



29 March 2019

Dear Colleagues

I am pleased to let you know that from Monday, 1 April 2019, Citizens Advice and Citizens Advice Scotland will offer a new Universal Support service called 'Help to Claim' as part of the Universal Credit service in your constituency.

The Department announced in October 2018 that it would be partnering with Citizens Advice and Citizens Advice Scotland, as independent charities with a strong track history of delivering impartial advice, to deliver this support. This improved offer will replace the previous Universal Support model.

Help to Claim is free, confidential and impartial support provided by trained advisers from Citizens Advice and Citizens Advice Scotland. It is for people who need advice or practical support making their Universal Credit application and getting their first full correct payment on time.

People can get Help to Claim over the phone, online, or face to face through local Citizens Advice and Citizens Advice Scotland services. Claimants will receive information on the service through local marketing, through the Universal Credit Service (including through gov.uk) or through other partner organisations who have established relationships with Citizens Advice and Citizens Advice Scotland. I have included more details about how your constituents can access the service below.

Through this service, Citizens Advice and Citizens Advice Scotland can also help signpost and connect claimants to other support services – both within Citizens Advice or Citizens Advice Scotland, or through other trusted organisations where the need is identified.

I am sure you will welcome this new service and ensure that your constituents are made aware of this support available to claim Universal Credit where they need it. Citizens Advice or Citizens Advice Scotland will write to you on Monday 1 April with more detail of how Help to Claim will work locally for your constituents and how they can access the support. If you would like further information on this new service, the letter from Citizens Advice/Citizens Advice Scotland will include contact details.

## **Ways to access the service**

Support will be available through the Citizens Advice free phone line and web chat from 8am - 6pm Monday to Friday:

- England: 0800 144 8 444
- Wales: 08000 241 220 (Welsh speaking advisers are available)
- Scotland: 0800 023 2581
- Web chat (England and Wales): [citizensadvice.org.uk/helptoclaim](https://citizensadvice.org.uk/helptoclaim)
- Web chat (Scotland): [www.cas.org.uk/helptoclaim](https://www.cas.org.uk/helptoclaim)

This signposting information is also accessible through <https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit/how-to-claim>

For locations and timings of face-to-face support in your area please contact your local office.

## **Local partners**

Colleagues are rightly always keen to ensure that local charities and businesses with expertise can help support Universal Credit claimants. This 2019-20 service offers national consistency, but local partners are vital.

Charities and businesses providing support can always approach the local group partnership manager. Local Jobcentre areas have funding under the Flexible Support Fund that they can use to locally commission non-contracted support.

Please do contact my department if you would like further information and advice on local partnerships.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amber Rudd', is centered on the page.

**The Rt Hon Amber Rudd MP**  
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WORK AND PENSIONS