

October 2022

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Free Benefits Newsletter

For professionals

Absolute and Relative Poverty Set to Rise

A recent report by the Resolution foundation has found-

'The number of people living in absolute poverty is currently projected to rise from 11 million in 2021-22 to 14 million in 2023-24 – a rise from 17 to 21 per cent, including 30 per cent of children. Relative child poverty is projected to reach its highest level since the peaks of the 1990s.'

About responses-

'But the challenge for policy makers is not just about getting through the winter without widespread destitution. Higher energy bills may last, and higher prices of essentials requires a higher level of basic benefits. This means that it is crucial that the default inflation-linked uprating for benefits (including the Basic State Pension) goes ahead in full in April 2023 and April 2024. In addition, the artificial lag between measuring inflation (in September) and uprating benefits (in April) should be reduced: with a permanent shift to at least October-based uprating, which would mean a temporary additional income boost in 2023-24. In periods of high inflation, benefits (particularly Universal Credit) should also be increased more than once per year. Both of these policies would simply speed up the normal process of benefit uprating catching up with increases in the cost of living. Parts of the benefit system that do not automatically rise in line with prices must also be revisited: Local Housing Allowances and the benefit cap should be updated in April 2023 rather than remaining permanently frozen.'

Book Now- for our updated- [Introduction to Welfare Benefits 2022 course](#)

NEW COURSE [Benefit Updater 2022/23 Cost of Living Crisis](#)

Increase in UC Admin. Threshold

A new law comes into force from 26/9/2022. It raises the administrative employed earnings wages threshold for Universal Credit.

The government estimates The changes will 'move around 114,000 claimants who are currently in the Light Touch regime across to the Intensive Work Search regime.' Chancellor Kwasi Kwarteng says the government intends to continue to tighten up conditionality including raising the threshold further from January 2023, affecting a further 140,000 claimants.

	Pre 26/9/2022	26/9/2022	Jan. 2023
single	£355(8.6 hours pw xNMW)	£494(12 hours pw xNMW)	15 hours pw xNMW)
couples	£567(13.7 hours pw xNMW)	£782 (19 hours pw xNMW)	24 hours pw xNMW)

Book Now for our **updated-UniversalCredit – the Tricky Parts 2022**

This course looks at conditionality in the Universal Credit system, including how the administrative threshold works.

Housing Costs and Universal Credit 2023 full 1 day course(over two half days) 15/2/2023 to 16/2/2023

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Appeals

The government [has confirmed](#) that it will not revise decisions very close to the appeal hearing date as it may put undue pressure on claimants-

'we have made improvements to the process to help ensure claimants do not feel pressured to have their decision revised in circumstances where we are able to revise the decision but not to the level the claimant was seeking on appeal. For example, Decision Makers have been issued with a Best Practice Memorandum reminding them that they must contact formal representatives in the first instance and that they must inform claimants of their appeal rights at the start of the phone call. Further, to avoid placing the claimant under undue time pressure close to the hearing date, Presenting Officers are no longer contacting claimants where they can revise the decision but not to the level that the claimant is seeking at appeal. In these cases the Presenting Officer instead allows the appeal to continue and informs the First-tier Tribunal of the Department's revised decision.

Decision letters have also been revised to make clearer the further appeal rights against revised decisions. Where a decision is revised before a tribunal hearing, claimants are notified of the revised decision, as well as further appeal rights against that decision, in writing. A notification is also sent to HMCTS to inform them that the appeal has lapsed. It should not be the case that claimants become aware of a lapsed appeal on the day of the hearing, save in circumstances where DWP was able to revise the decision to the level the claimant was seeking on appeal but has been unable to reach the individual to inform them of this.'

Book Now [Welfare Benefit Appeals 2022](#)

Millions of Cost of Living Payments Paid

[Government statistics](#) show-

Means tested benefits Cost of Living payment, first payment

	Number	Spend (£m)
Total payments processed as of 8 September 2022	8,400,000	2,700
DWP	7,200,000	2,400
HMRC	1,200,000	400

Disability benefits Cost of Living payment

	Number	Spend (£m)
Total payments processed as of 30 September 2022	6,000,000	900
DWP	6,000,000	900
MOD	5,000	1

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NEW COURSE [Benefit Updater 2022/23 Cost of Living Crisis](#)

Don't forget our [Cost of Living Support guide 2022/2023](#)

New Shared Room Rent LHA exemptions

[A new law](#) helps some claimants get exemption from the shared accommodation rate(UC)/ the single room rent(HB) for under 35(local housing allowance) as part of either their Universal Credit or Housing Benefits. It applies for claimants(perhaps around 11,000) from 1/10/2022 who meet conditions for-

- victims of domestic abuse – [the explanatory memo says](#)-'will be required to provide written evidence from a 'person acting in an official capacity' that their circumstances are consistent with those of a victim of domestic abuse and that they have made contact with said person in relation to such an incident.'
- or
- victims of modern slavery. 'determined by the Home Office's National Referral Mechanism (NRM). A claimant who has been the subject of a positive Conclusive Grounds decision which determines someone as a victim of modern slavery'

Book Now [Housing Costs and Universal Credit 2023](#)

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