

- By Post by accessing and downloading the Rent Arrears form via GOV. UK – Universal Credit: Rent Arrears Form Once completed, the Rent Arrears form should be returned to: FREEPOST DWP UNIVERSAL CREDIT LIVE SERVICE

### When can a Managed Payment to a landlord be requested?

A Managed Payment to a landlord can be made when:

- A claimant is in arrears with their rent for an amount equal to, or more than, two months of their rent. A third party deduction to recover the rent arrears can also be requested at this point, or
- A claimant has continually underpaid their rent over a period of time, and they have accrued arrears of an amount equal to or more than one month's rent.

In the first instance Personal Budgeting Support (PBS) will be considered, using the standard PBS referral process. A Managed Payment of the housing costs element to the landlord will be considered for those claimants who have longer term problems paying their rent.

### For more help and advice contact the Revenues and Benefits Service:

Tel: 01643 703704 (lines open Monday-Thursday 8.30am-5.00pm, Friday 8.30am-4.30pm)

Email: [benefits@westsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:benefits@westsomerset.gov.uk)

In person: West Somerset House, Killick Way, Williton, TAUNTON, TA4 4QA  
Monday -Thursday 8.30am - 5.00pm, Friday 8.30am - 4.30pm

Download: Forms, factsheets and information from our website at

**[www.westsomersetonline.gov.uk](http://www.westsomersetonline.gov.uk)**



## Alternative Payment Arrangements

From 12th October 2016 if a tenant needs to make a brand new claim for Housing Benefit or any of the five main benefits below:

- Income Support
- Child Tax Credit
- Working Tax Credit
- Employment and Support Allowance (income-related)
- Jobseekers Allowance (income-based)

They will need to claim Universal Credit from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) online.

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

**For online claim queries please ring 0345 6000723**

To find out information on entitlements, you can visit:  
[www.entitledto.co.uk/benefits-calculator/](http://www.entitledto.co.uk/benefits-calculator/)

Universal Credit prepares claimants for the world of work in which 75 per cent of employees are paid monthly. It also encourages claimants to take responsibility for their own financial affairs. Universal Credit is paid in a single monthly sum to households. Households are expected to manage their own budgets, making housing costs a priority.

It is important that claimants are able to make the same sorts of decisions as those in work and develop the financial capability to do so, however, it is recognised by the DWP that in some cases, vulnerable claimants may require their Housing Costs to be paid direct to their landlord.

## **What are Alternative Payment Arrangements?**

The move to a single monthly household payment will be a significant change to the way most benefits are currently paid. The following Alternative Payment Arrangements will be available to help claimants who are identified as needing additional support:

- Paying the housing element of Universal Credit as a Managed Payment direct to the landlord
- More frequent than monthly payments
- A Split Payment of an award between partners

## **When can an Alternative Payment Arrangement be considered?**

Alternative Payment Arrangements can be considered at any point during the Universal Credit claim. They may be identified at the outset by the Jobcentre Plus work coach during a Work Search Interview, alongside Personal Budgeting Support, or during the claim e.g. because the claimant is struggling with the single monthly payment.

They can also be triggered by information received from the claimant, their representative, their caseworker or their landlord, advising of a build up of rent arrears. To safeguard the claimant's home, a landlord can notify Universal Credit of a build up of rent arrears and ask for the Universal Credit housing element to be paid direct to them where a rent arrears 'trigger' has been reached.

## **When should Alternative Payment Arrangements not be offered?**

The Government is keen that Universal Credit reflects the world of work, where 75% of people receive their salary monthly. The majority of claimants will be paid a single monthly payment, which will encourage personal responsibility for finances and encourage claimants to budget their money on a monthly basis. This will enable them to make a smooth transition into monthly paid work.

Alternative Payment Arrangements should only be considered for those claimants who cannot manage the single monthly payment and as a result there is a risk of financial harm to the claimant and/or their family. The

Universal Credit Agent will consider a number of factors and evidence provided to decide if an Alternative Payment Arrangement is appropriate.

## **What are the key elements to consider?**

Alternative Payment Arrangements will be 'claimant centric,' in other words something that is discussed and considered with the claimant. Applications will be considered on a case by case basis.

A claimant can be considered for one or more Alternative Payment Arrangements based on individual circumstances and characteristics. The Universal Credit Agent acting on behalf of the Secretary of State makes the decision whether to award an Alternative Payment Arrangement taking account of numerous factors.

For example:

- Is the claimant managing to pay their bills on time, particularly their rent, and have they fallen into arrears in the past, or are they currently in arrears?
- Do they think they will be able to manage a monthly budget, taking account of their income and outgoings over a calendar month?
- If the claimant is part of a couple, are they used to managing their money together and do they think they will be able to manage the single Universal Credit payment to the household?

## **Who can request a Managed Payment of the Universal Credit housing element to the landlord?**

The claimant, their representative or the landlord can make this request.

If the claimant is making the request, this can either be:

- During the Work Search Interview with their Jobcentre Plus work coach or
- By phoning Universal Credit on 0345 600 0723\*

If the landlord is making the request, this can either be:

by phoning Universal Credit on 0345 600 0723\* and requesting a rent arrears form, or

- By email, using the form that can be downloaded from: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/universal-credit-and-rented-housing](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/universal-credit-and-rented-housing)