

Summer 2021

SOLIDARITY

The quarterly newsletter of One Fund For All



KEEP OUR FAMILIES FED



Keep the £20 uplift to Universal Credit – Get your voice heard - Speak out together

The £20 uplift to Universal credit that was introduced at the start of the pandemic is under threat. Unless the Government acts the uplift will disappear at the end of September. **See inside** how you can help support the campaign to convince our political leaders to do the right thing.

Contact us via our new website

www.duwc.org.uk

Or facebook message us **[@DerbyshireUWC](https://www.facebook.com/DerbyshireUWC)**

Email **info@duwc.org.uk**

Universal Dis-credit



In March, the Chancellor extended the £20 Universal Credit uplift but only for six months. This means that the **£20 uplift is due to finish at the end of September 2021** unless, together, we take some actions to make the Government understand how this loss of weekly income will have an impact on people receiving Universal Credit.

What will this planned reduction of £20 per week mean to you and your family?
We want to help you to speak out about the importance of continuing to pay the £20 uplift of Universal Credit.

Here are some of the actions that you can take to get your voice heard:

- ♦ *Write to your MP – by post or by email – about the importance to you of the £20 Universal Credit uplift*
- ♦ *Arrange a visit in July or August to talk to your local MP about why this £20 uplift matters to you – this could be one to one or as a small group*
- ♦ *Share your concerns via your social media about the planned £20 reduction in Universal Credit*
- ♦ *Join us at one of our campaign events – let's show why this campaign matters to people in Derbyshire*
- ♦ *Have your photo taken with our campaign selfie-boards for use on social media*

The time for us to act on this campaign is NOW.

We will help and support you to take whichever action is best for you – we will provide you with information and advice about what to say and if you want, we will come along with you to visit your MP.

Please contact us as soon as you can to let me know how you would like to be involved in this important campaign. Send an email or you can leave a message on 07870 387999 – leave your name and preferred phone number to let us know that you are willing to take part in the campaign. We can ring you back to talk about the campaign options and how we can best work together to make a difference. Alternatively you can contact us through our website :

www.duwc.org.uk

Universal Dis-credit

The number of households in receipt of Universal Credit in our area as of February 2021 was:

Amber Valley	6336
Bolsover	4749
Chesterfield	7079
North East Derbyshire	4744

If the £20 uplift is taken away from all these households it will suck money out of the local economy adversely affecting local businesses already reeling from the last sixteen months of disruption to trade. If the furlough payments (Job Retention Scheme) come to an end at the same time, many will not only lose their reduced wages but fall onto a social security system that is one of the worst in Europe. **Join our campaign and write to your MP.** This is an issue that affects all of us. Remember we are all only one visit to the doctors, or to the bosses office, from needing social security.

DEAR _____ MP

Right now, thousands of people in our constituency are really struggling to get by.

If the government goes ahead with plans to cut £20 a week from Universal Credit at the end of September, many more Families and children will be pushed into even deeper debt and poverty overnight, just as furlough is also due to end.

We are better than this

Taking this money - around £1,040 a year - out of people's pockets when poverty in working families is at a record high and our economy is still recovering from the pandemic would be a mistake. It will mean even more people turning to foodbanks and more parents going without to feed their children.

No one should be left behind, which is why the £20 a week increase must immediately be extended to people on legacy benefits such as ESA as well.

Please write to the Chancellor. Tell him to cancel the cut to Universal Credit and extend the £20 a week payment to all claimants.

