

Welfare benefits: the reform timeline

Compiled by HQN Associate Sue Beasor

Updated January 2025

Words in blue text indicate (temporary) measures introduced to provide financial support for individuals affected by coronavirus pandemic.

Keep up with welfare reform using HQN's guide to the major changes. For further information, please go to www.hqnnetwork.co.uk

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Going forward

2026

- Managed migration of legacy benefit claimants to universal credit – due to be completed
- Housing costs for pension age claimants – ‘administration of Pension Credit and HB brought together for new pension age claimants’.

December 2025

- Pension Age Winter Heating Payment (replaces Winter Fuel Payment for people living in Scotland) – due to start.

Spring 2025

- Child poverty reduction strategy – due to be published
- Reforms to benefits for sick or disabled claimants – government proposals due to be published
- Pension credit:
 - Government to use HB data to identify people who may be entitled to pension credit
 - HB pension age applicants – proactively encouraged to apply for pension credit.

April 2025

- Uprating:
 - Inflation-linked benefits and tax credits – uprated by 1.7%
 - Basic and new state retirement pension – uprated by 4.1%
 - Still frozen:
 - Local housing allowance rates
 - Benefit cap
 - Tax thresholds

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April 2025 (cont'd)

- Universal credit debt deductions – maximum rate due to be reduced to 15% of standard allowance, currently 25%
- Carer's allowance – weekly earnings threshold increased to equivalent of 16 hours at national living wage
- Tax credit claimants – all migration notices due to have been sent
- Household Support Fund – further funding in 2025/26:
 - England – administered by local authorities
 - Devolved administrations – decide how to allocate this funding
- National living wage – increases to £12.21 an hour for individuals aged 21 and over
- National minimum wage – increases to £10 an hour for individuals aged under 21
- Help to Save scheme –
 - Extended until 5 April 2027
 - All working universal credit claimants eligible
- Pension age disability benefit (replaces attendance allowance for people living in Scotland) – national roll out due to start.

March 2025

- Scottish Adult Disability Living Allowance – replaces DLA for remaining adult DLA recipients in Scotland (ie, those not transferred to PIP).

By 2025

- Migration to PIP – due to be completed.

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December 2024

- Pensioner Winter Fuel Payment – restricted to pensioners receiving a DWP/HMRC means-tested benefit, applies to whole of UK
- Maximum repayment period for universal credit budgeting advances – increased from 12 to 24 months (for new budgeting advances only).

October 2024

- Infected blood compensation payments from an approved infected blood scheme – indefinite capital disregard in means-tested benefits of all payments made to beneficiaries out of the estate of a deceased infected person
- Pension age disability benefit (replaces attendance allowance for people living in Scotland) – pilot starts.

September 2024

- Migration notices start to be sent to claimants in receipt of:
 - Pension age tax credits
 - Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
 - Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (including ESA with HB)
- Free childcare – 15 hours per week for working parents of children aged nine months and over.

Summer 2024

- Carer's allowance recipients – text alert when weekly take home pay exceeds carer's allowance earnings threshold, pilot starts.

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July 2024

- Migration notices start to be sent to claimants in receipt of HB only (not supported or temporary accommodation claims).

June 2024

- Pension age claimants migrating from tax credit via managed migration:
 - Eligible for universal credit and transitional protection top up, or
 - Eligible for pension credit transitional protection top up
- Two-child benefit limit – abolished for HB pension age claimants
- Debt relief orders – maximum debt value threshold increased from £30,000 to £50,000.

May 2024

- Universal credit claimants whose monthly earnings from employment are less than the equivalent of 18 hours (single claimants) / 29 hours (couple) per week at the national living wage (the administrative earnings threshold) – subject to the work search and work availability requirements
- Access to work grants – claims may be made online.

Spring 2024

- Carer support payment (replaces carer's allowance for people in Scotland) – full national roll out starts.

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April 2024

- Uprating:
 - Inflation-linked benefits and tax credits – uprated by 6.7%
 - Basic and new state retirement pension – uprated by 8.5%
 - Local housing allowance rates – increased to 30th percentile of rents
- Migration notices sent to all claimants in receipt of tax credits only – due to be completed
- Migration notices start to be sent to claimants in receipt of:
 - Income support only
 - Income support with HB
 - Income support with tax credits and/or
 - HB with tax credits
- National living wage – increases to £11.44 an hour for individuals aged 21 and over
- National insurance contributions for employees on PAYE Class 1 – employee national insurance contributions reduced
- National insurance contributions for self-employed people:
 - Class 2 national insurance contributions – abolished
 - Class 4 contributions – reduced
- Household support fund intended to help 'those most in need' – further £500m funding for next six months:
 - England – administered by local authorities
 - Devolved administrations – decide how to allocate this funding
- Debt relief orders – £90 administration fee removed
- Child Disability Payment (replaces DLA for children in Scotland) – fully rolled out
- High income child benefit charge:
 - Threshold at which eligibility for child benefit is withdrawn – raised from £50,000 to £60,000 per year
 - Taper rate at which entitlement is removed – reduced to individual earnings of £80,000 per year.

