

# Press release: New budgeting support for Universal Credit claimants

Money Advice Service's Online Money Manager is an interactive tool that offers personalised advice, on making the most of your money while you'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.

Universal Credit is built to mirror the world of work to make the transition much easier for claimants and so there is always an incentive to work. New claimants receive monthly benefit payments, just like a pay cheque, and some may need extra help to manage this change.

Employment Minister Damian Hinds said:

Universal Credit gives people back control of their own lives and finances, and makes the transition into work much smoother. We know that this can be a big change. Our work coaches offer budgeting support to all new claimants and this new tool will help more people get all the skills they need to manage their money.

Caroline Rookes, Chief Executive for the Money Advice Service, said:

The Online Money Manager is an essential tool that will help people to plan and budget for this new way of receiving their money and paying their bills. They will be able to find personalised information about bank accounts, help with setting up direct payments to landlords, budgeting and saving money on regular bills, as well as where to go for additional support if they are struggling with financial commitments.

We are pleased to be working closely with the Department for Work and Pensions to bring this tool to the people who can benefit the most.

## **Online Money Manager**

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

Universal Credit is a single monthly payment which replaces 6 benefits. It is simpler for claimants, and adjusts automatically when someone moves into work. It is designed to mirror the world of work and the monthly payments reflect the way many people's wages are paid. Money for housing costs also goes to the claimant, rather than direct to a landlord, giving people control over their own finances.

Jobcentre Plus work coaches:

- give people the support they need to prepare for, move into and stay in work – including help with job searching and signposting to relevant training and interview advice
- can provide budgeting advice for those that need it

## **Budgeting tips from the Money Advice Service**

### **List all your income and outgoings**

Keep track of how much money you have coming in and how much you need to spend on essentials. You can use the Online Money Manager to help.

### **Divide your spending into essential and non-essential items**

Take a look at your spending and create 2 lists: one for things you really need, and another for things you could live without.

### **Sort out your rent or mortgage payments**

Make sure you keep your rent or mortgage money separate from your everyday spending money. Think about setting up a direct debit or standing order to pay your landlord or lender directly each month after you get your first Universal Credit payment.

### **Think about how you'll manage a monthly payment**

Universal Credit is paid monthly so if you're used to working out your spending weekly or fortnightly, you'll need to start managing your money across the whole month.

### **Work out how you'll cover your essential outgoings**

These include rent or mortgage, Council Tax, utility bills, and repayments on loans, credit cards or store cards. If there's a risk you'll fall behind with payments, don't bury your head in the sand. Lenders, councils and landlords can work with you to manage repayments if you tell them as soon as there's a problem.

### **Get better deals on regular bills**

With essential bills, like your gas, electricity or phone, you could save up to £200 a year if you switch to a better deal. Even making a single call to your current provider to ask about cheaper tariffs could make you better off.

## **Check for insurance policies and make a claim**

If you've taken out any income or payment protection policies you might find the insurance company will cover loan repayments if you're not working. Check your policy paperwork if you're not sure.

## **Think before you borrow**

If you're tempted to borrow, think carefully about how you will keep up with repayments. Stay away from high-cost borrowing like payday or doorstep lenders. If you must borrow, credit unions can offer cheaper loans and will work with you to set affordable repayments.

## **Prioritise debts – and get help if you're struggling**

Your rent or mortgage, Council Tax and gas or electricity bills are priority bills. If you're struggling to pay them, get free, confidential debt advice as soon as you can. A debt adviser can help you manage your debts even if you think you have no spare money to deal with them. The [Debt Advice Locator Tool](#) will help you find free advice in your area.

## **About the Money Advice Service**

The Money Advice Service is an independent organisation. It gives free, unbiased money guidance online at [moneyadviceservice.org.uk](https://moneyadviceservice.org.uk) or via free phone on 0800 138 7777. Debt advice is also provided through a variety of partners across the UK.

The service was set up by the government and is paid for by a statutory levy on the financial services industry, raised through the Financial Conduct Authority. Its statutory objectives are to enhance the understanding and knowledge of members of the public about financial matters (including the UK financial system) and to enhance the ability of members of the public to manage their own financial affairs.

For more information about the Online Money Manager for Universal Credit claimants contact [pressoffice@moneyadviceservice.org.uk](mailto:pressoffice@moneyadviceservice.org.uk) or call 0207 943 0593.

Media enquiries for this press release – 0203 267 5111

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**[Government must not hide behind talk](#)**

# of a wealthy older generation whilst inequality remains – Abrahams

**Debbie Abrahams**

**MP, Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary**, commenting on the findings of the Intergenerational Commission report, said:

“We welcome the news that pensioners are now much less likely to be in poverty, continuing the trend put in place by the last Labour Government which saw a huge decline in poverty among older people.

