

Universal Credit implementation for Stroud - update January 2018 from Revenue and Benefits Manager

Go live date: 4th October 2017

Stats

	UCNEW/COC/TERM	Notification of Stopping Housing Benefit	PBS (Personal Budgeting Support)	Digital Support	Reception enquiries	Phone enquiries
October	197	68	1	8	20	n/a
November	341	173	1	7	11	60
December	412	162	1	3	11	18
January (to 11 th)	148	21	1	2	2	5

It's generally been quiet apart from Universal Credit notifications from DWP. There has been lots of interest from Members, The MP and Stakeholders. CAB were positively engaging with us before Christmas.

Staff took time initially to feel confident with what advice to give and with the different scenarios. We have produced a number of desk aids for staff which has helped. It's new for Jobcentre Plus as well and staff are being up skilled and are learning on the job across both authorities.

Shadowing with work coaches and Jobcentre Plus staff has been useful and they continue to support us.

Lots of information on our website for claimants - <https://www.stroud.gov.uk/housing-benefit-universal-credit-and-council-tax-support/universal-credit>

In regards to helping claimants make their UC claims, the majority are happy to carry on with the application at home, as they have all the documents required to complete the claim to hand. The claimants we have helped here are the claimants that we would have given additional help if they were still on Housing Benefit. On average 90% happily self-serve with signposting with 10% needing additional support to do so.

Our reception area has 3 dedicated PC's. There has been a strong message that claimants do not like using PC's and prefer to use an iPad or mobile at home.

We have seen a slight increase in DHP requests, but not as many as we may have anticipated.

We have no record of any 'hard luck' stories to date. Instead we have had some positive feedback from customers. One, who is a former staff member who left to develop a new business has given us some good constructive feedback. He found that his work coach has been very flexible and willing to engage with his circumstances. He was very surprised to learn that he didn't have to keep updating us as we are getting his assessments fed back from DWP so he can concentrate on his business and only keep DWP UC departments informed. Very much a theme once you are on it, it works well.

We have had a few phone calls from the UC service centre seeking clarification on rents, but otherwise we have had very little contact from DWP.

There is some duplication on claims for the HB stop notifications because we will get one each for a claimant and a partner and we have also found that we get some duplication for claimants.

The benefits assessment team have found it difficult to keep up with the UC work items as they cannot be automated. As a result we have decided to create new teams to deal with them. Equally, it is hard to stay on top of the notifications as the results need to be notified back to the UC team within 5 days of receipt. We have a dedicated staff member dealing with this at present.

Council Tax Support processing statistics have taken a hit due to the length of time new claims are taken to be decided. We anticipate this will improve with legislation changes, and a different allocation of work to our new teams.