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March 2024

- Pre pre-payment meter standing charge – removed permanently
- Statutory paternity pay, changes include:
 - Extending the period within which it can be claimed from eight weeks to 52 weeks after the birth of the child
 - Allowing fathers or partners to split their leave into two blocks of one week.

February 2024

- Third 2023/24 means-tested additional payment/cost of living payment (£299) – paid to people who received a payment of a DWP and/or HMRC means-tested benefit between 13 November and 12 December 2023
- Transitional severe disability premium element – increased for legacy benefit claimants who:
 - Move to universal credit via natural migration, and
 - Were entitled to a disability premium or an enhanced disability premium prior to migrating.

January 2024

- National insurance contributions employees on PAYE Class 1 – employee national insurance contributions reduced
- Landlord portal – DWP permits landlords to use automation tools to verify universal credit housing costs.

December 2023

- Pensioner additional payment/cost of living payment – paid with annual winter fuel payment.

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November 2023

- Second 2023/24 means-tested additional payment/cost of living payment (£300) – paid to people who received a payment of a DWP and/or HMRC means-tested benefit between 18 August and 17 September
- Carer support payment (replaces carer's allowance for people in Scotland) – pilot starts
- Tell Us Once scheme (when someone dies) – universal credit and maternity allowance added to list of benefits included in this service.

October 2023

- Maximum number of hours that universal credit claimants with responsibility for children aged three to 12 are expected to work or look for work – increased to 30 per week
- People arriving from Israel, the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Lebanon, in connection with the violence in the region – exempt from the residency tests for DWP means-tested benefits, disability and carer benefits and child benefit.

July 2023

- Universal credit childcare costs monthly maximum amounts – increased and then uprated annually
- Disability additional payment/cost of living payment (£150) – paid to people receiving a specified disability benefit on 1 April 2023.

June 2023

- Universal credit claimants moving into work or increasing their hours – able to claim childcare costs in advance from the DWP
- Certain compensation payments (Grenfell Tower tragedy, Post Office Horizon scandal and vaccine damage payment scheme) – disregarded as income and capital for means-tested benefits.

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May 2023

- People arriving from Sudan in connection with the violence in the region – exempt from the residency tests for universal credit, pension credit, HB, JSA and ESA.

April 2023

- Uprating:
 - Working age and pension age benefits – uprated by 10.1%
 - State pension triple lock – restored
 - Benefit cap – uprated by 10.1%
 - Transitional severe disability premium element in universal credit – increased and then uprated annually
 - LHA rates – frozen again.
- First 2023/24 means-tested additional payment/cost of living payment (£301) – paid to people who received a payment of a DWP and/or HMRC means-tested benefit between 26 January and 25 February
- Support for mortgage interest payments:
 - Waiting period reduced to three months (from nine months)
 - Zero earnings rule abolished.
- Access to PIP, DLA and attendance allowance fast tracking of claims where claimant is terminally ill – definition of terminal illness changed (death can reasonably be expected within 12 months, previously six months)
- Council Tax support – £100 million in government funding for local authorities to supplement local schemes (England only)
- Council Tax – local authorities can increase by up to 5% without a local referendum
- National allowance for foster and kinship carers for people resident in Scotland – introduced
- Requests from energy suppliers to set up new or to increase existing third-party deductions from income support, pension credit, ESA(IR), JSA(IB) or universal credit for ongoing fuel consumption – accepted by the DWP where claimant gives their consent

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April 2023 (cont'd)

- Household Support Fund intended to help 'those most in need' – further £1 billion funding for next 12 months:
 - England – administered by local authorities
 - Devolved administrations – decide how to allocate this funding.
- National Living Wage – increases to £10.42 an hour for individuals aged 23 and over
- Personal income tax:
 - Basic rate of tax and National Insurance contributions – thresholds frozen until April 2028
 - Higher rate of tax – threshold reduced to £125,140 (from £150,000) and frozen until April 2028.

March 2023

- Homes for Ukraine monthly payment to sponsors/hosts – increased to £500 after 12 months.

February 2023

- Alternative fuel payment scheme, England, Wales and Scotland – single non-repayable payment of £200 to households that use alternative fuels (eg, biomass or heating oil)
- Bereavement support payment – eligibility criteria extended to cohabiting parents with dependent children. Affected claimants whose partner died before 9 February 2023 have 12 months to make a retrospective claim back to 30 August 2018. Any lump sum payment of arrears disregarded as capital for 12 months for means-tested benefits
- Winter Heating Assistance (replaces Cold Weather Payments for people on a low income in Scotland) – first payments due to be made
- Online claims for child benefit – introduced for new claims or for additional children.

