



Frontline Network Summary Guide: Universal Credit Event 2018

BRIGHTON & HOVE
FRONTLINE NETWORK

DECEMBER 2018



**Frontline
Network**
Partner



Department
for Work &
Pensions



Justlife

INTRODUCTION

In September 2018, Brighton & Hove Frontline Network hosted an event in collaboration with our local DWP team to work together with frontline workers to identify both current challenges and potential solutions regarding Universal Credit.

This summary highlights some helpful pointers from the DWP arising from the key issues raised by frontline workers. To request a more detailed report of the event please email: frontline@justlife.org.uk

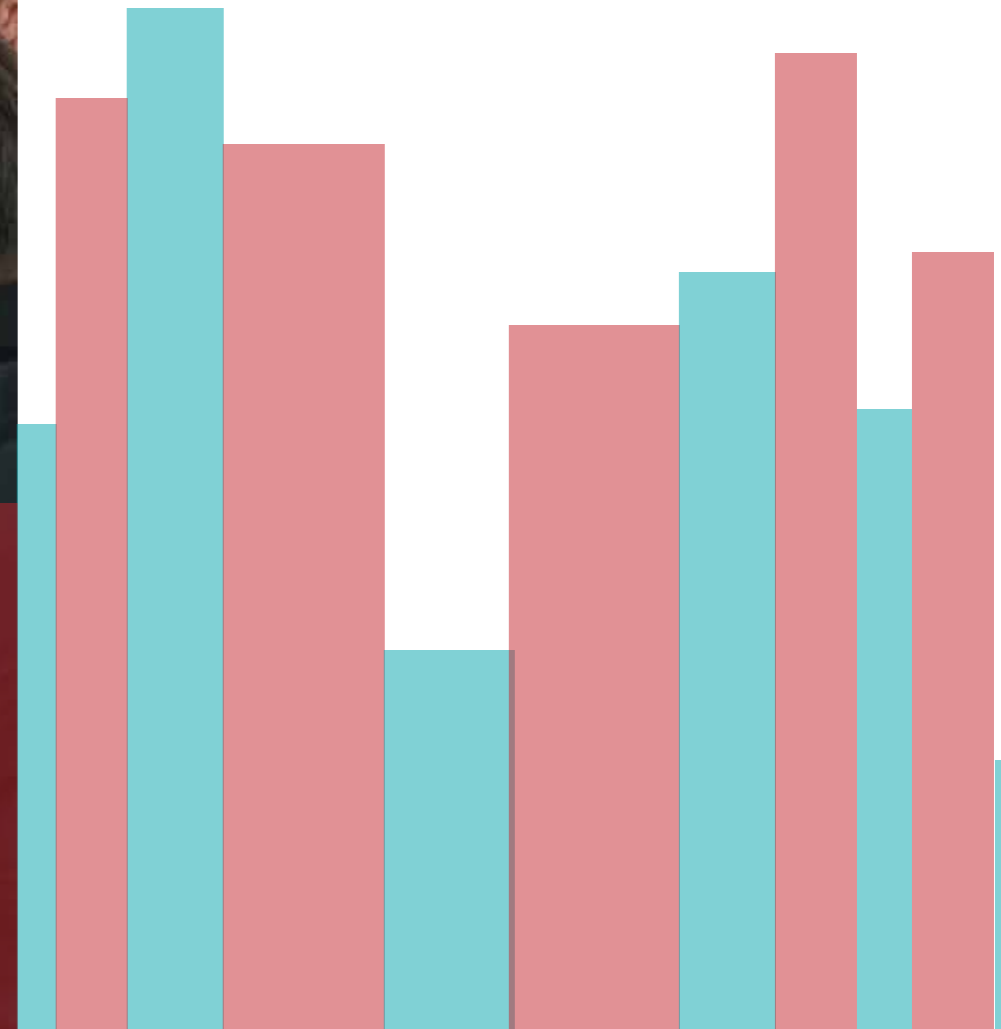


USE OF THE JOURNAL

- This is the key way to communicate information with the DWP. Please include here:
- Support Worker details, inc. contact details.
 - Information regarding a person's complex needs, which can then assist the DWP staff in decisions around their claim.
 - Some Support Workers share that they use this instead of the phone – as it is available 24/7 and records all contacts.

