

Community Care Live

The impact of poverty on social work practice

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CHILD POVERTY:
IT SHOULDN'T HAPPEN HERE



Key issues for families

- Benefit cap
- Two-child policy
- Help with child care costs
- Delays in payment – rent arrears
- Digital exclusion
- Less support for those with a disabled child
- Conditionality, linked to attitude and knowledge of Job Centre staff, leading to sanctions and food banks!



job plus

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graph LR; UC[UNIVERSAL CREDIT] --- JA[Jobseeker's Allowance]; UC --- ESA[Employment & Support Allowance]; UC --- IS[Income Support]; UC --- CTC[Child Tax Credit]; UC --- WTC[Working Tax Credit]; UC --- HB[Housing Benefit];
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UNIVERSAL CREDIT

Jobseeker's Allowance

Employment & Support Allowance

Income Support

Child Tax Credit

Working Tax Credit

Housing Benefit

Progress towards UC.....

April 2016

- Live UC service in all 714 jobcentres areas in GB – “Live running’ or Gateway at least

May 2016

- Expansion to the full-service begins

Transition

- Transition to the full UC service will rollout in phases between May 2016 - September 2018

Migration

- Testing migration will begin in 2017
- Managed migration will start July 2019 with completion in March 2022

Benefit cap (Winter 2016)

New weekly Benefit Cap

Two parent family

Single parent family

Single person



Two-child limit (6th April 2017)

- Child tax credit and UC child element now limited to first two children for new births (some exceptions e.g. rape, multiple births and adoption/kinship care etc. See www.gov.uk/hmrc/ctc-exceptions).

● July 1st 2016 was
National Pregnancy
Deadline Day!



Child care costs

- Universal Credit provides more help with child care costs than working tax credit did (up to 85% of cost, as opposed to 70%; and more flexible arrangements). But key problem for parents trying to move into work is the upfront need to pay child care when moving into work, when DWP will only reimburse, 4 weeks later, on proof of payment. Free child care for 3-4 year olds helps to some extent but is untargetted.