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January 2023

- Universal credit claimants whose monthly earnings from employment are less than the equivalent of 15 hours per week at the national living wage (the Administrative Earnings Threshold) – subject to the work search and work availability requirements
- Energy bill support scheme alternative funding scheme, England, Wales and Scotland – households with no direct relationship to a domestic energy supplier able to apply online for single non-repayable payment of £400. Payments made by local authorities
- Energy bills support scheme, Northern Ireland – single non-repayable payment of £600 (£400 of support under the energy bill support scheme and £200 under the alternative fuel payment scheme irrespective of how they heat their home)
- Self-Isolation Support Grant in Scotland – ends.

November 2022

- Payment of DWP benefits into post office card accounts – due to end
- Second means tested additional payment/cost of living payment (£324) – paid to people who received a payment of a DWP and/or HMRC means tested benefit between 26 August and 25 September
- Pensioner additional payment/cost of living payment – starts to be paid with annual winter fuel payment
- Scottish Child Payment:
 - Increases to £25 per week per child
 - Rolled out for children aged six to 15.

October 2022

- LHA shared accommodation rate (universal credit and HB) – victims of domestic abuse and victims of modern slavery added to the list of those who are exempt
- Disability additional payment/cost of living payment (£150) – paid to people receiving a specified disability benefit in respect of 25 May 2022

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October 2022 (cont'd)

- Energy bills support scheme, England, Wales and Scotland – £400 non-repayable discount applied automatically by supplier spread over next six months
- Household Support Fund intended to help 'those most in need' – further £500 million funding for next six months:
 - England – administered by local authorities
 - Devolved administrations – decide how to allocate this funding.
- The Warm Home Discount scheme – revised, £150 off electricity bill for winter 2022/23 for people in:
 - England and Wales – receiving the guarantee credit element of pension credit or on a low income and have high energy costs
 - Scotland – receiving the guarantee credit element of pension credit or on a low income and meet energy supplier's criteria for the scheme.

September 2022

- First means-tested additional payment/cost of living payment (£326) – paid to people who received a payment of tax credit only between 26 April 2022 to 25 May 2022
- Universal claimants whose monthly earnings from employment are less than the equivalent of 12 hours per week at the national living wage (the Administrative Earnings Threshold) – subject to the work search and work availability requirements.

August 2022

- Adult Disability Payment in Scotland – full roll out starts
- Infected blood interim compensation scheme – interim compensation payments of £100,000 made to infected persons and bereaved partners, payments are disregarded as income and capital for means tested benefits
- Social tariffs (discounted broadband and mobile deals for people on specified benefits) – introduced.

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July 2022

- First means-tested additional payment/cost of living payment (£326) – paid to people who received a payment of a DWP means tested benefit between 26 April and 25 May 2022.

June 2022

- Self-Isolation Support Payment Scheme – ends in Wales.

May 2022

- Managed migration to universal credit of remaining legacy benefit claimants – roll out starts with small pilots in a few areas
- One off £500 payment to unpaid carers in Wales who were in receipt of carer's allowance on 31 March 2022 – not taxable and does not affected means tested benefits
- Scottish self-isolation support grant – reduced from £500 to £225.

April 2022

- Uprating:
 - Working age and pension age benefits – uprated by 3.1%
 - State pension triple lock – suspended for one year
 - LHA rates frozen again.
- Annual rent changes for social housing tenants – DWP requires landlords to verify all rents
- DHP funding reduced to £100 million for 2022/23 – an initial £98 million and a further £2 million to be allocated later in the year

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- Council tax rebate scheme intended to help with energy costs – £150 one off non-repayable payment made to council tax payers who live in:
 - England – property bands A-D and, where band reduced due to disabled band reduction, band E
 - Scotland and Wales – as England, plus recipients of council tax support who live in any council tax banded property.
- Requests from energy suppliers to set up new or to increase existing third-party deductions from income support, pension credit, ESA(IR), JSA(IR) or universal credit for ongoing fuel consumption – not accepted by DWP for 12 months
- Access to universal credit and employment and support allowance – fast tracked for people whom a medical professional has confirmed to be terminally ill and whose death can reasonably be expected within 12 months (previously six months)
- Household Support Fund intended to help 'those most in need' – further £500 million funding for next six months:
 - England – administered by local authorities
 - Devolved administrations – decide how to allocate this funding.
- The Scottish Child Payment – doubles to £20 per week per child
- Council tax reduction scheme in Scotland revised for working age applicants:
 - With universal credit award – reflects level of council tax reduction they would have received if they were on a legacy benefit
 - No universal credit award – level of council tax reduction maintained.
- Payment of HMRC benefits into post office card accounts – due to end
- National living wage – increases to £9.50 an hour for individuals aged 23 and over
- Basic rate of tax and higher rate thresholds for personal income tax – frozen until April 2026
- Eligibility for free school meals for children from families with no recourse to public funds – introduced, subject to specified income and capital thresholds.