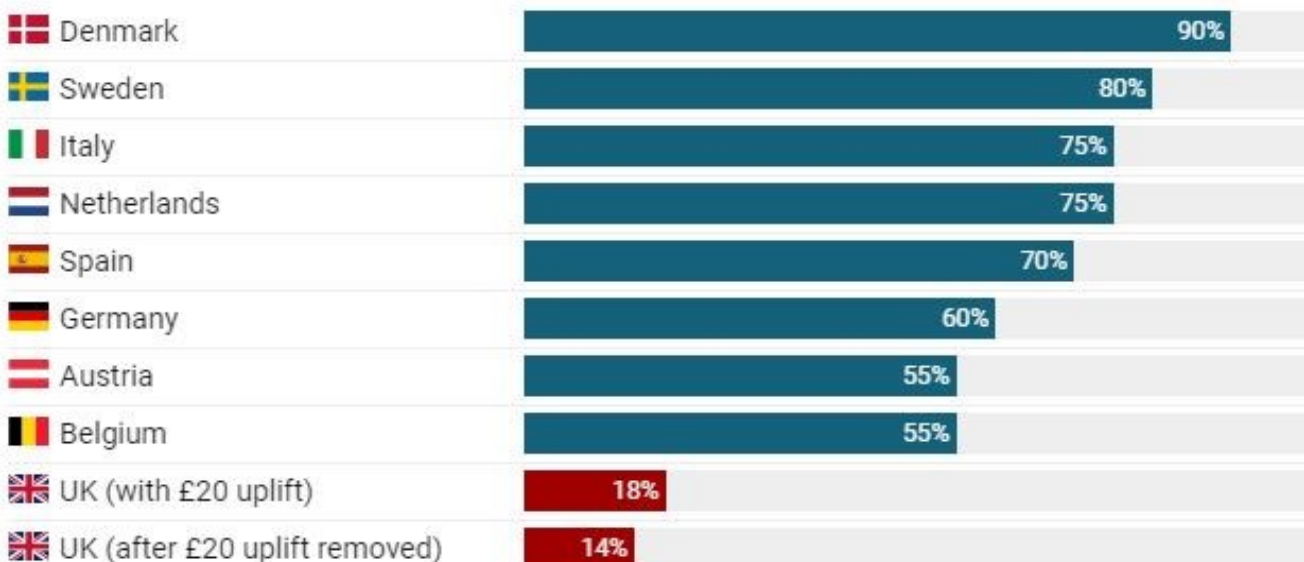


Print Name: _____ Signed: _____

CANCEL THE CUT!

Universal Credit is worth less than a fifth of the average earnings, even with the uplift

Standard rate unemployment benefits for a single person, as a percentage of previous earning



Note: UK benefits are fixed amount, not proportional, so are shown as a percentage of average UK earnings.

Source: MISSOC • Get the data • Created with Datawrapper

In reality for many the UC £20 per week uplift just goes in paying back the loan (advance payment) to cover the five week wait in getting UC. The drop in income if the uplift goes at the end of September is going to be devastating. Please support the campaign to keep the £20 per week. **Write to your MP!** Our Social Security system is a shambles and this is what is going to greet the people made redundant at the end of furlough. Instead of forcing people back to work—low incomes entrench poverty, lead to health problems and to greater costs to the taxpayer in the long run. Money will be sucked from the local economy creating more unemployment.

- Proportion of UC claims with a deduction February 2021: **45%**
- Average deduction: **£79**
- Proportion of deductions for advance repayments: **49%**
- Proportion of deductions for tax credit overpayments: **16%**

Analysis of UC claims with a payment due in February 2021

Source: Parliamentary Answer of Will Quince MP, 21 June 2021

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-06-15/16144/>

Scandal of Government plunder of former mineworkers' pensions

Many former mining industry workers are struggling to make ends meet. Despite paying into their pension pots for years, their pensions are often as low as £84 each week, while a quarter get only £30 weekly. 10% of these men and women get a miserly £18 a week.

These former Coal Board workers worked underground, on colliery surfaces, in offices and canteens, to produce the coal that was so badly needed over a long period. Many were made ill or disabled by their jobs, yet their pensions have been plundered by every Government since 1994, when the industry was privatised. As the Government wanted to make the industry more attractive to private buyers, they undertook the risk of covering any possible shortfall in the pension scheme, so ensuring private buyers would pay more for collieries they bought. In return, Government insisted on taking half of any surplus the pension scheme might generate.



