

BEDFORDSHIRE BENEFITS NETWORK

13 March 2024

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UNIVERSAL CREDIT MANAGED MIGRATION

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MANAGED MIGRATION

Managed migration - now

- Tax Credit only claimants
- From April, other types of claimants will start getting their migration notices
 - Income Support claimants
 - Tax Credits + Housing Benefit claimants

Managed migration - later

- June: Housing Benefit only claimants
- July: ESA + Child Tax Credit claimants
- September: JSA (IB) claimants
- All in-time claims to be transferred over by end of Dec 2024.
- Reminder: ESA (IR) only or +HB claimants excluded until 2028

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MANAGED MIGRATION

Discussion

- What issues have we seen so far?
- Please share your experiences

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BENEFIT UPDATES

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UNIVERSAL CREDIT OTHER NEWS

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UNIVERSAL CREDIT

Autumn statement

- Surplus earnings rule to remain at £2500pm for another year
- MIF to be increased for lead carers of children aged 3-12 up to a max £1250pm from April 2024

Other changes

- 53 week tenancies in 24/25 – UC Housing Costs element will still only pay 52 weeks
- Budgeting Loans – From Dec 24 will be repayable over up to 24 months instead of 12 months

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Extra disability premium transitional elements

- Following a court case, DWP has from 14 February 2024 started implementing new extra transitional elements to cover loss of:
 - Enhanced Disability Premium
 - Disability Premium
 - Disabled child premium/element
- For new claimants of UC via natural migration.
- Between £84pm to £172pm for single claimants
- Between £120pm to £246pm for couples
- Plus extra £177pm for each disabled child on claim

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New Transitional element rates

- Single claimants:
 - £84pm to replace Enhanced Disability Premium
 - £172pm to replace Disability Premium
- Couples:
 - £120pm to replace Enhanced Disability Premium
 - £246pm to replace Disability Premium
- £177pm per child for whom claimants were entitled to a disabled child premium/element

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Change to calculation of earnings for couples with one self-employed worker

- This is not a law change, but a change of process
- Relates to couples with a self-employed worker and a worker paid by PAYE
- Before: Earnings added together and couple MIF (minimum income floor) threshold used (so PAYE earner could prevent MIF applying to self-employed earner)
- Now: the MIF for the self-employed earner will be reduced by the amount over the couple MIF threshold they are together.
- That new MIF figure then added to actual PAYE earnings to be used as the income figure to calculate UC entitlement
- Most will be worse off

CONDITIONALITY

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CONDITIONALITY

New back to work initiatives and rule changes

- In the last 6 months the government has announced a number of initiatives and rule changes designed to move more people closer to the labour market. Some key ones:
 - Back to Work plan, includes:
 - Fit note reform, WorkWell service, Tougher sanctions
 - Expanded and improved Restart
 - Exploring health barriers to work
 - Lead carers of 3-12yos have to look for work 30 hrs per week, except self-employed, as of 25 October 2023
 - Expansion to Youth Offer to all 16-24yos.

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HEALTH AND DISABILITY

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WORK CAPABILITY ASSESSMENTS

Consultations on reforming WCA

- Following consultation we discussed last meeting, DWP plan to make following changes for new claimants undergoing WCA from 2025:
 - No LCWRA descriptor for mobilising
 - LCW will be called Work Preparation; LCWRA to be Health Group
 - Substantial risk rule will only give LCW not LCWRA
 - Reduction to number of descriptors under Getting About
 - LCWRA claimants will be allowed to try a job for up to 6 months and give it up if they can't manage it without losing their LCWRA status or being reassessed

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HEALTH AND DISABILITY

Other Health and Disability news

- DWP are combining PIP and WCA assessments to one contract
- Atos lost all contracts
- Provider for South East region will be Ingeus UK from Sep 2024
- DWP trialing a 'Severe Disability Group' fast track for PIP and WCA claims.
 - If claimant gives permission DWP will ask a secondary clinician to declare if claimant has an irreversible or progressive condition which has not responded to treatment and has no reasonable prospect of improving
 - If yes, claim lengths will be extended.

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BEREAVEMENT

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BEREAVEMENT

Backdating deadline

- Due to a court case, widowed parents were allowed to make backdated claims for Bereavement Support Payment or Widowed Parents Allowance, but only up to 10 February 2024.
- Retrospective payments disregarded as savings for 12 months

Widowed Parents Allowance and new partners

- Claim ends if claimant moves in with a new partner on or after 9 February 2023

Caselaw

- Court of appeal upheld a decision that it was unlawful that the surviving partner of the deceased who could never work due to severe disability could not claim due to lack of NI contributions

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**OTHER BENEFIT
NEWS**

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IMMIGRATION RULES

Israel/Palestine/Lebanon

- From 7 October 2023
- People fleeing the above who resided there before 7 October 2023 and left due to the violence
- Exempted from habitual residence and past presence tests for benefits:
 - IS, JSA, ESA, PC, UC, HB, CA, PIP, DLA and AA.

AUTUMN STATEMENT

- We had the following announcements from the November 2023 Autumn Statement:
 - Most benefit rates to be increased by 7.7% from April 2024
 - Does not include the benefit cap
 - Pensioner benefit rates to be increased by 8.5%
 - LHA rates re-set at 30th percentile of rents from April 2024, based on rents as of November 2023. But will be frozen again at least for April 2025
 - New powers for DWP to find out about savings held by claimants to detect fraud

MARCH BUDGET

- Household Support Fund extended to September 2024
- Changes to **Child Benefit**:
 - From April 2024:
 - Higher Earnings Threshold changing to £60,000 (from £50,000)
 - Taper rate halved, so awardable up to £80,000 (instead of £60,000)
 - From 2026:
 - Earnings will be assessed on a household basis instead of individually.

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OTHERS

- HMRC have started an exercise contacting State Pension claimants who lost out on entitlement because NI credits for their Child Benefit claims were not recorded correctly up to year 2000.
- **Statutory Paternity Pay** changes from 8 March 2024:
 - Can split 2 weeks entitlement into 2 separate weeks
 - Time to claim extended up to 52 weeks

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