

## Universal Credit

### Universal Credit and the Eligibility Checking Service: Continuity of Service

The Department for Education maintain that the “**eligibility checking service for free school meals (FSM) will continue to be available so that local councils can continue to check eligibility during the Universal Credit pathfinder and also once new criteria are introduced.**”

*Department for Education web site: 18 April 2013*

Source: [Universal Credit and free school meals \(FSM\): Eligibility checking service and other proposals](#)]

### Background

Universal Credit is a new benefit that has started to replace 6 existing benefits with a simpler, single monthly payment if you're out of work or on a low income. Universal Credit will help you to be better off in work, start a new job or work more hours. Universal Credit will eventually replace:

- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Income Support
- Working Tax Credit
- Child Tax Credit
- Housing Benefit

[Introduction from [Universal Credit Guide on GOV.UK](#) web site]

## Local Authorities

The following local authority areas (wholly or partly) have (or will soon have) Job Centres that are part of the Pathfinder (early implementation) project:

*England:* Bath and North East Somerset, Hammersmith and Fulham, North Yorkshire, Oldham, Tameside, Warrington, Warwickshire and Wigan.

*Scotland:* Highland

*Wales:* Flintshire

## Information Timeline

December 2013	<a href="#">Government's Universal Credit targets unlikely to be met</a> – <i>Information Daily</i>
November 2013	<a href="#">Universal Credit is the DWP's single biggest programme and enjoys cross-party support, yet its implementation has been extraordinarily poor</a> – <i>Public Accounts Committee</i>
September 2013	<a href="#">Government slammed by NAO over 'ineffective' Universal Credit roll-out</a> - <i>Information Daily</i> <a href="#">Universal credit: Welfare reform 'poor value' watchdog says</a> – <i>BBC News</i> <a href="#">Universal Credit plans were driven by an ambitious timescale, and this led to the adoption of a new approach. The programme suffered from weak management and ineffective control</a> – <i>National Audit Office</i>
May 2013	<a href="#">The implementation of Universal Credit and the support needs of claimants</a> - a study by the <i>Social Security Advisory Committee</i>
April 2013	<a href="#">The Universal Credit Regulations 2013</a> come into force and implementation begins in Ashton-under-Lyne (Tameside, Greater Manchester).
March 2013	Universal Credit Regulations 2013 laid before Parliament.
December 2012	<a href="#">Universal Credit and Conditionality</a> - a report by the <i>Social Security Advisory Committee</i>
June 2012	The Universal Credit Regulations 2012 published as a Draft Statutory Instrument.
March 2012	<a href="#">Welfare Reform Act 2012</a> receives Royal Assent - paving the way for the introduction of Universal Credit.