Big Book of Benefits and Mental Health - Updater Pack 2

- replaces Chapter 4: Benefit changes an overview *(pages 27-59)*

This is the second of two Updater packs for the Big Book of Benefits 2021-23.

- *Updater Pack 1 (in May 2022) updated all pages, rates, calculation sheets, examples for the 2022-23 rates.*
- *This Updater Pack 2 (in March 2023) replaces Chapter 4: Benefit Changes– A summary in your Big Book (pages 27 to 59) if you have one, but it also stands alone as benefits updater if you haven't .*

We aimed to note the context of the big changes - be they simple cuts and restrictions to existing benefits or bigger changes of Welfare Reform (e.g. ESA, PIP and UC) - since 2011. It's been 12 years of cut, complexity and confusion in the benefits maze. Some may seem historical, though it's still handy to get the context of so much change. But you may also just want to focus on what's hip and happening and affecting people right now.

So this Updater Pack 2 / replacement Chapter:

- *nods farewell the Coronavirus pandemic changes, but notes them and the ongoing slow return of DWP back to "business as usual"*
- *adds in the new Cost of Living Support measure in response to the current crisis*
- *updates past changes around cuts, migration plans and new dates, new benefits proposals for further change*
- *comments on growing impact of differences in the devolved nations*
- *updates the tables covering all of these changes for the main benefits or groups of benefits*

Work on this Update Pack has drawn on the updating of the National Association of Welfare Rights Advisers (NAWRA) ***Benefit Changes Chart -*** *by your present author & Daphne Hall from Rightsnet.*

We are delaying a new edition of the Big Book as we are contributing to: the 1st edition of ***CPAG's Mental Health and Benefits Handbook****. In time you can order a printed version of that book, currently being updated for latest changes and 2023/24 rates. For now you can access the current text of the book for fee at: https://askcpag.org.uk/publications/-243337/mental_health_and_benefits_handbook_1st_edition.*

We will thoroughly edit , rewite and update for a new edition of the BIg Book later in the year, robably as an e-publication. And we will post a Part 3 Updater Pack to bring your copies up to 2023/24 rates in the meantime.

Do let us know if you spot any errors or omissions in this Updater so we can amend and improve it :-).

Contents of this Updater:

Cost of Living Support and the end of coronavirus measures

*We deal with these separately here and in the tables immediately after, as these are **not** part of ongoing longer term changes, cuts and welfare reform. There are currently some extra temporary measures as part of Cost of Living Support taking over from previous changes to some benefit rules and the way things were down during the coronavirus pandemic.*

The challenge of coronavirus was significant, especially as earnings related support has almost disappeared from the UK system. The main system involves a big drop down to basic incomes, without a few months of levels closer to earnings, so the UK needed a bigger furlough scheme than many other countries. The Cost of Living schemes are also significant, however the big difference is that now the main benefits system is slowly finding its way back to "business as usual".

These changes to the main benefits system are reported in the tables for specific benefits or groups of benefits later in this chapter .

But in this first section we summarise the special measures whether those now gone relating to lockdowns and current measures as part of extra support during the Cost of Living Crisis.

Cost of Living support - *April 2022 to 2024*

These fall into two types:

- non-means tested help to all who meet the criteria, regardless of their savings and income,
- extra means tested help for those on lower incomes who get one of the "qualifying" benefits

Coronavirus Support - *April 2020 - Sept 2021*

AS lockdowns in various phases came in from March 2020, it became clear, as the UC nearly had a meltdown—that the usual social security system was not up to the task of this new emergency.

Small changes to make people more likely to self-isolate, became major changes in how all benefits ran . The treasury stepped in with new HMRC schemes such as furlough and Self Employment Income Support The changes to social security as we knew occurred over a number of areas:

Supporting self-isolation

To make it financially possible for people—and small employers - to do the right thing on testing positive.

Changes to Universal Credit :

UC is he main benefits "safety net" especially for huge numbers of new claims. UC almost fell over under the weight of a million new claims in a month.

- changes to ease the processing of new claims,
- A £0 uplift and the mirroring of changes in other benefits in work conditionality, health assessments and paying the rent.

Changes in other benefits

Business as usual couldn't work in lockdown e.g. :

- *"signing on"* and meeting *work requirements* for JSA and UC (when unemployed); *or*
- face to face health assessments *for*
    - ◊ *the Work Capability Assessments* for ESA and UC (when unwell)
    - ◊ PIP claims re-assessments or the ongoing switch from Adult DLA to PIP
- levels of *Local Housing Allowance* within HB and UC Housing Costs Element were raised back to 30% of the local rate (but were then frozen again) . This first reduced the need for discretionary top ups for rent shortfalls, but now the need is growing again.
- Other measures limited evictions for rent or mortgage arrears

The HMRC schemes

A mother of all "tax credits" to enable the economy to be put on hold rather than let businesses collapse

- **Job Retention Scheme** meant people could keep their jobs but "furloughed", HMRC paying 80%
- the **Self Employment Income Support Scheme** (SEISS) came later to help the self-employed .

Both were due to wrap up by the end of October 2020, but extended several times in 3 months bursts , finally closing in September 2021.

Summary

The various changes made in relation to Coronavirus have now all gone: the £20 uplift to Universal Credit went in September 2021 and its loss would have been keenly felt . The Boost to the level of the previously frozen Local Housing Allowance that limits private rents has stayed, but it has been re-frozen, despite a 20% increase in rents during 2022.

The new Cost of Living Support make a real difference, especially given the huge lag in benefit rates. The 3.1 % increase in April 2022 was wholly inadequate at the time as inflation had soared to 7% and peaked at 11.1%. The 10.1% increase in April 2023 will play catch up but meantime those on the lowest incomes have been reeling under inflation that feels more like 16%.

Cost of Living Support

Just as extra financial support through the Coronavirus pandemic faded, a sudden surge in fuel prices and knock on effects on food and other essentials suddenly took off from January 2022. By the time of April 2022 uprating, inflation had hit 7% (more than double the uprating based on September 2021).The case was made to match this at it could be too long until a catch up in April 2023 especially as inflation was set to rise further, peaking in the Autumn. Instead, the Government revised and increased special cost of living support, while promising to fully increase in April 2023. A new step has been announced in Cost of Living Support, but other option of reneging on increases has been retained by a crisis ridden new Government.

Change	*Notes & Comment*
Non-means tested help • *April 2022. £150 grant paid via Council Tax - for each property in Bands A, B and C .* • *September 2022 - £150 extra with September 2022 payment of DLA, PIP or AA. To be repeated in 2023* • *From 1st October 2022 - **£400 grant** paid via reduction in electricity bills over 6 months. Credits/ vouchers for those on a pre-payment meter* • *From 1st October—Energy subsidy. What would have been an 85% increase in the Offgen energy price cap was subsidised down to a 30% rise . This was to run until April 2023, but is now extended to July. A typical bill is often quoted as £2,500 for gas and electricity, but your actual bill could be more or less than this, as the subsidy caps the cost of each unit of gas and electricity* • *Dec 2022 / Jan 2023 Winter Fuel Payments —an extra £150 or £300 added to WFPs bringing totals up to a max of £600. Again in 2023/24*	*This was to make it financially possible to follow self-isolation guidelines. But a convoluted and still very basic income, with many low paid workers unable to afford to drop down to SSP levels e.g. a major issue in the failure to protect care home residents.* *Other countries could rely on sickness benefits of c£200 a week with top ups to incentivise and support compliance.* *A belated £500 allowance for self isolation failed a little n England , but done better with top ups in the other nations - with less restrictions / more funding. A big impact on people's ability to self isolate.* *Increases to UC to match SSP while welcome, tended to help younger and unemployed claimants and leave out older and the unwell and disabled who are mainly on legacy benefits* *Longer term absences - e.g. when shielding - have mainly been dealt with by furloughing rather than SSP*

Extra means tested help
Applies if you
• *get one of the "qualifying means tested benefits" i.e. Universal Credit, Pension Credit, one of the legacy benefits (Income Support, Ir-ESA, Ib-JSA or tax credits) .*
• *Does **not** apply if you only get HB or CTR*
• *In 2022 this was paid in two parts totaling £650*
  ∗ *First part £326 - had a cut off date of 25th May and was paid out in July 2022*
  • *second part £324—had a cut off date of 25th September and is paid in November 2022*
  • *Payment dates were later if your entitlement was based on getting tax credits to avoid double payment by both DWP and HMRC.*
• *During 2023/24 this will be repeated to a total of £900, but over 3 payment periods - £299, £300 and £301.*
• *In all cases you either needed / need to be getting a qualifying date by the cut off date. Or could become entitled if you only later became entitled to a benefit backdated to before the cut off date*
	Entirely new "emergency tax credit" schemes from HMRC aimed to put the economy on hold rather than let mass unemployment rip. In lockdowns. Getting scheme started - esp. SEISS led to big wave of UC claims . Some 2 million freelancers etc. fell between the schemes. Initially for 3 months ,but extensions/roll offs thereafter. Finished on 30th September 2021. See tax credits chapter for history and current criteria.

Extra help varying across the nations Scotland : *already had an extra Scottish Child Payment which was increased by 6% in April 2022. It also tops up Carer's Allowance and added an additional top up* *Wales has no powers on routine Carers Allowance , but has added a £500 top up for the last two years.*	

Changes related to coronavirus

Note: changes evolved over these months so dates of introduction of measures are less relevant as measures have been continuously amended and a planned "return to normal" procedures rather pre-announced. The aim is broadly a phased return to normal from July 2020, but emergency measures may return in response to second waves of both huge numbers needing to claim UC or of coronavirus infections.

Change	*Notes & Comment*
Support during self-isolation shielding • *Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) from day1 instead of day 4. HMRC covers for 2 weeks for small employers.* • *Contributory ESA - paid from day 1 rather than day 8, but not increased to match SSP . This is done via UC or WTC and linked HB* • *UC standard allowances increased - extended to 30th September 2021, to match SSP rates* • *Underfunded £500 allowance in England , with better provision in the devolved nations* • *No GPs sick note needed, but an NHS online note accepted. Back to sick notes on all claims from July* • *Measures extended to those "shielding" for longer periods when following NHS advice, but not if quarantining on return from abroad.*	*This was to make it financially possible to follow self-isolation guidelines. But a convoluted and still very basic income, with many low paid workers unable to afford to drop down to SSP levels e.g. a major issue in the failure to protect care home residents.* *Other countries could rely on sickness benefits of c£200 a week with top ups to incentivise and support compliance.* *A belated £500 allowance for self isolation failed a little n England , but done better with top ups in the other nations - with less restrictions / more funding. A big impact on people's ability to self isolate.* *Increases to UC to match SSP while welcome, tended to help younger and unemployed claimants and leave out older and the unwell and disabled who are mainly on legacy benefits* *Longer term absences - e.g. when shielding - have mainly been dealt with by furloughing rather than SSP*
New Covid schemes • *Job Retention Schemes - for employees* • *Self Employment Income Support*	*Entirely new "emergency tax credit" schemes from HMRC aimed to put the economy on hold rather than let mass unemployment rip. In lockdowns. Getting scheme started - esp. SEISS led to big wave of UC claims . Some 2 million freelancers etc. fell between the schemes. Initially for 3 months ,but extensions/roll offs thereafter. Finished on 30th September 2021. See tax credits chapter for history and current criteria.*
Changes to UC *Changes in processes: to deal with 2.6 million new claimants peaking at 640,000 in one week in late March 2020 (compared to normal 55,000pw)* • *"Don't call us, we'll call you" No longer the usual p post-claim interview. Local JC+ offices closed* • *Extension of existing Verify.gov online verification but can also use a Government ID.* • *Not operationally possible to not reclaim Advance Payments - as in other DWP recoveries- see below* • *Changes in work conditionality, health assessments and housing element - see below* • *"Minimum Income Floors" for the self employed, waived for those affected by impacts* • *Managed migration pilots stopped and start up of main managed migration uncertain.* *NB: Since January 2021 a new phased back to " "business as usual". Double check on info at end of claim, and locally for your area / in your case.* *(NB: table continues on next page)*	*The usual processes of UC could not cope both with sheer numbers and with need to rethink face to face interactions. See details on next page / side of this table re work condionality and health assessments .* *DWP staff transferred from other benefits to support UC, as the priority, but did affect capacity and contact with other benefits. DWP succeeded in paying out UC without big delays, which was no mean feat.* *Many self-employed found themselves claiming UC and - whether paid or not - losing access to previous legacy benefits by doing so. Hopes of going back to legacy benefits were dashed* *The hold on managed migration pilots has also delayed the national rollout . Pilots restarted through 2022 and full rollout from Jan 2023 to end of 2024. The Office for Budget Responsibility were already allowing for September 2026 for completion. Each year of delay saves £700 million in unpaid transitional element...* *DWP anticipated a surge in applications when furlough/SEISS schemes ended in September 2021. But have experienced smaller surges each time there has been uncertainty about continuation of the schemes.* *An announcement of almost overnight "back to normal" from the 6th July 2020 turned into a slower "phased re-introduction". But rowed back a little after a new coronavirus wave in Autumn 2020. January 2021 saw a new phased return to normal, so a need for a while to check local arrangements*

Changes related to coronavirus *(continued)*

Change	*Notes & Comment*
Work requirement changes • *Local JobCentre Plus offices closed* • *Signing on, work requirements and sanctions abandoned, as effectively no work to be sought.* • *Claimant commitments no longer required for UC or New style JSA or ESA* • *No sanctions for breaching work conditionality.* *A slow return to normal from July 2021, rowed back in 2nd wave lockdowns .*	*The need to avoid face to face assessments and the locking down of most economic activity - meant that normal face to face support or supervision/sanctions were suspended.* *That begs the question as whether they are ever useful, as the evidence suggests most jobseekers are highly motivated to get into work. Sanctions have no real effect apart from making it harder for people to survive and get to job interviews. But they were back with a vengeance from July 202. Staff unions were greatly concerned at additional risks to staff and claimants and feel the emphasis is more on control and policing than support for customers. .*
Changes to health assessments ***The Work Capability Assessment*** *for ESA/ UC claims for sickness)* • *Priority went to WCAs for the newly unwell - i.e. starting ESA or becoming unwell while on UC.* • *More emphasis on the paper evidence and further information from others to avoid a need for assessments, and where done by phone* • *Assessments focused on those likely to get into the ESA Support / UC Limited Capability for Work Related Activity groups. Others left without a WCA decision as (no financial difference).* • *Re-assessments that were due for long-term claims were put on hold and entitlement extended.* ***PIP assessments:*** • *Again, a focus on assessments for new claims* • *Time limits on returning "PIP2 How Your Disability Affects You" forms extended to up to 3 months.* • *More emphasis on the form and other evidence to limit telephone based assessments with an HP* • *Claims due for re-assessment extended 6 months* • *Transfers from "working age DLA" to PIP put on hold and DLA awards when turning 16 extended.*	*During 1st lockdown the face to face assessments were not safe or practical. Telephone assessments prioritized to: new claims - especially if a support group/LCWRA seemed likely - or looking again if deterioration, rather than renewals / scheduled re-assessments. But ramped up from Jan 2021 to gradually bring in all outcomes for ESA/UC* *Greater use of paper based reviews: more weight on self assessments (in ESA50 /UC50 and PIP2 forms) plus other evidence submitted / obtained. DWP are not doing anything re 12 month time limit on unassessed Contributory ESA but will look at any supporting evidence you can send.* *Under pressure DWP seemed to fall back on the common sense approach planned in Scotland for Adult Disability Payment as it replaces PIP. Might there be lessons for DWP to learn from having done better re-inforced by Scotland continuing to do so?* *DLA to PIP migration stopped with DLA awards extended if needed . In Scotland these resume as switches from DLA to PIP and in the rest of the UK restarted from to finish by October 2025.* *There was a worrying 50% reduction in PIP claims, possibly related to:* • *difficulties getting through to PIP, as staff were diverted to UC* • *reduced contact with social workers, support workers and others to spot potential claims and support through the process* • *difficulty getting adviser support to go through potential entitlement and complete PIP 2 forms*
Support for renters • *LHA limits restricting the max private sector rent eligible for HB or UC housing costs eased to get back to the lowest 30% in an area from April 2020, but then refrozen at this level from 2021* • *HB earnings disregard for those on WTC increased by £20 a week, so as not to cancel out the increase in WTC basic element.*	*Increasing LHA back to 30% restored an arbitrary cut, that led to no properties being available at LHA rates in some areas. The measure . reduces the need to seek DHPs or fund rent shortfalls from already stretched other income. Together with other housing changes, the aim is to prevent evictions during lockdown* *The earnings disregard stops the extra £20 uplift in WTC being swallowed by lower HB and tops up Contributory ESA to SSP levels. There was though no extra help for others on HB or on other "legacy benefits"*
Tax credit changes • *Increase to WTC basic element by £20 pw* • *Hours requirements based on past hours normally worked rather than current ones* • *A £500 grant replacing £20 uplift to 30th September 2021*	*The extra £20 is to match the increase to UC that in turn aims to match SSP rates to help enable self isolation and generally in hard times . It still left out those on other legacy benefits. The hours change recognizes that in lockdown many might struggle to meet previous hours.* *A £500 grant for first half of 2021/ 22 down to admin difficulties in a part year assessment . Restricts to WTC awards at the time e.g. not someone on CTC who later added WTC to their claim after this.*

Changes in the main system ***not*** related to coronavirus

These next two pages summarise the main changes since the Big Book of Benefits and Mental Health 2021-2022. Some have been on the cards for a while, but were waiting for dates or have new dates after the pandemic. This section offers a ready reckoner of changes relating to each chapter, to help this act as an updater to that last edition of the Big Book to make it work through to April 2023. The main information, tips and practicalities around each benefit have returned to as they were before big changes were made during Coronavirus lockdown.. See also the tables for each benefit area later in this chapter.

ESA, UC (with LCW) and the WCA

- **LEAP exercise** continues to review cases who may have been underpaid on migration to ESA from the old Incapacity Benefit / Income Support (sickness) system
- **A notion was floated to improve decision making standards -** alongside those for PIP—and trialled– during lockdowns to look more at what you put on your ESA 50 or UC 50 form and what others can say . Sadly its back to normal with primacy given to health professional assessments "face to face" assessments.
- **Contributory ESA**: C-ESA continue even after UC has fully rolled out and taken over from the six "legacy" benefits. C-ESA is **not** a "legacy benefit", only Income-related ESA is. New claims for C-ESA are now for *New-style ESA* (i.e. without the link to Ir-ESA). Claiming Ns-ESA does **not** force a switch to UC (e.g. you could stay with WTC & HB during up to 6 months sickness). You don't have to claim ESA if you are claiming UC, but there are advantages to doing so. You can claim New-style ESA online (avoiding UC Line confusion about ESA being open to new claims). You cannot start a new claim for Ir-ESA, but you can start to have it added to an existing claim for "old-style" C-ESA.
- **ESA pending an appeal.** The practise of requiring a separate Mandatory Reconsideration (MR) and stopping ESA during that time, was ruled an unlawful barrier to justice. In response, DWP has allowed you to go straight to an appeal so that reduced rate ESA can continue , but you still need to go through an MR and forward the result on to the Appeal Service.

