

## Revenues and Benefits Bulletin

# Universal Credit Migration is here

**Universal Credit (UC) has now been in place for several years** and people making new benefit claims are normally directed straight to it.



However, many people across the country still receive the older 'legacy' benefits that predate UC. The government's intention is that all of these claimants should move onto UC and a time table for the 'migration' of these claims is now in place. (Benefit claimants of working age, will start to receive 'migration notices' from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to inform them that their existing benefits will end. On receiving a migration notice, it is essential that the claimant makes a new claim for UC if they still need financial support. It has to be emphasised that the claimant

is responsible here for actively making a claim. Their migration notice will give them a deadline by which their UC claim should be submitted.

The government's time-table to start contacting customers is as follows.

- Income Support - April to June 2024
- Housing Benefit only - June to August 2024
- Employment Support Allowance with Child Tax Credit - July to September 2024
- Job Seekers Allowance - September 2024 onwards

The DWP will send reminders to customers, by letter and text message. In some circumstances they even intend to make home visits to customers who fail to respond. However, the best advice for anyone affected is to act on any DWP request for information or instruction as soon as possible. Failing to do so carries the risk of losing benefit.

UC claims should be submitted online. If you can't do this, there is a Universal Credit Migration Notice Helpline 0800 169 0328. This is a freephone number available Monday to Friday from 8.00 am to 6.00 pm. Citizens Advice are also offering support to people who need help with the migration process.

Landlords and housing providers should remember that except in very limited circumstances, (where a person is resident in 'special exempt accommodation') a UC claimant will receive help towards their housing costs as part of their UC claim. UC does not offer support towards Council Tax. Anyone on a low income who needs support with this should claim Council Tax Reduction from the council.

More information on Gov.UK [here](#).

# Council Tax shouldn't be a source of stress

## Some basics on keeping on top of your bill

Nobody enjoys getting bills. That includes a Council Tax bill, especially anybody struggling to cope financially. There are things you can do though, to minimise a Council Tax bill's impact.

As a service, Sandwell's Revenues and Benefits team deals with all sorts of stakeholders who are regularly in contact with our mutual customers about money issues. From advice agencies, housing associations, charities, to disability groups and more. If you work for an organisation that does talk to clients about money - it is always worth checking that they are on top of their Council Tax and not getting into unnecessary difficulties.

Below are some of the things to think about to help stay on top of Council Tax.

**Discounts and exemptions:** Check whether you're entitled to a discount on your bill. There is a long list of possible discounts you can apply for. In particular, Council Tax Reduction (CTR), which is a discount for people on low incomes. If you think you might be entitled to CTR or any other discount—act immediately as delays could cost you money. You can apply for CTR and other discounts online.

**Changes in circumstances:** Report any change that might affect your liability as soon as you can. The earlier we get the correct bill to you, the easier it will be to budget for any payments you need to make, giving you increased control. And sometimes, telling us late about a change can even result in a penalty charge being added to your bill.

**Act on arrears:** If you are in arrears with your Council Tax, act straight away to get back on track. Arrears always carry the risk of additional costs being added to your bill. Such as the cost of a court summons or even fees from an enforcement agent (previously known as bailiffs) that the council has appointed to collect your Council Tax debt.



**Your bill doesn't have to be stressful**

**Do it online:** Our website allows customers to take most of the actions they need to maintain their accounts online. You can set up a special payment arrangement if you are overdue, apply for a discount, notify us of changes, check the status of your account and much more via our website. You can also set up a direct debit, the easiest and safest way to stay on top of your bill, or register to get future bills by email.

**Never delay:** Just like any other problem in life, a Council Tax problem will only get worse if you leave it! If you are worried about your bill for any reason, act. [Visit us online](#) for more information.

- **Check for discounts**
- **Report changes promptly**
- **Take action on arrears**
- **Do it online if you can**
- **Never leave a Council Tax issue undealt with.**

# Sandwell Council Tax reduction income bands for 2024/25

(Figures shown are weekly).

For people of working age, we use income bands to calculate the value of the discount we can award through Council Tax Reduction. (Different rules apply for people over state pension age). These bands are changed yearly. All local authorities have their equivalent local schemes for which they set their own rules. The income bands shown here apply only in Sandwell.

## Single person with no children

Income from	discount
£0	100%
£90.81	90%
£120.81	75%
£150.81	50%
£180.81	25%
£210.81	0

## Single person with one child

Income from	discount
£0	100%
£193.20	90%
£223.20	75%
£253.20	50%
£283.20	25%
£313.20	0

## Single person with two or more Children

Income from	discount
£0	100%
£276.44	90%
£306.44	75%
£336.44	50%
£366.44	25%
£396.44	0

## Couple with no children

Income from	discount
£0	100%
£142.53	90%
£172.53	75%
£202.53	50%
£232.53	25%
£262.53	0

## Couple with one child

Income from	discount
£0	100%
£244.92	90%
£274.92	75%
£304.92	50%
£344.92	25%
£364.92	0

## Couple with two or more children

Income from	discount
£0	100%
£328.16	90%
£358.16	75%
£388.16	50%
£418.16	25%
£448.16	0

## DON'T LOSE TIME APPLYING

If you think you might be entitled to CTR, don't wait, apply immediately.

Delays could cost money.

Visit us online for [further information.](#)