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March 2022

- People fleeing the war in Ukraine who are supported under the Homes for Ukraine scheme – able to live and work in the UK for up to three years and access benefits, healthcare, employment and other support
- Homes for Ukraine £350 monthly payment to sponsors/hosts introduced – disregarded as income and capital for benefit and no:
 - Change to the number of bedrooms for the bedroom tax or LHA
 - Non-dependant deductions for the Ukrainian nationals
 - Effect on the host's entitlement to the severe disability premium
 - Effect on any council tax discounts.
- Statutory sick pay – provisions introduced due to Covid (self-isolation and shielding and reduction of waiting days from four days to one day) revoked
- Adult Disability Payment in Scotland (replaces PIP) – pilot starts.

February 2022

- Requirement for universal credit claimants to look for and accept work outside their previous or preferred occupation as a condition of receiving benefit – does not apply for first four weeks of claim, previously did not apply for first three months
- Test and trace payments and Covid 19 self-isolation support payments – end in England.

January 2022

- Payments made:
 - From a scheme established or approved by the secretary of state to provide compensation in respect of historic institutional child abuse in the UK, or
 - Under 'the Windrush Act'disregarded as income and capital in means-tested benefits assessments.
- Support for mortgage interest in universal credit, pension credit and legacy benefits – interest rate charged on loans increases to 0.8% from 0.6%.

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December 2021

- Disabled students' eligibility for universal credit restricted – eligible where limited capability for work determination obtained before (not after) they start the course.

November 2021

- Universal credit earnings taper for those in work reduced from 63% to 55%
- Universal credit work allowances (where claimant and/or partner has responsibility for a child and/or has limited capability for work) – increased
- Sanctions can be applied to a New Style Jobseeker's Allowance or Employment and Support Allowance claim – brings them in line with universal credit and legacy benefits
- Child Disability Payment in Scotland – open for new applications.

October 2021

- £20 per week increase to universal credit standard allowance – ends
- Claimants living in a social rented sector tenancy who have a sanctuary scheme applied to a room in their property – exempt from the bedroom tax in HB and universal credit
- Deductions for court fines from universal credit – set at a flat rate of 5% of the appropriate standard allowance
- Household Support Fund intended to help 'those most in need' – launched
 - England – administered by local authorities
 - Devolved administrations – decide how to allocate this funding.

September 2021

- Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme – ends
- People arriving from Afghanistan under one of the relocation and resettlement schemes – exempt from the residency tests for DWP means-tested benefits, disability and carer benefits and child benefit.

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August 2021

- Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme – employers have to pay employer National Insurance and pension contributions and 20% of wages, up to a cap of £2,500
- Prisoners temporarily released from custody – eligibility for means-tested benefits ends
- Self-isolation payment in Wales – increases to £750, from £500.

July 2021

- Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme – employers have to pay employer National Insurance and pension contributions and 10% of wages, up to a cap of £2,500
- Minimum income floor for self-employed universal credit claimants – suspension ends
- Self-employment Income Support Scheme – applications for fifth grant open (covers May to September), amount determined by how much turnover has been reduced in the year April 2020 to April 2021
- Support for mortgage interest in universal credit, pension credit and legacy benefits – interest rate charged on loans increases to 0.6% from 0.3%
- Child Disability Payment in Scotland (replaces DLA for children) – pilot starts.

June 2021

- LHA shared accommodation rate (universal credit and HB) – care leavers up to age of 25 and under 25-year olds who have spent at least three months in a homeless hostel added to list of those who are exempt
- MoneyHelper (provided by Money and Pensions Service) – launched.

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May 2021

- Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme – extended to include people who were employed on 2 March 2021 and on PAYE payroll between 20 March 2020 and 2 March 2021
- Breathing space and mental health crisis moratoriums on enforcement action and the charging of interest and fees – start.

April 2021

- Uprating:
 - State pension – increases by 2.5%
 - Pension credit (guarantee credit) – increases by 1.9%
 - All other benefits – increase by 0.5%
 - LHA rates 'frozen in cash terms'.
- HB personal allowance rates for people reaching state pension age on or after 1 April 2021 – reduced, existing claimants who have already reached pension age unaffected
- £20 per week increase to basic element in working tax credit – ends and replaced by one-off payment of £500
- Universal credit advance payments – repayment period extended from 12 to 24 months (for new universal credit claims only, includes people migrating from legacy benefits)
- Maximum debt repayment rate – reduced from 30% to 25% of claimant's standard allowance
- Funeral support payment (Wales) – £500 payment for families who register death of a child under the age of 18
- National living wage:
 - Increases to £8.91 an hour
 - Applies to workers aged 23 and over.