PIP

- **DM Pilots** Promises of improvement to decision making at each stage by taking a slightly Scottish approach.
- **Review of all cases for discrimination on Mobility:** proceeding, very slowly with far lower levels of changed decisions than the DWP forecast. People then have a choice to appeal that (with risks to their current award) or wait until their next assessment.
- **Progress on Scottish Disability Payments.** Child Disability Payment was fully rolled out for new claims by, while Adult Disability Payment has been fully rolled out for new claims (instead of PIP) by July 2022. Existing claimants of Child DLA and PIP will switch over automatically to CDP/ADP (with no need for a new claim or new assessment. Those still awaiting the switch from Adult DLA to PIP will switch to ADP instead. ADP uses the same points system as PIP, but aims for a more disability friendly claims and assessment processes. See the PIP /ADP chapter.
- March 2023 White Paper proposes abolition of the LCWRA element and using PIP as basis for a new health element. ESA would stick with the WCA

Pension Credit

- **Mixed age pensioners:** For couples making **new** claims, both partners have had to be of pension age for claims with effect from 15th May 2019. Instead, a new couple usually has to claim UC . The end of the SDP Gateway no longer allowed disabled couples to start a new couple claim for the "legacy benefit" that match PC levels. However if the younger partner in a new couple gets Income-related ESA, then a new PC age partner can join them on the Ir-ESA claim.
- **Existing "mixed age" couples** stay as they are, *unless* they lose entitlement to PC. If they are still covered by HB (for those over pension age) over 65s, then they can restart their PC claim, but if not, even the shortest break in PC will mean starting as a new claimant most likely under UC
- **Amounts for children in PC -** started o1/02/19, as tax credits were closed off to all new claims. If you were getting help via CTC that continues for now. Otherwise new amounts similar to CTC are added to PC applicable amounts. But these will start to taper off at much lower incomes than CTC would do and the additions for most disabled children would be much less than under CTC.
- **Help with rent** - people over pension age can continue to make new claims for HB (in pension age) . Eventually - by October 2023 at the earliest - HB (in pension age) will be replaced by a new Housing Credit within PC.

Universal Credit

Most changes were described in the previous book, but dates for implementation hadn't been set:

- **The SDP gateway**- this stopped people who were getting a severe disability premium (SDP) within a "legacy benefit" from claiming UC until 27th January 2021. This no longer applies, certain changes of circumstances can now force a "natural migration" to UC, but with some protection.

(Continued on next page)

Universal Credit (continued)

- **Different amounts of SDP protection-** This began as a compensation for those migrated over before the SDP Gateway, then an a special Payment and then a special SDP version of the normal UC Transitional Element now that the UC computer is set up to do these ahead of managed migrations. DWP have been quibbling about the amounts, so that the payments do not yet reflect the full transitional protection that would apply under a "managed migration" .
- **Universal Credit (for sickness) and students:** From March 2020 , UC regs amended to clarify and confirm the UC policy intent that this exception is only intended for those who were on UC with LCWRA and then took up a course . See the UC chapter for more detail
- **Two Child Limit :** UC claims opened up to larger families - who could be hit by the "two child" policy - from 1st February 2019. However, this punitive policy at odds with other aims at reducing child poverty now operates in UC as it has done in Child Tax Credit. i.e. based on the *date of birth* of the children **not** the *date of the UC claim*, as had been proposed. This stops older children being caught retrospectively, but still damages life chances. Child poverty now runs at 55% in 3 child families and 77% in 4 child ones.
- **Help to claim:** Citizens Advice have been funded to help people through the process of making a claim. But this help is only funded until your first correct UC payment. DWP are not accepting first contact with Citizens Advice as your date of claim. From April 2022, it is only an online/telephone support as DWP reckon local JC+ offices can offer any face to face support.
- **Explicit consent:** Having been told there is no good data protection reason for UC's insistence on specific short term permission to talk to an adviser. DWP are working out a new approach. *Dear DWP, Please talk to a grown up in HMRC who can explain better ways of ensuring customer consent...*
- **Advance Payments scam:** the DWP opened themselves and benefit claimants - victims to a scam. Criminals were managing to get data for date of birth and NI number and able to make claims on people's behalf. They weren't interested in any main payment of UC, but more in taking the Advance Payment and running. This left the person affected with a repayment and having been switched from legacy benefits to UC without any transitional protection. Under pressure the DWP are ceasing to blame the victim, but initially you are still stuck having been migrated over to UC..
- **Work requirements while awaiting a WCA:** unlike ESA, UC will want to explore work conditionality while you are waiting for your work Capability Assessment. UC are promising to go away and have a think about this.
- **Managed Migration:** a pilot began in July 2019 in Harrogate and Ripon in North Yorkshire to bring everyone in the area over from legacy benefits to UC. The trial was to look at different ways of doing migration letters, support etc. Those switching in the trials had full transitional protection and run –ons of legacy benefits .
- Pilot stopped during the pandemic and picked up again in 2022, in small testing phases in a number of areas involving 250 people in each**.**
- **New dates for roll out of managed migration**
    - **2024 to the end of 2025 for most claimants**
    - But during **April 2028/29 for people who get Ir-ESA** if **not** also getting Child Tax Credit. This delay may ease worries and allow DWP to be more careful with this group but also saves £1,000 million a year:
        - those who "win" under UC sums may not get to UC as soon as they otherwise might (NB can always make a claim)
        - those who "lose" under UC sums, have more time to be caught up in a "natural migration" (without transitional protection) if circumstances change).
- **NB Natural migrations carry on**. For now, you can usually only switch to UC by either opting to claim UC instead of your legacy benefits or have to do so - via a "natural migration" - if certain changes in circumstances occur . Neither comes with transitional protection against any losses in the new UC sums.
- **Two week run–on of IS, Ib-JSA or Ir-ESA -** from July 2020 similar to the previous run on of HB, this run of these other legacy benefits (if you were getting them before claiming UC) aims to help bridge the gap to your first UC payment.
- **Improvements on Third Party deductions** DWP announced improvements in December 2018—in the way they do deductions to pay debts, fines and arrears. They will start more quickly and be explained more clearly on your UC Statement
- **Assessing income:** the rule remains *"what you receive in a month counts for that month".* A real problem when earnings may be uneven, if paid early/late, you receive arrears/bonuses for work done over previous months, different paydays etc. The only concession allows two monthly paydays to be re-allocated to separate MAPs .
- DWP are trying to work out potential solutions that doesn't upset the monthly assessment period system which is basic to the structure of UC and the computer. *See section on Income in part 2 of the UC chapter.*

Benefit changes, cuts and "welfare reform" in context

Benefits changes over recent years for people of "working age" (from 16 to 66) has been a tale of both simple cuts and ongoing *"Welfare Reform"* to change how the system works. Less money has made harder, but reform added migration anxiety and stress.

The last 13 years of hard times for those taxpayers who also need to claim benefits, has its origin in the Government's response to the 2008 banking crash and its view of what *"we are all in this together"* means.

It might seem the whole point of social security is in insuring against hard times it would be normal and accepted that cost of it might rise. But in the new narrative cause and effect have got strangely reversed.

That natural rise in social security spending would challenge any Government, but it would have choices whether to cut back on help to the most vulnerable, ask the less vulnerable to pay more or creatively grow the economy. The choice was "austerity" and the spin in aid of this policy included:

- it was all the last lot's fault, despite the new 2010 Government being signed up to all the previous spending plans and lax approach to banking regulation
- however single handedly, they had not only spent all the money in UK coffers but sparked a world wide recession !!!
- in particular, social security spending was "out of control" with far too much spent tackling child and pensioner poverty, a tax credit folly and not getting enough people off sickness benefits and into work.

So the remedy was to cut back on spending and "live within our means" , rather than focus on growing ourselves out of recession. Social security, being a large heading in the accounts, had to deliver some big savings in two main ways:

- cutting existing benefits as they stood; and
- making sure that welfare reforms - with much wider aims - also delivered big savings

The ensuing 13 years have led to real financial hardship as incomes have been squeezed , but perhaps even more damaging, a narrative of division, stigma and blame undermining people's mental health .

Cutting social security since 2011

The tables later in this chapter take us through all these changes. It may be the most recent and current changes that feel the most relevant to you or the people you help right now, but it is useful and instructive to remember the scale of what has happened.

Step 1 in cutting spending was to generally tighten existing benefits, with a focus on some in particular:

Tax credits

Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit were ideologically suspect , as they the "Big Idea" of the previous Government, just as Universal Credit is of the current one. It seemed wrong for, believers in smaller Government, for HMRC to be taking tax money in and paying some of it out straightaway:

- The first gentler bite— removing the small amounts—didn't cause huge losses but took out the idea that 90% of parents would be in the Child Tax Credit system. Many might just get this small amount that replaced a previous income tax allowance, but the idea was to tackle underclaiming and poor take –up, as CTC could automatically rise if finances changed .
- amounts for those in work were cut and hours rules tightened, leaving many families falling through a new hole in the system.
- previous problems solved were now unsolved again. Cutting the disregards when income improved between years meant once again far more people faced demands to pay back tax credits.
- A big wave of cuts planned for 2016 was stopped in Parliament, but another way was found...

It was almost as if it was intended to make tax credits harsher to make Universal Credit look better.

Housing Benefit:

HB spending could actually fit the narrative that spending was "out of control". But this wasn't because claimants were living it large, but rather it was down to the of the 1989 housing reforms, of the market response that was expected and of housing policy over the following years. So, once again it was "blame the victim" time by:

- tightening up the limits that Local Housing Allowance sets on the maximum rent that HB could cover for private sector tenants
- bringing in a "bedroom tax" to share the pain for council and housing association tenants
- various other cuts and changes

Benefit rates restrictions and freezes:

The biggest cut of all was the simple "stealth cut" of not uprating benefit rates fully, whether by changing the price index used or putting 1% limits or freezes on increases.

- A "stealth cut" , as your benefit amounts didn't fall, but just didn't keep up. Taking small amounts from lots of people means annual savings of £12 billion.
- When the freeze came off , with a small but welcome increase of the basic rate for many benefits to £74.35 a week, without the fiddles and

The £20 a week uplift made up this drop for some benefits but it stopped in September 2021 . Real pain had set in from the loss and the cost of living crisis staring in February 2022 for which effective help only arrived in July 2022.

Arbitrary limits

The benefits cap

While never generous, means tested benefits were at least based on some sense of meeting the needs of a particular household, although DWP never stopped to work out in practise how much would be required.

This assessment of need had already been left behind by restricting Housing Benefit leaving private tenants struggling to meet rent shortfalls. The Benefits Cap added to this, cutting a households HB even further.

The Benefits Cap was based on a sort of "politics of envy" in reverse . Working families feeling the pinch were encouraged not to question their lot, but rather to look down on those even more poor and powerless. Why should, the Government incited, a household on benefits get more than the average wage?

In fact, only 0.5% of benefit claimants did so, not because of excessive generosity of benefits, but mainly due to the high rents—even within LHA limits - in London and the South East of England. Any working family in that situation would also have qualified for HB and tax credits raising them even further ahead of average wages. Alongside help from Child Tax Credit for larger families.

The benefit of the Benefits cap to the Treasury was less financial - it saved very little money on the DWP budget, and may have added more in extra to costs for health, social services and housing. Rather its aim was perhaps more political in softening the public mood for far more lucrative cuts to come

The policy was hugely popular, but it was also very socially damaging . The Chancellor's wrath was turned on alleged "shirkers" and harnessing the resentment of strivers invited to note the curtains drawn across their more feckless neighbour's windows. So the scene was set for making "shirkers" feel less comfortable , until it was then the turn of the once favoured strivers.

Over time the Benefits Cap was tightened well below that average wage milestone, so that now a household anywhere in the UK - even paying a reasonable housing association rent - could be capped if they happened to have 3 or more children. .

Ramping up cuts after 2015

The Benefits Cap then served to help ramp up cuts to redress an injustice invented and an "unfairness to taxpayers" . It allowed the previously unthinkable to be accepted and acted on. Co-alition partners balked at *"balancing the budget on the backs of the disabled, children and the working poor"* before being dumped.

A reconstituted Government - bluer in tooth and claw—emerged from the 2015 election, with more details of how exactly a further £12 billion of cuts were to be achieved.

All the "low hanging fruit" of easy cuts to make - without too harsh consequences or controversy (but see ESA and PIP below)- had been made. Independent analysts tried to work out how the election promise was going to be made. And then the cunning plan was revealed:

- extend the Benefits Cap to hit well below average wages but use its mood music to do more
- further tighten the LHSA limits within HB and UC, so that in many areas no private sector property was affordable .
- take a lump out of ESA
- remove any third or subsequent child from any benefits support.
- Do a good thing and a very bad thing to tax credits - the "rabbit out of the hat" to everyone's surprise.

The good thing was to signal gradual real rises in the National Minimum Wage which by 2020 would mean less need for tax credit support. But less helpfully, the Chancellor proposed to hurt the once favoured strivers by cashing in on savings early by just cutting WTC.

But there was rebellion in Parliament and that proposal had to be dropped: well at least for the 2.3 million workers on WTC. But the plan was quietly continued for the 80,000 workers on Universal Credit, and it would be ready and waiting for new claims from those in low paid work and the 2.3 million as they switched over to UC.

This cunning plan was subsequently dropped under a new Prime Minister before they could hit.

"Welfare Reform"

The term "welfare reform" is often widened to cover all changes, but it is really about significant changes as old benefits are replaced with new ones And people with long term mental health issues, have been affected by them all.

These weren't all purely about cuts: there were many good intentions for a better system and even for being more generous than the old benefits on a promise of invest to save. But the Treasury have been keen to take their savings rather earlier.

Meanwhile the changes themselves have caused real harm and distress to people struggling with long term mental health issues. The three benefits concerned are:

- Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
- Universal Credit (UC)

Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)

The "welfare reform" intent:

- a kinder, gentler replacement for the controversial Incapacity Benefit (IB), to achieve reducing numbers in a more gradual gentler "win-win" way
- IB had been a simpler attempt at cutting numbers by re-assessing everyone under a medicalised points system. Advisers disliked the points based, snapshot, but at least welcomed that cuts to the actual benefits were minimal and that some groups - including those with severe mental health issues or on the highest rate of DLA - were exempt.
- ESA's aim was to focus more on what people could do and support moves into work under the mantra of *"work for those that can and support for those who cannot"*
- A "New Deal" offered earlier payments of extra amounts of benefit in exchange for engagement with real support, training and help in building up confidence to try work as and when health allowed. All encouraged by much more generous "permitted work" earnings limits.
- The aim was not to crudely re-assess existing claimants off benefits, but to better support moves into work, saving money and helping people to become more independent.

The more cutting reality

Sadly, after the 2008 financial crash, ESA seemed to switch priorities to just saving money asap:

- the nightmare of re-assessment on moving over to ESA was back on, with most people facing new assessments as part of migration over to ESA mainly between 2011 and 2014, though the assessment system collapsed delaying completion to 2018
- Many of the most unwell faced assessment for the first time as ESA had far fewer exceptions.
- Some 25% got a "no" on migration and over 50% on first time claims (although that included many who were back in work before the WCA was completed). This refusal rate was higher than that under the previous Personal Capability Assessment used by the old Incapacity Benefit and Income Support (for sickness). And that was already the toughest test amongst OECD countries.
- But if you can bear to challenge it that "No" - and an important change means that you can still receive an albeit reduced rate of ESA right through this - your chances of success at appeal are high.
- Other cuts have hit hard with new time limits, abolition of the Work Related Activity Component and a serious ratcheting up of sanctions.
- ESA does still offer more in work related support but much more pared back than intended. The financial incentives though remain although Universal Credit's confusions undermine them.

ESA then was full of positive intentions, but has perhaps ended up creating more harm, distress and worry than the much criticised benefit it replaced.

Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

Reform intentions

No plans for a better benefit, although some good was injected into a project whose main aim was to cut the bill for adult DLA in "working age" by 28% .

A case against DLA was made for its alleged failings but more to justify the case for change and for PIP. However, some greater care was taken as the targets for cuts were seen in public perception as "deserving" disabled, rather than suspect too unwell to work.

Greater care and consultation in preparing a points grid, and an emphasis on a new approach to medicals to do them properly this time.

The cutting reality

Well not quite as much as was intended. Some have been able to do better under PIP than DLA, but many have lost out, often after an assessment process has gone wrong:

- The promise was of a much more thorough and fair assessment than ESA, but it can feel like pot luck as to whether that time is used wisely and fairly.
- The success rates at appeal are way too high to imply serious accuracy in these expensive assessments.

Hopes for reform of PIP

- DWP are under pressure to focus less on assessment reports and to look at what you say and other evidence too. They have been piloting this.
- DWP also say they want to learn lessons from Covid lockdown times, when they had to rely on far more "on the papers" assessments
- Particular hope lies in the replacement of PIP in Scotland by Adult Disability Payment (ADP). ADP has disappointed some in not taking a new direction and staying with the PIP points system. But the promise a far friendlier and more supportive claims and assessment process. –see the PIP and ADP chapter for more on the differences based on Social Security Scotland's strapline of "fairness, dignity and respect" .
- Time will tell, but ADP may point the way to putting some reform into PIP too as advisers and campaigners get to compare similar– but potentially very different—benefits.

Universal Credit

People will be mainly meeting UC - a replacement for the six main "working age" means tested benefits, such as Income-related ESA and Housing Benefit - as they either start a new claim or switch over because of certain changes in circumstances. The main "managed migration" is yet to start.

So for now almost all new claims are for UC, but a large number—some 2.6 million - remain on legacy benefits".

Reform intentions:

- The aim, like for ESA, was to "invest to save" spending more on UC to pay off in enabling people to better move off UC into work
- One overall benefit meant none of the complications of switching benefits
- It would be easier to see how UC "makes work pay" work pay as you started in work and progressed to doing more hours or better pay for more responsibility.
- In the meantime UC was meant to be more generous than the old benefits, with tailored individual support,
- in return UC wants more "claimant responsibility" as you make your claim and keep it going with increased "work conditionality" based on accepting a "claimant commitment" tailored to your situation.
- Backing up a system geared to the responsibilities of someone in the workplace, would be lots more flexibilities for those who were identified as needing them and a fully funded Universal Support scheme.

Cutting reality

Lots of people thought the aims of UC were a good idea, but the reality has been rather compromised from the plans of its founders by:

- cuts to meet savings rather than earlier generosity. These added complexity and confusion
- over-simplistic design—UC is focussed too much on the jobseeker to work journey and is not yet fit for purpose for those who are in work already or may not be able to seek work e.g. unwell or carers
- a failure to fund Universal Support and quickly identify the vulnerable and refer them for help

The result has been:

- a much slower rollout of UC— this was due to be completed by October 2017, but now its 2029.
- But the system did very well taking on 2.3 million claimants in 5 weeks from late March 2020
- However, that same system also sets basic UC design errors in stone and makes it hard for DWP to apply "test and learn" if the computer says "No"
- a rather casual "make it up as we go along" means UC gets into decision making trouble, the courts and makes basic errors
- UC has aimed for too much simplification - some complexity comes from enabling a benefit to deal with the fact that people and lives can be complicated and flexibility be needed.
- real cuts to work incentives - Plan A involved a Work Allowance for all then a taper of 55p /£
- Cuts led to many not having any work allowance and 63p/£ taper, made worse by the late change not to merge Council Tax Benefit into UC. This adds a further 20 to 40% to the taper.
- Better news came for workers from November 2021, who had been hit like everyone by the end of the £20 uplift, but gained from a rise in these Work Allowances and a taper reset to 55p/£
- UC is still unhelpful approach if earnings vary and can even create variations all by itself.
- Support for those with limited capability trying out some work is less generous than ESA, while support for disabled workers (who might be under WTC in the old system) has been very confused.
- UC's current problem is a focus on sickness but forgetting about disability. The March 2023 proposes to swap this around, whereas a sensible UC really needs to understand both.
- The current UC disability gap also affects those with health issues busy as parents carers or jobseekers.
- There is at least currently no change to the assessment used for "sickness". UC uses the same WCA as used by ESA. Not that the WCA couldn't be improved but it does at least mean that you don't need to face a new WCA just because you may switch from Income-related ESA to UC ...
- UC do make a bad WCA worse, forgetting or delaying applying the WCA and with it any extra element. It also relies on UC work coach discretion if you become sick on UC and are awaiting a WCA. And it is this that the new White Paper proposes to extend to all who are unwell on UC.
- UC assumes that sanctions work with little evidence and can be "trigger happy" . Get advice if sanctioned: UC often backs down.
- Part of the case for asking for more from UC claimants , was that the system would offer Universal Support for those struggling with this. But this has never really happened , leaving UC demanding more claimant responsibility while abandoning its own.
- Financially, UC's take on the usual promise that *"no-one is worse off at the point of change"* when switching to a new benefits, is causing worry, hardship and added complexity.

