

November 2020

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Limited ©2020

Now Booking-

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online full 1 day course(over two half
days) 27/1/2021 to 28/1/2021 or
22/2/2021 to 23/2/2021 or
24/3/2021 to 25/3/2021

Benefits and Mental Health 2021
online full 1 day course(over two half
days) 10/2/2021 to 11/2/2021 or
28/4/2021 to 29/4/2021

An Overview of Universal Credit 2021
online full 1 day course(over two half
days) 24/2/2021 to 25/2/2021

Benefits for Older People 2021
online full 1 day course(over two half
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Universal Credit – the Tricky Parts 2021
online full 1 day course(over two half
days) 17/3/2021 to 18/3/2021

Welfare Benefit Appeals 2021
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Universal Credit 2021**
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Free Benefits Newsletter

For professionals

Covid-19 Related Extensions/ Changes

There have been lots of welcome recent extensions to the provisions that have helped clients manage better financially during the Covid-19 pandemic.
Extensions-

- **Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme- [extension](#)**-Furlough(employed)- extended until 31/3/2021(replacing the planned Job Support Scheme). For claim periods running to January 2021, employees will receive 80% of their usual salary for hours not worked, up to a maximum of £2,500 per month. The £2,500 cap is proportional to the hours not worked. Employers can claim for employees who were employed and on their PAYE payroll on 30 October 2020. Employees that were employed and on the payroll on 23 September 2020 who were made redundant or stopped working for their employer afterwards can be re-employed and claimed for.
 - **SEISS(self employed)-** The [extension](#) will last for 6 months, from November 2020 to April 2021. Grants will be paid in 2 lump sum instalments each covering a 3 month period. The third grant will cover a 3 month period from 1 November 2020 until 31 January 2021. The Government will provide a taxable grant calculated at 80% of 3 months average monthly trading profits, paid out in a single instalment and capped at £7,500 in total. Details on the fourth grant are yet to be announced.
 - **Universal Credit- Minimum income floor**(affects many self employed). This was suspended on 13/3/2020. A [new law](#) extends it now until 30/4/2021. A client will be able to look at whether they are still self employed before the are hit by the reintroduction.
- The law also allows until 12/5/2020 any period during which a person is infected or contaminated with Coronavirus disease, in isolation or caring for a child or qualifying young person in their household who is so infected or contaminated or is in isolation, to not be counted towards a period of sickness under JSA. Temporary breaks in caring where a client is in receipt of Carers Allowance is also allowed.
- **[Winter Grants Package](#)**- includes £170m Covid Winter Grant Scheme(run by councils) to support children, families and the most vulnerable over winter, Holiday Activities and Food programme to be expanded, covering Easter, Summer and Christmas in 2021 and Healthy Start payments set to rise from £3.10 to £4.25 a week from April 2021. At least 80% earmarked to support with food and bills, and will cover the period to the end of March 2021.
 - Job centres open during November lockdown, including in person if people need extra support and are unable to interact on the phone or digitally.
 - Face to face medicals remain suspended- also from 2/11/ 2020, claimants who fail to attend (by telephone) may have their ESA stopped or universal credit entitlement changed.
 - BSL Video relay service-DWP has extended Video Relay Service (VRS) for British Sign Language (BSL) users across all service lines. [Click here](#) for the app
 - ESA extend the waiving of ESA waiting days until 12/5/2021.
 - Conditionality returns for claimants, 4,500 new work coaches.

Changes Continued

There are currently over 5.7 million (Oct 2020) people on Universal Credit. Claims have more than doubled this year.

We have amended our Coronavirus Briefing 1 to reflect some of these changes-

Click for - [Coronavirus Briefing 1- At a glance guide to Changes in the Spring Budget 2020 and Ongoing Changes](#)

You can access all 11 Covid-19 Benefit Change briefings by logging into our [Members' area](#).

Remember, [Membership](#) is free for 1 year if you attend one of our courses.

Book now for our **updated** [Benefits and Mental Health 2021](#) online course and our [Introduction to Welfare Benefits 2021](#) online course.

Paid Twice in One Month- Change to UC Earnings Calculation

Clients getting paid monthly sometimes get paid twice in one assessment period due to their employer paying slightly early due to non 'banking day'.

From 16 November a [new law](#) (changing regulation 61 of the UC regulations 2013) comes into force affecting the way monthly earnings are treated for Universal Credit calculations.

Paragraph 6 allows for a reallocation of a calendar monthly payment of earnings reported via the Real Time Information (RTI) service to a different Universal Credit assessment period where it is necessary to maintain a regular payment cycle. It will allow then to benefit from their work allowance (earnings disregard if applicable, each month).

The new law implements the judgment of the Court of Appeal in *Secretary of State v Johnson & others* [2020] EWCA Civ 778. The government think it will affect less than one 1% of clients working and claiming UC.

Note- others who might get paid weekly, fortnightly or 4 weekly might experience a similar fluctuation in UC but the new law does not cover those situations.

Book now for our **updated** - [Universal Credit Overview 2021](#), [Universal Credit – The Tricky Parts 2021](#) and [Universal Credit and Housing Costs 2021](#) courses.

New UC Guidance for Untidy Tenancies

Some clients, who are jointly liable for UC housing costs have problems when a joint tenant leaves. The DWP might not treat the remaining tenant as liable for the absent tenant's share of rent liability even though they are paying the rent in full (an untidy tenancy). [The law](#) allows clients to be treated as liable where it is reasonable to do so.

The National Housing Federation state that the DWP say- 'On 23 June 2020 a new 'Record a change in joint tenancy costs' to-do was introduced to Universal Credit Full Service, which ensures cases are automatically correctly paid each month without the need for manual payments or continued claimant intervention...A claimant can report this in their journal or phone. If the claimant declares new housing costs they will need to inform us again of their circumstances. The claimant will get a journal message to tell them this.

New guidance has been issued to Work Coaches and Case Managers to make them aware of the changes....Work Coaches and Case Managers are reminded that they must not:

Ask the claimant to re-declare housing costs as a single tenancy, unless there is a genuine change of circumstances.

Make a housing declaration on behalf of the claimant that it is a single tenancy.

Ask the claimant to get a new tenancy from their landlord or a landlord letter to confirm the claimant is solely liable.'

This Newsletter

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