

New video service for deaf claimants accessing Universal Credit

The service can be used to help make a new claim or for those already claiming Universal Credit.

This supports a package of measures put in place to provide quicker and easier access to benefits during the Coronavirus outbreak.

British Sign Language users can now easily access Universal Credit through a video relay service provided by the Department for Work and Pensions. The move will support many of the 87,000 Deaf BSL users currently living in the UK.

The Video Relay Service (VRS), allows users to make BSL interpreted video calls via their tablet, smartphone, computer or laptop. A professional interpreter then relays the call in English to a member of DWP staff.

Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, Justin Tomlinson said:

With more than 1.4 million people accessing Universal Credit in these unprecedented times, this technology will provide vital and equal accessibility for Deaf people and those with hearing loss.

It is fantastic to see concern for increasing accessibility going right to the top and I am delighted that we are championing this cause for people accessing the welfare safety net.

The service, which is already available for people accessing other disability benefits and the Access to Work scheme, will be available through GOV.UK.

DWP staff won't see the caller or the interpreter; but will receive a phone call from the interpreter who will translate into BSL. There is no need to book the service in advance which allows the conversation to take place in real time.

Customers will be able to access a VRS hyperlink on GOV.UK. Alternatively, SignVideo offer an app that can connect to Universal Credit. Colleagues won't see the caller or the interpreter; they simply receive a voice telephone call and allow additional time for translation into BSL.

Media enquiries for this press release – 020 3267 5144

Follow DWP on: