

A new benefit called Universal Credit (UC) is gradually being introduced to replace a range of benefits and tax credits for people of working age.

UNIVERSAL CREDIT

A quick guide for tenants

More Information

Further information is available at www.welhat.gov.uk/benefits or by speaking to Citizens Advice on **03444 111444**.

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Universal Credit

Universal Credit is being introduced more widely across Welwyn Hatfield from 6 December 2017. This leaflet helps to explain the key information you need to know.

What is Universal Credit?

Universal Credit is the new benefit that replaces these six benefits:

- Job Seekers Allowance
- Employment & Support Allowance
- Income Support
- Child Tax Credit
- Working Tax Credit
- Housing Benefit

What happens if I am on one of these benefits right now?

When you have a change in your circumstances after 6 December 2017, all your existing benefits will stop and you will need to apply for Universal Credit.

Applying for Universal Credit

If you are entitled to receive Universal Credit you are encouraged to apply online, but you can apply over the phone or in person if you need to.

You will need to go to the Job Centre and take some key documents with you, including proof from the council of your full weekly rent amount and the size of your home. You will need to use your National Insurance Number (NINO) to make your claim.

Your claim may be assessed incorrectly if you do not provide your full weekly rent charge.

How long will it take for Universal Credit to start making payments?

Make sure you apply as soon as your circumstances change and you need help; it can take up to six weeks for the first

payment to arrive when you make a new claim.

It is essential that you talk to your Neighbourhood Housing Officer about your Universal Credit claim so we can provide advice and assistance. Call the council on 01707 357 000 to speak to your Neighbourhood Housing Officer.

How frequently will I receive payments of Universal Credit?

Payments will be made each calendar month, unless you have special circumstances agreed by the Department for Work & Pensions, and then payments can be made more frequently.

You will receive the payments directly and you will be responsible for making sure your rent is paid to the council.

What happens to my Housing Benefit?

Your Housing Benefit will stop and this will no longer be paid to the council

directly. You will receive the housing element of your benefit in your monthly Universal Credit payments and it will be up to you to pay the council your rent each week.

Please be aware that if you fail to pay your rent, you will be in arrears and this can lead to eviction.

What happens in April when the council rent changes?

It will be up to you to tell the Department for Work and Pensions when your rent changes each April. You can use the annual rent change letter from the council to let the DWP know about your new rent charges.

What if I receive the state pension?

If you are no longer of working age and receive the state pension, you will not be eligible for Universal Credit. You can get a top up of Pension Credits and claim Housing Benefit in the normal way.