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February 2021

- Self-employment Income Support Scheme – applications for fourth grant open – support for self-employed people whose trade is adversely affected by coronavirus – able to claim a taxable grant worth 80% of their trading profits (up to a maximum of £2,500 per month) where specified conditions are met. Scheme open to self-employed people who have traded in tax years:
 - 2019-20, and submitted their self-assessment tax return by 2 March 2021, and
 - 2020-2021.
- Scottish Child Payment for under sixes starts – payable to families receiving Universal Credit, legacy benefits and/or pension credit.

January 2021

- Protection from natural migration to Universal Credit for legacy benefits claimants entitled to severe disability premium ends – any of these claimants who have a relevant change in circumstances move to Universal Credit and new claimants claim Universal Credit rather than legacy benefits
- Export of Child Benefit payments made in respect of children living overseas stops – applies to EEA migrants arriving in the UK under the new immigration system
- EEA migrants' access to benefits aligned with non-EEA nationals – applies to EEA citizens who are not protected by the EU withdrawal agreement.

November 2020

- Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme – extended, HMRC reimburses employers with 80% of employees' wages, up to £2,500 per month, includes people who were employed and on PAYE payroll on 30 October 2020
- Self-employment Income Support Scheme – applications for third grant open – support for self-employed people whose trade is adversely affected by coronavirus – able to claim a taxable grant worth 80% of their trading profits (up to a maximum of £2,500 per month) where specified conditions are met

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- Winter Grant Scheme in England announced – additional funding (£170m) intended to support children, families and the most vulnerable during the winter
- Winter Plan for Social Protection in Scotland – funding to help people pay for food, heating, warm clothing and shelter during the winter, intended to help those on low incomes, children and people at risk of homelessness or social isolation
- Tenant Hardship Loan Fund in Scotland starts – interest free loans to support those struggling to meet their rent costs due to financial difficulty associated with the pandemic
- Universal Credit claimants moving to pension credit and/or HB when they reach pension age – receive full UC payment in final assessment period in which they reach state pension credit age. For a mixed-age couple this applies when the younger partner reaches state pension credit qualifying age
- Child Winter Heating Assistance starts – payable to households in Scotland with a child in receipt of the:
 - Highest rate of the care component of Child Disability Payment
 - Highest rate of the care component of DLA (child)
 - Enhanced daily living rate of PIP.

October 2020

- Age for claiming state pension and/or Pension Credit – increases to 66 for both men and women
- Working Universal Credit claimants who are paid monthly and receive more than one payment in a single assessment period – DWP may reallocate payments to a different assessment period to maintain a regular payment pattern
- Test and trace payments start in England (similar schemes in Scotland and Wales) – £500 payment for people who have been told to self-isolate and who receive specified benefits

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October 2020 (cont'd)

- Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme – employers have to pay employer National Insurance and pension contributions and 20% of wages, up to a cap of £2,500
- Legacy benefit claimants who moved to Universal Credit via natural migration and whose legacy benefit included a severe disability premium – monthly compensation payments converted into 'transitional elements'.

September 2020

- Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme – employers have to pay 10% of wages to make up the 80% total, up to a cap of £2,500
- Child Trust Funds start to mature – the oldest children who had a child trust fund will be able to access their money
- Start-up/Grace period for self-employed Universal Credit claimants – minimum income floor does not apply for first 12 months when DWP decides claimant is in gainful self-employment, unless one applied during previous five years.

August 2020

- Free TV licence for people aged 75 or over – only available for those receiving Pension Credit
- Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme – employers asked to pay employer National Insurance and pension contributions
- Self-employment Income Support Scheme – applications for second grant open – support for self-employed people whose trade is adversely affected by coronavirus – able to claim a taxable grant worth 80% of their trading profits (up to a maximum of £2,500 per month) where specified conditions are met
- Job Start Payment in Scotland (help for young people with the costs of starting a new job) – starts.

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July 2020

- Claimants moving to Universal Credit from legacy benefits – receive (non-repayable) two-week JSA(IB), ESA(IR), Income Support extension/run-on
- Legal requirement for landlords to provide proof of Universal Credit claimants' housing costs to the DWP within one month (or such longer period as the DWP considers reasonable) of the request
- Rent payments to landlords for Universal Credit claimants – aligned with Universal Credit payment dates and paid 12 times per year
- **Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme:**
 - Closed to employees who are not already included at this time
 - Employers able to bring back their furloughed employees for any amount of time and for any shift pattern.
- DWP resumes recovery of legacy benefit overpayments, social fund loans and tax credit debits from Universal Credit awards
- Support and compensation payments in respect of the Grenfell fire and payments made by the National Emergencies Trust – fully disregarded in HB and DWP means tested benefits.

