



## ***News in Brief***

We are beavering away on the Autumn edition of our Benefits Bulletin – be sure to give it a read when it comes through. In the meantime, here is a round-up of the latest news from the benefit world.

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### **End of furlough and £20 uplift – new support fund announced**

The furlough scheme ended on 30 September, and despite persistent calls to reconsider, the £20 uplift to Universal Credit came to an end from 6 October. With covid related measures coming to a close despite the economic impact still being felt for many, the government have announced a new £500 million Household Support Fund to try and plug the gap over the winter. Outlining the scheme, Chancellor Rishi Sunak has said that the fund will '... support millions of households in England and will be distributed by councils in England, who know their local areas best and can directly help those who need it most, including for example, through small grants to meet daily needs such as food, clothing, and utilities. Cash will be made available to local authorities in October 2021.'

For more information, visit [www.gov.uk/government/news/government-launches-500m-support-for-vulnerable-households-over-winter](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-launches-500m-support-for-vulnerable-households-over-winter)

### **Normal hours for Working Tax Credit**

During the height of the pandemic, HMRC introduced an easement to the normal Working Tax Credit rules which allowed claimants to be treated as working their normal hours and retain entitlement to WTC if they were furloughed or working reduced hours. It has been announced that this easement will end from 25 November 2021. From this point, the duty to notify HMRC of changes to hours will resume.

For more information, visit [Working Tax Credit customers must report changes to working hours - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/working-tax-credit/customers-must-report-changes-to-working-hours)

## Submit your appeal online

HMCTS has confirmed that the Submit Your Appeal online service has now been extended to all cover all DWP benefits. Previously, only appeals for Universal Credit, Personal Independence Payment and Employment and Support Allowance could be made in this way. Paper appeals are still possible, and the paper form has been updated with a new SSCS1.

For more information, visit [Appeal a benefit decision - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/appeal-a-benefit-decision)

## Trawl of PIP claimants

An administrative exercise to identify claimants affected by a Supreme Court judgement relating to Personal Independence Payment has begun. The Supreme Court judgement considered PIP activity 9 – engaging with other people face to face – and found that social support can include support given before or during an engagement and prompting from someone trained or experienced in helping a person to engage. The trawl to identify claimants who might be entitled to more money due to this judgement is expected to take some time, and the DWP have confirmed that they are prioritising claimants who are terminally ill.

For more information, visit [Social support: changes to PIP law from 6 April 2016 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/social-support-changes-to-PIP-law-from-6-april-2016)

## Post Office Accounts and HMRC payments

HMRC have confirmed their intention to stop making payments of Child Benefit, Guardian's Allowance and tax credits into Post Office Card Accounts from 30 November 2021. Customers who fail to provide alternative details will have their payments suspended. Although HMRC have been writing to affected customers since August 2019, there is a high likelihood that customers may believe that the extension of a year given to DWP administered benefits also applies to HMRC payments – it doesn't.

For more information, visit [Time is running out for tax credits and Child Benefit customers with Post Office card accounts - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/time-is-running-out-for-tax-credits-and-child-benefit-customers-with-post-office-card-accounts)