

# 11. How to Help Change Things for the Better

If you've gone through the process of claiming Universal Credit, then you know how the social security system works, and probably have ideas for how it could be made better.

Your experience and knowledge are really valuable and important. Which is why some organisations who want to improve the benefits system are looking to work with people like you. Your lived experiences of Universal Credit brings expertise about what life is really like and can input into recommendations to change the system for the better.



If you are interested in contributing to campaigns which seek to improve the benefits system, then please take a look at some suggestions for getting involved below.

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## Write to your Local MP or local representative

You don't have to be an expert on the issue to write to your MP, MLA, MSP or MS (depending on where you live), you just need to show them you care about the issue. The purpose of writing is to try influence the elected representative in your local area.

For more information on how to write to your elected officials go to:

[theyworkforyou.com](https://theyworkforyou.com)

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## **APPLE Collective**

The APPLE Collective is a national collective of individuals who experience poverty. They work collaboratively with organisations that take positive action to eradicate poverty.

For more information on the campaigns they are currently involved in, and the organisations they work with, see here: <https://www.applecollective.com/>

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## **Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG)**

Child Poverty Action Group works to understand what causes poverty, the impact it has on children's lives, and how it can be permanently eradicated. CPAG also campaign for policies that will prevent and solve poverty for good.

For more information on what they are doing and how you can help, see here: <https://cpag.org.uk/policy-and-campaigns/campaigns>

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## **Join Unite Community**

Unite Community is trade union organisation which runs campaigns across Britain and Ireland. Unite members campaign for a fairer social security system for all. They want a benefit system which works to end poverty and allows claimants to live with dignity. As of September 2021, Unite Community campaigns are currently focused on three immediate demands:

- End the five-week wait for payment
- Make the temporary £20 per week extra permanent and give to ALL existing
- Stop Benefit Sanctions

To find out more on how you can get involved, contact your local community branch and/or email [community@unitetheunion.org.uk](mailto:community@unitetheunion.org.uk)

More information on how you can get involved can be found here:

<https://www.unitetheunion.org/campaigns/unite-community-campaign-for-a-fairer-social-security-system-for-all/>

More information on what is currently going on in your region can be found here: <https://www.unitetheunion.org/what-we-do/unite-in-your-region/>

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## **Get involved at the Derbyshire Unemployed Workers Centre (DUWC)**

Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres were formed out of the Trade Union movement. They encourage all people, in or out of work, to join a union. Although they are based in the Derbyshire area, this does not necessarily mean that you have to live locally to get involved. DUWC require people with lived experiences to help with a range of activities around their campaigns:

*“We need help from all those who share our aims to bring about full employment and an income that gives dignity to those not in work. Whatever your talents, get in touch! We need help in a variety of ways and to suit the time you have to spare. From leafletting, helping with research, to telephone work and social media – we need your input. Most of all we need your ideas and your contribution born from experience. Get in touch and join the team.”*

For more information on how you can get involved, see:

<https://www.duwc.org.uk/change-the-world/>

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## **Access more of our info sheets**

This document is part of a series of info sheets that have been produced from content hosted on [ucus.org.uk/ucguide](https://ucus.org.uk/ucguide). There are a number of guides in the series you can visit them here or view the guide in its original web form:

Download all the guides here!

## [Helping you understand our guide](#)

### [UC Lessons from Lived Experiences](#)

Key lessons our group have learnt from their lived experiences. Includes our “Talking Universal Credit: What I wish I’d known” videos

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### [Before you apply](#)

Highlights key things that you need to know before making a claim for UC.

### [How to make an application](#)

A checklist with all the information you need to have ready to make a claim online for Universal Credit.

### [How to understand the UC elements](#)

Sets out all the different elements of Universal Credit to help you to understand more about the benefit.

### [Where to get extra financial support](#)

Places where you may be able to seek financial help in addition to your UC claim.

### [How to use the online journal](#)

Here we highlight some of the key do’s and don’ts when using your online journal, which should help things run smoothly.

### [How to challenge a decision](#)

A step by step guide to appealing decisions and lodging complaints along with details of help available.

### [Managing Overpayments & Deductions](#)

Information on the reasons why overpayments and deductions occur and some options to manage them.

### [Crisis support](#)

Find out support available for people living on a low income who are undergoing difficult circumstances.

### [Want to change things?](#)

A quick run through of ideas for trying to change things and ways you can get involved.

### [Important contacts](#)

Contacts for a number of free, independent advice agencies who can provide advice and assistance, free of charge.

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The Universal Credit Guide is a core output from a research collaboration between UC:Us participants, the universities of York and Ulster, Housing Rights and Law Centre NI. The research was funded by ESRC. Although it has not been involved in the production of this claimants' guide, UC:Us would also like to thank the Joseph Rowntree Foundation for funding the initial participatory research project that brought us together and for supporting our engagement with policymakers.