May 2020

- Self-employment Income Support Scheme – applications for first grant open – support for self-employed people whose trade is adversely affected by coronavirus – able to claim a taxable grant worth 80% of their trading profits (up to a maximum of £2,500 per month) where specified conditions are met.

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April 2020

- Universal Credit standard allowance and the basic element in working tax credit increases by £20 per week in addition to the planned annual uprating. No similar arrangements for legacy benefits
- Benefits freeze ends, working age benefits to increase by 1.7%
- LHA freeze ends – rates increased to the 30th percentile of market rents
- Local authorities in England given additional government funding to 'provide support to economically vulnerable households,' either through existing council tax support schemes or through 'complementary reliefs', similar arrangements in Scotland and Wales
- DWP pauses recovery of legacy benefit overpayments, social fund loans and tax credit debits from Universal Credit awards
- Minimum income floor for self-employed Universal Credit claimants – suspended
- Statutory parental bereavement leave and pay – legal entitlement to two weeks' paid leave for qualifying employees who suffer the death of a child under 18 or a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy
- Funeral Expenses Payment – increases from £700 to £1000 in England and Wales
- National Living Wage – increases from £8.21 to £8.72 an hour.

March 2020

- Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme starts for eligible PAYE employees, HMRC reimburses employers with 80% of employees' wages, up to £2,500 per month
- Statutory sick pay – people who are eligible and unable to work due to coronavirus eligible from day one (and not day four) of their sickness absence
- Employment and support allowance claims due to coronavirus:
 - Removal of requirement to serve waiting days before entitlement starts, and
 - Claimants treated as having limited capability for work.

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March 2020 (cont'd)

- Prisoners temporarily released from custody – eligible for means tested benefits subject to them meeting the usual conditions of entitlement
- Managed migration of existing legacy benefit claimants to Universal Credit – pilot suspended temporarily.
- Maximum/higher level sanction – length reduced from three years to 26 weeks.

October 2019

- Universal Credit deductions – maximum rate reduces from 40% to 30% of claimant's standard allowance, exceptions for:
 - Arrears of housing and fuel costs, and
 - Ongoing monthly costs for gas, electricity and water where deduction for arrears is also being taken.
- Reporting childcare costs to the DWP – timescale for reporting amounts extended to the end of the Universal Credit assessment period following the one in which the costs were incurred
- Young Carer Grant (Scotland) – starts for eligible carers, aged 16 to 18, who care for a disabled person for 16 hours or more each week.

September 2019

- Blue badge for parking – eligibility in England extended to people with hidden disabilities (eg dementia, autism or anxiety disorders)
- Funeral Support Payment (Scotland) – starts for eligible claimants.

August 2019

- Best Start Foods – starts in Scotland, all pregnant women aged under 18 and pregnant women receiving certain benefits can apply.

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July 2019

- Managed migration of existing legacy benefit claims to Universal Credit – pilot begins in Harrogate
- Legacy benefit claimants who moved to Universal Credit via natural migration and whose legacy benefit included a severe disability premium – receive a lump sum and ongoing monthly compensation payments
- Children's Funeral Fund for England introduced – pays some funeral costs for a child under 18 or a baby stillborn after the 24th week of pregnancy.

June 2019

- Best Start Grant (Scotland) – School Age Payment starts for eligible claimants.

April 2019

- Universal Credit work allowances (where claimant and/or partner has responsibility for a child and/or has limited capability for work) – increased
- Universal Support (budgeting advice and digital support for Universal Credit claimants) – funding and responsibility for provision moves from local authorities to Citizens Advice and renamed Help to Claim
- Best Start Grant (Scotland) – Early Learning Payment starts for eligible claimants
- National Living Wage – increases from £7.83 to £8.21 an hour.

February 2019

- Families with three or more children – make new Universal Credit claim instead of claiming legacy benefits, two child benefit limit applies to children born on or after 6 April 2017
- Pension age claimants responsible for a child – child element paid with Pension Credit rather than child tax credit, unless already claiming support through child tax credit

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February 2019 (cont'd)

- New claims for working tax credit and child tax credit cannot be made (with some exceptions) – claim Universal Credit (working age) or Pension Credit (pension age) instead.

January 2019

- Legacy benefit claimants receiving severe disability premium – remain on legacy benefits and move to Universal Credit via managed migration only.

December 2018

- Universal Credit (full/digital service for new claims) – rolled out to all jobcentres
- Housing costs for 18-21 year olds – entitlement reinstated
- Best start grant (Scotland) – pregnancy and baby payment starts for eligible claimants (replaces Sure Start Maternity Grant).