UC again started off with a real intention to address real problems with the "legacy benefits". It goes back to a good intent of easing the path from "welfare into work" for all. Had UC been less obsessed with sanctions and hamstrung by cuts and the computer - a sensibly implemented UC could have been a really useful reform.

UC staff have done heroic things in making sense of a an flawed UC, and have often done what they can to make it work. The computer proved its capacity in 2020.

The technology then is now sound, but the benefit design of UC has too may gaps and limitations. The benefit is not yet fit for purpose to meet the needs of the many different groups that it aims to cover.

It may adopt the same basic structure as Income-related ESA and apply the same WCA, but it does so less reliably and more dysfunctionally at times.

The failure to organise Universal Support alongside the rollout of UC leaves the scheme unsuitable for the vulnerable people who may depend on it. Too much depends on the good luck of connecting with a good work coach.

Too many will be at risk of falling through the cracks of UC processes and ending up confused and without a large part of their income. UC is no yet safe enough to be a basic "safety net" .

Test and learn - or "make it up as you go along" - may be fine for tweaks and small niggles, but not gaping holes. Breaking usual principles of public law and accountability is not a healthy basis for a benefit.

UC could be fixable - some aspects of the computer can easily be changed, others are baked in. So much has been invested in this change, but there can be no such thing as too big to fail.

The problems may be entirely fixable with creative thinking and some wiser heads within DWP and the experience of advisers and the wisdom of legacy benefits and claimants, but it may need a bit of a new start.

Can cuts ever be right?

Now you may be thinking that Big Books sees all reform as doing harm to claimants and any savings from benefits budgets as an intrinsically wicked money grab to get the poorest to pay for the mistakes of the richest.

Not so. There is indeed huge scope to save money in the system:

- A housing policy that freed up social landlords and good private landlords to make affordable social housing available could hugely cut the bill for Housing Benefit and UC Housing Costs support
- A system that genuinely focussed on ESA and UC aims of supporting those that can into work, while effectively supporting those who clearly cannot would make real long term savings
- Moving towards the Real Living Wage does bring down the need and costs of in work support
- Real fair incentives in moving to work will be far more effective than expensive ill evidenced assumption of sanctions
- A humane and sensible approach to health assessments for sickness and disability could save millions in contracts for the current failed assessment systems

"Welfare reforms" that kept faith with the plans of those who first proposed them could have made really positive impacts on people's lives. But in their cut back, confused and twisted forms, any positive change can sometimes feel more by accident than by design of the rather changed purposes for ESA, PIP and UC.

Real reform needs to involve everyone, rather than very bright young things in Whitehall only. Top down centralism and penny pinching has undermined them.

And the term "welfare reform" should perhaps be borne in mind as rather separate from straightforward cuts to existing benefits that raid the increasingly threadbare pockets of the poorest and most vulnerable. There is nothing big or clever about halving the amounts for disabled children in the poorest households nor or refusing to recognise the needs or existence of third or subsequent children.

Making welfare reform work?

This could start by re-thinking and fixing the welfare reform that has taken place. ESA could go back to its roots, PIP may emerge unrecognisable in Scotland . UC though may be a harder ask, simply because of the scale of its problems and ambition, but each of the issues could be sorted.

For more ideas issues with UC and fixing them you might like to check out reports from:

- *Citizens Advice:* ***UC for single disabled people***
- *Child Poverty Action Group:* ***UC: What needs to change to reduce child poverty and make it fit for families?***
- *Disability Benefits Consortium:* ***Mending the holes: Restoring lost disability elements to UC***
- *DBC:* ***Recommendations for the 2020 Budget***

Early on, in the emergency changes to the main benefits and the new HMRC schemes a number of suggestions were made for changes now and looking to the future:

- *Citizens Advice:* ***Helping people through the pandemic***
- *TUC:* ***Fixing the "safety net"***
- *DBC:* ***Covid 19 Proposals***

Looking longer term, there is a sense that the current benefits system has been found wanting during the pandemic and various ideas are being actively considered for the future.

One of the biggest changes being considered - and a huge change - is switching over to a system based on a Universal Basic Income. A simple idea in theory, but with lots of issues to make it work in practise. You can see more at:

- *Reasons why:* ***https://citizensincome.org/citizens-income/what-is-it***
- *JRF:* ***Reasons for caution**:*
- *Commission on Social Security:* ***Have your say in a current consultation on a practical proposal.***

We will catch up with these ideas and explore in more detail in the next edition of the Big Book of Benefits and Mental Health

Devolved differences

Another important question for those of us living in the devolved nations is whether the experience of these cuts will be different across borders and over the water between the home nations and between different parts of England?

The answer is and increasingly - yes, both as the result of localisation in England, intervention by devolved Governments and a very different sense kind of public debate on social security in other nations.

For a Government claiming to be compassionate, one-nation Conservatives and strong unionists, welfare cuts present a double challenge:

⇒ the determination to make the poorest pay for the banking crash does not speak well to "all being in this together" and has challenged more shared and compassionate values in much of the UK.

⇒ welfare reform for example has been a powerful factor in both a threat to the Good Friday Agreement in N. Ireland and the case for independence in Scotland.

So far differences are small in the devolved nations, but are likely to get rather bigger in time.

Localisation and current differences.

Traditionally benefits have been a UK-wide matter, simply to allow all UK citizens to have the same rights to social security wherever they live or might move to.

It comes, historically from a sharp resentment against the failed Poor Law, which dumped all the responsibilities on local councils ill-equipped to afford social support during the 1930s. The hearts and sympathies of councillors were strong in many areas, but the coffers soon ran dry and resources had to be eked out through increasingly harsh "means tests".

The first small differences were down that same road of offloading responsibilities (including financing) in the name of localisation of :

- Council Tax Benefit
- parts of the old discretionary Social Fund
- greater reliance on local Discretionary Housing Payments to deal with hard cases as LHA was cut back, the Benefits Cap tightened and the bedroom tax introduced.

Localisation in England

In England, this means it is down to your local council to decide:

- if you can get full help with the council tax,
- if there is some sort of Local Welfare Payment for one off grants and crisis loans, and
- how difficult it may be to get a top up to meet shortfalls in your rent.

It now means a bit of a postcode lottery, that may in part depend on your council's political complexion but also on their resources to make up the cuts they have been handed.

Localisation in these small areas has brought back some of the variation from parish to parish of the old Poor Law.

Different approaches in other nations

In the devolved nations, this localisation had to go through the respective devolved Governments. All three nations decided to make up the cuts handed over by UK Government and run national schemes

⇒ to keep a single scheme to replace the discretionary Social Fund - the Scottish Welfare Fund, the Discretionary Assistance Fund in Wales and Discretionary Support in N. Ireland.

⇒ to top up council tax support - and so maintain Council Tax Benefit in all but name - in Scotland and Wales. In N. Ireland, poll tax fuel was never dared to be added to existing flames so "son of poll tax" council tax was not needed and the old rates system still applies.

⇒ To add support to local Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs). In Scotland the DHP has been topped up, so that anyone caught by the "bedroom tax" is likely to get a DHP ahead of the powers to abolish the bedroom tax there.

UC payment arrangements

Another area of likely common difference that is not related to localisation is in payment arrangements for Universal Credit (UC):

⇒ **Scotland** and **N. Ireland** currently both allow a free choice for people to receive payments twice monthly and/or have their rent paid directly to a landlord

⇒ Both are looking for powers to split payments between partners . Currently it's very rare across the UK with only 100 such split payments

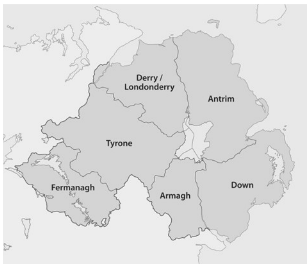
⇒ **Wales** is actively looking at pushing to have UC payment arrangements devolved to Wales too

Other changes in Scotland and N. Ireland

Bigger differences are emerging in coming years as:

- **N. Ireland** has a set agreement for new dates for welfare reform changes and extra mitigations for those adversely affected
- **Scotland** looked less different to start off, but has far more potential to change devolved benefits or introduce some new ones.

Definite differences in N. Ireland



Welfare Reform was one of the major issues that came close to causing the collapse of the Good Friday agreement.

Legally, the benefits system in N. Ireland is entirely separate, requiring its own legislation with regulation making powers in Stormont, with the civil service department being the Department for Communities (rather than DWP) and administered by the Social Security Agency (not Jobcentre Plus).

In practise, N. Ireland has always enacted the same system as the rest of the United Kingdom, to ensure equal rights to social security. But on this issue Ulster - and in particular Sinn Fein and the SDLP - said "No". They were not going to pass the Welfare Reform (Northern Ireland) Act as it stood.

The eventual compromise saw the Act passed in November 2015 as part of a Fresh Start Agreement. For a start this means different dates for the arrival of many of the big changes already experienced in the UK

It also includes a specific list of "mitigations" that will ease the transition over to the new system:

⇒ UC powers: to pay UC more often than monthly, with rent direct to landlords and amounts for children paid separately,

⇒ Discretionary Support to replace the just abolished parts of the Social Fund

⇒ a £345 million - over 4 years to 2020 - package of "mitigation" measures,- largely funded from the NI. Budget - to ease the transition to the new system, to include welfare support payments to:
   - continue payment of DLA until an appeal for anyone disallowed on switching to PIP
   - allow a further run on for 12 months at a reduced rate if the appeal is unsuccessful
   - pay the equivalent of one of the standard rates for a year if someone scores 4 or more but less than 8 points at PIP re-assessment.
   - Run –on Carer's Allowance for a year if lost because your caree loses PIP.
   - Cover losses for those switching from Working Tax Credit to UC .
   - Assist where UC payments are delayed.

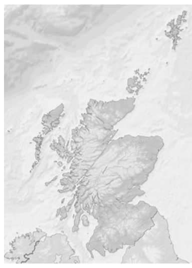
⇒ There will also be a national helpline for people who are sanctioned and additional advice resources to help with sanctions and UC issues.

So although, N. Ireland is about to face all the changes and challenges detailed in the rest of the Big Book, that switch over may feel a lot easier.

Dates for welfare reform in N. Ireland

- *Abolition of ESA in Youth – from 7.02.16*
- *MRs and direct appeals – from 23.05.16*
- *Benefits cap – from 31.05.16 – DHPs and WSPs*
- *PIP starts for new claims from 20.06.16 and for natural reassessment and "invitations" from December 2016*
- *Abolition of HB Family Premium and less backdating 5.09.16*
- *Financial Support from 31.10.16 with Discretionary Support replacing CCGs and Crisis Loans (emergencies) Advance Payments when awaiting first benefit*
- *Time limiting of ESA from 28.11.16. WSP 12 months*
- *Lone parents and IS - age of youngest child reduced from 7 to 5 from 16.01.17*
- *Bedroom Tax – introduced from 20.02.17*
- *Universal Credit - N.I went straight to "full service UC, going live for most new claims between 25.09.17 and December 2018 . Switching over to UC then fits in with the rest of the UK*

Bigger potential differences in Scotland



Again, cuts to the poorest and most vulnerable have not gone down well here either. Defence against the cuts has become a powerful part of the nationalist narrative, contributing to a closer than anticipated independence referendum result and an SNP tide in constituency seats at Westminster and Holyrood.

Differences began with small but important differences in response to the localisation agenda, so far , have been highlighted as a distinctly Scottish different approach, although the same choices have also been made by Labour in Wales and across parties in N. Ireland and large parts of England too.

The Scotland Act, 2018 implemented the Smith Commission Agreement on increased devolved powers for Scotland.

These includes taking control of some rather important benefits - only 15% of the overall social security spend - but these will be benefits that feature rather larger in the lives of those with health issues or lowest incomes.

In contrast to N. Ireland, then, it is **not** a one off set menu of new implementation dates and mitigations, which leaves that Province initially looking the most different.

Rather it's the devolution of new powers that offers a far greater potential for the Scottish Parliament to make a bigger difference over time.

The new devolved powers in Scotland include:

⇒ **full control over** :

- *AA, DLA and PIP* - the replacement Disability Payments adopt the same criteria to ease transition from UK benefits to Scottish ones (and vice versa) . But with a much kinder, gentler approach to encouraging claims and assessing them. Once settled in there could be potential for more radical change. t
- *Carer's Allowance* - so far a supplement to bring CA rates up to the standard levels of other benefits and beyond with higher annual increases. In time the supplement will merge with CA into a single Carer's Payment. t
- *the regulated Social Fund* : so far changes have made for more generous maternity grants, funeral expenses and winter fuel payments
- *Industrial Injuries benefits:* no changes planned so far.

⇒ Some powers over UC:

- Payment - Scottish Choices for twice monthly payments and/or rent paid direct to landlord. Split payments to couples to follow.
- control over UC Housing Costs element - the planned abolition of the "bedroom tax"

⇒ **Powers to add new discretionary top ups** to:

- any of the benefits that are not devolved e.g. to plug UC disability or "in work" gaps
- give short term support e.g. boost DHPs and support for prisoners

⇒ **Powers to create new benefits in other devolved areas** such as social services, health and education

⇒ Control over future employment programmes

What this will actually mean in practise depends partly on the ideas of both the next Government and across the Scottish Parliament.

No one party has a monopoly on a more generous approach to welfare and there are a range of ideas being proposed. The spirit then seems very willing, but the devil may be in the price tag.

The start of a Scottish benefits

All parties have unanimously passed a Social Security (Scotland) Act 2016

This involved extensive consultations around a "once in a lifetime opportunity" to determine a new framework for the benefits coming over and any more that might follow.

It very encouragingly talks about *"social security"* as a "human right" and establishes a new **Social Security Scotland** agency to take over the running of devolved benefits from the DWP in Scotland. Some devolution powers will be in alterations to DWP benefits and the DWP will be still running most benefits in Scotland.

Social Security Scotland has a statutory duty to:

⇒ treat claimants with *"dignity, fairness and respect"* which it even includes on its logo; and

⇒ to advise claimants on their full entitlement.

The first payments from the new agency involved a twice yearly Carer's Allowance Supplement to bring the DWP's Carer's Allowance up to a current equivalent of £74.70 . The value of the supplement is ignored in other benefits.

Other benefits are beginning to be paid. You can find out more about the new agency at: **https://www.socialsecurity.gov.scot**

You can see the latest timetable for the roll out of Scottish benefits in the table on the next page. Further details and updates on what and when can be found by following the links form: **https://www.gov.scot/policies/social-security**

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) has devolved but remained under the DWP short term

Adult Disability Payment is now fully up and running and those on PIP in Scotland will move over to ADP, with the same structure and points as PIP to ease transfers, but a very different approach to the claiming and assessment process . We cover those differences in detail in the renamed *"PIP and ADP"* chapter,

A similar process for Child DLA transferring over to Scottish Disability Payment.

Time will tell, but we certainly like intention to:

- make it much easier to claim ADSP and CDP
- believe what claimants say, measured against conditions and other medical evidence
- avoid face to face assessments completely under CDP and mostly under ADP, but if needed to NHS health professionals
- change the criteria for special rules.
- run benefits with *"dignity, fairness and respect"*

These changes generally - but disability benefit ones especially - may not just be of interest to readers in Scotland. If real differences emerge in people's experiences, then there will be campaigns to import best practise from Scotland to the other nations. But Scotland only inherits the same budget as PIP and Child DLA, so the devil may be in the costs of change.

The Big Book and devolution

I will be keeping an eye on the differences that may develop across England from localisation, in Scotland as a result of devolution and in N. Ireland as "mitigation measures' take effect. For now, we will run differences in Scotland alongside equivalent benefits in the rest of the UK to draw out differences But I welcome kind comments and suggestions from over the borders and seas as to how the Book can work best for you.

tommessere@gmail.com

Devolved benefits in Scotland

Date	*Change*	*Notes & Comment*
October 2018	Carers Allowance Supplement *A twice yearly supplement - with an extra payment made in recognition od coronavirus stresses - to bring DWP Carer's Allowance up to other main benefit rates of currently £74.35*	*A main campaign pledge of the current Scottish Government this mainly tops up Cares Allowance of £67.25 a week to £74.35 a week though and extra supplement payment in 2020 ads more. The extra is ignored in means tested benefit sums, so you don't lose it. The aim is to merge it into a Scottish CA, but taking that over is administratively complicated, so won't happen until 2022*
April 2018	Best Start Pregnancy and Baby Payment *Replaced the Social Fund Maternity Payment , with a first grant of £600 and ongoing payments of £300 for subsequent births*	*More generous and a long way to restoring the cut when the old Maternity Payment became only payable once, making a real difference to new parents.*
June 2019	Best Start School Age Payment *A new payment of £250 for low income parents when a child starts school*	*Another expensive time for parents, this new grant helps children with the expenses of starting school.*
Summer 2019	Best Start Early Learning Payment *Another **new** payment of £250 when a child starts nursery*	*Another payment to help at another expensive key stage for the youngest children.*
Autumn 2019	Funeral Expenses Assistance *Replaces SF Funeral Expenses Payment with some key differences:* • *widening the scope of who can claim by 40%* • *paying a bit more than the previous FEP.*	*Similar in principle to the old FEP but pays a bit more and e.g. does not deny help if someone else of equal close relationship in the tables is not on benefits. A real improvement, but still falls short of the costs of a simple basic funeral.*
Autumn 2019	Young Carers Grant *A new annual grant - that started at 300 - for carers aged 16, 17 or 18 to 18, who are caring for over 16 hours but who are not able to get Carer's Allowance*	*The hours rules are a bit more complicated and you can see the full criteria at:* *A small recognition for a group who may be part time caring perhaps while still at school but not for the 35 hours required for CA*
April 2020	Funding and policy control to Holyrood *From April 2020, the full funding and policy responsibility for all benefits being devolved was passed to the Scottish Parliament.* • *Actual running remains with DWP on an agency basis until arrangements are securely in place to move over to Scotland.*	*The buck now stops in Holyrood for the way all the devolved benefits are run. It will be a much more complex task to smoothly move over regular benefits to Social Security Scotland, so it will take time. That is when any main changes in approach might happen, though small changes within current structures could be asked of DWP. The timetable has been disrupted by coronavirus impacts and new dates are awaited*
was May but delayed to Nov 2020	Scottish Child Payment *This began as a £10 a week payment per child under 6, living in low income families (i.e. on qualifying benefits) Now rolled out to all children under 16 and increased to £25*	*An extra amount to cover younger children in families on low income, with no arbitrary limit, so all children who qualify will be covered. Helps offset Two Child policies and the growth in Child Poverty . Ignored as income in other benefits so helps reduce the impact of child poverty (along with e.g. free school dinners for all primary age children) .*
New date set with pilots ahead of Autumn 2021	Child Disability Payment *CDP is now open to all new claims for what was Child DLA. Claims up to age 16, but can carry on to 18 before a need to switch to ADP below. Same broad criteria but no use of assessments and aims to ease and support the process. Those on Child DLA have started transfers to CDP automatically from late 2021*	*DWP tries to be a bit more friendly with child DLA, but there is still plenty of room for improvement. Pushing back the swap to ADP - the replacement for PIP - to 18 will be a much better time for young people in transition. The test will be in how SSS can make the experience better, boost take-up, reduce daft decisions and historic fall off from child DLA to adult DLA .*

