UNIVERSAL CREDIT

**STAGE 2:**

**I HAVE MADE MY UNIVERSAL CREDIT CLAIM**

**WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?**

**Now that you’ve made your Universal Credit Claim…**

You will be told to call and book an interview at the Job Centre. There, you will be asked to confirm your identity and accept your commitments. You will be told what documents to bring with you to the appointment.

**My Work Coach**

You will be assigned a work coach at this first appointment.

Remember the name of your work coach and get to know them, as the Job Centre says that this work coach will remain with you as long as you are claiming Universal Credit (UC).

**What will the work coach do?**

Your work coach will discuss what you need to do to look for, or prepare for, work.

This is called your “claimant commitment”, which is a record of what you are expected to do. You must accept this or your claim will stop after 7 days.

**Things to talk about with your work coach:**

* What personal circumstances might affect your work seeking (e.g. sickness, childcare responsibilities, caring responsibilities, ability to read and write). If you have evidence e.g. a sick note, medical letters, **bring the evidence to the appointment.**
* What job could you do? What are your skills? What qualifications and work experience do you have?
* Do you have a CV? If so, bring it along. If not, ask for help to get one.
* How many hours could you work per week? Most full time jobs are around 36 hours per week. If you don’t feel you can work full–time, give your work coach good reasons e.g. you might have to pick up children from school or have health concerns
* Where could you work? Your work coach may expect you to travel up to 90 minutes to work. If you have reasons why you could not cope with a long commute, be prepared to explain why. E.g. you might have health concerns, childcare or caring responsibilities.

**REMEMBER TO ASK YOUR WORK COACH ABOUT:**

* Whether your rent can be paid directly to your landlord. You may be able to get an Alternate Payment Arrangement (APA) if you have debts or rent arrears owing over 2 months worth, or have physical/mental health or language problems which make it difficult to deal with monthly rent payments.
* A Short Term Advance. Your first Universal Credit payment will not be made for at least 5 weeks after your claim. You can ask for extra money to help cover basic living costs but the Short Term Advance is a loan and will be taken off later Universal Credit payments – it must be repaid within 12 months so deductions can be high.
* The Flexible Support Fund. This can help you cover the costs of travel or training.
* The Jobcentre Plus Travel Discount Card.
* Budgeting Support if you would like some help and advice on how to manage your money throughout the month. You can ask for 2 weekly payments if you can’t cope with monthly. This is only a temporary arrangement which gets reviewed after some time.
* Tailoring your commitments to suit your personal circumstances, if you care for someone, for example, your work coach will consider this.
* Assessment periods and paydates.

**WHEN YOU ATTEND YOUR FIRST INTERVIEW:**

**REMEMBER**

You won’t get your Universal Credit payment until you have provided your work coach with all the right evidence. If you can’t provide the right evidence, contact your work coach and explain why. Remember, providing evidence late may delay your payment.

**You MUST provide (tick the boxes as a checklist)**

* 1 piece of evidence of who you are e.g. passport, driving licence, bank card with the account you declared or similar
* 2 pieces of evidence such as Birth/Adoption Certificate, Council Tax letter,
	+ Bank/Building Society statements, Debit/charge card, Expired Passport
	+ Expired full/provisional licence, Local Authority Rent Card, NHS Medical Card
	+ Marriage/Civil Partnership Certificate, Tenancy Agreement
* Your National Insurance Number – you can find this on a payslip or letter about benefits or Tax Credits. If you can’t find it, call the helpline 0300 200 3500.
* Your landlord’s address. This can be found on your rent agreement. Ask your landlord for a copy if you don’t have one.
* Any savings you have and any other ‘capital’ investments e.g. shares or property. You’ll need a bank statement to show your savings or details of property you own.
* Any income that is not from work e.g. from a pension or insurance plan.
* Details of how much you earn from work e.g. payslips
* How much you pay for childcare (if you want to claim for childcare costs) e.g. an invoice or receipt
* Any other benefits you are getting e.g. benefit letters or a bank statement
* Details of dependant children, proving identity and residence at your address, passport/birth cert + doctor’s letter.

**If claiming the housing element:**

* Proof of address - Tenancy Agreement or similar
* AND proof that you pay the rent e.g. bank statement, rent book, rent statement.

**REMEMBER**

If you’re part of a couple, you both will get an appointment with your job coach separate of each other.

**Other financial help whilst waiting for your Universal Credit.**

You may qualify for help from the council’s Local Support team: **0207 475 6464**

****You can ask for a Food Bank Voucher: Contact Citizens Advice to discuss further

Call us for more information or help

0300 330 1162

(Monday-Friday 10am-4pm)

Online information at:

[www.gov.uk/universal-credit](http://www.gov.uk/universal-credit)

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk/benefits/universal-credit](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/benefits/universal-credit)