Over the years, governments have taken more than £4.5 billion out of the scheme – at the expense of hard-up former Coal Board workers. Every penny taken by Government means less money for Coal Board pensioners.

Years of Campaigning

Following years of campaigning by their union the NUM, a petition signed by 100,000 people was handed in to Downing Street in 2019. It demanded a fairer share for coal industry pensioners. A cross-party Committee of MPs then considered the scandal. They agreed the system was unfair to former coal industry men and women, stating that Government should only remove money from the scheme if it has needed to pay out to cover any deficit - but there has never been a deficit. Despite the urging of the cross-party Committee of MPs, Government ministers have this week refused to look again at the arrangements.

Ian Pyatt, who worked at Ireland and High Moor collieries, said he was disappointed but not surprised. "This decision is especially hard on those former mineworkers, and their widows, who do not have time on their side."

Another former miner, who worked at Arkwright and Markham collieries, branded the Government's actions as "disgusting".

Colin Hampton, Co-ordinator of Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres, said that former coal industry workers often needed advice and support from their staff. "Many former Coal Board employees, often made ill by their work, are in great need."

James Eaden, President of Chesterfield Trades Council, said

"We stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters who worked in the coal industry. The Government's intention to continue taking money from the pockets of former coal industry workers is disgraceful. It is not just an issue of individual hardship, though. Our local economy is still depressed following the death of the coal industry. The extra money these pensioners should be getting would be spent locally, so helping our whole community."

Derbyshire Asbestos Support Team

Health professionals asked to gaze into crystal balls

DAST and the Asbestos Victims Support Groups' Forum agreed to support the **#Scrap6months** campaign being run by Marie Curie Charity and the Motor Neurone Disease Association. The campaign hoped to create a fairer definition of terminal illness. The current restrictive definition not only affects victims of asbestos related conditions like lung cancer and mesothelioma but also others suffering from asbestos related diseases as well as members of the wider community living with life-limiting conditions.

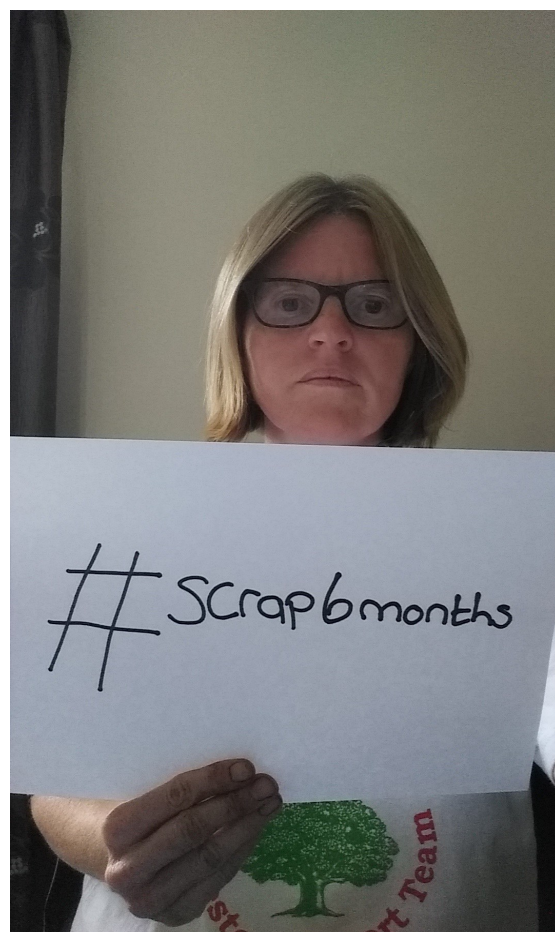
Currently to claim benefits under the terminal illness rule, a medical professional signs a form called a DS1500. The terminal illness rule has been defined in legislation since 1990 and the official Government definition of terminal illness states "you are considered terminally ill if your death could be reasonably expected within the next six months" but official guidance to the medical professional states "has a progressive disease and as a consequence of that disease they wouldn't be surprised if their patient died within six months"

In 2019 an inquiry by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Terminal Illness published a report and found the six-month rule was outdated, arbitrary and not based on clinical reality which was backed up by Amber Rudd MP who was the Work and Pensions Secretary at that time. She called for a review of the current terminal illness rules for claiming benefits.