Devolved benefits in Scotland *(continued)*

Date	*Change*	*Notes & Comment*
Delayed New dates tbc	Pension Age Disability Payment *Replaces AA for new claims, existing claimants will switch with no need for re-assessment. No health assessments and longer awards likely. A new more open definition of special rules*	*A kinder, gentler version of AA, starting off with identical criteria. DWP already tend to believe older people more and awards are more successful. But again promotion and help in claiming could make a real difference to the numbers getting help and their experience of claiming.*
Winter 2020	extending Winter Heating Assistance *This Replaces the SF Winter Heating Payments - for people over pension age.* *But the plan is to extend help to other groups starting in winter 2021/22 with* ***Child Winter Heating Assistance*** *for a child getting the highest rate of DLA/ CDP Care Component.*	*A useful start on extending the Winter Fuel Payment to those with extra heating costs because of disability. Further plans for late 2021*
Spring 2021	Carers allowance for more than one child *A new extra payment of CA to parents looking after more than one child with a disability.*	*A start on recognising the extra work involved for carers looking after more than 1 person with disabilities.*
July 2022	Adult Disability Payment *ADP now rolled out to new claims across Scotland, replacing PIP. Those getting PIP will be transferred automatically to ADP between Summer 2022 and Summer 2024 . ADP is big one for Big Books due to:* • *the degree of changes planned; and* • *the potentially hugely positive impact for Big Book of Benefits and Mental Health readers.* *ADP will follow the same main criteria as PIP- so no re-assessment on switching over - Phew !!* *But the promise is that ADP will feel very different for those making a new claim, coming up for a re-assessment or moving over from DLA to ADP (rather than PIP). See the PIP and ADP chapter for more details of the likely differences*	*For many the problem with PIP hasn't been the switch to a points makes prizes grid, but the difficulties claiming it and the way assessments have been done. The plans for a much kinder, gentler version of PIP could make a huge difference.* *The advantages of the basic benefit staying the same are:* • *a) there is no need to worry about having to do are-assessment, as you will move from PIP to DAWAP at the same rate and* • *b) any real differences between the experiences in Scotland and in the rest of the UK will be very clear.* *So we may all want to watch this DAWAP space and say "Dear DWP , Why not adopt it this for PIP?"*
late 2022 , paid in Feb 2023	Winter Heating Payment *Replacing weekly Cold Weather Payments with a fixed £50 payment that does not depend on particular temperatures to trigger a payment .* *NB a separate Child Winter Heating Assistance is paid for households with a child receiving Child DLA/CDP*	*These are potentially triggered more often in Scotland than other parts of the UK . Whether or not issues with the criteria - currently that a sufficiently cold snap has to last for 7 days - remains to be seen.*
April 2022	Carer's Payment *Taken over fully by SSS, with Carer's Allowance Supplement merged into the basic amount. This could be a time to rethink the whole way carer's are supported.* *A separate* ***Young Carer's Grant*** *worth £326 a year is payable to young carers aged 16, 17 and 18 who are caring for 16 hours a week but not for 35 hours. If for 35 hours+ claim CA and CAS instead.*	*The main reason for this coming last is that Carers Allowance has quite a complex array of links with many other benefits and if it carries on in its current form will need to have all that remapped to Carer's Payment.* *There is an opportunity to rethink the whole approach to supporting carers in consultation with carers groups. Would it be better to shift the support to being an extra non-means tested benefit rather than an earnings replacement one— e.g. to move it from Step 1 to Step 3?*

Welfare Reform for those over pension age

Date	*Change*	*Notes & Comment*
April 2011	Changes in pension age *Accelerate speed of equalisation of pension age - with equal pension age achieved by Nov 2018. Now an earlier phasing to 66 from 2018 to 2020. Then to 67 between 2026/8 and 68 from 2037-39- both earlier*	*Equalised the age for men and women claiming Retirement Pension, Pension Credit by 2018, now the new common age is rising to 66 by October 2020. It will stay there, then start to rise to 67 between 2026 and 28. As it rises, so doe the minimum age to claim Attendance Allowance.*
April 2011	Retirement Pension annual increase *To be increased by the highest of: Retail price increase, average earnings or 2.5% each year* ***Increase of £450 million pa by 2014/15***	*Restores link with earnings and offers a "triple lock" - highest of earnings, prices or 2.5% . Real increases over time. Universal benefits - e.g. Cold Weather Payments, TV licenses, bus passes - are protected. Some real rises but is this sustainable over time?*
April 2011	Pension Credit annual increases ***Guarantee Credit** only rises by the cash value of the Retirement Pension increase not % but now rises in line with SRP*	*PC Guarantee Credit increases have varied between matching the % increase of SRP in good years to just the cash amount, leading to a real cut. Offset for some by cuts to / abolition of PC Savings Credit.*
April 2011/3/6	***Savings Credit** frozen in 2011 and cut from 2013 . Thresholds are rising and maximum SC limits falling. Does not apply to new claims if reaching pension age after April 2016.* ***Cut of: £330 million pa by 2014/15***	*SC was a small bonus for those on low incomes who have saved/set up small pensions for retirement, to offset PC's usual loss £ for £. Fewer now qualify receive less. PC claimants u 5 before from before April 2016 can still get SC added at 65 / those on SC carry on, as it slowly reduces*
April 2016	"Single tier" New Retirement Pension • *Pensions Act 2014 - merges Retirement Pension, additional state pensions (e.g. SERPS, S2P) and PC (Savings Credit) into a single state pension at a full rate of £155.65 a week.* • *35 years NI for full pension and minimum of between 7 and 10 years for any pension.* • *Amounts will be reduced for years "contracted out" and paying into works schemes* • *A comparison between pension under the old rules and the new rules*	*Simplifies RP and reduces gender inequalities (from old NI contribution conditions and differential accumulation of earnings related second pensions). Aim is a simpler higher non-means tested base on which to build other provision.* *Cuts means testing as new basic rate **above** basic PC amounts. But PC will remain as a top up for disability/carers and as it newly takes on help with rent and children .* *Short term protection for new claims, but long term everyone will be paying full contracted in NI, but getting less than these would have paid under the old system. See the* ***Big Book of Benefits and Money for Older People***
February 2019	PC and tax credits • *New 'child additions' as Child Tax Credit closed to new claims - from 1st February 2019* • ***Workers after pension age:** Those not on PC lose from no new claims for WTC with no access to UC equivalent.*	*Same amount in PC as under CTC, but they will start tapering off much earlier than CTC and much more steeply. A big cut for grandparents bringing up grandchildren.* *Inability to start a WTC claim nor have UC style earnings rules in PC. A loss for those not on PC, as any WTC for those on PC was only taken away from PC.*
May 2019	Mixed age couples • *both partner in a couple will have to be of 'pension age' to qualify for PC. Otherwise claim UC. Or in some cases legacy benefits* • *Mixed age couples on PC at 15.05.2019 can stay on PC as long as they do not come off PC and HB (in pension age) for even a day*	*Mixed age couple changes from 15th May 2019 (backdated claims were possible until 13.08.19). New couples where one is under pension age have to claim UC with big losses– as UC has no pensioner element or severe disability one unlike legacy benefits. End of the SDP Gateway in 2021 no longer stops UC and allow a legacy benefits claim. Only route is if a pension age partner joins an Ir-ESA claim.* *Those already claiming PC at that time will not be affected., unless they come off PC and/or HB for over 65s for a day Lose one and can get it back as long as retain the other,*
2028/29	• ***A new 'housing credit'** within the Pension Credit to replace HB in last stages of UC rollout* • ***? New capital limit**: if & when tbc. If so, would be higher than other means tested benefits*	*HC will mean more people will be entitled to PC, even if only to access help for rent, so this might improve PC take-up. Possibly £32,000 limit, but also may **not** happen*

Benefit changes across all “working age” benefits

see also other changes under individual benefit over the next few pages and in the relevant chapters in the rest of the Book

Date	*Change*	*Notes & Comment*
April 2011	Change in uprating for all benefits *Increases will be set by the Consumer Price Index (which produces **consistently lower increases**) instead of the Retail Price Index or the Rossi index.* ***CUT of £5,840 MILLION pa by 2014/15***	*Those receiving any benefit will see its value decrease over time, lessening their ability to pay for essentials. Will be the biggest cut of all by 2015* *e.g. April 2013 increase 2.2% not 2.6%*
October 2012	Civil Penalties *introduced for claimant error*	*Local Authorities and the DWP have discretion to enforce a civil penalty of £50 to claims if an error made by claimant*
April 2013	1% limit uprating limit *Many benefits restricted to 1% for next 3 years* *PC Savings Credit – cuts in sums ahead of abolition*	*Real cuts of 4% over next 3 years for many; an extra 200,000 children in poverty. DWP claims protection for e.g. carers, disabled and ESA Support Component but their basic allowances are still hit*
April 2013	Benefits Cap ***Household Benefits cap** on total benefits income for “working age” claimants (unless on DLA/PIP or Working Tax Credit) at “median income” (c £350pw for single adult, £500 for couples), applied initially by cuts in HB, but in future all UC. Phased in across UK by September 2013.* **CUT of £270 million pa by 2015**	*Main impact was in high rent areas – where people have same low disposable benefits income, but larger rent bills, due to housing market/policy failure. Risks of homelessness, migration and ghettoization. Also affects larger households across the UK . Main purpose may be more political than financial n financial: to focus resentment amongst working poor against those even poorer and more powerless than them, rather than look higher. And so soften opinion up for real cuts,*
April 2014	Overall Benefits Cap on spending *Total benefits spending - excluding Pensions and JSA - capped at current levels £119.5 billion*	*Little overall impact in itself. More political than financial impact. The real impact comes from the choices and cuts already made/planned to achieve it.*
March 2015	Deaths under Sanction: *Dispatches programme reveals DWP are looking over 49 deaths - 40 of which were suicides among those under sanctions. Parliamentary Select Committee causes for pause and review.*	*The poorly evidenced and out of control sanctions policy continues to target those with mental health problems. With other cuts, they continue to be implicated in increased demand on mental health services, harm to mental health and some deaths.*
April 2015	The 2015 Election: *Conservatives confirm October announcement of a further £12 billion cuts in “working age” benefits, but are criticized for only spelling out 10% of them*	*Left the Conservatives as the only party wanting to cut £12 billion and to retain the bedroom tax. Their former coalition partners agreed on austerity, but opposed “a plan to balance the books on the backs of the working age poor”*
July 2015	An “emergency budget” *Because the last lot left finances in such difficulties? Revealed the remaining £10.8 billion of benefit cuts*	*IFS criticized lack of accountability in a policy that requires some dramatic changes, straining both “one nation” Toryism and the UK. See the rest of this table for the cuts*
April 2016	Benefits and tax credits freeze *A freeze on “working age” benefits - i.e. no uprating of benefits or LHA allowances until April 2020 - except for protected elements (e.g. disability, carers and ESA support component)* ***Cuts of £4,000 million by 2020***	*Continues / accelerates this stealth cut that has seen real cuts of 8% on bare 1960s subsistence rates. The basic £74.35 rate should be £89.15 in 2020/21. Limited effect at first, as inflation measures were low, but still a year on year real cut. Protection for carers, the sick and disabled is only partial. The freeze on LHA further reduced the range of housing available*
November 2016 & first increase in April 2023	Tightening the Benefit Cap *The maximum amount was reduced to a two tier:* • *in London £23,000 (£25,323*) couples/families and £15,410 (£16,967*) if singles* • *outside London:£20,000 (£22,020*) couples/ family and £13,400 (£14,753*) singles.* *Frozen until 1st 5-yearly review in April 2023 gave the annual 10.1% increase but then refrozen .* *(* figures in brackets apply from April 2023)* ***Cuts of £430 million by 2020***	*No longer any attempt to justify re average earnings. Extends the cap across the UK - e.g. any family with 3 or more children in social housing would be capped - if not caught by the Two Child limit . Exemptions continue: e.g. if someone on DLA/PIP or in work. Carers are also now exempt, (but only after yet another Court ruling on unlawful disability discrimination by the DWP)*

Benefit changes across all "working age" benefits *(continued)*

see also other changes under individual benefit over the next few pages and in the relevant chapters in the rest of the Book

Date	*Change*	*Notes & Comment*
March 2019	No end to Benefits Freeze? *CPAG concern that end of austerity did not mean an end to the benefits freeze*	*CPAG concern expressed that the Spring Statement signaled another real cut to many benefits. See:* https://cpag.org.uk/news-blogs/news-listings/spring-statement-no-justification-ongoing-benefits-freeze *DWP have stated an intention not to renew it in 2020, but that may depend on how the finances are doing*
March 2019	NAO Supporting Disabled People into Work *The National Audit Office expressed disappointment that the DWP still does not know what works in supporting people into work.*	*The NAO noted that despite UC ambitions, work coaches can only be expected to do so much and have limited disability and coaching training. Some evidence that time spent on this does pay off, but scope to do this may be limited as caseloads rise.* *NB: the provisions for working with "limited capability" are much less secure under UC and the concept of a "disabled worker is lost.*
May 2019	Latest Benefit Cap stats • *75,000 capped at May 2019 up 12% on last stats 9% have been caught by new lower limits* • *HB caps down 2,500 to 49,700, but UC caps up 11,000 to 25,690* • *70% are lone parents almost all with a child under 5* • *HB caps: 18% on JSA, 12% on ESA and 53% on IS*	*A switch from HB to UC seems normal, given the switch over, but why such a growth in UC caps?* *The policy no longer relates to "fairness" between workers and taxpayers as the post Nov 16 limits are arbitrary It now saves some cash, but the purpose remains political—to pretend that people on benefits are living it large so more and bigger cuts are needed. The cap is hitting hard in all areas, but it is still only 4% of claimants*
	Government refuses to limit scope of cap • *The Work and Pensions Committee had proposed limiting the Benefits cap only to the 18% with a work requirement. Government said no to:* ◊ *to exemption if in temporary accommodation* ◊ *to stopping the cap biting deeper under UC (apparently too difficult to do right thing) or to end caps caused by weird ways UC assesses earnings (easier to do the wrong thing correctly?)*	*And the cap was meant to be a measure to encourage a move into work. But work is good for those not required to seek it* *"The prejudicial effect of the cap is obvious and stark. As we on the Committee have argued repeatedly, families affected by the cap will, by definition, receive an income that is far short of what they need to house, feed, clothe and warm themselves and their children - if you believe benefits are at that "adequate" level in the first place."*
June 2019	IFS - working v. pension age gap growing *The Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) noted that the gap in value of benefits has grown from 30% to 130% since 1990*	*For more details see:* https://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/14211
July 2019	Child support workers see destitution *The Buttle Trust survey noted that:* • *54% of child support workers see families in destitution* • *37% see families hit by cuts on a daily basis* • *30% see families hit by UC delays* • *40% see a cut in local support*	*Evidences "balancing the books on poor families and the disabled"* *For more details see:* *https://disabilitybenefitsconsortium.wordpress.com/2019/07/16/has-welfare-become-unfair-a-new-report-by-the-disability-benefit-consortium/*
	Disabled people lose four times more *The Disability Benefits Consortium (DBC) found:* • *average losses of £1,200 a year compared to £300 for those without disabilities* • *the greater the need the bigger the loss* • *without help for average disability costs of £583 a month, people lost access to transport, independence and jobs*	*Evidences "balancing the books on the backs of poor families and the disabled". For more details see:* *https://disabilitybenefitsconsortium.wordpress.com/2019/07/16/has-welfare-become-unfair-a-new-report-by-the-disability-benefit-consortium/* *Recommendations include: : simpler claim processes, review assessments, use supporting evidence more sensibly, reform MRs, improve tribunals, monitor disability living costs*

Benefit changes across all "working age" benefits *(continued)*

see also other changes under individual benefit over the next few pages and in the relevant chapters in the rest of the Book

Date	*Change*	*Notes & Comment*
April 2020	End on last adult dependency increases in non means tested benefits *A final goodbye to the last remaining adult dependant additions within Step 1 earnings replacement*	*These amounts may not have been large, but further undermine non-means tested benefits and represent an important loss . Some may get a top up instead from Step 2 but won't if income or savings are too high.*
July 2020	Run on of legacy benefits *Switching to UC already came with a two week run on of HB, but this was now extended to Income, Support, Income-related ESA and Income-based JSA*	*A welcome extra help during the 5 week wait for UC reducing the need for the debt of Advance Payments. Still important to time any switches well i.e. after receiving last usual payments of benefits.*
September 2021	End of Coronavirus special support *Farewell to furlough, the £20 uplift and a continuing "return to business as usual" across benefits*	*Extra financial support had definite end dates, with serious impacts on those affected. Some gains for workers in UC in November 2021 helped.* *Business as usual has been more gradual . Telephone and video assessments and appeals seem here to stay , Re-assessments for existing claims are returning but depending on capacity - big delays continue in e.g. PIP*
During 2022-23	Changes in for Terminal Illness *A move from 6 months to 12 months`;* • *Quickly via secondary legislation to ESA and UC* • *But slower change needing primary legislation for disability benefits - with follow up completed by April 2023* *NB Scottish disability benefits already have their own wider definition without any fixed time guide, certified by a BASRIS certificate*	*Extends the period in question from 6 months to 12 months. During the change the DWP were happy to accept DS1500 for all if 6 months applied but needed a different SR1 form for ESA and UC if relying on 12 months.* *DWP do like their "rigidly defined areas of doubt and uncertainty", but case law means the change is not so great (bar fitting in better with NHS thinking. The test remains:* • *Would it be a surprise if death occurred within 6/12 months?* • *Even if realistic hopes of a good deal longer* • *Renewable awards are made for 3 years*
Nov 2022	Autumn Financial Statement - benefits • ***Full benefits uprating*** *- see below* • ***LHA rent limits*** *for HB and UC remain frozen* • *Extension of extra* ***Cost of Living Payments*** • ***Benefits Cap*** *rises first time in 5 years but just by annual 10.1% then fixed again* • ***Energy Price Guarantee*** *to continue after April 2023 but at a typical bill of £3,000* • *Roll out of in the* ***In-work Progression Offer*** *within UC, extending work conditionality* • ***Migration*** *to UC from Ir-ESA delayed to 2028/29* • ***HB (pension age)*** *merger into PC now 2028/29* • ***Support for Mortgage Interest*** *changes: only a 3 month wait and now can apply if earning* • *extension of the* ***Household Support Fund*** • *changes to* ***NI rates*** • *Increases in the* ***National Minimum Wage****.*	*Continuing freeze of LHA causes real pain at a time when rents rising 20% + partly due to impacts of the September 2022 budget.* *Benefits Cap change means more people gain from annual uprating than would have done, but problems remain* *The energy Price Guarantee continuing was welcome as was the March 2023 change to stay at a guide amount of £2,500, helped by falling wholesale prices and likely costs of the policy* *In– work progression means more people in work will feel pressured into more hours or face sanctions* *The delay to Ir-ESA migration saves money for the Treasury in two ways: those who stand to gain from UC may switch later than they might and those that lose may be more likely to switch another way without transitional protection.* *Support for Mortgage Interest becomes a useful potential tool with easier access and as other interest rates rise.*
April 2023	Benefits Uprating After leaving the door open for some return to restricting benefits uprating, it was revealed that there would be a full 10.1% increase based on the CPI inflation at September 2022	*A welcome relief for claimants struggling with the significant time lag between the sharp leap in inflation from early 2022 to benefits catching up a year later. Inflation had actually peaked at 11.1 % in October but the effective people for those on the lowest 10% of incomes has been calculated as closer to 16% and a full catch up with CPI not until a full increase in April 2024.*

