**Universal Credit triggers**

*What changes in circumstances might trigger a move to Universal Credit?*

The government’s current plan is that existing benefit claimants will be moved over to Universal Credit at some point between July 2019 and March 2023, as part of its 'managed migration'.

However, anyone who has a change of circumstance before that point will be moved earlier via 'natural migration'. This group of people will also lose their right to [transitional protection](javascript:gotoHelpPage('Transitional_protection_Universal_Credit')).

In general, natural migration could be triggered if entitlement to your current benefit ends (prompting a need to claim a new one) or you become entitled to a different or extra benefit. It shouldn't happen when you make changes to benefits you are already claiming.

The following gives examples of what may happen in a range of circumstances:

**First, a word of warning**

If you decide to switch from legacy benefits to Universal Credit we suggest you seek advice before doing so. It is not just the amount of money you may be entitled to that could change.

Some of the overall rules may be different, including; the initial waiting days you will not be paid for; the frequency of your payments (eg, weekly, fortnightly, monthly); or the commitments you need to agree to in order to remain eligible. See our [Universal Credit guide](javascript:gotoHelpPage('universalcredit')) for more details on each of these areas.

Plus, **there is usually no going back** **to your previous benefits** once a claim for Universal Credit has been made, so get advice if you're considering doing this.

**A change in employment status**

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| **Change in circumstances** | **What happens before Universal Credit Full Service?** | **What happens in Universal Credit Full Service areas?** |
| If not already claiming Child Tax Credits but on Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support or Income-related Employment Support Allowance and start work with enough hours to satisfy Working Tax Credit conditions | Claim Working Tax Credit | Claim Universal Credit |
| If not already claiming Child Tax Credits but on legacy benefit such as Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance and Housing Benefit and start work but not enough hours to satisfy Working Tax Credit | 'Legacy benefits' adjusted | Choice - remain on adjusted 'legacy benefit' or claim Universal Credit if you will be better off |
| If already claiming Child Tax Credits, on income based legacy benefits and start work with enough hours to satisfy Working Tax Credit conditions | Remain on existing benefits and add Working Tax Credit | Choice - remain on adjusted existing benefits or claim Universal Credit if you will be better off |
| On Working Tax Credit and hours fall below 16 | Claim Income Support, Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or Income-related Employment and Support Allowance | Claim Universal Credit |
| On Income-related Employment and Support Allowance and hours increase over 16 | Potential Working Tax Credit claim | Claim Universal Credit |
| On Child Tax Credit and start work to satisfy Working Tax Credit rules | Add Working Tax Credit | Remain on Child Tax Credit and claim Working Tax Credit |
| On Working Tax Credit and increase hours | Stay on Working Tax Credit | Choice - remain on adjusted 'legacy benefit' or claim Universal Credit if you will be better off |
| On Working Tax Credit and become sick | Claim Income-related Employment and Support Allowance | Claim Universal Credit |

**A change in family circumstances**

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| **Change in circumstances** | **What happens before Universal Credit Full Service?** | **What happens in Universal Credit Full Service areas?** |
| On Income Support, Income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or Housing Benefit and household becomes responsible for a first child | Claim Child Tax Credit | Claim Universal Credit |
| On Working Tax Credit only and household becomes responsible for a first child | Remain on Tax Credit and claim Child Tax Credit | Choice - remain on adjusted 'legacy benefit' or claim Universal Credit if you will be better off |
| Lone parent on Income Support and youngest child turns 5 years old | Unless there is another reason to stay on Income Support, claim Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance | Unless there is another reason to stay on Income Support, claim Universal Credit |
| On Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance and baby due within 11 weeks | Claim Income Support | Claim Universal Credit |
| On Child Tax Credit (with or without WTC) and have another child or go from 2 to 1 | Remain on Tax Credit and continue to claim Child Tax Credit | Choice - remain on adjusted 'legacy benefits' or claim Universal Credit if you will be better off (note: you can't currently claim UC if you have 3 or more children). |

**A partner leaving or joining the household**

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| **Change in circumstances** | **What happens before Universal Credit Full Service?** | **What happens in Universal Credit Full Service areas?** |
| Couple on Tax Credits separate | Make separate claim for 'legacy benefits' | Both claim Universal Credit as single people |
| Lone parent on Income Support and Child Tax Credit forms a couple with a partner working less than 24 hours a week | Claim Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or Income-related Employment and Support Allowance and make new Tax Credit claim as a couple | Claim Universal Credit as a couple |
| Lone parent on Income Support and Child Tax Credit forms a couple with a partner working 24 or more hours a week | Make a new Tax Credit claim as a couple | Claim Universal Credit as a couple |
| Couple on Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance with child under 5 become lone parents | Claim Income Support or Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance | Both claim Universal Credit as single people |
| Single person under pension age on 'legacy benefits' becomes a couple with person of Pension Credit qualifying age | Claim Pension Credit until Universal Credit is fully rolled out across the country | Claim Universal Credit when fully rolled out |

**Starting or stopping being a carer**

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| **Change in circumstances** | **What happens before Universal Credit Full Service?** | **What happens in Universal Credit Full Service areas?** |
| Satisfies Carer's Allowance rules which means a new 'legacy benefit' claim | Claim the relevant 'legacy benefits' | Claim Universal Credit |
| Carer on Income Support stops being a carer | Unless there is a reason to stay on Income Support, claim Jobseeker's Allowance | Claim Universal Credit |

**Starting or stopping a claim based on disability**

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| **Change in circumstances** | **What happens before Universal Credit Full Service?** | **What happens in Universal Credit Full Service areas?** |
| On Income-related Employment Support Allowance and fails Work Capability Assessment | Claim Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance | Claim Universal Credit. If you challenge Work Capability Assessment and win, remain on Universal Credit |
| On Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance and become sick | Claim Income-related Employment and Support Allowance | Claim Universal Credit |

**Renewing or making small changes to tax credits**

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| **Change in circumstances** | **What happens before Universal Credit Full Service?** | **What happens in Universal Credit Full Service areas?** |
| Tax Credit renewal | Remain on Tax Credit | Choice - remain on adjusted 'legacy benefit' or claim Universal Credit if you will be better off |
| On Tax Credit and change does not lead to a claim for a new 'legacy benefit' for example less income | Remain on Tax Credit | Choice - remain on adjusted 'legacy benefit' or claim Universal Credit if you will be better off |

**Moving home and taking up a new tenancy**

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| **Change in circumstances** | **What happens before Universal Credit Full Service?** | **What happens in Universal Credit Full Service areas?** |
| Housing Benefit claimant moves into a new local authority | New claim for Housing Benefit | Claim Universal Credit |
| Housing Benefit claimant moves within the same local authority | Remain on Housing Benefit | Choice - remain on adjusted 'legacy benefit' or claim Universal Credit if you will be better of |
| On Tax Credit, Income Support, Income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance and take up a new tenancy for the first time | Claim Housing Benefit | Claim Universal Credit |

**Other changes**

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| **Change in circumstances** | **What happens before Universal Credit Full Service?** | **What happens in Universal Credit Full Service areas?** |
| On Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance and attends court or jury service | Claim Income Support | Claim Universal Credit |
| On Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance and remanded in custody | Claim Income Support | Claim Universal Credit |
| On Income Support and cease full time education | Claim Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance | Claim Universal Credit |
| On Contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance or Employment and Support Allowance and believed to be entitled to Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or Income-related Employment and Support Allowance | Claim Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or Income-related Employment and Support Allowance |  |

Taken from: <https://www.entitledto.co.uk/help/changes_that_trigger_Universal_Credit>