DWP are promoting the following format;

- *"I am currently being supported by <X organisation>*
- *My support worker is <Y worker> and their contact details are <phone/email>.*
- *I may also have difficulty maintaining my claim due to <brief details of complex needs and any times/durations of treatment/appointments etc>"*



INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

UC claims need to be made and managed online, which can prove problematic for those with limited access to I.T, and potentially those with complex needs.

I.T. ACCESS

The Council website provides a list of places offering support around UC in the city. This includes:

- 'Universal Support' is provided by the CAB (which includes Budgeting Support and Assisted Digital Support). This can be accessed via the Brighton and Hove Jobcentres and the CAB at Hove Town Hall. Claimants can also be referred by contacting the CAB on 0300 330 9033. For more information on the support available visit: Moneyworks: www.advicebrighton-hove.org.uk
- Library Connect – where a 1-2-1 session with a trained volunteer at a number of libraries across the city can be booked. In addition, Jobcentre staff can help claimants to re-establish email accounts using their self-help computers.

NEW CLAIMS:

- The online claim progress should be retained if there is a break during completion, so long as a username and password has been set.
- There is a known issue (Oct 18) where the claim cannot be submitted until full bank account details are known – this has been raised by Brighton and Hove Jobcentres.

DATA:

- All details about the claimant on their Journal are owned by the claimant themselves and, therefore, have the discretion to share them as and how they would like. If storing any information with consent from the claimant, then it is of paramount importance that all data protection is adhered to.

PAYMENT AND SANCTIONS

ADVANCE PAYMENTS:

- Claimants who are likely to struggle to pay back the advance can discuss with their Work Coach what is a reasonable amount to apply to receive as an advance and how they plan to pay it back.
- Claimants can request to receive the advance all at once or as split payments.
- Claimants can speak to their Work Coach about 'Personal Budgeting Support' available at the Jobcentre with the CAB.
- Current national DWP policy means that Brighton and Hove Jobcentres are unable to increase the time people have to repay their advances.
- It is strongly advocated by DWP that claimants taking up advances, and that may have difficulties with repayment, take up Personal Budgeting Support

ALTERNATIVE PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS (APAS):

- Can be requested via the Journal.
- Split payments (for each member of a couple for example); more frequent payments; and managed payments to landlords can be requested via the Journal.

SANCTIONS:

- Complex needs, such as those relating to substance misuse and homelessness, will be taken into account in assessing 'good cause' (reasons not to impose sanctions), so it is really important to make it clear in the Journal (or through meeting the Work Coach) the complex needs of the claimant. Also include details of support (support worker's contact details etc). It is important to ensure this information is included in the Journal at the earliest opportunity.

