

Universal Support: Help to Claim (stakeholder information)

At Citizens Advice Universal Credit is our fastest growing advice area. Since the roll out began we've helped over 175,000 people with Universal Credit issues.

The majority of people who come to us for help with Universal Credit need help in making their initial claim. We've designed a new service which meets this need and it will be available in England and Wales from April 2019. Citizens Advice Scotland will deliver a parallel service in Scotland.

The service

Step 1: Multi-channel 'no wrong door' access



Our service will be available, face-to-face, over the phone and online through webchat and online content - to allow clients to access support in the way that's right for them. They can be sign-posted or referred by other support agencies or self-refer.



Step 2: Help to Claim Check

We'll check that Universal Credit is the right benefit for a client to claim.



Step 3: Individual needs assessment

However clients come into our service we'll start by assessing their individual needs to make sure they can get access to the right level of support in the way that's right for them.



Step 4: Support to start a Universal Credit claim

- Set up an email address or Universal Credit account
- Work through claim to-dos
- Access Universal Credit phone claim service
- Access DWP home visit support



Step 5: Completing a claim and getting ready for first payment

Depending on their level of need this might include help to:

- Verify their identity
- Provide additional evidence
- Prepare for the practicalities of a monthly payment
- Access adaptations such as direct payments to landlords and conditionality easements
- Apply for additional financial support



Step 6: Access to longer term support

Our help to claim service supports clients to make their initial Universal Credit claim. We can also support them with other issues in their lives by signposting or referring clients to other services - within Citizens Advice or through other organisations.

Working with Job Centre Plus Offices.

The UC Help to Claim service in Shropshire (face to face support) covers the whole County of Shropshire and its 5 Job Centres in Market Drayton, Oswestry, Whitchurch, Bridgnorth and Shrewsbury. We also cover Leominster for our South Shropshire clients. It's a large geographical area to cover with the allocated resource we have and in order for this service to be as flexible as possible we would like you to use the following referral path for your customers.

If a customer needs help to claim Universal Credit please refer them initially to the UC Help to Claim Telephone service. The phone and chat services are available from 8am to 6pm via a freephone number:

England - 0800 144 8 444 and **Wales - 08000 241 220**

Alternatively, if a client has made a claim and needs additional support you can refer the customer via our agreed national referral pathway (TBC).

We will then contact the client and make an appointment for them to receive the support they need at one of our local delivery points.

Information for your customer/client:

Please give your client/customer our Help to Claim Information leaflets "Before You Apply for Universal Credit " and the "Universal Credit Help to Claim Handbook"



There is also information on How to Claim for Universal Credit on our web pages on www.citizensadvice.org.uk/universalcredit