In January 2020 the Disability Analysis Division of the DWP launched a survey seeking health professional views for terminally ill claimants, this review closed on the 29th February 2020. In July 2020 Justin Tomlinson MP gave assurances that an update of the evaluation would be made "shortly" and the evaluation remains a priority for the Department. A further announcement then stated the evaluation took longer due to Covid but the Government were making good progress and it has shown there needs to be change to the six-month rule, improve consistency and to raise awareness of the support. At the time of going to print, (9th July 2021) the Government have announced that changes will be made to increase the criteria of the six month rule of terminal illness to 12 months. Whilst we are pleased to hear this announcement we still have concerns.

"Ministers plan to implement the 12-month end-of-life approach across five DWP benefits, beginning with Universal Credit and Employment Support Allowance next year and Attendance Allowance, Disability Living Allowance and Personal Independence Payment when parliamentary time allows". We urge the Government to increase the criteria for all benefits as soon as possible. Moreover, a piecemeal approach of implementing the changes is going to cause confusion. Medical professionals may not be aware as to which benefits are being applied for and what criteria of terminal illness they need to consider.

Please support the campaign by writing to your MP and asking them to request that the Government apply the changes as soon as possible.



Joanne Gordon

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£26 per year—contact 07870 387999 if you would like to pay monthly

Please complete, place in envelope and send Freepost to: Freepost Plus RSCC-JGAL-GRJA,
FAO Community, Unite the Union, Unite House, 128 Theobalds Road, London WC1X 8TN

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If you can't pay by direct debit contact community@unite-theunion.org or call 020 3371 2062.

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Date

Where to get advice

ALFRETON Alfretton House High Street Tues, Weds 9.00am—12.00pm 1.00pm—4.00pm Thurs 1.00pm—4.00pm 01773 832237	BELPER Belper Library Derwent St Not open at Present Ring 01773 832237	BOLSOVER Library Church St Not open at present Ring 01623 748161	BRIMINGTON Community Centre High Street 9.00am-12.00pm Mondays Ring 01246 231441
CLAY CROSS Adult Education Centre Market Street Not open at present Ring 01246 231441	CLOWNE Community Centre Recreation Close Wednesdays 1.0pm—3.30pm Ring 01623748161	CRESWELL Limestone House Elmton Road Thursdays 1.0pm -3.30pm Ring 01623748161	ECKINGTON Business Centre Market Street Now closed Ring 01246 231441
GRASSMOOR Community Centre New Street Not open at Present Ring 01246 231441	HASLAND Hasland Working Mens Club Wednesdays 1.00pm—3.30pm Ring 01246 231441	HEANOR Buxton Room Heanor Town Hall Thursdays 9.0—11.30am Ring 01773 832237	NORTH WINGFIELD Community Resource Centre Not open at present Ring 01246 231441
PINXTON Church Hall Kirkstead Road Not open at present Ring 01773 832237	SHIREBROOK 54 Patchwork Row Mon, Tues, Weds 9.0-11.30 and 1.0—4.0 Thurs, Friday 9.0—11.30 01623 748161	SOMERCOTES Parish Hall Nottingham Road Mondays 1.30pm—4.0pm Ring 01773 832237	STAVELEY Library Not open at Present Ring 01246 231441

CHESTERFIELD 1 Rose Hill East

Callers
Mon—Fri
9.30am—1.00pm

or

01246 231441
Mon-Fri
8.0 am—4.0pm

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 One Fund For All in your
 will, or to ask for donations
 in lieu of flowers at your
 funeral.

Let our future be your
 legacy.

Donate through our
 website:
www.duwc.org.uk

If you should need the advice and representation services of DUWCs

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