Housing Benefit (HB)		
Date	*Change*	*Notes & Comment*
April 2011	Local Housing Allowance 1. *Local Housing Allowance maximum caps for 1 bed (£250), 2 bed (£290), 3 bed (£340) and 4 bed (£400). Separate rate for 5 bedrooms (at any amount) scrapped* 2. *Rates will be set at the 30th percentile of local private rent prices, not the 50th* 3. *Additional room in LHA if need for a carer or a disabled child needs own room*	1. *Reducing the amount going to low-income households to help pay their rent, especially those who need a larger home* 2. *Only a third (instead of half) of available private rented housing locally affordable to HB claimants. Latest shows less than 10% in many areas* 3. *Supports caring, but still ignores other needs (e.g. partners needing separate rooms, because of disability) and only applies if claimant/partner needs overnight care so limited*
April 2011	Non-dependant deductions - *large increases over next 3 years to make up ground since last increase 10 years ago.*	*Affects tenants with non-dependant adults (e.g. parents, grown up children, living in house). Non-dependants may not always be willing to make up the shortfall*
January 2012	LHA Single room rent restriction *for single people (not lone parents) under 25 extended to people aged* ***under 35.*** *Rent only covers room in shared house not a 1 bed flat*	*Further extends restriction for people in private sector tenancies, increasing marginalisation and ghettoization. Exempt groups remain*
April 2012 and April 2013	**LHA** rates frozen in April 2012 **LHA** up-rated in line with the *consumer price index* not average market rents.	*Less variation from month to month – harder to find properties within LHA if rents increase substantially. Latest report shows only 1 in 10 properties come within LHA limits*
April 2013	The "bedroom tax". *HB restricted to the number of rooms "needed" in social housing Rent eligible for HB reduced by 14 % if have one spare room and 25% if 2 or more spare rooms*	*No account taken of bedrooms for: shared care/children due back from local authority care, separate rooms for disability (except some children after Court ruling) Affects 660,000 households (410,000 with disabilities) . All those affected in Scotland will get a DHP, worth applying elsewhere.*
April 2014	• *No HB entitlement for new EEA jobseekers though existing claimants carried on* • *LHA increases restricted to the lowest of rent in the lowest 30% of properties or 1%*	*EEA workers in receipt of HB, threatened with homelessness if they lose a job Existing JSA claimants risk losing HB entitlement if their circumstances change.* *More tenants likely to find shortfalls in their rent and more landlords likely to opt for "no HB tenants". Now only the lowest 10% in many areas are available without shortfall.*
April 2015	• *Cut of £40 million in* ***Discretionary Housing Payment*** *- from £165 million to £125 million. A 25%cut*	*Reduces capacity to make up for growing rent shortfalls from reducing LHA and bedroom tax. Some 70% of those hit by bedroom tax are also affected by cuts in council tax support. Likely to cause more debt, housing arrears and homelessness.*
April 2016	HB backdating limited to 1 month *HB backdating will be restricted from the current maximum of 6 months to 1 month, in line with Universal Credit for working age claimants.*	*The ability to backdate for 6 months was invaluable, if problems with a claim or claimant not good at renewing or after a retrospective cancellation of a DWP "certificated" entitlement to HB. Leads to more arrears and repossessions*
April 2016 and April 2017	Targeting families :-(: *The one per family premium worth £17.45 is abolished on new HB claims. From April 2017, the two child policy will hit larger families*	*Makes little odds if on full HB, but will mean a £11.35 cut for people on partial HB A third or subsequent child after April 2017 will usually not be counted.*
April 2017	~~Restrictions for 18 to 21 year old's~~ *Not applied to HB, ended for UC from April 2018*	*Important exemptions covered some 96% of UC claimants anyway. Just added hassle and some really hard impacts.*
April 2018	Temporary accommodation *UC claimants get HB in temporary accommodation in same way as those in supported / exempt*	UC is not quick enough to work with either types of accommodation so people get UC for living costs, but help with rent via HB.

Housing Benefit (HB)- continued		
Date	*Change*	*Notes & Comment*
April 2019	~~Social rents subject to LHA~~ *Cancelled after delays to April 2019 - New social housing tenancies were to come under LHA*	*Little logic for this as tenants can't just chose more expensive/ too large properties. Tenants already hit by bedroom tax. Real problems for supported housing and under 35s, affecting viability of much supported accommodation*
April 2021	Pension age personal allowance. *Removal of the extra amount that ignored the full value of Savings Credit (regardless of how much was paid) from those reaching pension age after April 2021*	*A loss linked to the erosion and abolition of PC Savings Credit. There have been no new awards of Savings Credit since April 2016*
June 2021	New exemptions from single room rent *The lower rent for a room in a shared house for under 35s now also does not apply if:* • *A care laver up to age 25* • *Or other under 25s who have spent 3 months + in a homeless hostel.* *From October 2022 a further exemption if:* • *A victim of domestic violence or modern slavery.*	
2028/29	End of HB in Pension Age *Delay to the abolition of HB in pension age which remains open to new claims until then and its merger with PC*	

“Sickness Route” Benefits – From IB to ESA and UC

Date	*Change*	*Notes & Comment*
April 2011	Changes to “old sickness” routes • *No new linked claims for Incapacity Benefit, SDA or Income Support (for sickness) from 31/01/11* • *“Welfare to work” claimants no longer return to old rate but claim basic ESA- if NI allows- and face Work Capability Assessment* • *IB/SDA claimants can still claim Income Support (and vice versa) if become eligible*	*Targets those who have tried to move from “welfare to work”. Goes back on “trial period” promise (e.g. to WTC claimants etc. that could return to previous rate of benefit if job did not work out.)*
March 2011 to ? 2014	Migration to ESA *Migration of existing claimants (of Incapacity Benefit, Severe Disablement Allowance and Income Support through sickness route) begins. To be completed by April 2014, with individual Work Capability Assessments to determine if can transfer to ESA:* • *If “YES” switch to ESA at transitionally protected rate - but may **still** lose ESA after April 2012 (see below)* • *If “NO” can appeal and get assessment phase ESA pending (pre Oct 13) or sign on for Income based JSA or lose benefit*	• *Affects around 1.5 million people across UK with a disproportionate effect in deprived areas with a high incidence of long term limiting illness* • *Pilots show a 30% “failure rate” (as opposed to 15% forecast)* • *Some groups previously exempt (e.g. severe mental health/ learning disabilities or on DLA Higher Care) face test for the first time. Additional support needs (e.g. CMHTs, CSTs)* • *Likely increase in demand for advice and help with appeals* • *Of those disallowed 50% may get JSA, 50% lose benefit*
April 2012	Time limit on Contributory ESA ***Limited** to 1 year for people in the “work-related activity” group. Support group not affected.*	*Loss of basic benefits income for those with savings or working partners. Applied retrospectively, so some will lose ESA straight away. Doubles cuts from migration and WCA*
April 2012	Abolition of ESA (Youth) ***Abolished for new claims from April 2012.***	*Ends non-means tested ESA for under 20s. Targets young people with severe or long term illnesses or disabilities, who have had no chance to build up contributions.*
December 2012	Tougher ESA Sanctions *From the 3rd December there was a three tier sanction for those in the work related activity group who fail to undertake work preparation and work focused interviews, where the claimant will lose payment of all their benefit*	*The sanction will be open ended until the claimant re-engages followed by a 1, 2 or 4 week benefit sanction. The weekly amount of the sanction also increases from the work-related activity component to the standard allowance (from £29.15 to £73.10)* ***April 2015:** Numbers of sanctions have quadrupled since and 60% are against people with mental health problems. In March 2015 the DWP were reviewing 49 cases of death under sanction.*
January 2013	Changes to Work Capability Assessment • *Tightening up of some of the descriptors to make them more restrictive* • *Definitions of hospital stay extended to be more than 24 hours (Reg. 25)* • *Substantial risk (Reg. 29) amended to exclude risks which could be significantly reduced by work place adaptations or taking medication* • *All types of chemo and radiotherapy now give ‘limited capability for work related activity’*	• *Makes it even harder to score points on some of the amended descriptors leading to more claims being rejected* • *Harder to be ‘treated as’ having limited capability for work* • *With the one positive of a stronger exception for cancer patients.*

continued on next page

“Sickness Route” Benefits (continued)

Date	*Change*	*Notes and Comment*
October 2014	**Waiting days extended** • *Does not extend delay in payment but does mean more days not covered in your first payment. Extends from 3 days to 7 days* • *Also happens for new claims for Universal Credit from May 2015, but abolished from Feb 2018*	*Aim is to shift responsibility to claimants but leaves a gap for self employed or people on other benefits who may have few resources., when they come on to ESA.*
April 2015	**New claims restricted if previously found fit for work** *If have previously failed the WCA, a new claim will not be paid until pass the WCA unless can show have a new condition or substantial deterioration in previous condition*	*Aim to prevent ‘revolving door’ of claim, found fit for work, then able to claim again six months later.* *Does not matter how long ago previously found fit for work. Can be found not to qualify and claim refused on grounds of previous assessment.*
April 2017	**ESA Work Related Activity Component & UC Limited Capability for Work Element abolished** *New claims after April 2017, will no longer qualify for these additions worth £29.05 a week* *Existing ESA claimants or UC claimants with limited capability will not be affected as long as they stay on benefit or do not come off for longer than e.g. the 12 week ESA linking rule*	*Historically, sickness benefits included an extra amount for long term illness, recognizing that basic subsistence levels were inadequate for long term survival, especially with the extra costs sickness can bring. The ESA “new deal” was to pay that extra earlier, but in exchange to require those that could to be involved in appropriate work related activity. Now the incentive goes, but the requirement, enforced by sanctions, remains.* *It is claimed that this removes a perverse incentive to stay on ESA rather than switch to JSA. But this is not a choice for the claimant as:* *a) it requires passing the WCA and* *b) a disabled jobseeker can access a similar amount- as a disability premium within JSA anyway.* *Rather the change introduces:* • *a powerful disincentive to trying work beyond permitted earnings, undermining ESA “welfare to work” objectives* • *A perverse incentive to claim JSA or IS inappropriately ahead of a switch to UC, to get a disability premium*
May 2016 to April 2029	**UC, limited capability and switching over** *Under Full Service UC, the benefit became becomes much more widespread as a “sickness route” benefit, replacing Income-related ESA and HB for new claims . Eventually 32% of UC claimants would have been claiming ESA with “limited capability”, far more than the 2% for JSA.* *Real problems keep recurring within UC around:* • *dealing with Special Rules cases* • *moving people over from ESA - there is NO need for a new WCA, just because you switch from ESA.* • *where UC does need to do a WCA , managing that process properly, with error and delays.* • *applying new - and unsafe - work conditionality while awaiting a WCA - or an appeal.* • *a real rise in petty sanctions - e.g. not attending interviews on time - applied inappropriately* • *dealing with people who would only be entitled to “New style” Contributory ESA*	*See the considerably enlarged Universal Credit chapter and it’s new Health and Disability Issues sections for more details.* *The hope would have been that having arrived 5 years late, Full Service UC would have arrived with all staff well prepared for the much wider group of new claimants - mostly made up of those already in work and those too unwell to work.* *It is unacceptable that UC still struggles with understanding the needs of the terminally ill and ESA’s learning that work conditionality ahead of a WCA was a waste of time.* *UC dogma, institutional arrogance and a refusal to talk to grown ups in ESA and PIP beforehand, means that for now UC is unsafe and not fit for purpose to replace Income-related ESA. Many are calling for managed migration to not go ahead until UC has got its “sickness” act together.* ***NB From 16th January 2019, the “severe disability premium” Gateway stopped you from claiming UC and instead you could make new claims for legacy benefits. This stopped from 27th January 2021***

"Sickness Route" Benefits (continued)

Date	*Change*	*Notes and Comment*
September 2018	Average waiting times increasing *The average waiting time on the ESA helpline up eight fold—to 13 minutes—compared to a year before.*	*The fall in service levels notable under UC are spreading. Cuts to staffing budgets are showing up in the end of concerns with customer care*
September 2018	The LEAP review of all ESA awards from 2011 to 2015 expect to backpay more *Reviews so far show the underpayment of those switching over from the old Incapacity Benefit to ESA is bigger than when the LEAP exercise began in Dec 2017, as:* • *an extension to how far DWP are able to go back (after a Court case) brought more cases into review* • *and greater % than first thought have lost out of the 600,000 claims to be reviewed, DWP estimate 170,000 will receive arrears averaging £5,000 each, with some getting an ongoing increase* • *105,000 should be paid during 2018 to 2020* • *£980 million arrears in total and a much lower increase in ongoing payments* • *All arrears will be wholly ignored for savings rules under means tested benefits*	*This LEAP (Legal Entitlements and Administrative Practises) exercise, was caused by an initial errors (then cover up and denial) in the switch from Incapacity Benefit to ESA between 2011 and 2015. The initial error was in not checking that those migrating from non-means tested Incapacity Benefit to Contributory ESA might not also qualify for a top up from Income-related ESA.* *Previously IB was a totally separate benefit, with any top ups from Income Support needing a separate claim. But ESA is one benefit, so all should have been assessed for both parts of ESA. The majority—in the Support Group—would now qualify for an enhanced disability premium and some missed out on a severe disability premium too.* *The cover up came from carrying on with the error and not fessing up and only doing a proper Review after the Courts intervened.*
December 2018	New-style ESA improvements *DWP announce improvements to the claims process:* • *Improvements od voice recognition* • *A dedicated menu option for New Style ESA only through to a dedicated team* • *Team will e-mail out a UCESA1 claim form to claimant and e-mail local JobCentre Plus for them to arrange interview.* • *Can now claim Ns-ESA online*	*The DWP initially proceeded on the basis that everyone claiming New Style ESA would be claiming UC as well. People had to ring UC and were told there was no point claiming ESA as well, it didn't exist any more or that they could only claim if they claimed UC.* *You still ring UC but should get a trained person familiar with Ns-ESA and familiar with the process.* *Some will only qualify for Ns ESA if other income savings too high. Those on UC still do better to also claim ESA* *Several attempts to get this right but now everyone can claim Ns-ESA online - see latest arrangements at: https://www.gov.uk/employment-support-allowance/how-to-claim*
June 2019	Letter to GPs revised *In April, the BMA and the Royal College of GPs pointed out that they had **not** been involved in changing the letter to GPs about fit notes after a WCA as claimed. A new minister asked for a revised letter started on 3.06.2019.*	*The letter led GPs to believe they could not issue any more fit notes after a WCA found against a patient.* *The revised version - available here - still headlines on no longer needing to issue, but does say they still can e.g. to support an MR or appeal*
September 2020	ESA when awaiting appeal *Courts have ruled that forcing a stop on ESA pending an appeal during the Mandatory Reconsideration (MR) stage can be an "unlawful barrier to accessing justice."* *See the Sickness benefit chapters for more on who is covered and what to do.* *Essentially, this covers where you are appealing against being found for work and have a right to receive ESA pending appeal. You no longer have to go through an MR stage with ESA suspended but can go straight to an appeal.*	This only affects the common situation if you have been getting ESA and have had an adverse WCA stopping your ESA. It does not apply if the appeal is e.g. for other reasons, you missed a WCA or you cannot get ESA until a successful WCA For those who benefit from this, it avoids what was once just an inconvenience of needing to claim JSA during a Mandatory Reconsideration. But this became a more serious issue of forcing an unprotected switch to UC where some lose (but others gain, so get advice) . With the SDP Gateway gone and protection only limited many will want to hang on to Ir-ESA, pending their appeal.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">“Sickness Route” Benefits (continued)</th></tr>
<tr><th>Date</th><th>Change</th><th>Notes and Comment</th></tr>
<tr><td>April 2020</td><td>Planned end to ESA transitional Protection cancelled
This was transitional protection from the previous Incapacity Benefit system that was due to be phased out by April 2020.
In rare cases where it still applies it can continue until eroded by annual increases in normal ESA rates.</td><td>A marked contrast to UC transitional protection, which only applies to some of those moving over . UC’s TP also erodes over time, but can also be reduced by any other increase in entitlement or ended suddenly in certain circumstances. May 20</td></tr>
<tr><td>November 2022</td><td>Ir-ESA to UC managed migration delayed
While most managed migration re set to occur during 2024 and 2025, those getting Ir-ESA without any CTC 9 whether or not also getting HB) will not be invited until 2028/29 to allow greater focus and safeguarding for vulnerability</td><td>This may come as a relief to many anxious at the prospect of switching to UC , but also carries risks.
The Treasury may save in two ways:
• “Winners” in UC sums may delay a beneficial switch to UC, although there is nothing to stop them switching voluntarily after getting advice.
• “Losers” in UC sums now have more time to be forced to switch to UC via a “natural migration” in the meantime, without transitional protection
This also gives more time for White Paper proposals to have been implemented which ends the WCA in UC and so complicates the move over to UC if you do not get PIP</td></tr>
<tr><td>March 2023</td><td>White Paper proposals for sickness changes within UC
• It is proposed to end the use of the WCA within UC, but retain it for ESA
• Instead the current UC LCWRA element would be replaced by a similar value Health element based on receipt of PIP.
• The LCWRA group (with no work conditionality) and the LCW group with some work preparation conditionality would be replaced by a personalized Health Conditionality varying from none to all work conditionality at UC work Coach discretion
• There will be transitional protection for those not on PIP who are receiving the LCWRA element when it is abolished.
• Proposed timing is not to start this until 2026-27 at earliest with a 3 year roll out e.g. to 2029 , but might depend on who is in Government after 2024 . It could be another factor in migrations from Ir-ESA to UC</td><td>Early days and proposals may evolve and the plans may pass to a different Government who may change or scrap them, although some ideas are from the current Opposition.
Impacts vary with the benefits people currently have:
• 1 million get sickness benefits without PIP so have most to lose financially and from new work conditionality
• 1.2 million get both sickness benefits and PIP so are OK in cash terms but may worry about work conditionality
• 0.8 million just get PIP and may lose the hassle of needing to consider a WCA, do better as disabled workers, carers or parents, but may still be worried re work conditionality
Leaving it to UC work coaches is what happens if you are awaiting a WCA when on UC, unlike ESA that accepts you as sick until proven otherwise. This has not always worked well and may not be welcome as an ongoing feature.
Some aspects of the WP are lifted from Opposition policy but Labour has concerns over WP - esp. around lost amounts for those not getting PIP and lost of protection from inappropriate work conditionality. Could all change.</td></tr>
<tr><td>August 2023</td><td>Integration of Health Assessments
This was from an earlier proposal to improve and integrate both the WCA and PIP:
• A choice of channels—face to face, phone or video
• A single IT system for DWP and assessment providers
• But plans to merge the assessments abandoned
• A common admin and use of evidence between sickness and disability benefits
• One case manager throughout the process
• Co location of case managers and health care professionals</td><td>Originally the plan was a full merger of the two assessments, but instead they remain as two separate assessments , but now by the same provider . More information between assessments may reduce the need for two assessments, with both taking more consideration of other evidence too.
This plan was before the curved ball of plans for UC to drop the WCA all together (see above)</td></tr>
</table>