“Nevertheless, this report recognises the ‘high level of inequality’ among pensioners. We cannot allow this Government to hide behind talk of a wealthy older generation, while these inequalities remain.

“Unlike the divisive Tories, we will not trade one generation off against the others by claiming that an improved social security settlement for older people must come at the expense of working families.

“That’s why Labour has committed to extending the triple lock and protecting social security for older people until 2025, and reversing cuts to Universal Credit Work Allowances supporting people in low paid work.”

ENDS

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# John McDonnell responds to the independent Kerslake Review into the Treasury

**John**

**McDonnell MP, Labour’s Shadow Chancellor**, welcoming the publication of Labour’s

independent Kerslake Review into the Treasury this morning, said:

“I

welcome this report, which has been produced by some of the leading experts in our country who have worked closely with the Treasury. And Labour will be responding in full in the coming weeks to the review.

“Labour asked Sir Bob Kerslake to head up a review into the Treasury because we needed to have a serious and thorough examination of one of the most important pillars of government, and the cornerstone of economic policy making in our country.

“The Treasury is our most important economic policymaking institution, but one that has been criticised by some for its approach and attitudes.

“This review will help shape Labour’s economic policy, as well as being an first important step in setting a new direction for the Treasury in the 21st Century. As the views of the former head of the Civil Service are ones that should be taken on board right across the economic and political spectrum in our country.

“As Sir Bob has made clear, we need the Treasury in the 21st century to be not only able to meet the big challenges of the day such as Brexit, but also one that focuses on all corners of our country, so that no one and no community is left behind. Therefore, I am deeply concerned that the review has raised this as areas which need reform.

“Given the severe challenges that our economy and our country face in the coming years, it is vital that we have a Treasury that is up-to-speed and is able to match them. The next Labour government will need to deal with many of these challenges, with what by then could potentially have been 10 years of Tory economic failure, and it will fall to us to ensure that the Treasury is ready and properly equipped for the 21st century.

“I am are deeply grateful for the contribution from all the independent members of the review’s panel, who represented many different fields of expertise, and who gave up a considerable amount of their time to take part. And I would also like thank Sir Bob Kerslake for his time, energy and expertise in producing this report for Labour.”

**Lord**

**Kerslake, former head of the Civil Service**, who headed up the review, said:

“The

Treasury is a small but very powerful department. To make the most of its very capable staff, it needs to fundamentally change both what it does and how it does it. It should focus on its core economic and financial roles and work in a much more open and collaborative way. The impact of Brexit reinforces this need for change”.

Ends

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## [Commenting on the Education Select Committee's report into the evidence for grammar schools – Angela Rayner](#)

**Angela Rayner, Shadow Education Secretary**, commenting on the Education Select Committee's report into the evidence for grammar schools, said:

“When even the Conservative-dominated Education Selection Committee calls Theresa May's new grammar schools an ‘unnecessary distraction’, it's time that ministers finally sat up and took notice.

“There is a crisis in teacher recruitment, schools budgets are being cut for the first time in decades and hundreds of thousands of pupils are in super-sized classes. The Tories should be keeping their pledge to protect school funding rather than pressing ahead with this policy which will only make things worse for the majority of children.”

Ends

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## [“A better and fairer approach” to](#)

# public access for outdoor recreation

The Welsh Government asked the public for its opinions in 2015. Many of the 5,800 who responded said the current system is too complex and burdensome with some strong, and sometimes polarised, views on how it might be improved.

The [consultation](#) revealed the wide range of outdoor activities taking place across Wales but also exposed challenges faced by land managers and flaws and inconsistencies in the current system.

After reviewing the responses, Lesley Griffiths has announced her intention to develop proposals on how current laws can be improved in order to:

- Achieve consistency in the opportunities available for participation and how activities are restricted and regulated;
- Simplify procedures for designating and recording public access;
- Improve existing advisory forums and better communicate access rights and responsibilities.

The Cabinet Secretary said:

“Outdoor recreation makes a significant contribution to the economy and provides considerable health and social benefits. This is demonstrated by the huge success of the Wales Coast Path which has increased Wales’ profile at home and abroad. We now have the opportunity to build on this success.

“Wales needs an approach to public access for outdoor recreation that is less burdensome to administer, provides for a wide range of activities, but at the same time, respects the concerns of landowners.

“Whilst we can learn from other countries’ approaches, Wales requires laws which suit its cultural and physical landscape. We are very much aware of the concerns of landowners and the aspirations of access users. I will publish our proposals at the earliest opportunity so people can have their say, so we achieve a system that works in the best interest of all parties”.