

Services Select Committee *Universal Credit Sub Group*



Update for SDC Meeting 03/04/2012

Michael Horwood

Members: Cllr Anna Firth (Chairman), Cllr Michael Horwood (Vice Chairman),
Cllr Simon Raikes, Cllr Roddy Hogarth and Cllr Laurence Ball

What is Universal Credit (UC)?



**Universal Credit will
be rolled out from
April 2013 – Oct 2017**

- A simpler benefits system that amalgamates most benefits – this will reduce fraud and make the system easier to understand.
- A more worthwhile benefits system that makes most people better off working.
- A system that is designed to respond to the flexibilities of modern working patterns.

What is the current system?

Responsible for

Institution

Housing Benefit

Council Tax Benefit

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Jobseekers Allowance

Income Support

Employment Support Allowance

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Working Tax Credits
Child Tax Credits
Child Benefit

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What is the new system?

Universal Credit

Benefits Outside of Universal Credit



Council Tax 'Discount'



.... And that's it.

What have we done so far?

- We have held five meetings so far, all on a Friday from 9AM – 1PM, to discuss the impact on Sevenoaks residents from the changes to Universal Credit.
- Interviewed various witnesses from charitable and voluntary organisations, as well as officers from the Department for Work and Pensions and Jobcentre Plus.
- Attended a conference regarding Universal Credit and Council Tax localisation.

Some of the Challenges Ahead

- The 'ambitious' 80% of *applications online* target.
- The payment of Universal Credit monthly, not fortnightly.
- The payment of housing benefit to social tenants directly.
- Budgeting of Universal Credit, along with a possible reduction in Council Tax Benefit and reduced access to 'The Social Fund'.
- Creation of a new Council Tax localisation policy.



Thank you for listening

Questions?

