

WHAT IS UNIVERSAL CREDIT

Universal Tax Credit was first introduced for England, Scotland and Wales in 2013, with the idea of combining the main 6 elements of means tested benefits for “fairness and simplicity”. Northern Ireland will introduce this in the last quarter of 2017.

How the process works

People who make a new claim for Universal Credit you will not be paid for the first seven days*. These days are known as waiting days.

People who are entitled or think they may be entitled should make a claim as soon as possible. The claim can take up to 6 weeks before any payments are made

On the 7th day after you first made a claim, will be the day you receive any payment every months thereafter Universal Credit Payment are paid on monthly basis. This is called your assessment date.

Universal Credit is paid monthly in arrears so you'll have to wait one calendar month from your assessment date before your first UC payment is made. This is called your assessment period.

You may have to wait up to seven days for the payment to reach your bank account.

* There are exceptions to the 7 day rule:

Received Universal Credit within the last 6 months
Splitting up from or moving in with someone who is already claiming Universal Credit
Moving onto universal Credit form another benefit
Terminally ill
Vulnerable, victim of domestic violence or leaving care or prison

When will the landlord receive any payments

Universal Credit is paid to the tenant directly and within the Universal Credit there is the Housing Rent element. As a landlord you are not given any information from the Universal Credit department about any personal financial payments that the tenant receives and so it's more beneficial to have a good and honest relationship with your tenant about what day they receive the payment. The tenant will receive a breakdown of what the payment is for and this tells them what amount of the payment is for the housing element. Remember the Universal credit is means tested.

What should I do if the tenant doesn't pay the Rent

You need to talk to your tenant and find out why they haven't made any payments to you. However, if you're still unhappy with the answer they give you, then you need to contact the Universal Credit on 0345 600 0723 – they are open 08:00 – 18:00 Monday to Friday. They should be able to look into the claim and see if the tenant has signed to say that they are willing to discuss the Housing Element of the Universal Credit claim with the landlord. But on many occasions the tenant hasn't and you will have to fill out a form and send this into the Universal Credit.

Once you have filled out the form and it's been received and added to the Universal Credit system. No further Housing payments should be sent to the tenant and you should receive all future Housing payments.

Unpaid Rent

The tenant is liable for any missing rent and not the Universal Credit. The payments are sent to the tenant on the proviso, that the tenant can manage bills and payments for themselves. A tenant can miss payments for many reasons, so it's important to have a good relationship with your tenant for many reasons and for a landlord, rent is a good reason. Speak with your tenant and if needed set up a payment plan for any missing rent, but make it an affordable plan and not one that causes the tenant further hardship.

We have included a Landlord Request/Rent Deduction Form which is required if you need to apply for the payment directly to yourselves.