November 2018

- Two-child benefit limit – exception applies to non-parental carers and adopters regardless of order of children in family or in which they joined household
- Age for claiming state pension and pension credit – 65 for both men and women.

September 2018

- Carer's Allowance Supplement (payable to Carer's Allowance recipients who are resident in Scotland) – first payment made, backdated to April 2018.

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August 2018

- Supported accommodation – government announce funding to be met through HB.

April 2018

- Two week HB (non-repayable) extension/run-on for new Universal Credit claimants who already receive HB as they 'transition to Universal Credit'
- Temporary accommodation – housing costs met through HB not Universal Credit
- Universal Credit work allowances (where claimant and/or partner has responsibility for a child and/or has limited capability for work) increased
- Support for mortgage interest – paid as recoverable interest-bearing loan
- Surplus earnings rules introduced in Universal Credit – past earnings taken into account, where the claimant returns to Universal Credit within six months of a previous award ending
- Free school meals for children of Universal Credit claimants – passporting to free school meals for all claimants replaced by £7,400 annual earnings threshold in England, some transitional protection for pupils who already receive free school meals
- National Living Wage – increases from £7.50 to £7.83 an hour.

February 2018

- Universal Credit – seven day 'waiting period' abolished.

January 2018

- Universal Credit live service areas – new Universal Credit claimants claim legacy benefits (including HB) instead. Does not apply to new claimants in full/digital service areas

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January 2018 (cont'd)

- Universal Credit advances:
 - Maximum amount of advance increased from 50% to 100% of projected entitlement in claimant's first assessment period
 - People who make a claim in December 2017 can get a 50% advance and in January 2018 ask for a top up to 100%
 - Repayment period extended from six to 12 months.
- Universal Credit in Scotland – claimants in full/digital service areas who applied for Universal Credit before 4 October 2017, able to choose whether to be paid monthly or twice monthly, and/or their housing costs are paid to themselves or to their landlord.

November 2017

- Universal Credit helplines become freephone numbers.

October 2017

- Universal Credit in Scotland – new claimants in full/digital service areas able to choose whether to be paid monthly or twice monthly, and/or their housing costs are paid to themselves or to their landlord.

September 2017

- Claimants in the ESA support group and Universal Credit recipients with limited capability for work and work-related activity – no longer have to attend a work capability assessment if they:
 - Have a severe, lifelong disability, illness or health condition
 - Are unlikely to ever be able to move into work.

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June 2017

- All payments made by the London Emergencies Trust and We Love Manchester Emergency Fund fully disregarded (including those made to the injured / deceased person or their spouse, civil partner, partner or child).

April 2017

- Most welfare support – limited to two children
- Universal Credit – higher amount for the first or only child abolished unless the claimant is responsible for a child or young person who was born before 6 April 2017
- Universal Credit cannot be claimed by a person who is responsible for three or more children, must claim legacy benefits (including HB) instead
- Universal Credit and HB – additional bedroom for disabled adults who cannot share a bedroom and for disabled children or non-dependants who need an overnight carer
- New claims for Universal Credit in full/digital service areas from out of work 18-21 year olds:
 - Automatic entitlement to housing costs element removed, some exemptions (including vulnerable young people)
 - Subject to a 'youth obligation', after six months expected to apply for an apprenticeship or traineeship, gain work-based skills or go on a mandatory work placement.
- Universal Credit taper for those in work reduced from 65% to 63%
- ESA cut – new claimants in the 'work-related activity' group paid the same amount as JSA claimants, similar changes in HB and Universal Credit
- Temporary accommodation management fee included in HB for self-contained licensed and short-term lease accommodation ends
- Council tax support schemes – local and national changes
- National Living Wage to rise from £7.20 an hour to £7.50
- Universal Credit conditionality – extended to responsible carers of children aged one and over
- Bereavement support payment replaces existing bereavement benefits.

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November 2016

- Benefit cap HB and Universal Credit:
 - Reduced to £23,000/£15,410 for claimants resident in Greater London and £20,000/£13,400 for all other working-age claimants, implementation completed in January 2017
 - Recipients of the carers' element of Universal Credit, carer's allowance and guardian's allowance exempt.

July 2016

- Temporary absence from home – changes for HB and Pension Credit claimants who are outside Great Britain, maximum period of absence reduced from 52 to four weeks in most situations.

May 2016

- Family premium in HB – removed, does not apply to existing claimants whose HB includes family premium on 30 April 2016.