Tax Credits and Child Benefit		
Date	*Change*	*Notes & Comment*
April 2011	Child Benefit *Frozen for three years*	*A cut affecting ALL families and children, with the greatest impact proportionately on the poorest*
April 2011	Both Tax Credits *Taper on income for tax credits moves from 39% to 41%* *Fall from £25,000 to £10,000 in "disregarded increases in income during the current tax year"*	*Increases "marginal tax rate" by 2% . Will impact on all those in low paid employment and will impact on working families in particular* *Administrative costs, complexity and destabilising effects of overpayment recovery. An extra barrier from "welfare to work"*
April 2011	Working Tax Credit • ***Basic and 30 hour elements*** *in WTC frozen for 3 years* • ***New category for workers aged 60+*** *who can claim WTC if working over 16 hours, regardless of whether a disabled worker or have children.* • ***Childcare element*** *of WTC reduced from 80% to 70% of actual costs up to maximum*	• *Effective real cut in for those in work or taking extra hours . Does not fit well with Welfare Reform aim of "making work pay"* • *Another option at 60 + to support carrying on in work, but may overlap with £ for £ reduction in Pension Credit if low earnings* • *Significant cut when childcare costs are a major barrier from welfare to work*
April 2011	Child Tax Credit • ***Income threshold*** *for family element of CTC reduce from £50,000 pa to £40,000 a year and taper up from 6.6% to 41%* • *Abolition of Baby Element*	• *Loss affecting better off claimants only* • *Cuts for babies. Will affect poorest parents most*
April 2012	All tax credits ***New rule*** *of disregarding an income drop of £2,500* ***Time limit*** *for notifying changes of circumstances cut from 3 months to 1 month*	*Tax credits will not increase to help you if your income drops unless the drop is more than £2,500 Not helpful when hours and pay is dropping* *Cuts on backs of people too busy, pre-occupied or vulnerable to report changes that might increase tax credit on time e.g. after a new baby, a DLA/PIP award*
April 2012	Working Tax Credit ***Couples*** *with children must work at least 24 hours combined (rather than 16) to qualify; with one working at least 16 hours (some exemptions)*	*Real problems if extra hours can't be found and Working Tax Credit comes to a stop*
April 2012	Child Tax Credit ***Family Element income threshold*** *abolished, so will start to taper off straight after CTC individual elements.*	*Family Element will taper off at much lower earnings, so cut now hits lower income working families*
January 2013	Child Benefit ***Affluence test:*** *Tapered withdrawal of Child Benefit (via income tax) where an earner over £50,000, stops completely at £60,000.*	*Affects better off parents, but undermines simplicity and universality of CB, reducing support for the benefit and reach to the poorest. Will mean 500,000 additional self assessments at HMRC*
April 2013	All Tax Credits *Increased income disregard falls to £5,000 (previously £25,000, reduced to £10,000 in 2011)*	*Increases potential for complexity and uncertainty, which caused so many problems when tax credits started*
April 2014	*Must now report a young person staying on at school by 31st August each year or lose the CTC* *All challenges to decisions now have to go for HMRC reconsideration before can appeal.*	*Many may not realise and find CTC disappearing and if delay more than a month will lose out.* *HMRC very strict on time limits so may lose flexibility of appeal judges allowing late challenges*
		Continued on next page

Tax Credits and Child Benefit *(continued)*		
	Change	*Comment*
Nov 2015	Tax Credit overpayments recovery • *Recovery increasingly outsourced to private debt recovery agencies* • *Overpayments of WTC can be recovered from CTC and vice versa*	*The worry is that detaching recovery from HMRC may reduce the ability to take into account extenuating circumstances and increase the amount of overpayment. There may also be more temptation to recover overpayments caused by misreporting by a now disappeared partner from the "innocent" partner.*
April 2016	Reduction in increased income disregard *The amount of any increase in income during a tax year that will be ignored in calculating tax credit entitlement in the next is reduced from £5,000 to £2,500*	*This disregard had two purposes, to:* • *build in incentive to increase hours/pay rate* • *reduce occurrence of overpayments within a tax year.* *This cuts stays, putting the disregard back at the original 2004 figure which created significant overpayment issues.*
Nov 2015	Other April 2016 cuts abandoned *These were to include:* • *a rise in tapers to 48%* • *a reduction in thresholds from £6,420 £3,850 when claiming WTC or from £16,105 to £12,125 if claiming CTC only*	*These additional cuts failed to be hidden by the rabbit out of the hat of painless cuts - for claimants - by increasing the national minimum wage for over 25s. In time this would have produced significant savings. But "strivers" were going to be hit by an average £1,300 cut this April from which some might not recover until 2020. The Budget figure of 80% being better off as a result of all the changes in 2017/8 proved to be rather too creative. In a second "rabbit out of hat" in Autumn 2015 abandoned these cuts completely. But crucially not the equivalent cuts within in UC - to which everyone on Working Tax Credit will be switching.*
April 2017	Targeting Families • *Child Tax Credit Family Element abolished* • *Universal Credit higher amount for the first child abolished* • *Housing Benefit– Family Premium abolished. (from April 2016)* ***Cut by 2020: £675 million***	*These cuts survive the Autumn Statement U-ish turn, A small amount for families of any size was once an additional child allowance within Income Tax. Would a cut have been considered if it still was?* *The CTC family element idea was a) to get this money into the hands of the main person with care and b) to be crucial to CTC's aim of "progressive universalism" i.e. to involve most parents in the system so as to tackle the problem of low take up should adversity strike.*
April 2017	The "Two Child Policy" *Amounts per child will be limited to two children, with no amount for a 3rd or subsequent child if :* • *a new **child** after April 2017 for CTC / HB* • *a new **claim** after April 2017 for UC* *except in exceptional circumstances. e.g. multiple births, adoption, other care arrangements, under 16 and the "rape clause")* *However, UC will did not take claims from affected families until 01.02.2019. Until then people claimed CTC + legacy benefits instead, even under UC Full Service areas.* *Plans for UC to be based on date of claim rather than date of birth - and so to retrospectively hit children born long before April 2017 were dropped. UC now operates the limit in the same way as CTC* ***Cut by 2020: £1,365 million pa***	*This change survives the Autumn Statement. With the Chancellor playing to ancient Poor Law worries of the feckless poor having children on the rates. There is, however, **no evidence** for family size being any larger among families claiming CTC and those not. Exceptions rules will see the unwelcome return of the failed CSA rape test.* *DWP research shows that even now, children in larger families are at higher risk of child poverty (35% rather than 25%), so targeting cuts here may not give the new "life chances agenda" the best of starts. Enforcing further child poverty does not just punish the parents, but the children as well. And it hurts wider society in increased costs and potential contributions foregone. Child poverty targets have been abandoned and this is set to undo 20 years progress* *Protection for disabled children is limited - a third child will still get a disability addition, but no money for the basics. And of course most disabled children will see the value of this addition halved under UC.*
Feb 2019	Tax credits closed to new claims *With larger families able to claim UC, tax credits closed to entirely new claims except for those covered by the SDP Gateway.*	*Although only those getting a "severe disability premium can start an entirely new tax credits claim, those on one of the tax credits can continue to add the other to what is a single claim for tax credits—e.g. adding CTC to WTC is **not** a new claim*

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Tax Credits and Child Benefit (continued)</th></tr>
<tr><th></th><th>Change</th><th>Comment</th></tr>
<tr><td>2020 to 2021</td><td>WTC uplift during Coronavirus
WTC was the only legacy benefit to get a £20 pw uplift during covid.
Ended in April 2021, but those on WTC at the time received a £500 extra payment to take them through to September 2021Recovery increasingly outsourced to private debt recovery agencies
Overpayments of WTC can be recovered from CTC and vice versa</td><td>The worry is that detaching recovery from HMRC may reduce the ability to take into account extenuating circumstances and increase the amount of overpayment. There may also be more temptation to recover overpayments caused by misreporting by a now disappeared partner from the “innocent” partner.</td></tr>
<tr><td>April 2016</td><td>Migration to UC
Managed migration will start for most groups except those just claiming Ir-ESA (However, they would be invited to UC now if also getting CTC).
Those in work are the single biggest group within those still awaiting a move to UC.
Special arrangements apply for one year for those with savings above the £16,000 limit (TCs don’t have such a limit) - see the UC chapters for more details</td><td>Workers are the largest group awaiting a transfer to UC, as they may have been carrying on in work in settled circumstances. UC will present some real changes:
A monthly rather than annual assessment
More variable payments (even when your income appears regular to you as UC is fairly rigid about dates income is received
If self employed
Income variability may be a much bigger issue. Many will have depended on a regular WTC payment each month
but may now see UC amount vary wildly. Or even come off UC and need to do a rapid reclaim for the next month
Minimum Income Floor - After a while, UC assumes you are earning usually 35 x the National Minimum Wage a week and will count that amount -rather than actual income – if your earnings are below the MIF, when calculating UC
Disabled workers
UC is also very confused about support for disabled workers (e.g. those getting WTC disability element) . UC does not recognize PIP as a route to extra elements, but will unusually allow those getting PIP to undergo a WCA, despite working over the usual 16 hours.
But what are chances of passing a WCA with LCWRA at an assessment on the way to your full time work ???
The White Paper proposal to shift UC to PIP may help this group at least.</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Personal Independence Payment (see PIP and ADP chapter for more details)</th></tr>
<tr><th>Date</th><th>Change</th><th>Comment</th></tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2013 Pilot areas

June 2013 all new claims

October 2013 natural reassessments for some DLA claimants.

October 2015 Invitations to other existing DLA claimants begins

Latest PIP Changes 2018 –20</td>
<td>DLA for 16 – 64 year olds to be replaced by PIP, but carries on for children and over 65s Attendance Allowance remains for new claims after pension age:
• 20% budget cut and focus on most disabled
• Mobility and Daily Living component with:
⇒ enhanced rate if 12 or more points
⇒ standard rate if 8 to 11 points.
• Medical assessment of most claims using ESA style descriptors in 10 Daily Living activities and 2 Mobility activities
• ESA style process: initial claim ➔ self assessment form ➔ medical in most cases
• Longer qualifying period – 3 months backward test and 9 months forward test

PIP Timetable:
New claims for PIP:
• June 2013 – all new claims from 16 to 64 year olds for PIP across GB.
Migration of working age DLA claimants
• October 2013 – “Natural reassessments” Existing DLA claims start to move over to PIP : starting with DLA renewals, young people turning 16, looking again at existing DLA awards, self selectors. Delayed in most of UK covered by Atos, rollout not completed until July 2015.
• October 2015 – October 2020 Full Roll Out. All remaining “working age” DLA claimants to be “invited” to claim PIP instead. Stopped during the pandemic, but further migration now delayed until 2028-29 . Will be to ADP in Scotland
• Enabling powers taken to extend PIP to replace AA, DLA (over 65s and children) in the future

<u>Note:</u> After withdrawing changes to PIP points due from Jan 2017, the Government said they would not do so again, but did . Changes to Daily Living 3 and Mobility 1 in March 2017. However the Mobility change was ruled unlawful and DWP are reviewing all PIP cases to see if Mobility should be increased.

But the switch to PIP continues – but now not to be completed until March 2021. The aim is to save 30% - £2,500 billion - compared to unchanged DLA.
Guidance and assessments can still be tightened even with points unchanged. Losing PIP may also affect extra amounts in other benefits

Extra protections for those losing out on PIP have been agreed for N. Ireland. Scotland was due to run PIP as Disability Assistance from Autumn 2020, but now delayed Same rules, but with a different approach:
• run by Social Security Scotland with an aim of “dignity, fairness and respect”
• less medicals but if needed will not be private sector, but by in house assessors matched to e.g. mental health</td>
<td>Loss of DLA for those failing the new Personal Independence Payment (PIP) criteria – DWP expects 600,000 to come off DLA

An “invitation” is an offer that you can’t refuse. If you don’t claim or are not good with the post, your DLA will at first be suspended after 4 weeks and closed irretrievably after another 4 weeks. If you do start your PIP claim in time then DLA—and related disability additions—will continue until 4 weeks after the PIP decision.

If you miss the deadline, you can still claim PIP but won’t have any DLA—or premiums—until you get a PIP award, backdated to your date of claim. The fear is that many vulnerable claimants will slip out of DLA, without being re-assessed or get into real difficulties for 3 months on much lower income.

Although no equivalent to DLA Lowest Care under PIP it’s not just a case of those DLA claimants losing their DLA; many could get more. There will be drops - and increases - right across the DLA range - only 16% stay the same

New descriptors offer potential winners and losers. As with ESA, those with less easily definable difficulties or lesser physical needs may be hit
• criteria for Enhanced Mobility is 20m rather than c.50m of DLA Mobility – some 400,000 likely to lose Higher Mobility
• only 1pt for equivalent of DLA Care supervision for risk of danger (e.g. epilepsy diabetes, poorly controlled asthma, psychotic episodes). Otherwise supervision only if linked to specific daily living activities, so will need to identify more specific risks or attention descriptors
• the DLA ‘cooking test” (for lower Care) still attracts points, but in most cases not enough. Some will lose DLA, others find other points to go up to equivalent of Middle Care—problems cooking not enough on their own for an award
• prompting with an activity tends to score less than physical help
• but some activities - communication, engaging with others and budgeting decisions - may help many e.g. learning difficulties, autism, sensory impairment, mental health
• DLA Lower Mobility claimants may score enough in some cases be able to access equivalent of Higher Mobility
• But numbers suggest DWP expect many more to lose DLA Lower Mobility with tight guidance and new caselaw, diverting those with mental health issues to lower scoring descriptors

The poorest losing DLA get hit hardest: a loss of DLA related premiums in Means Tested Benefits. No adult disability elements in Universal Credit.</td>
</tr>
</table>

Personal Independence Payment *(continued - see PIP chapter for more details)*

Date	*Change*	*Comment*
	Reports on PIP's Progress: *Office of Budget Responsibility* • *switch from working age DLA to PIP unlikely to be completed until February 2021* • *the cost of introducing PIP has been greater than if DLA had been left alone.* *Parliamentary Questions:* • *More than half of DLA claimants have see cuts in PIP Daily Living and loss of DLA Mobility* • *A third of PIP assessments required feedback, amendment or were unacceptable* • *50,000 transfers from child DLA to PIP refused; 77,000 led to an award* *University of York:* • *those with mental health issues are 2.4 times more likely to see less PIP than DLA*	*PIP is getting close to the projections in reducing awards compared to PIP , after an early period of being too generous. A noticeable tightening up on renewal.* *Some have seen increases too. The most clear cut losses are the targets of PIP Mobility by moving the goalposts from 50m to 20m and by discrimination on mental health .* *However that saving is being swallowed up largely by the increased costs of assessing most claimants, rather than the as and when needed approach of DLA (a rise from 45% assessments to over 70%)* *As with the ESA assessment process on which PIP is modelled, the easiest target for misunderstanding and "snap shot" view is mental health, especially for those with less severe sounding diagnoses or growing numbers not in contact with services.*
Mar 19 April 19 July 19	Special Rules: *New DWP notes on DS1500 and Guidance leaflet more in keeping with the current law - i.e. would not be a surprise if rather than will die in six months* *Work & Pensions Select Committee welcomed changes but not a substitute for changes in the law - e.g. as in Scotland. Will medics be more flexible* *All Party Working Group - current rules are not fit for purpose*	*DWP seems to want "rigidly defined boundaries of doubt and uncertainty" Many descriptions have stressed as if only applies if less than 6 months. The law says: no actual prognosis needed and that it would not be a surprise if someone were to die within 6 months. Often the outlook can be over a wide range—a few months to a couple of years and awards are for 3 years.* *Operating the current law correctly with less emphasis on 6 months would go a long way, but abolishing it, as in Scotland would clear the way to clinical judgement.* *Universal Credit though continues to show a sharp contras with PIP and ESA in the service, understanding and service for those who are terminally ill*
July 2019	Mobility unlawful discrimination review *The process of reviewing PIP claims to see if claimants have been affected by unlawful discrimination in Mobility Activity 1 is underway:* • *400,000 had been reviewed* • *3,500 - i.e. less than 1% - have had award changed with arrears payments averaging £4,500* *A cross party group of MPs is "extremely alarmed" alarmed at the very small number of awards being changed, given the DWP impact assessment was that c14% of awards would need to be changed* *The review of 1.6 million cases began in June 2018 and may take until end of 2020.*	*The reviews follow the court ruling that explicitly ruling out access to the main descriptors for those experiencing psychological distress amounted to unlawful discrimination. The law has returned to more covert discrimination—people can access the higher scoring descriptors, but only by stressing navigation difficulties* *The reviews are only about seeing if an increase is due e.g. from 4 points to 8 points to enable standard rate to be paid. Claimants can seek an MR or appeal but may be put off as all the award is then up for reconsideration.* *The rate seems very small in the light of large numbers claiming on mental health grounds. It is likely that an exercise sitting down with reps or at appeal would produce a much higher rate of changes. There is more room for a grey area than the parallel ESA review.*
May 19	Changes in decision making *DWP are piloting arrangements to rename Case Managers as DMs and encourage them to look at all the evidence, with aim of reducing appeal rates*	*DWP may have pressure from MPs and HMCTS to stop pursuing to appeal. There may be cost savings / incentives to concede when appeals are submitted / on the day. For MRs the incentive remains is to fob people off, so it remains to be seen if there is more change at MR to avoid unnecessary appeals. There is a risk that serious rethinking may only be after MR but any would be welcome.*

PIP & ADP *(continued - see PIP chapter for more details)*		
Date	***Change***	***Comment***
	Length of awards - pension age *All new PIP award with an end date after pension age will be indefinite, as will be awards for those already over pension age.* *DLA to PIP transfers for people over pension age will have the PIP age limits waived to enable any PIP Mobility to be included*	*Both changes are linked to the normal 66 year limit on starting a PIP claim. Once made it can carry on into pension age. Delays in the DLA to PIP transfer mean that some could be in their early 70s on starting a PIP claim. There could also be claims during a renewal after 66. These changes allow older people to continue with PIP - and to receive PIP Mobility. Awards remain subject to periodic review*
Sept 2020	**Changes to Activity 9 Social Engagement** *New guidance and definitions around support for social engagement with others.* *See the PIP and DAWAP chapter for updates*	*These changes clarify when social support counts and when it doesn't and who might give that support. Some feels helpful, some less so*
CDP from Summer 2021 **ADP from July 2022** **PADP tbc**	**Disability Payments in Scotland:** *The three disability benefits will transfer from DWP to Social Security Scotland:* • *DLA (children) to become Child Disability Payment* • *PIP was to become Adult Disability Payment* • *AA to become Pension Age Disability Payment* *However, progress has been delayed by coronavirus, so new dates are awaited. To avoid re-assessments and ease the switch to DA current criteria apply* *However, real changes in the process, esp. for PIP:* • *easier to claim: online, by phone, in person or on a form as preferred.* • *assistance to claim and take-up target for SSS* • *emphasis on believing the claimant alongside medical information, other evidence* • *No face to face assessment s for CDP or DAOP and as a last resort for DAWAP by HPs from public sector, with mental health experience and trained rather differently* • *advocates in the process* • *no 6 month time limit in special rules* *There is a stop on any further DLA to PIP transfers agreed so long as process of DLA to DA is in place before end of DLA to PIP.*	*This is not just of interest to readers in Scotland.* *That's because DA will initially run on exactly the same criteria as AA, DLA and PIP to ensure a simple, straightforward transfer, without any re-assessment needed if you move over from the current benefits.* *However, the commitment to run the claims and assessment process very differently - with "dignity, fairness and respect" - meaning it will be easier for people in the rest of the UK to see how things could be different.* *How far is PIP a worse or better benefit than DLA in its nature and how much is it a matter of budget driven choice to not encourage take up and assess most claims?* *People in Scotland should have a much better experience of going through a friendlier process even if the answer may still be "No". Significant savings will come from using assessments only when needed.* *However, the danger - to budgets - is that there could well be an increase in award rates. Increases in take up in smaller devolved benefits has already been identified as a risk to the Budget. Time will tell whether generosity in spirit will stretch budgets—the devil may be in the price tag.*
023	**Merging PIP and WCA assessments ?** *DWP aim to integrate ESA and PIP assessments under one service by 2021* *DWP are also doing a feasibility assessment of whether both PIP and WCA assessments (for ESA and UC) could be done together.*	*Merging the contracts and arrangements could save costs , but may lose on any advantages of one contract over another. It may mean less competition as Atos pulled out of WCA in disgrace and Capita wanted to stay well clear.* *Given the difficulties in applying mostly very different criteria appropriately in one session per benefit, will assessors struggle to manage two different criteria in one session.* *Claimants might welcome less assessment hassle, but fear both being done together and seeing both benefits messed up at the same time. Better to follow the Scottish example?*