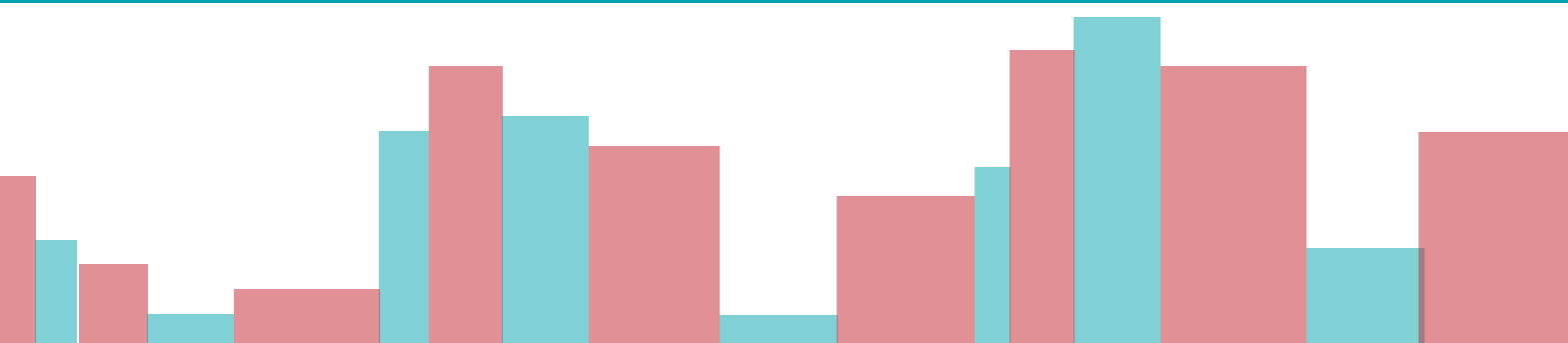
ID AND BANK ACCOUNTS

ID:

- If it's not possible to verify someone with their ID itself (eg. if they don't have access to any) ID can be verified through completing biographical questions, and failing that, the DWP will write to the claimant's GP for verification.

BANK ACCOUNTS:

- Support to access bank accounts is available through the CAB service available at both Jobcentres mentioned above.
- Justlife have experience of setting up Nationwide Basic Accounts, even for those without ID. [see Appendix I]



ACCESS

APPOINTMENTS:

- Currently (Oct 18), you can only book the initial UC appointment via phone. There are plans for an upgrade, whereby appointments can be made online.
- All claimants need to attend an initial UC appointment at their Jobcentre. Exceptions include claimants with terminal illnesses and claimants with immobility etc.
- Arrangements can be made to provide quiet areas to make new claims at Brighton & Hove Jobcentres.
- Appointments can, potentially, be waived or delayed in many circumstances (eg. if homeless or attending treatment), but the Jobcentre need to be made aware of any such circumstances in order to consider this.

GETTING TO THE JOBCENTRE:

- Let the Work Coach know if the claimant is very anxious about attending the Jobcentre via the Journal. You can request the appointment take place in a private interview room.
- Support Workers are always welcome to attend appointments.
- There currently isn't the capacity for Work Coaches to meet claimants at venues outside of the Jobcentre.

PHONE:

- If a claimant is likely to regularly lose their phone, or change their number, please ensure Support Worker contact details are recorded on the Journal.
- If a claimant calls from the same mobile number as the one on the UC claim, their call should be recognised by the DWP system and answered more quickly by the linked Service Centre.

HOUSING

- Housing Benefit for exempt accommodation (inc. emergency, temporary and supported accommodation) is managed by BHCC, so please liaise with them to resolve any issues faced by claimants.
- Regarding third party deductions for service charges for supported accommodation there is currently (Oct 18) a known issues with setting these up. It has been suggested that in the interim, direct debits could alleviate this issue in some instances.
- It is currently DWP policy that the housing element does not go directly to the landlord until the claimant is two months in arrears or there a reason such as history of debt, or gambling, a care or prison leaver and many other complex needs etc. DWP suggest that managed payment to landlords are set up as early as possible.
- For hostels (eg. backpackers) that are not HB exempt, receipts need to be provided up to the last day of the Assessment Period. These receipts can be received by the Work Coach at intervals during the Assessment Period, or at the end, but it is vital that all receipts are received by the Work Coach for the last day of the Assessment Period.
- Currently service charges cannot be deducted from UC claims and direct debits are strongly advocated.
- There is a council Homeless Prevention Officer located at the Jobcentres.