April 2016

- LHA rates, tax credits and most benefits paid to working-age claimants – frozen for four years, but non-dependant deductions increase
- Backdating for working-age HB claimants – reduced to a maximum of one month
- Universal Credit work allowances – some cut/abolished, claimants will only be eligible for a work allowance if they (and/or their partner) have responsibility for a child, and/or 'limited capability for work'
- Working Universal Credit claimants – able to receive a maximum of 85% of their childcare costs, previously 70%
- Universal Credit full (digital) service – starts to roll out nationally for new claims
- Council tax support schemes – local and national changes

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April 2016 (cont'd)

- DHP funding – £150m for 2016/17
- Tax credits – re-assessed if the claimant's income increases/decreases by £2,500 or more in a year
- Retirement pension – New State Pension introduced for men and women who reach state retirement pension age on or after 6 April 2016
- Savings credit – most people who reach state pension age on or after 6 April 2016 will not be eligible
- Support for mortgage interest – waiting period increased to 39 weeks for new claims
- National living wage – £7.20 per hour (minimum) for all staff aged 25 and over.

March 2016

- Universal Credit – due to be rolled out to all Jobcentres
- Disability benefits – refugees and their family members exempted from the Past Presence Test – no longer have to be resident in the UK for 104 out of the 156 weeks preceding a claim before they can receive disability benefits and associated disability premiums.

November 2015

- Severe disability premium in HB – claimant does not qualify if their carer is awarded carer element in Universal Credit
- NHS fixed-charge items – Universal Credit claimants (and their dependant children) qualify for help with costs in limited circumstances.

August 2015

- Universal Credit – seven day 'waiting period' introduced.

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February 2015

- Universal Credit – new regulations extend powers for providing and sharing information about claimants.

2015

- Universal Credit – national roll out for mainly single claimants starts
- HB fraud and error – performance funding for local authorities to reduce HB fraud and error.

By end of 2014

- Universal Credit – Universal Credit piloted for claims from couples and families. Digital service for Universal Credit tested in a limited postcode area in Sutton, South London.

October 2014

- The Warm Home Discount scheme – increased to £140 and eligibility criteria extended.

April 2014

- Most working-age benefits and tax credits – increases capped at 1% a year for two years. Excludes disability and carers' benefits
- EEA nationals – restrictions on HB and JSA(IB) for EEA nationals
- Specified accommodation – housing costs to be covered by HB not UC.

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October 2013

- Universal Credit – six more pilots (for limited group of claimants) rolled out starting in October 2013
- DWP benefits and child maintenance – new DWP appeals process introduced. Mandatory reconsideration by DWP before appeal can be made to HM Courts and Tribunals Service
- Disabled people – some existing DLA claimants have to claim PIP (roll out starts October 2013).

April 2013

- Benefit cap – cap on total amount a household can receive, fixed at national average earnings (approx £26k pa) except for those receiving disability benefits, working tax credit or war widows pension, completed at the end of September
- Social housing size criteria – working-age households lose benefit for 'spare bedrooms': 14% for one spare room, 25% for two or more spare rooms. (Claimants who have received HB continuously at the same address since at least 1 January 1996, protected from the reduction until w/c 3 March 2014)
- Size criteria – social housing and private sector – extra room allowed for disabled tenants or partners who need an overnight carer (from April 2011 for private sector), for children with severe disabilities unable to share a bedroom and for approved foster carers. Adult children in the Armed Forces who are deployed on operations are included in parent's size criteria and no non-dependant deduction while on operations
- Universal Credit – phased introduction of the new single means-tested benefit payment for working age claimants begins in North West to pilot for limited number and group of claimants. Includes direct payment of the housing element to tenants
- Tax credits – in-year income rise disregard reduced to £5,000
- Discretionary housing payments – another £30m extra from central government. A further £35m announced in July. Total DHP funding in 2013/14 – £160m. A further £20m made available in July 2013 for which LAs were able to submit bids

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April 2013 (cont'd)

- Private rented sector – local housing allowance uprated using CPI measure
- Local welfare provision – new local provision begins, crisis loans and community care grants abolished
- Council tax – localised support schemes start
- Disabled people – Disability Living Allowance replaced by Personal Independence Payment for all new claimants from June. Armed Forces Independence Payments introduced
- Uprating – working-age personal allowances, including those for HB rise by 1%.

Before April 2013

- Tax credits – frozen and entitlement reduced for most working tax credit claimants for three years
- Private rented sector – reductions for new and existing Housing Benefit claimants. Limits on those aged 25–34
- Parents – child benefit frozen for three years to 2014
- Non-dependants – deductions increased to catch up with prices
- Overpayments – civil penalties for overpayments on benefits if claimants have failed to take reasonable care of their claim
- The Warm Home Discount scheme – introduced April 2011, requires domestic energy suppliers to deliver support to low-income pensioners and other people on low incomes and who are vulnerable to cold-related illness or living wholly or mainly in fuel poverty.