruptcies were awarded during this quarter - a 50.6% decrease on the same quarter in 2019-20. PTDs decreased by 45.0% to 1,114 over the same period.
- There were 778 applications for moratoria granted in 2020-21 Q4. This is 500 more than the figure granted in the same quarter in 2019-20.
- There were 1,043 debt payment programmes (DPPs) under the Debt Arrangement Scheme (DAS) approved in 2020-21 Q4, compared with 820 approved in the same quarter of 2019-20, an increase of 27.2%.
- A total of 453 DPPs approved under the DAS were completed in 2020-21 Q4 – a 2.7% increase on the same quarter in 2019-20.
- There were 196 DPPs revoked in 2020-21 Q4 – a 16.2% decrease on the same quarter in 2019-20.
- In 2020-21 Q4, around £10.2 million was repaid from debtors under the DAS compared with the £9.7 million repaid in 2019-20 Q4, an increase of 5.3%.
- The number of Scottish registered companies becoming insolvent or entering receivership decreased in the fourth quarter of 2020-21, with 91 companies becoming insolvent compared with 246 in the same quarter of 2019-20.

Scottish Statutory Debt Solutions Statistics for the financial year 2020-21

All figures for the financial year 2020-21 remain provisional until final validation on 28 July 2021.

- There were 7,600 personal insolvencies in Scotland in 2020-21, 5,891 (43.7%) fewer than in the previous financial year.
- Bankruptcies and PTDs decreased by 50.8% and 39.8%, respectively, when compared with 2019-20.
- There were 1,980 applications for moratoria granted in 2020-21, 887 (81.2%) more than in 2019-20.
- There were 3,676 DPPs under the DAS approved in 2020-21, compared with 3,130 approved in 2019-20, an increase of 17.4%.
- Corporate insolvencies decreased from 948 in 2019-20 to 440 in 2020-21, a decrease of 53.6%.

www.aib.gov.uk/news/releases/21212121/0404/scottish-statutory-debt-solutions-2020-21-q4



The Money and Pension Service have questions to answer about Stepchange

Less than a year after the **Money and Pension Service** announced they were giving **Stepchange**, the Debt Advice Charity, a share of £7.5 million, to help increase their capacity to provide debt advice, they have announced they may slash up to 10% of their debt advisers across the UK, with demand for their services expected to rise.

In June 2020, the Money and Pension Service (MAPS) split £7.5 million of funding between Christian Against Poverty, Stepchange and the private debt management Firm, PayPlan (which is a trading name for Totemic Ltd).

www.advice.scotland.com/the-money-and-pension-service-have-questions-to-answer-about-stepchange/