UPDATES, NEWS AND FEEDBACK

- The DWP locally are hoping to provide updates via a newsletter.
- The latest DWP numbers are available on gov.uk.
- Please refer to gov.uk where possible and enquire through 3rd Party Escalation route where significant areas are affected by change.
- If you are unable to resolve any issues relating to UC, please refer to the 3rd Party Escalation route. Note this is just for the use of Support Workers and Organisations and not the general public. [see Appendix II]



APPENDIX I

NAME ID

Letter from professional: - Solicitor, - Accountant, - Doctor, - Social worker, - Probation officer, - Homeless centre/refuge centre, - Refuge case worker, - University or College.	EEA nationals - Yes	No more than three months old.
	Non-EEA nationals - No	Must be addressed to Nationwide. Confirms the customer is who they say they are. Confirms customer's permanent address. The professional's phone number. Must be on headed paper

ADDRESS ID

Doctor's letter	No more than three months old. Must be addressed to Nationwide. From a UK-based doctor Confirms the customer's name Confirms customer's permanent address which matches the application. Includes the doctor's phone number (the main surgery number is ok too). Must be on headed paper. Can not be used if the letter has already been used a proof of name or if the doctor has already provided a separate letter to be used as proof of name.
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Homeless centre letter confirmation	No more than three months old. Must be addressed to Nationwide. From a UK-based homeless centre. Confirms the customer's name Confirms customer resides at the address declared on their application. Includes a contact phone number (the main centre number is ok too). Must be on headed paper. Can not be used if the letter has already been used a proof of name or if the refuge has already provided a separate letter to be used as proof of name.
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Social services accommodation letter or letter from a social worker	Confirms accommodation for the customer. Less than 3 months old.
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Benefit letter (from Government organisation)	The letter is less than 12 months old (this includes Universal Credit letters). It shows when the benefit was or will be paid. Name and address match the application form
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Claimant Escalation Routeway

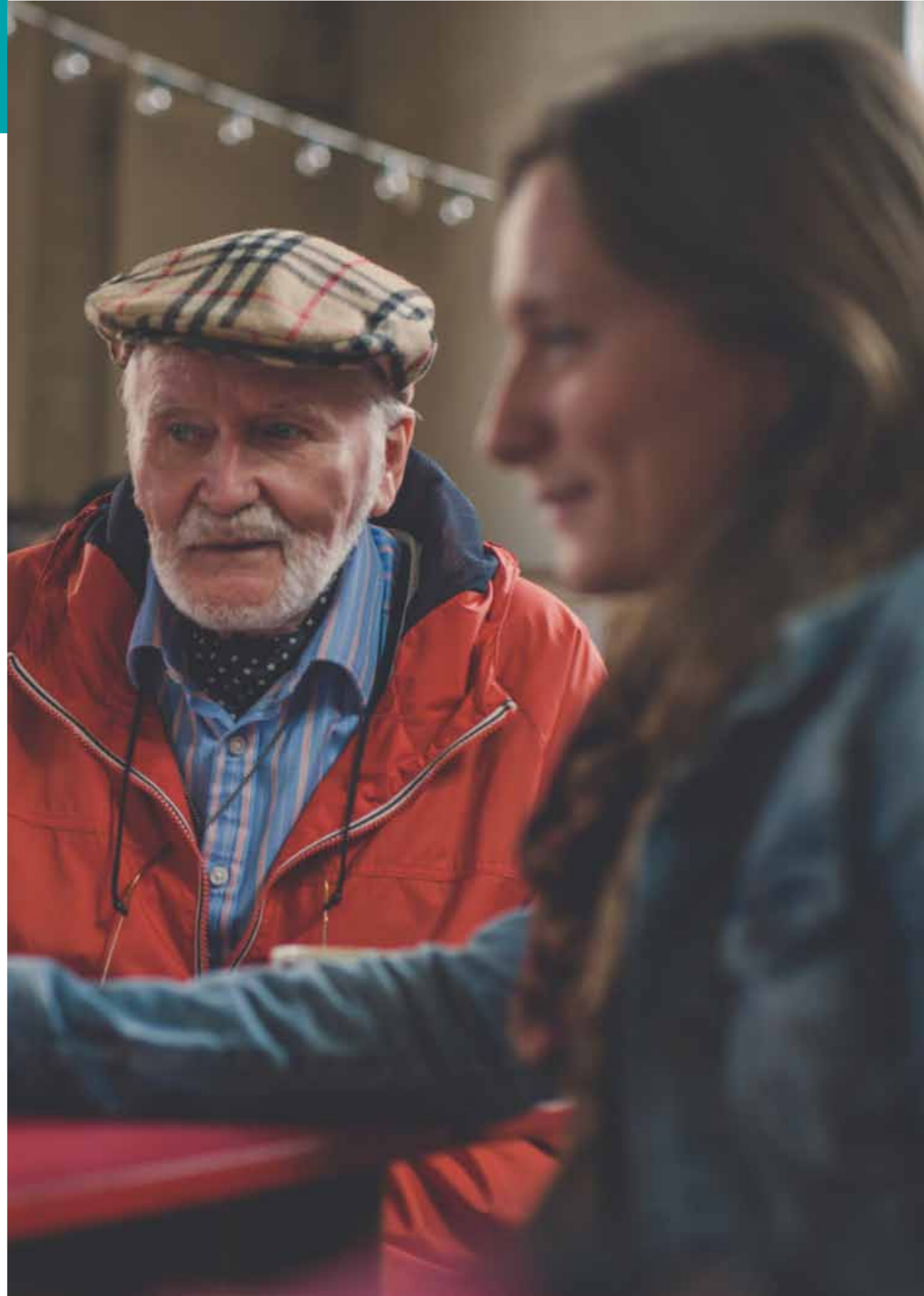
Working Age Benefits (e.g. JSA, ESA, Income Support)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Call Benefit Enquiry Line on 0800 169 0310
Universal Credit Live Service (Non-Digital UC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Call the Universal Credit Live Service - Service Centre on 0800 328 9344
Universal Credit Full Service (Digital UC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digitally – via Journal Facility in UC Digital System Call the UCFS Service Centre on 0800 328 5644