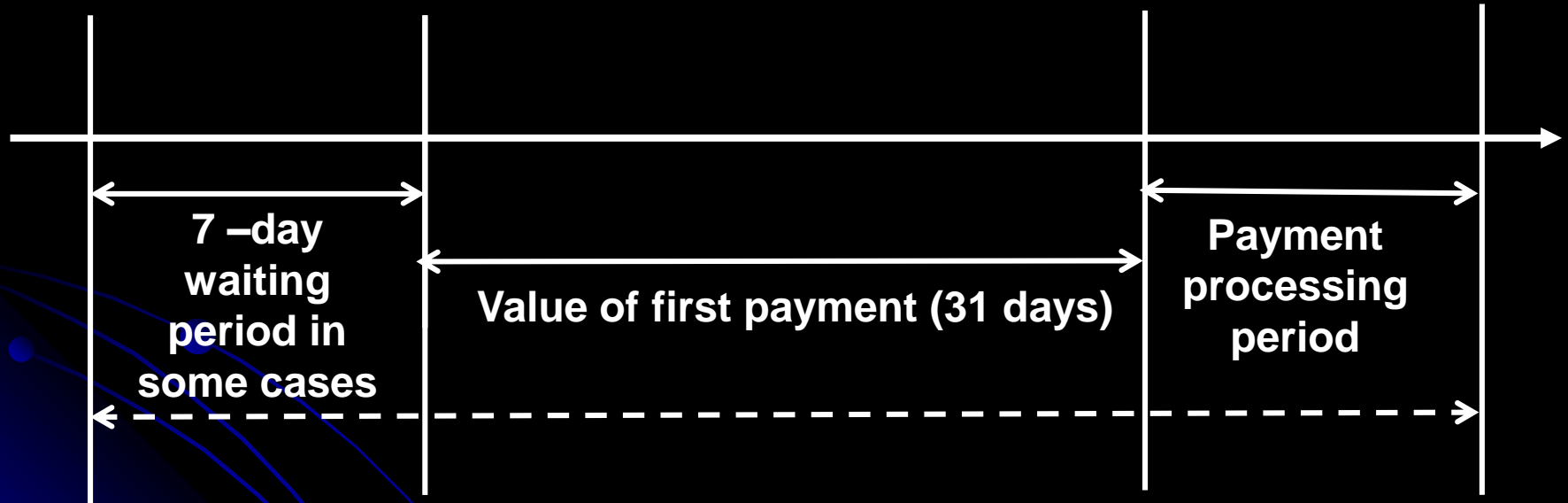
Impact of the waiting period

Claim on 10th
(called the
“relevant
date”)

Entitlement begins
on the 17th (the
start of the AP)

End of AP
on the 16th

First payment
on the 23rd



1 calendar month and 13 days before first payment

Rent arrears

- The National Federation of ALMOs recently found Universal Credit rent arrears had reached £6.7m, representing 10% of total unpaid council rent, despite roll-out to only 2.6% of tenants nationally.
- 79% of council tenants in receipt of Universal Credit are in rent arrears
- 38% of renters on Universal Credit are in arrears eight weeks after making a claim, 77% of whom were not in arrears previously.

Full-service UC

- Claim on-line
- Maintain claim on-line
- On-line journal as main means of communication each-way

The screenshot displays a user interface with three navigation tabs: 'Home' (highlighted in blue), 'To-do list', and 'Journal'. Below the tabs, there is a main content area with the following text:

If you're entitled to Universal Credit, you'll be paid in **7 days**.

How much you'll get will depend on your circumstances from **09 June 2017** to **08 July 2017**.

Below the text, there are three large, light-colored buttons with rounded corners:

- Report a change of circumstances**
- Add a note to your journal**
- View to-do list**

Children with Disability

**Support under child tax credit
- £264.58 a month or £372.08
a month**

- **Support under universal credit - £126.11 or £372.30 a month**

CONDITIONALITY

From the DWP's own research on Families and Universal Credit:-

“There was a widespread feeling that the hours of work and work-search (demanded) within the Claimant Commitment were too high and therefore hard to achieve. For the most part, claimants felt they had been given a ‘one size fits all’ CC which they were struggling to meet. These findings tie in with those on perceptions of personalised support – the main criticism of Jobcentre Plus support was that it was not always thought to reflect or take into account claimants’ personal circumstances or aspirations”



Re-defining Poverty

“We need to think of poverty in relative terms – the fact that some people lack those things which others in society take for granted.My party recognises, will measure and will act on relative poverty” (2006)



“Improving social mobility is the principal goal of the Governments social policy” (2011)

“I want to talk about troubled families.....whatever you call them, we know that these 120,000 families are the source of a large proportion of the problems in society. Drug addiction. Alcohol abuse. Crime. A culture of disruption and irresponsibility that cascades through generations” (2011)

Re-defining the response to poverty

“Turn around” those 120,000 families by May 2015 – payment by results and one of the key targets was moving those families into employment” – pronounced as a success (with scant evidence!)

2015 - Second Phase – 400,000 more families, with increased focus on ‘workless’ families.

2016 – Child Poverty Act largely rescinded and retrospectively re-named as the Life Chances Act.

Re-defining the response to poverty

Have local authorities, and social workers, been 'bought off' by the Troubled Families funding mechanism?

Do councils do enough to combat poverty at local level, and are social work departments engaged in that?

Are councils part of the solution or part of the problem?

RESOURCES

Welcome to www.revenuebenefits.org.uk

For access to the latest information on the range of HMRC 'products' including tax credits, child benefit and guardian's allowance, national minimum wage and tax-free childcare ... as well as information and guidance on the transition from tax credits to universal credit.



Check whether you can claim universal credit just by entering
postcode