



Department  
for Work &  
Pensions

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Rt Hon Sir George Howarth MP  
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Our ref: MC2020/65282

11 November 2020

Dear Sir George,

As you may know, your email of 28 October to the Chancellor of the Exchequer on behalf of a number of your constituents about the £20 uplift to Universal Credit has been passed to this Department. I am replying as the Minister with responsibility for this policy area.

The Government introduced a package of temporary welfare measures worth around £9.3 billion this year to help with the financial consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. This included the £20 weekly increase to the Universal Credit Standard Allowance rates as a temporary measure for the 20/21 tax year.

We are continuing to work with the Treasury on the best ways to support those receiving benefits.

We have also made a number of changes to legacy and other working age benefits in response to the coronavirus public health emergency, including increasing certain entitlements, such as Local Housing Allowance.

There are no plans to increase Employment and Support Allowance, Jobseeker's Allowance or Income Support. These benefits were increased by 1.7 per cent in April 2020 as part of the annual up-rating exercise.

It has always been the case that claimants on legacy benefits can make a claim for Universal Credit if they believe that they will be better off. There are special arrangements for those in receipt of the Severe Disability Premium, who will be able to make a new claim to Universal Credit from January 2021.

Claimants should check their eligibility before applying to Universal Credit, because, as a matter of fundamental policy design, making a Universal Credit claim will cease any entitlement to legacy benefits that an individual might have

and they cannot move back to legacy benefits. This function, supported in legislation, has been part of the Universal Credit design since its early stages reflects the overarching principle that Universal Credit will replace the legacy benefit system.

For this reason, prospective claimants are signposted to independent benefits calculators on Gov.uk. Neither the Department for Work and Pensions nor HM Revenue and Customs can advise individual claimants whether they would be better off moving to Universal Credit or remaining on legacy benefits.

I hope your constituents will find this reply helpful.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Will', is centered below the text 'Kind regards,'.

**Will Quince MP**

**Minister for Welfare Delivery**