PIP & ADP *(continued - see PIP chapter for more details)*

Date	*Change*	*Comment*
Nov 2022	Change to migration timetable *The completion of migration from Adult DLA to PIP went on hold during the pandemic and a date was to be confirmed for resumption of moving remaining 350,000 "working age" Adult DLA claimants over to PIP.* *Initially delayed until PIP got over a crisis from new application. New announcement pushes this back to 2028/29, possibly to allow for PIP capacity to be used if White Paper proposals increase claims.*	*Delay from an exercise due for completion by 2018 was first delays and problems getting PIP going, then a hold during pandemic, then a post-pandemic 50% rise in PIP applications. This may have been pent up demand, lack of access to advisers and/or more long term health issues as NHS backlog grows* *PIP has recovered to normal 3 months for new claims, but still catching up with renewals. It may also need capacity if a further wave of applications if White Paper proposals are implemented* *Aplan then is to leave them be until 2028/29. In Scotland these will be DLA to ADP migrations. While those aged 65+ in April 2013 were left on Adult DLA, there could now be people aged up to 78 having to swap to PIP.*
March 2023	Health and Disability White Paper *Changes for both PIP assessments and sickness - see under Sickness benefits table for main changes around UC using PIP status rather than WCA for a new health element replacing the current LCWRA element)* *Proposed timeline:* • *Some areas but not before 2026-27 at the earliest with a three year roll out e.g. to 2029* • *But this assumes current Government wins I ? 2024 Election. Some elements of plans are from Labour policies but Opposition not fully sold on WP proposals*	*Main change is in PIP status replacing WCA for the new "health element" in UC* *PIP becomes a passporting benefit affecting UC amounts, but remains unchanged. More affected by the Integration of PIP & WCA assessment provisions below and any improvement in reducing needs for HCP assessments in PIP.* *Note ADP will have the same affect so that people in Scotland may have far less encounters with HCP assessment.* *But will PIP cope with another increase in claims from people who currently might pass a WCA but don't think they meet PIP criteria but may now need to try?*
August 2023	**Roll out of integration of PIP & WCA assessments** *DWP aimed to integrate ESA and PIP assessments under one service by 2021. Did a feasibility study and trial in small areas. How much integration? Could assessments be done in one session?* *They concluded that while assessments need to remain separate - but e.g. could be done on the same day - scope for big admin changes:* • *claimant choice of face to face, phone or video* • *common database and admin for WCA and PIP enabling more use of info between benefits* • *co-location of DWP case managers and HCPs* • *one case manager through the process*	*Merging the contracts and arrangements could save costs , but may lose on any advantages of one contract over another. It may mean less competition as Atos pulled out of WCA in disgrace and Capita wanted to stay well clear.* *Given the difficulties in applying mostly very different criteria appropriately in one session per benefit, it is likely that assessors would struggle to manage two different criteria in one session.* *Claimants might welcome less assessment hassle, but may fear both being done together (and risk of both benefits being removed at the same time). Changes don't apply to Scotland—as DWP does WCA and ADP avoids assessments if possible and if needed are done by SSS.. Perhaps less reliance on flawed assessments may be a good thing?* *Integration plans also feed into new White Paper proposals - see above*

Jobseekers Allowance (JSA)

Date	*Change*	*Notes & Comment*
Oct 2013 to March 2014	Claimant Commitment: - *replaces Jobseeker Agreement - greater emphasis on responsibilities– and sanctions*	*Ups emphasis on contract and highlights consequences and sanctions regime*
From April 2014	• *Up front Job Search must show evidence of job seeking at first interview* • *to prepare CV, register on Universal Jobmatch seek work before longer 1st Jobseeker Interview* • *weekly rather than fortnightly "signing on"* • *intense review every 3 months* • *must learn English if needed*	*Some individual proposals may be sensible, but the language in which changes are couched continues to blame the unemployed for their predicament.* *Leaving the poorest jobseekers waiting for 7 days before any benefit and hitting people with a sanctions regime that has no evidence base continues to cause significant hardship, debt and destitution*
October 2014	Waiting days: - *i.e. which are not covered by any JSA extended from 3 to 7. Original concession to stay at 3 days for Contribution based JSA dropped*	*More financial hardship at start of claim. Denial of short term advances seems routine. Delay may knock on to HB entitlement and payment. Plan is to introduce a similar 7 days to Universal Credit*
February 2015	UC for jobseekers *Start of national rollout of UC for simple jobseeker claims. Those not meeting the UC "gateway" conditions continue to claim JSA*	*Important to not get on the wrong benefit e.g. if claiming while challenging an ESA decision. Ending up on UC might mean you win your appeal but lose out on any SDPs. Get advice.*
March 2015	Being unwell on JSA: *Extension from 2 weeks to 13 weeks for maximum time someone can be sick and stay on JSA. Extension can apply one in every 12 months, to avoid previous need to switch to ESA*	*Eases hassle of switching while temporarily sick but for more than 2 weeks*
May 2015	EEA Nationals: *Existing EEA jobseekers given a 3 month limit on Income-based JSA unless can prove "genuine prospects of finding work" (e.g. a job offer) or have an alternative right to reside.*	*Some 8,800 people affected and will lose benefit tightening the 6 month limit from January 2014* *Also in Jan 2014 all jobseekers from abroad - inc. returning UK nationals - had to here for 3 months*
Aug 2015	DWP stats on sanctions since 2012 changes • *1.75 million sanctions have been applied since Oct 2012 : 57% lowest, 35% intermediate, 9% highest* • *When challenged the DWP changed their minds on 56% of sanctions., on review, 31% at MR - compared to usual 15%*	*There continues to be no evidence for the effectiveness of sanctions on job seeking and some evidence that it may harm it. It seems in the small scale pioneering projects that success lies rather than a mainstream linked closely to sanctions that are in turn linked to despair, destitution and death.*
April 2016	Jobseeker support and conditionality • *increased Job Centre Plus support* • *JSA support and conditionality to extend to 1.3 million claimants* • *Weekly "signing on" in first 3 months* • *Help to Work Programme - currently for long -term claimants to be brought forward* • *A new Work and Health Programme to replace the Work Programme / Work Choice (now delayed until Autumn 2017)* • *Spending on Access to Work will rise*	*Added requirements to attend adds costs to claimants and heightened risks of sanctions.* *The new Work and Health Programme is to come in as current contracts expire and promises a more effective support and better outcomes* *There may be real gains from any positive support offered if it is appropriate and relevant. The Work Programme developed an early reputation as being less effective than doing nothing, so time will tell if new arrangements do better.*
April 2017	Youth Obligation *Unemployed young people to get intensive support from Day 1 to find work. After 6 months they must accept and either:* • *apply for an apprenticeship* • *gain other work based skills* • *or go on a mandatory work placement*	*Once more - the generation gap looms - with special measures reserved for citizens under 21, through higher conditionality pressures and compulsory work at benefit rates. Young workers do not gain from the real increases in the National Minimum Wages, as these are reserved for over 25s, so sticks replace that incentive. They may get a chance to undercut other workers turning 25.*

Universal Credit (UC) *(see UC chapters for more details)*

Date	*Change*	*Comment*
April 2013 Pilot areas February 2015 to March 2016 national roll out for new jobseekers Starts May 2016 to Dec 2018 - transition to Full Service UC *i.e. open to all new claimants* *Nov 2023 change:* Early 2024 to end of 2025 "Managed migration" for most on *"legacy benefits" BUT if on Ir-ESA this may be delayed to 2028/29*	Merges most "working age" means tested benefits/tax credits into **Universal Credit :** Timetable: • *Reset dropped repeated target of October 2017. Latest DWP target is Sept 2024.* • *Feb 2015* **-** *March 2016* ***"accelerated rollout" for new claim from simple case jobseekers*** *only - originally planned for Oct 13 - April 2014* • *May 2016 to December 2018 -* ***Transition to Full Service UC*** *i.e. most new claims will be for UC, unless have an SDP in a legacy benefit (an SDP Gateway from 16th January 2019 to 27th January 2021) or claiming HB in temp/supported accommodation .* • ***Exclusion of larger families:*** *bar on larger families dropped from 1st February 2019. Two child limit operates in UC as in CTC i.e. previous plans for UC to go by date of claim rather than date of birth - hitting older children retrospectively - dropped* • ***Mixed age couples:*** *i.e. When one over, one under pension age. Bar on new claims for Pension Credit from 15th May 2019 means new couples forced to claim UC (unless access to legacy benefits). UC has no pensioner element (a loss of some £150 a week) and no adult disability elements (bringing loss to up to £280 pw)* • *Existing mixed age couples can stay on PC as long as they remain entitled to PC and/or HB for 66+* • ***Managed migration*** *with "transitional protection" small pilots from July 2019, paused in pandemic . Resumed in 2022, but now main phase will be during 2024 and 2025. But most on Ir-ESA will be delayed to 2028/29* • *DWP now expect most migration to be "****natural migrations"*** *- i.e. where certain changes of circumstances trigger a switch to UC - and without any transitional protection.* UC Sums: • *Maximum UC includes allowances / other elements, including amounts for rent or mortgage interest. A single 63% taper—now 55% - for earnings after disregards* • *Taper only applies to earnings – other income will be taken into account £ for £ - particularly affects those that only qualify for help with their rent* • *UC had more generous work allowances (if reduced if help with housing costs) But significantly cut averaging £1,000 from April 2016. Later largely restored*	General aims of UC: • ***Simplify:*** *reduce barriers into work and complex interactions between "in work" and "out of work" benefits or need to switch between benefits* • ***Increase work incentives:*** *same benefit, a simple taper to see how work pays (but 63% +CTS rather than a single 55%). Carrots withered but no relenting on sticks.– sanctions remain out of control with little evidence they work and much that they may hinder genuine work search and preparation.* • ***Reduce poverty*** *directly and indirectly by being better at getting into work. DWP estimates of direct impact not revised after cuts. IFS estimate direct impact of UC is an increase in child poverty* Timetable issues • *Delays are welcome if allows UC to make essential reforms to become fit for purpose, but does mean more people have unprotected migrations* • *"No one loses at the point of change" BUT only limited transitional protection - none for the majority expected to switch to UC by "natural migration"* Making work pay? • *An original all in taper of 55% has become 63% + roll off of council tax support on top. April 2016 saw a significant cut in Work Allowances reducing the boost on starting work. Much of that cut restored from April 2019, but still no WA for those without children or "limited capability"* • *Loss of help with mortgage interest - a loan from April 2018 - for those doing 'any' work, but higher worker allowances* • *help with childcare on any work and increases to 85% of costs - up to maximum - from April 2018* • *"In work" claimants will be required to keep job seeking until they meet individual earnings threshold* Support for the vulnerable in the sums? • ***Adult "disability" elements abolished.*** *Only "limited capability for work" and "limited capability for work related activity" elements; latter increased to "replace" e.g. enhanced/severe disability premiums. DLA/PIP will not trigger any UC adult elements, except for pensioners forced off PC, who will be treated as having "limited capability"* • *A WCA only approach to health support excludes many people with disabilities from additional elements: disabled workers, lone parents, carers and jobseekers. Forces an expensive, inappropriate double testing via WCA - by not recognising PIP assessment, - which many may correctly not pass. Even then need LCWRA to get any extra help.* • ***Carer's element*** *extended to working carers :-) but disabled carers lose: a new either or for carer's v limited capability, losses from any disability elements.* • ***Child disability:*** *two child disability elements on same basis as tax credits, but more than halved at the lower rate. -a loss of £30+ pw for the majority not on DLA Highest Care*

Universal Credit (UC) continued *(see UC chapter for more details)*

Date	*Change*	*Comment*
see previous page for updated dates for the rollout of UC. It now spans from 2013 to 2029	Work Conditionality: • ***Four levels of conditionality:*** 1. *Full job seeking (as in JSA)* 2. *Work preparation (as in ESA WRAC)* 3. *Keeping contact with labour market (as in IS for lone parents)* 4. *No conditionality (as in ESA Support Component and Carers)* • *In work conditionality: pilots towards full job seeking conditionality if gross income is below 35 hours x minimum wage (less hours if other responsibilities e.g. childcare)* UC claims and payments • ***Default payments** of UC: single payment to household, monthly in arrears (5 weeks to 1st payment) including rent* • ***Alternative Payment Arrangements** - rent to landlord, more frequent and split payments - at DWP discretion:* ◊ *Scottish Choices - option to opt for twice monthly and rent to landlord* ◊ *N. Ireland - default is twice monthly and rent direct after 1st payment* • *Both Scotland and NI aiming for split payments by default. UK policy review may follow their lead.* • ***Capital limit of £16,000** – an issue for some on tax credits on migration to UC. Will have capital ignored for a year, then normal rules will apply. A problem for some mixed age couples too.* • ***Online claim*** ◊ *85% of claims to be made on line – no paper claim forms* ◊ *But not just the claim—main dealings and keeping up claim via online account* ◊ *Telephone claim is possible—heavy sell of online and questions re "can't claim online rather than won't".* ◊ *Criteria based on vulnerability and poor digital access. But if insistent claimant can insist on telephone claim* ◊ *Follow up by phone/letters. Will be reviewed to get people online*	Claim issues - *see UC chapter for more details* • *Difficulty with accessing IT to make claims and access 'mail' in relation to claims* • *Help to Claim via Cit. Advice from April 2019, but funding stops once claim in place. No other "Universal Support"* • *Long wait to 1st payment - risk of destitution and arrears—but alleviated by changes in early 2018:* ◊ *Jan 18 easier access to Advance Payments an interest free loan of up to 100% of first payment. But repayments at 15% of standard allowance keeps many below poverty line for up to a year* ◊ *?too easy—availability on line before verification led to scam and numerous bogus UC claims. DWP will allow people affected to legacy benefits.* ◊ *Feb 18 Ending of UC waiting days that added a week with no payment to the wait for 1st payment* ◊ *Apr 18 two-week run on of HB - at full HB as a gift - not repaid nor taken off first payment* ◊ *July 2020 Similar 2-week run on of IS, Ib-JSA or Ir-ESA* • ***Monthly payments and assessment periods.*** ◊ ***circumstances** on last day apply for whole period—so winners and losers. Time changes well if you can* ◊ ***Income** received in period count: UC can vary considerably month to month, if other than monthly pay, a pay day slips or if self employed. No real DWP response so far on Court decision over a too rigid interpretation of current rules. UC needs more flexibility to allocate income more appropriately and some sort of averaging. People often having to do rapid reclaims of UC if no UC in an assessment period* ◊ ***Surplus earnings rules** - delayed in practise now to April 2021. Added complexity for anyone looking at temp work potentially from October 2020* • ***Health and disability issues** - UC is not coping well with the new and much larger group of claimants who are unwell* ◊ *trying to start a new WCA for ESA claimants* ◊ *special rules failures: delays, failure to get LCWRA element straightaway, insistence on own DS1500 not rely on PIP/ESA, unreliability re harmful information, no means to claim on behalf of* ◊ *not issuing "treated as" claimants with UC50s straightaway and delays at sending to others* ◊ *taking much longer to get WCAs done than ESA* ◊ *variable approach to work conditionality while awaiting WCA/pending appeal. UC policy review* ◊ *ill considered and much poorer support in place of ESA permitted work and WTC disabled workers* ◊ *Feb 2020 - UC confirm blocks to disabled students* • ***Housing Costs** - common failings and delays:* ◊ *insisting on recent tenancy agreements* ◊ *UC confusion if a previous joint tenant has left* ◊ *too high third party deductions* *All leave people without rent help due, in arrears and at risk*

Universal Credit (UC) continued *(see UC chapter for more details)*		
Date	*Change*	*Comment*
July 2019	*Managed migration* *Aim was to start pilots from July 2019 with managed migration from 2020 to 2022* *But delayed by pandemic and now a new timetable* *Main features remain* *A letter giving 3 months notice of end of legacy benefits and advice to claim UC before then* *Various formats and offers of support being trialled* *Managed migrations will feature full Transitional Protection, unlike voluntary switches or natural migrations. But TP can be quickly eroded/ suddenly lost—less secure than usual TP*	*This was intended to be the main switch from "legacy benefits to UC, but delay means that most migrations will be voluntary or "natural migrations".* *This makes UC's departure from the norm that "no-one loses at the point of change even more striking as most will migrate without transitional protection bar some enforced in relation to Severe Disability Premium.* *Treasury saves by not giving TP to all, by making it far easier to see TP reduced or removed than was the case with e.g. TP from Incapacity Benefit to ESA.* *Delays may also discourage UC winners from switching early, but they can at least choose to claim UC now—but only after getting advice to check that they are better off and to time UC application well and understand the new ways of UC*
July 2019 & Sept 2020	Minimum Income Floor *Changed to a 12 month exemption if :* • *a managed migration from July 2019* • *a natural migration from September 2020*	
October 2019	Debt deductions *Maximum usual rate of deductions reduced from 40% to 30%*	
July 2020	*Two-week run on extended* *Run on of HB on migration from legacy benefits now extended to include a run on of any Income Support, Income-related ESA or Income-based JSA*	
March 2020 to September 2021	*Coronavirus changes* *See separate table as have now all been revoked:*	
August 2020	*Disabled Students and UC* *Change in Regs limits qualification to UC if a disabled student. Must have passed a WCA:* • *Before they start the course (if already on UC)* • *When they claim UC (if already on the course*	
October 2020	*Change to SDP Transitional Payments* *The temporary SDP Transitional Payments forced on UC by the Courts are now possible under the normal Transitional Element system which is ready for "managed migration"* *But confined only to DWP view of what counts as loss related to just SDP (so not full protection) and now subject to usual erosion/loss*	
November 2020	*Adjusting Monthly Income* *A limited concession—forced by the Courts—allows Sof S to re-allocate earnings to an adjacent month when two monthly payments happen to fall in same Monthly Assessment Period*	

