



CORONAVIRUS SPECIAL - 24 April 2020

Roundup of recent DWP announcements

Update on Universal Credit claims

More than 1.5 million new claims have been made to Universal Credit since 1 March 2020. People who made their claims when lockdown first began started to receive payments from 22 April, with 93% of people forecast to receive their payments in full and on time.

Where people haven't been paid, it is often due to the claimant needing to provide information, such as a correct bank account number, and DWP staff will attempt to contact claimants to fill in any blanks.

The latest figures also show that in the four-week period to 12 April over 513,000 advances were paid to those urgently in need of money.

More information and guidance about Universal Credit can be found on the [Understanding Universal Credit](#) website.

Neil Couling, DWP Change Director General and Senior Responsible Owner for Universal Credit has also written a [blog](#) on how we're delivering support

Video relay service for Universal Credit

Video Relay Service (VRS) has now been extended to customers claiming Universal Credit. Over the coming months VRS will be further extended into all DWP services. VRS is already available for British Sign Language (BSL) people who claim DWP disability benefits as well as Access to Work.

VRS enables BSL people to contact DWP via a BSL interpreter. The customer uses a video link accessed through their own computer, smartphone or tablet. The interpreter will then speak to a DWP agent relaying the conversation by phone. There is no need for anyone to be in the same location and the customer does not have to book the service in advance.

This means that the customer and DWP agent can have a telephone conversation in real time.

[Find out more](#)

New Style Employment and Support Allowance online claims

People can now apply for New Style Employment and Support Allowance online, where they are not already claiming Universal Credit.

Making an application online instead of over the phone should streamline the process to allow greater access to claimants and speed up processing times.

People who are unable to use the new online service can continue to make an application over the phone and the normal reasonable adjustment process continues to apply for those who need it, for example using Braille or large print communications.

For anyone who has applied for Universal Credit, or is already receiving Universal Credit, they should sign in to their Universal Credit account and use their online journal to inform their work coach or case manager about applying for New Style Employment and Support Allowance.

More information is on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

The [Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-job-retention-scheme) is now open for applications. Employers can claim online for a grant for 80% of their furloughed employees' salaries, up to a maximum of £2,500 per employee, per month.

A simple, step-by-step guide is available for employers on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

Support for domestic abuse victims

The Home Office has launched a new [campaign](#) to raise awareness of the support available to domestic abuse victims and those around them during Covid-19.

A [partner pack](#) is available including social media assets, leaflets and posters. Please help us reach as many people as possible by sharing this material through your channels.



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