Sources of information on UC for customers & partner organisations (links enabled when viewed in slideshow mode):

- Unsure if you are in UC Live or Full service? Use the [Citizens Advice eligibility checker](#) to find out
- www.understandinguniversalscredit.gov.uk & [Universal Credit partner toolkit](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7Km4IXfVJB1n8SQUmkJD0Q) - useful guides to UC for claimants and partners
- www.youtube.com/channel/UC7Km4IXfVJB1n8SQUmkJD0Q - useful range of videos on UC full service

Partner Organisation Escalation Routeway

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please note – this escalation Routeway is used to support Partner Organisations/Providers – please do not issue this to claimants as they will only be directed into the Routeway above. For UCFS we need Explicit Consent from the claimant to talk to a provider/partner organisation. The claimant can provide this via the Journal in their Digital Account or verbally to the Service Centre. They need to include the point of contact & name of organisation they give permission for us to speak to and details of the issue. For more information on disclosure follow this link Universal Credit consent and disclosure of information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact Local Partnership Manager Mischa Harrison 07789 943855 Mischa.Harrison@dwp.gsi.gov.uk Brighton Jobcentre: BRIGHTON.BRIGHTONJCPMANAGERS@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK Hove Jobcentre: HOVE.WORKCOACHES@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK
General Queries & Questions	<p>For generic queries that may affect multiple claimants e.g. <i>Does somebody need to claim UCFS if they move into this area?</i></p>
Individual Claimant queries or escalation	<p>e.g. <i>We are supporting Joe Bloggs who has not received his UC housing payments and is under threat of eviction, can you look into this so housing costs can be paid asap ?</i></p>
Complaints	<p>If a claimant has a complaint about DWP they can complain by phone, in person, or in writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to complain





Special thanks to all those who took part in the session and for all the brilliant work they do.



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