

# Benefits and tax credits are changing

Get ready for  
**UC** *Universal  
Credit*

## Information for landlords



# What is Universal Credit?

Universal Credit is a new benefit which combines six existing benefits and tax credits into one **monthly** payment, paid direct to the claimant. It is run by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

For most claimants, help towards paying the rent will now be part of their Universal Credit claim - this is called the **housing cost element**. This means they will no longer be able to get housing benefit.

You can find more information about Universal Credit on our website at [aylesburyvaldc.gov.uk/universal-credit](https://aylesburyvaldc.gov.uk/universal-credit)



## Avoiding payment delays

To make sure their housing costs are paid promptly, your tenant will need to give details of their rent to the DWP when they claim, or if their rent changes. You should make sure your tenant has an up-to-date tenancy agreement, or that you give them a valid rent increase letter if you are putting up the rent.

## Universal Credit and rent arrears

If your tenant is on Universal Credit and falls into rent arrears, you can apply to the DWP for the housing costs element to be paid directly to you. This is a type of managed payment called an **Alternative Payment Arrangement (APA)**.

**You can apply for an APA if your tenant:**

- Is two or more months in rent arrears, or
- Has consistently underpaid their rent, and is a month or more in rent arrears

You may also be able to apply for any rent arrears to be paid to you straight from your tenants Universal Credit claim. This is called a third party deduction.

Your tenant can also apply for an APA.



# Applying for an APA

You can apply for an APA online at [directpayment.universal-credit.service.gov.uk](https://directpayment.universal-credit.service.gov.uk)

You can also ask for an APA using a UC47 non-secure form which can be downloaded from [www.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk). Alternatively get one by phoning the DWP freephone on 0800 328 5644. Return this to the DWP by email or post.

## If you apply for an APA, you will need the following information:

- Your tenant's (and their partner's) date of birth or their National Insurance number
- Proof of rent arrears – this must show the balance on the rent account, including the amount of rent due each week or month and the amount of rent outstanding
- A full breakdown of how you have calculated rent arrears and the time over which they have built up
- Your contact details – your name and address, and your bank or building society account number and sort code



Once you have made an application for an APA, the DWP will tell you whether or not it has agreed to this. If the DWP agrees to an APA, this will not be indefinite and the DWP will set a period to review the APA decision.

## What to do if you are refused an APA

If the DWP refuses an APA application, you can ask for a review of this decision if you can give more information about why you need an APA.



For more information visit <https://bit.ly/2vdcjhW>  
*This URL will take you directly to the correct publication on the .gov.uk website.*

# We can help your tenant

Universal Credit means that most claimants will no longer be able to claim housing benefit. Your tenant will need to contact the DWP if there is a problem with their housing cost element of Universal Credit.

## We can also help by:

- **Helping your tenant make their online application**

We have computer access available for tenants to make a claim at our Customer Service Centre at our Gateway office

- **Assisting those with limited computer skills**

A member of our staff will be able to show your tenant what they need to do to complete their application

- **Offering personal budgeting support**

A free service to tenants, helping them manage their payments to you

- **Offering a dedicated debt management team**

Who can offer your tenant debt management services free of charge



## Still more questions about Universal Credit?

Visit [gov.uk](http://gov.uk) or our dedicated Universal Credit web page [aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/universal-credit](http://aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/universal-credit) or [gov.uk/universal-credit](http://gov.uk/universal-credit)



**UC** *Universal  
Credit*