

Social Landlord Support Pack

**Getting social tenants ready for direct
payment of housing costs**



Ministerial Foreword

As you will be aware, we have recently announced our plans to roll out Universal Credit to all jobcentres and Local Authorities across the country from early next year. Universal Credit brings together six benefits and tax credits into one. It is helping people to get into work quicker and stay in it longer, making a lasting difference to people's lives now and for generations to come.

I welcome the important role social landlords have played in welfare reform, in particular supporting tenants who are receiving Universal Credit. Today I am asking you to continue these activities: to take steps to get your tenants ready for Universal Credit while at the same time preparing your organisation and your people for the changes.

My request is that, working with your Local Authorities, you start to identify tenants who may need support to prepare for Universal Credit - and then provide the appropriate support including, where appropriate, putting those who are ready onto a direct payment of Housing Benefit early. This approach will mean your tenants are ready for paying rent under Universal Credit, while also providing you with the time and opportunity to manage any organisational impacts.

We are learning together how best to manage the changes and make them work. In the attached pack, I have set out the support we have put in place to facilitate your participation in this initiative.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Freud'.

Lord Freud
Minister for Welfare Reform

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1. About your Social Landlord Support Pack

What it is, who it's for:

- The Social Landlord Support Pack has useful information for local authorities and social landlords considering undertaking some preparation for direct payment of housing costs under Universal Credit
- The information in this pack will help local authorities and social landlords provide the best possible support to tenants. It will be updated with new and additional information as it becomes available
- You can use the information in the Social Landlord Support Pack to develop your local preparation strategy. Different sections of this resource centre contain information for:
 - external audiences such as your tenants where you might publish links and information on your external channels such as your website
 - internal audiences i.e. your staff, where you might use the information in internal channels like staff newsletters or an intranet site
- If you would like to find out more or have any questions, comments or suggestions about the information in this pack, you can contact one of the DWP Partnership Managers for your region. How to contact DWP partnership teams for England, Scotland and Wales can be found [here](#).

2. Information and Links to useful documents

All of the information and links in this section can be published on your website or in publications for your tenants.

Learning reports

Landlord Learning Document from the Direct Payment Demonstration areas

A report by landlords in the Direct Demonstration Pilot areas, sharing experiences, findings and examples of how to make a successful switch to Direct Payments. The key lessons learned are in the Executive Summary on page 4.

[landlords-learning-document-DPDP-areas](#)

Direct Payment Demonstration evaluation reports

Evaluation of the Direct Payment Demonstration Project relating to the direct payment of Housing Benefit to tenants in social housing. Including:

- Rent underpayment
- 12 months in Extended Learning Report
- 12 months' Rent Account Analysis Exercise
- 12 month stage reports
- Report from the stage two survey of tenants

[direct-payment-demonstration-projects-DPDP](#)

Direct Payment Demonstration Projects: final reports

Final evaluation of the Direct Payment Demonstration Project relating to the direct payment of Housing Benefit to tenants in social housing.

[DPDP - final direct-payment-demonstration-projects-final-reports](#)

Local Authority led pilots findings report

Guidance for local authorities on implementing Universal Credit based on the findings of 12 local authority led pilots.

[universal-credit-implementation-findings-from-local-authority-pilots](#)

2. Information and Links to useful documents (continued)

Partner organisation information

Money Advice Service Social Landlord toolkit

Following input and advice from the sector, the Money Advice Service has developed a handy downloadable toolkit which gives landlords advice and support for helping their tenants. It includes topics such as how to access the Money Advice Service telephone budgeting support, helping someone cut back on non-essential spending or even ordering some offline materials.

As with everything the Money Advice Service does, it gives independent, impartial information around what is happening and how landlords can help their tenants to manage the change.

<https://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/categories/partners-uc-landlords>

Online Money Manager

Money Advice Service's Online Money Manager is an interactive tool that offers personalised advice, on making the most of claimant's money while they're on Universal Credit. It offers help and advice on a range of money topics, including opening a bank account, keeping on top of bills and dealing with debt.

The online service includes:

- step by step questions that signpost users to financial guidance and support relevant to their personal circumstances
- hints and tips for managing money and paying bills from a monthly payment.
- signposting to further support, such as advance payments and free debt advice

Visit the Online Money Manager – obs.moneyadviceservice.org.uk

Visit the Money Manager video - <https://youtu.be/cfnLgHeFySQ>

The Money Advice Service debt advice locator tool

This is a new tool launched by the Money Advice Service to help people quickly and easily locate their nearest face to face debt advice provider.

<https://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/tools/debt-advice-locator>

Chartered Institute of Housing Learning Network

The Chartered Institute of Housing Learning Network has free information and learning on the Direct Payment Pilots and Local Authority led pilots. Webinars from various stakeholders including Personal Budgeting Support and the Money Advice Service have useful information on preparing for Universal Credit. Follow the link below to request access to the network.

<http://www.cih.org/universalcredit>

2. Information and Links to useful documents (continued)

Universal Credit information to help your tenants prepare

Universal Credit Personal Planner

The Universal Credit Personal Planner can help tenants prepare for the changes that the new service brings. Claimants provide the answers to some basic questions and it will tell them how ready they are for Universal Credit. It provides advice on what tenants need to do and the best sources of help. It will not tell claimants how much Universal Credit they will get as this will depend on their circumstances when they claim.

[universal-credit-preparation](#)

Universal Credit Partner Toolkit

The online Partner Toolkit which can be found on GOV.UK contains important public information about Universal Credit and the changes it brings. It is designed to help partner organisations who want to explain Universal Credit to claimants and contains videos, quick guides, frequently asked questions and illustrations of various claimant scenarios.

[universal-credit-toolkit-for-partner-organisations](#)

3. Frequently asked questions

The following guides cover some frequently asked questions which will help you explain Universal Credit:

[Universal Credit and rented housing: guide for landlords](#)

This is a guide for private and social sector landlords which local authority communicators may also find helpful.

This guide provides current information about Universal Credit giving advice on how to prepare for Universal Credit and direct payments.

It explains how Universal Credit will ensure that the appropriate protections and safeguards are in place – both the trigger points for DWP intervention and recovery of arrears where they occur, and the budgeting and payment support for tenants who may need help moving to the new system. This includes putting in place alternative payment arrangements, for example managed payments from DWP to the landlord for those who need it, following conversations with both the tenant and landlord.

We remain committed to working closely with the rented housing sector to ensure implementation is safe and information is available.

[An Introduction to Universal Credit](#)

This guide offers general information about Universal Credit.