

Radcliffe-on-Trent Advice Centre

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APPLYING FOR UNIVERSAL CREDIT

December 2018

**To check whether you might be entitled, and how much you might get, it is worth while going to the turn2us website and using their Benefit Checker.
www.turn2us.org.uk**

It takes about 30 minutes to set up an account

It takes about 40 minutes to 'start your claim' once your account is set up

To apply for Universal Credit, you need the following:

- A phone that will accept text messages
- A computer with access to the internet
- An e-mail account

There are 3 stages to applying for Universal Credit:

1. Set up your online Universal Credit Account

You'll need to apply for Universal Credit online on GOV.UK.
www.universal-credit.service.gov.uk

You don't have to apply in one go - you can save your progress and come back later. But it's worth finishing as soon as you can, as your claim can't start until you've finished the whole process.

If you're making a joint claim you and your partner will need to set up separate accounts.

When you set up your account you'll be asked if you live with your partner. If you say yes you can get a 'linking code'. When your partner sets up their account they can type in this linking code to join their account to yours.

You'll both be able to log in to your accounts separately.

2. Use your account to start your claim

This is separate from setting up your account. It's worth starting your claim as soon as you can, as it will mean you get your Universal Credit payment sooner.

Log in to your Universal Credit account using the details you got when you set the account up. If you can't remember your details you can click on 'Problems signing in?' to ask the DWP to send them to your email address.

Once you've logged in, you'll see a 'to do' list. You'll need to go through the list answering questions about your situation. If you're making a joint claim you'll see your partner's to do list as well. They'll have to log into their account to answer some of the questions.

Confirming your identity

One of the items on your to-do list says 'Verify your identity online'. This takes you to a government system called 'Verify' to confirm your identity.

Verify can be difficult to complete. If you're having problems, go back to your Universal Credit account and click on 'I can't do this online'. You can then skip this step and confirm your identity at the Jobcentre instead.

3. Arrange an interview at the Jobcentre

You'll need to arrange an interview at your local Jobcentre within 7 days of applying online. If you don't arrange the interview in time you might have to start your application for Universal Credit again.

You should be given a phone number to call to arrange your interview after you apply online. You'll need your National Insurance number when you make the call.

If you aren't given a phone number, call the Universal Credit helpline to arrange your interview.

Universal Credit helpline (full service)

Telephone: 0800 328 5644

Textphone: 0800 328 1344

Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

Calls to these number are free. It's best to call from the phone number you gave the DWP when you set up your Universal Credit account. You'll have a shorter wait and be put through to the same person who handled previous calls you've made.

The person you speak to when you arrange your interview will tell you where your interview is and what documents to take with you.

After you've arranged the interview you'll be able to find details about it in your online Universal Credit account.

Before you go, check how you can prepare for your interview.

Remember: If you're in a couple, the jobcentre will normally need information and evidence about your partner's circumstances as well as yours.

Check you have everything you need to apply

Before you apply for Universal Credit, you'll need to gather some information together. This will help make sure you only have to do the application once and help you to get Universal Credit as quickly as possible if you're eligible.

You'll need the following details for you and your partner:

- your postcode
- your NI number - you can find this on a payslip or letter from HMRC - call the helpline on 0300 200 3500 (textphone 0300 200 3519) if you can't find it
- details of your bank, building society, credit union or Post Office card account (if you don't have one of these, you'll need to open an account or use simple payment)
- the type of accommodation you have, eg private rent, council tenant, or housing association tenant - make sure you check this before you apply
- how much rent you pay - this can be found on your rent agreement, ask your landlord for a copy if you don't have one
- your landlord's address - this can be found on your rent agreement, ask your landlord for a copy if you don't have one
- your landlord's phone number
- details of any savings you have and any other 'capital' investments, eg shares or property that you don't live in
- details of any income that's not from work, eg from a pension or insurance plan
- details of how much you earn from work, eg recent payslips
- how much you pay for childcare (if you want to claim for childcare costs)

- details of any other benefits you're getting, ie what benefit and how much you get
- child benefit reference numbers for any children you have if you get child benefit - this can be found on letters to you about child benefit, it will start with 'CHB' and is made up of 8 numbers and 2 letters, eg CHB12345678 AB - phone the Child Benefit Office on 0300 200 3100 (textphone 0300 200 3103) if you need help

You'll need evidence for all these details for when you go to your interview, so you'll need to gather all the documents together, eg landlord agreement (or a letter from them with your rent amount on it), payslips, bank statements etc.

You will also need evidence of who you are and where you live, this could be:

- who you are, eg passport or driving licence (with your photograph on it)
- your postcode, eg an official letter from a bank, energy company, or Council Tax Bill.
- your bank, building society or credit union account, eg a bank statement or bank card - ask your bank for a copy of a statement if you don't have one

Thinking about the Interview

Improving your work situation - the claimant commitment

We've listed below some things to think about to prepare for that first interview.

Your personal circumstances

- What personal circumstances might affect your ability to carry out work related activities? (eg childcare responsibilities, health concerns, caring responsibilities, ability to read and write)
- What job could you do?
- What are your skills? These don't have to have been developed in a job. They could be skills you've got from other life experiences, eg working around the home, managing a budget at home, being a parent, involvement with community or voluntary activities, support you've provided for friends or family members etc.
- What qualifications and work experience do you have? If you have a CV or any training or qualification certificates, take them along to the interview.
- What kind of job would you like?
- 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 a good reason. For example, 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 feel you couldn't cope with a long commute, be prepared to explain why. For example, you might not own a car or have health concerns, childcare or caring responsibilities.

Ask your work coach about:

- fortnightly payments (called an 'alternative payment arrangement') if you think you'll struggle with monthly payments
- whether your rent can be paid directly to your landlord, if you have debts or rent arrears or are worried about missing your rent payments
- a short-term advance. This extra money is a loan and helps cover your costs until you get your first UC payment
- the Flexible Support Fund - this can help you to 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.

**Radcliffe on Trent
Advice Centre**

**Thursdays
09.30 – 12.30**

at

**ST MARY'S HALL,
MAIN ROAD,
RADCLIFFE-ON-TRENT**

**Bingham
Advice Service**

**Wednesdays
09.30 – 12.30**

at

**BINGHAM TOWN
COUNCIL
THE OLD COURT HOUSE,
CHURCH STREET
BINGHAM**

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