

Press release 01/10/2021

For immediate release

Universal Credit cut: Everything you need to know

Over the coming weeks, people claiming Universal Credit will receive notifications about a cut to their benefits this autumn. Benefits experts at Citizens Advice LeicesterShire, which is campaigning against the cut, set out what this means for claimants.

When will the cut happen?

As it stands, the government is set to slash benefits by £20 a week - equivalent to £1,040 a year - from 6 October. The exact date people will see the cut kick in will depend on the day they get their Universal Credit payment. For many, this means September will be the last month they see their benefits paid at existing levels.

How many people will be affected?

If plans go ahead, the cut will hit nearly six million people on Universal Credit. This includes 70,525 people in Leicester and across Blaby, Harborough, Hinckley & Bosworth, Melton, North West Leicestershire and Oadby & Wigston. .

According to the latest available figures, approximately 43% of residents set to see their benefits drop are families with children and 42% are already in work.

How much could I lose?

While every Universal Credit claim will drop by around £85 a month, the proportion of income claimants will lose will vary depending on their circumstances. Single people under 25 are set to be hit by the biggest drop.

Monthly standard allowances will drop:

- **By a quarter** for single claimants under 25, from £344 to £257.33
- **By a fifth** for single claimants over 25, from £411.51 to £324.84
- **By 17%** for joint claimants under 25, from £490.60 to £403.93
- **By 14%** for joint claimants over 25, from £596.58 to £509.91

What support is available if I'm worried about my income?

You're not alone and there is support available. Everyone's situation is different which is why speaking to a trained adviser may be helpful. Depending on your circumstances, support could include:



- **A benefits check.** This will help you verify you're getting all the support you're entitled to. You can use an [online calculator](#) as a starting point.
- **Support with essential costs.** You can contact Leicestershire County Council or Leicester City Council to see if they can give you any extra help from a hardship fund, including food or essential things like clothes. [Check your local council](#) on GOV.UK.
- **Help with debt.** Some bills can cause you more problems than others if you don't pay them. Rent or mortgage arrears, energy bills and council tax are your priority debts as there can be serious consequences if you don't pay them. Citizens Advice LeicesterShire can provide guidance [if you're struggling with bills](#).
- **Free school meals.** If you have children and you get certain benefits, you might be able to [get free school meals](#) for your children.
- **Food bank vouchers.** If you can't afford the food you can ask for a [referral from Citizens Advice LeicesterShire](#) or an organisation that's already supporting you - for example, a charity, school or children's centre - for a food bank voucher.
- **Budgeting Advice** (If you live in the County). Money Max is our newest service that offers money management advice.

Richard Evans at Citizens Advice LeicesterShire, said:

"Many people seeking our advice at the moment are unaware of an impending cut to their Universal Credit. Understandably, when they realise their benefits are set to drop by £20 a week it causes a lot of anxiety.

"If you're in this position, remember you are not alone and there is support available. As a first step, make sure you're checking your online journal regularly so you know how much your benefits will reduce by and when.

"Citizens Advice LeicesterShire, which is campaigning against the cut, is on hand to help you if you're worried about making ends meet."

Editors Notes

Citizens Advice LeicesterShire is an independent local charity serving the communities of Leicester and the Leicestershire districts of Blaby, Harborough, Hinckley & Bosworth, Melton, North West Leicestershire and Oadby & Wigston . During 2020 – 21, our trained advisers supported 26,870 local people to solve their problems.

We are continuing to provide advice and information by telephone and email during the coronavirus restrictions and are now able to offer video appointments. We're here for everyone - please don't wait until you are desperate to contact us.

Chief Executive Richard Evans

Serving Leicester City and the districts of Blaby, Harborough, Hinckley & Bosworth, Melton, North West Leicestershire and Oadby & Wigston.

Citizens Advice LeicesterShire is a local charity. Charity registration number 1135081. Company limited by guarantee. Registered number 07186736 England. Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority FRN: 617648. Registered office: Clarence House, 46 Humberstone Gate, LE1 3PJ



For details of our complaints process please write to us or email contact@citizensadviceleicestershire.org

Anyone needing advice can ring **0808 2787970 (City)** and **0808 2787854 (County)** between 9am and 4.30pm on weekdays. Non-urgent or out of hours enquiries can be made by email from our website. In addition to our generalist services, we also offer the following specialist advice:

Macmillan Welfare Benefits - 0300 456 8400

Citizens Advice and Macmillan Cancer Support are working together to provide welfare benefits advice to people affected by cancer.

Mesothelioma Advice - 0800 169 2409

Benefits advice and compensation support for people with asbestos cancer, delivered in partnership with Mesothelioma UK.

Money Advice - 0116 464 7239, moneyadvice@citizensadviceleicestershire.org

Specialised debt and money advice service for County residents, supported by The Money Advice Service.

Pension Wise - 0800 134 3944

Free and impartial government service for the over 50s about the different ways you can take money from your pension.

For any more information, please contact Adele Stacey at adele.stacey@citizensadviceleicestershire.org

Chief Executive Richard Evans

Serving Leicester City and the districts of Blaby, Harborough, Hinckley & Bosworth, Melton, North West Leicestershire and Oadby & Wigston.

Citizens Advice LeicesterShire is a local charity. Charity registration number 1135081. Company limited by guarantee. Registered number 07186736 England. Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority FRN: 617648. Registered office: Clarence House, 46 Humberstone Gate, LE1 3PJ



For details of our complaints process please write to us or email contact@citizensadviceleicestershire.org