

## **£20 a week cut to Universal Credit – what it could mean for you**

In October, the current £20 a week uplift to Universal Credit that was introduced at the start of the pandemic is set to be removed, affecting 1 in 6 people within Kirklees. In real terms this means a cut of £1,040 a year, which in addition to the rise in household bills leaves people facing a perfect storm this winter. 39% of Kirklees residents who will be worse off by the cut are families with children, with 36% of residents who claim already in work. This means families and working people could be pushed into debt or struggle to afford household bills, leading to increased stress and anxiety.

### **What *is* Universal Credit?**

Universal Credit is a benefit that has replaced Child Tax Credit, Housing Benefit, Income Support, Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and Working Tax Credit. The £20 weekly uplift was introduced in March 2020 as a temporary measure to help with the COVID-19 pandemic, but was extended to last until October 2021. Universal Credit is paid monthly, different to some older benefits paid weekly or fortnightly, so an £80 decrease in each payment will be a significant blow. This may be particularly difficult for those who began claiming in the last 12 to 18 months, who will not have benefited from the uplift but will suffer from its removal.

Kirklees Citizens Advice and Law Centre is currently working alongside National Citizens Advice and our local MPs to lobby the government to keep the uplift via our #KeepTheLifeline campaign, as we see on a day to day basis how the £20 lifeline benefits the residents of Kirklees. We have helped over 2,000 people to claim Universal Credit in this year alone, and will continue to support new claimants or those moving over from another benefit.

### **What we can do for you:**

- Need to claim Universal Credit but don't know where to start? Call the Citizens Advice 'Help to Claim' line on 0800 144 8444, a dedicated line for those claiming for the first time or curious as to whether you can claim. It's open 8am to 6pm, Monday – Friday
- Your monthly or weekly budget may change after the removal of the uplift, and you may find yourself in debt or finding it difficult to make ends meet. Take stock of your income and outgoings, and use our budget tool ([www.citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money)) to help you make the most of your money.

Remember **you are not alone** – we are here to help you.

Kirklees Citizens Advice and Law Centre helps thousands of people each year. We can help you handle any problems which might arise relating to employment, housing, debt, benefits and more. See our website at [www.kcalc.org.uk](http://www.kcalc.org.uk), or call our Telephone Advice Line on **0808 278 7896 (Freephone)** open **Mon-Fri 9am - 4:30pm**.