Universal Credit (UC) continued *(see UC chapter for more details)*		
Date	***Change***	***Comment***
Nov 2020	Run on of UC at Pension Age *UC can now run on into the next Monthly Assessment Period (MAP) after someone reaches Pension age to allow an overlap with new entitlement to PC and HB (in pension age)*	*Stops a potential gap of up to a month in means tested support after pressure from Age UK. Legislative change from November 2020, but the DWP had been doing this on an extra statutory basis since March 2020*
January 2021	Removal of the SDP Gateway *No longer prevented from a migration to UC if have a Severe Disability Premium within Ir-ESA, IS or Ib-JSA. Instead if certain changes occur that would trigger a natural migration, then it happens, but with a limited version of Transitional Element covering only what the DWP thinks is the loss*	*Completes the final stage of the roll out of Full Service UC (otherwise concluded by December 2018) in ending a block for a large group of people on migrating to UC* *The timing was linked to the UC computer being ready for full automatic calculation of a UC Transitional Element ahead of the planned start of "managed migration"* *However, it will be restricted only to the DWP view—dismissed several times by the Courts—as to the actual level of loss that the Court judgement requires them to compensate . It also does not include any other losses, so will be less than that from a full transitional Element calculation under a "managed migration" so people may be well advised to hold on until honest migrations under the usual precedent of transitional protection are open*
April 2021	Recovery rates eased • *Usual maximum amounts for **deductions** reduced to 25% of the standard allowance* • ***Advance Payments** since April 2021 to be recovered over 24 months rather than 12 months*	*Welcome news to reduce recovery rates and re-introduce some element of affordability and care from the provisions under legacy benefits* *Easing repayment rates of the enforced loan many have to take out from the refusal of UC to pay out - on a safety net benefit– until 5 weeks into a claim is welcome. But the 5 week wait is a bad piece of dogmatic design baked into the computer system. The main obstacle to common sense reform seems to be once again , the computer says no*
September 2021	End of Covid Uplift *End of the extra £20 pw/£86 pcm on UC standard allowances, exposing how far basic benefits are behind covering basic living costs*	*The Government argues that it had to end, even if this effectively just put UC rates back to where they should have been without the stealth cuts of past limits on uprating . Even with the uplift UC was still far short of meeting an essentials budget. Various calls were made to bring it back for the Cost of Living crisis, but to some extent the extra Cost of Living Payments for means tested benefits did*
October 2021	Lower recovery of Court fines *Down to a flat rate 5% of standard amount rather than varying from 5% to £106.35 pcm*	*The open ended extraordinarily reckless lack of affordability was well beyond Court expectations for payments of fines*
November 2021	Higher work allowances/lower taper *Workers on UC suffered same loss of uplift, but were given it back and more by:* • *Increase in Work Allowances by £500 a year* • *Reduction of taper from 63% to 55%*	*Having taken away in September the favoured workers on UC are given something back, potentially worth more than the lost uplift. This considerably improves work incentives but still leaves a "benefits poverty trap" and marginal tax rates far higher than could be contemplated for top earners . It also came with an implication that those not able to work were unwilling to take advantage of new opportunities and undeserving of any sympathy for the cut just suffered.*
April 2022	Terminal illness changes *See under changes to all benefits - changes from 6 months to 12 straightaway for UC and ESA* *In practice should not make as much difference as DWP thinks as both 6 months and 12 months are guidance not limits as too often wrongly described on forms and some DWP information.*	*UC has been very poor at dealing with special rules. Even more obsession with 6 months than DWP generally, contrary to case law definitions. UC has not had a process for allowing this to be confirmed without claimants knowledge , has been poor with immediate LCWRA element and required a new DS1500 every 6 months. Extension to 12 months will rein this in a little but DWP in interim have invented a new SR1 certificate required if someone has a prognosis for 12 months but not under 6 months. Big Books says: Dear DWP, Please read you own guidance and case law and get to grips with 3 year awards...*

Universal Credit (UC) continued *(see UC chapter for more details)*

Date	*Change*	*Comment*
May 2022 2020	Managed Migration "discovery phase" *Resumption of the 2019 pilots, testing out transfers for 250 people each in a small number of areas (by no means everyone on legacy benefits in those areas,*	*Small pilots of just 250 of those in each area on legacy benefits to try out different ways of phrasing letters and supporting people to engage in migration and make a successful UC claim in time. No longer a pilot phase as DWP dumped the previous need to report back to Parliament to gain approval for full managed migration roll out.* *DWP are also doing a push to encourage "voluntary" migration but not offering "better off" checks before someone commits*
2022/23 and 2023/24	Cost of Living Payments *See separate table. As well as general non-means tested measure, UC was/is one of the qualifying benefits for additional help:* * *2 x payments totaling £650 in 2022/23* * *3x payments totaling £900 in 2023/24*	*These additional amounts make a big difference as UC uprating lagged well behind the sudden rise in inflation from February 2022. These are in addition to measures for all such as the Energy Price Guarantee and the £66 a month off electricity bills . But real concerns remain that some of the poorest are not cashing in vouchers for pre-payment meters and pressures on those on low incomes remain considerable as they face effective inflation rate of 16% with benefits only 3.1% up on 2021 rates*
May 2022 2020	Managed Migration "discovery phase" *Resumption of the 2019 pilots, testing out transfers for 250 people each in a small number of areas (by no means everyone on legacy benefits in those areas,*	*Small pilots of just 250 of those in each area on legacy benefits to try out different ways of phrasing letters and supporting people to engage in migration and make a successful UC claim in time. No longer a pilot phase as DWP dumped the previous need to report back to Parliament to gain approval for full managed migration roll out.* *DWP are also doing a push to encourage "voluntary" migration but without offering firm better off assurances before someone commits to such a switch.*
September 2022	In-work Conditionality changes *Mini Budget while announcing more incentives for higher earners added new requirements (under threat of sanction) for low earners* • ***From 26.09.22**: an increase to 12 x hourly National minimum wage if single and 19 x hourly NMW for a couple* • ***From January 2023**: 15 x hourly NMW if single, 24 x hourly NMW for a couple* *Below these levels of income (whether from hours at NMW or less hours at a higher rate) claimants in part-time work will be subject to all work requirements (i.e. as if an unemployed jobseeker) until earning exceed that level*	*A marked contrast between an incentives led approach (to drop top rate tax to 40% for high earners and more compulsion via Workhouse Plus for low earners in the ill fated September Mini Budget.* *Workers on UC have seen some improvement but still face a 55% marginal tax rate as UC is withdrawn and an added 20%+ from reduced Council Tax Support.* *Many par-timers are working all the hours they can and the pressure on part time workers disproportionately affects women and BME communities*
November 2022	Autumn Statement UC changes *See the all benefits table for all the measures. Those most relevant to UC:* • ***Uprating** - a full 10.1% uprating of UC amounts (as all benefits) from April 2023* • ***In Work Progression Offer** to be brought forward to September 2023 affecting 600,000 part time workers on UC on 15 to 35 hours a week* • ***New "managed migration" timetable: -** most during 2024 and 2025, but Ir-ESA to UC delayed to 2028/29* • ***Support for Mortgage Interest** reforms: qualifying period reduced to 3 months and bar if any earnings removed.*	• ***Full uprating** very welcome, though much financial stress given the time lag and a "real" inflation rate closer to 16% for claimants. . The IFS and JRF recon it will not be until a full uprating in April 2024 that UC rates will catch up completed* • ***In Work Progression** mixes extra resources & support for more and better hours with extra requirements to seek more/ better hours* • ***New timetable** clarifies situation and when groups need to be prepared. A delay for Ir-ESA may be welcome as UC can focus on a vulnerable group separately and gives more time to prepare, but may come at a cost for people who may delay a beneficial move to UC or if losing to be more likely to have to switch without transitional protection* • ***SMI reforms** mean that - together with interest rate rises- this may be a more useful option than it was previously.*

Universal Credit (UC) continued *(see UC chapter for more details)*

Date	*Change*	*Comment*
February 2023	Call for an "Essentials Guarantee" *Joseph Rowntree Foundation and the Tressel Trust call for an Independent Commission to check if basic UC standard allowances cover an essentials budget* *Their own calculation show the shortfall even after big uprating in April:. UC levels will be at the lowest ever against average earnings and leave people well short of their essentials budget* • *a single person need £120 a week. UC will cover £85.00 (£69 if u 25)* • *a couple needs £200 a week. UC will cover £ 134 (£103 if u 25)* *Yet 50% of UC claimants don't get even these amounts due to deductions, most commonly due to repaying Advance Payments to cover the 5 week wait.*	*It is a strange feature of what is meant to be a basic safety net to avoid absolute poverty and cover the essentials that there is no official calculation/ justification of the amounts set.* *They are simply the previous year that may/may not always be uprated for inflation. The last official budgeting exercise was by the old DHSS for Supplementary Benefit.* *The JRF shortfalls are dramatic—especially when frozen LHA rates mean many more will need to eat into their basic UC to cover rent shortfalls* *The cost though of raising basic benefits to that level are not inconsiderable*
March 2023	Budget changes affecting UC • *UC Childcare element now to be paid up front with more generous maximums of £951 for 1 child £1,630 for two or more* • *Extension of the free childcare offer may also be a gamechanger for parents seeking work* • *Extending In work conditionality from 15 x National Minimum Wage to 18 and dropping the couples rate - each partner may need 18 hours* • *New resources for support into work including relating to extra conditionality for the unwell* • *Measures to encourage over 50s to stay in work. "Mid-Life MOTs" at Jobcentre Plus (and pension pots to incentivize higher earners)* • *Increased - and more automated - sanctions regime*	• *The need to pay up front for child care then reclaim has been a major step back from WTC childcare element and a real barrier* • *Free childcare—as and when the sector can provide it—could also make a real difference* • *WTC treated people above the 16 hours as grown ups able to make their own decisions incentivized by a 40% taper. UC's plan to improve the carrots" has been replaced by sticks* • *New resources and support into work may be welcomed but not if accompanied by sanctions that may not actually have the intended effect and fear from removing set limits on expectations for people with health problems* • *Encouraging over 50s to postpone retirement seems to amount to bribery and incentives at the top and special work coach attention and cajoling at lower incomes* *Some really useful helpful measures wrapped up in some unhelpful, unproven coercion and blame the victim rhetoric*
March 2023	Health & Disability White Paper *Launched on Budget Day and cross-referenced in the budget. See more details under "Sickness Benefits" table. But essentially plan is to:* • *replace LCWRA element with a Health element based on PIP entitlement* • *remove LCW and LCWRA groups for work conditionality in favour of a "Personalised Health Conditionality" set by UC work coaches (similar to current situation ahead of a first WCA when on UC)* *Timeline: starting in some areas from 2026/27 at the earliest rolling out nationally over 3 years.*	• *Helps resolve UC's adult disability gap, failing to recognize a need for additional means tested top up to Pip denied when UC set out. Resolves the current nonsense treatment of disabled workers and may extend extra help to those with disabilities who may also be parents, carers or jobseekers* • *It removes double testing and anxiety of two assessments for many, with WCA being the most problematic* • *But it leaves those too unwell to work but not meeting PIP criteria (or not unwell for long enough without extra help* • *It removes the protection of set limits on work requirements (LCW Work Preparation or none if LCWRA) in favour of discretion of UC work coaches. This arrangement already causes concern as applied to UC claimants awaiting their first WCA. More safeguards may be needed for trust.* *The actual changes may change through the legislative process and the not so remote chance of an alternative Government in power when these changes are due to be implemented.*

Other Benefits

Date	*Change*	*Notes & Comment*
April 2011	Sure Start Maternity Grant *Now restricted to first child only*	*Assumes all baby equipment is kept and ready for any other children. Ignores realities of wear, tear and loss between moves, separation etc. Hits babies in the lowest income households or where difficult family situations, the most.* ***NB: Rises in*** *Scotland to £600 first child, £300 later + further amounts from Summer 2019*
Sept 2011	Educational Maintenance Allowance *Abolished in England. A loss of up to £30 a week for young people from low incomes staying on at school or college. About 10% retained as discretionary funding*	*Loss of up to £30 a week (and bonuses for attendance, attainment) could have a big effect on gap between richer and poorer areas. Some may give up courses as a result, others may do less well (with reduced resources for books and travel, no income and lost incentives)*
May 2012	Income Support (for lone parents) *New claims for IS (lone parents) only if a child* ***under age of 5*** *(was reduced to 7 in October 2010). If not then "sign on" for JSA instead—which may now mean a switch to UC . Existing claimants with no child under 5 will have the benefit removed in phases*	*Nominally same benefit rate, but must "actively seek" and be "available for work" or face JSA sanctions* *Lone parents want to work where jobs and support exist, when it is right for their children. Compulsion via JSA may just distract from action on barriers to work and child poverty. 21% of children of single parents who work full time are in income poverty*
October 2012	~~In Work Credit and Job Grant~~ • *In Work / Return to Work Credit was an extra £40/£60 weekly payment boosting income in first months in work* *Abolished from October 2013* • *Job Grant was £100 (single) and £250 (if with children) for additional expenses starting work (e.g. clothes, travel)* *Abolished from October 2013*	*Abolished in preparation for Universal Credit which aims to keep things simpler and have built in extra incentives for those making first steps into work* *However, potential recipients may not be able to access UC until at least April 2014, so a real loss of practical support for first days at work and an income boost in first year for lone parents and people with long term illnesses/disabilities*
April 2013	Council Tax Benefit / Support *(see Means Tested Benefits for more details)* *Handover of responsibility for CTB schemes to Local Authorities in England and devolved governments in Scotland and Wales with a 10% reduction in budget from 2012/3* *Councils have 13% less to play with overall and c20% less for "working age" claimants as older people are protected at CTB levels*	*English council responses vary. Some are able to make up shortfall (e.g. by changes to second homes and cuts elsewhere) Others have to balance within CTS budgets by e.g. : all paying something - up to 30%, only helping up to Band A or similar, increasing non-dependant deductions, no backdating . A bit of a postcode lottery* *Emerging issues: do councils apply ESA cuts or the two child limits from 2017 onwards?* *In Scotland and Wales, the devolved Governments have been continuing to make up the shortfall year and have national schemes*
April 2013	Discretionary Social Fund *(see Social Fund chapter for more details)* • *Crisis Loans (until 1st payment) replaced by 'short-term advances' of benefit* • *Budgeting Loans to be replaced by budgeting advances under Universal Credit, but remain as now for those on other means-tested benefits* • *Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans (for all other emergencies) are abolished and 2010 budget passed to Local Authorities, but retained by national governments in Scotland/Wales/NI*	*Initial funding to Local Authorities in England (county councils in two tier council areas) was not ring-fenced and no legal duty to run a Social Fund equivalent . So, replacement for Crisis Loans in emergencies and Community Care Grants will vary from area to area. No independent review process. Increasingly councils facing massive general cuts are ending "local welfare schemes"* *Devolved nations continue with their national schemes, which are grants only in Scotland and Wales:* • ***Scottish Welfare Fund*** *run through local authorities* • ***Discretionary Assistance Fund*** *in Wales run nationally* • ***Discretionary Assistance*** *(in NI) has both grants and loans.* *Cuts likely to increase high interest debt (pay day loans, Provident, loan sharks etc.) and requests for emergency help from social services and charities*

Other Benefits *(continued)*		
Date	*Change*	*Notes & Comment*
April 2017	Bereavement Support Payment *From April 2017, BSP replaced previous bereavement benefits with:* • *a lump sum of £2,500 plus18 monthly payments of £100 for those without children* • *a lump sum of £3,500 plus 18 monthly payments of £350 for those with children.* *Tax free, ignored for UC, not variable by age, simpler1-year NI contribution, not lost on a new partnership.*	*More emphasis on a lump sum payment and a smaller time limited monthly payment. However, unlike the old bereavement benefits system, which was an earnings replacement benefit - Step 1 in Big Book terms - the new system is more of a Step 3 additional non-means tested benefit payable* ***on top of*** *any Step 1 claim e.g. for ESA.* *There will be winners and losers in the change. Losers may be those with younger children who would have previously had Widowed Parent's Allowance until the youngest child connected with the deceased partner - ceased to be on their claim. A switch to alternative means tested support*
August 2017	Babybox (Scotland) *Every family to receive with a new baby born in Scotland to receive a Babybox*	*Box contains essentials e.g. nappies, clothes, books*
April 2018	Funeral Expenses Payment *Time limit to claim extended to 6 months* *Any charitable contributions or from relatives now ignored*	*Improvements help but the amounts remain increasingly out of touch with even the costs of a basic funeral as evidenced by increased local authority burials* *NB a new scheme in Scotland has increased amounts and the scope of who can apply by some 40%*
	Council Tax Support *Backdating increased to 6 months in Scotland*	*A real help for those not so good with paperwork to reduce council tax arrears among those fully entitled to help.*
	Fair Start and Job Grant (Scotland) • ***Fair Start*** *is the new, voluntary, employability scheme* • ***Job Grant*** *- a £250 for parents going back to work after 6 months or more out of work to help with return to work costs.*	***Fair Start Scotland*** *goes live in April 2018 and to support at least 38,000 people over three years of referrals and will have positive impacts on around 7,000 children.* ***Job Grant*** *will provide additional support for young parents* *However , the* ***Flexible Support Fund*** *is still available to* ***all*** *jobseekers, paid at the discretion of JSA advisers/UC work coaches. Stats show underuse in Scotland - at 6% of UK total - so a plan to encourage awareness and use is underway there.*
Summer 2018	Carer's Supplement (Scotland) *A top up to Carers Allowance for carers in Scotland to bring the amount up from £64.60 to £73.10 a week until CA is replaced by Carer's Assistance at that rate in Scotland*	*The first payments from the new Social Security Scotland, to test its new systems and approach of "dignity fairness and respect". Paid twice a year as a top up, until it can be added into the new Carer's Assistance from April 2019. The extra amount - compared to CA in the rest of the UK - will be ignored in means tested benefits sums. It has since been increased by more than inflation so does more than top up to standard JSA levels*
April 2018	Best Start Grant (Scotland) *Replaces Sure Start Grant with a £600 payment to first child and restores payments to further children at £300*	*Restores some of previous cuts to this grant to help make a difference from the start. To be followed by two further £250 grants per child on starting nursery and on starting school*
Se new timetable under devolved differenc es	Disability Payments (Scotland) *Takes over from Child , PIP and AA. Same criteria to ease transfer & no re-assessment* • *no time limit under special rules* • *medical assessments only when absolutely necessary and not by private contractors* • *new forms and processes based on "dignity, fairness and respect"* *DLA to PIP transfers halted and will go to ADP. No new assessment for PIP claims.*	*Practicality means Scotland will have to stick with the current AA, DLA and PIP framework for now, while consulting on any new direction for* ***Disability Payments*** *But that will provide a useful opportunity to see how the experiences of claimants for initially identical benefits differs under the same different very different approach intended.* *If noticeably better experience in Scotland, and then the demand will grow: "Why not in the rest of the UK ?"*

Other Benefits *(continued)*		
Date	*Change*	*Notes & Comment*
April 2020	Statutory Parental Bereavement Leave *Up to 2 weeks paid leave at the same rates as Statutory Maternity Pay after the death of a dependent child*	*Guarantees some paid leave from employers after the death of a child. Many employers will go further in making arrangements for time off under contractual sickness pay or adjusting work hours / duties*
April 2020	Child Bereavement Payment (Wales) *A grant of £500 after the death of a child or young person in Wales.* *No claim needed - details are taken as part of the registration of a death*	*A non means tested grant into intended to cover expenses but as a meaningful gesture of solidarity at a very difficult time*
April 2021 and 2022	Carers Support Payment (Wales) *Welsh Government does not have devolved powers of Scotland for an ongoing carers supplement or over Carers Allowance* *But the Welsh Government has made additional payments of £500 a year for carers in recognition of pandemic pressures then Cost of Living ones* *Not yet clear if another on for 2023 24*	*A recognition of extra difficulties for carers in difficult times even if on a one off basis. Comes as part of a Carers Support Fund to offer more support and services to carers in Wales*
April 2022	Scottish Child Payment *From April 2017, BSP replaced previous bereavement benefits with:* • *An initial £10 for each child under 6 from April 2022* • *Now extended in November 2022 to all under 16s and paid at £25 per child* *Ignored as income for means tested benefits, so it is all extra income*	*Aims to help tackle rising child poverty as UK benefits are cut back and to counter the two child limit a major driver in increases in child poverty. Initially required a claim but then paid automatically each month by Social Security Scotland*