

# The Welfare Reform Bill became law in March 2012



**It means benefits  
are changing**



## 1. Universal Credit

**The introduction of a new single benefit, called  
Universal Credit, which will replace all  
means tested benefits**

- Who is affected?** Working Age Households claiming means tested benefits, including Child and Working Tax Credits
- When?** From Oct 2013 (all claimants transferred by Oct 2017)
- How?** One payment of benefits monthly to one member of the household - claims will be made online, with support available for those who need help
- Rent will no longer be paid direct to a landlord but direct to you - you will have to budget your rent, bills and spending every month
- Rent is a priority debt and non-payment can result in eviction
- What can I do?** Talk to landlord to discuss your options
- If you haven't got a bank account, it's a good idea to get one - you can set up a direct debit to your landlord



For more information on how the changes affect you:

Wiltshire Council  
**0300 456 0100**

or Wiltshire Citizens Advice on  
**0844 375 2775** (from a landline)  
**0300 456 8375** (from a mobile)

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## 2. Cap on Benefits

**A cap on the total benefits paid to out of work households based on the average wage of in work households**

**Who is affected?** Working Age Households claiming Jobseekers Allowance or Income Support or Employment Support Allowance and Housing Benefit, Child Benefit, Child Tax Credits, Carers Allowance and a number of other benefits

**When?** Summer 2013

**How?** Initially the cap will affect your Housing Benefit and will then affect your Universal Credit

- £500 per week for a couple or lone parent
- £350 per week for a single person

**What can I do?** Look out for letters from Wiltshire Council and the Department for Work and Pensions



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## 3. Under Occupancy (Bedroom tax)

**If you are living in social housing that is bigger than you need from April 2013, your Housing Benefit entitlement will be restricted**

**Who is affected?** Working Age Households living in social housing that is considered to be too large for their needs

**When?** April 2013

**How?** Reduction in Housing Benefit of 14% for 1 extra room and 25% for 2 or more extra rooms

- One room for each adult over 16 years, or couple
- Children under 16 years, same gender, expected to share
- Children under 10 years, different gender, expected to share
- Only exemption is for a registered overnight carer

**What can I do?** Talk to landlord to discuss your options



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## 4. Non-dependant deductions

**If you live with people who are over 18 and not in education - who are working or claiming benefit, deductions will be taken from your Housing Benefit**

- Who is affected?** Working Age Households claiming Housing Benefit with people over 18 and not in education
- When?** Now
- How?** Deductions will be taken from your housing benefit  
£12.40 per week to £80 a week depending on levels of earning
- What can I do?** If someone over the age of 18 lives with you, and they are not your partner, contact Wiltshire Council to check you are claiming the right amount of Housing Benefit



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## 5. Personal Independence Payment

**Disability Living Allowance will be replaced by the  
Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and be based on  
medical assessment**

**Who is affected?** People currently claiming Disability Living Allowance

**When?** From June 2013 for new claims  
From October 2013 for existing claims

**How?** The new system will be focussed on how your condition affects you

It is expected that 20% of people will lose their award

**What can I do?** Look out for a letter from Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) asking you to attend a face-to-face medical assessment



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## 6. Council Tax Reduction

**Council Tax Benefits will be replaced by a local  
Wiltshire scheme**

**Who is affected?** Working Age Households currently receiving Council Tax Benefit

**When?** April 2013

**How?** Households will be expected to pay at least 20% of their council tax, regardless of their income

- Exemption for people claiming disability premiums
- Exemption for people claiming war disablement pension or war widow/widower pension

Council Tax is a priority debt and non-payment can result in imprisonment

**What can I do?** Look out for your council tax bill

Contact Wiltshire Council for more information



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## 7. Welfare Assistance (Social Fund)

**Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans will be  
replaced by a local Wiltshire scheme called Local  
Welfare Provision**

- Who is affected?** People in crisis, in urgent need of goods or services
- When?** April 2013
- How?** Wiltshire Council have designed their own scheme and criteria
- It focuses on providing vouchers and pre-payments for people in need
- What can I do?** If in urgent need, apply to Wiltshire Council for assistance or contact Wiltshire Citizens Advice



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