

Universal Credit through the Eyes of Children and Young People

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Collaboration



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Three projects examining Universal Credit



A rapid review of children and young people's views of poverty and welfare in the context of Universal Credit.

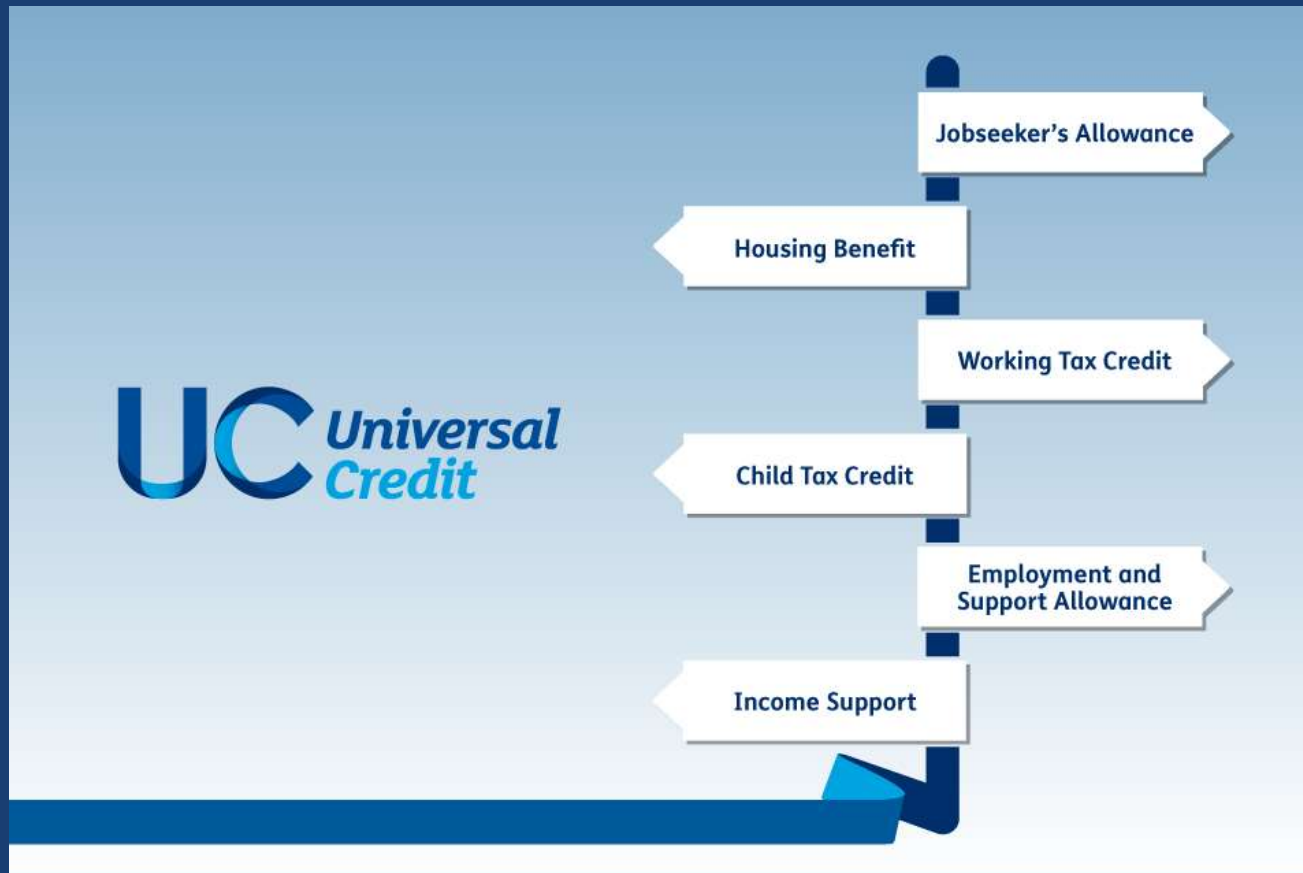


Young people's views on Universal Credit in North East England (ages 12-16 - n=41)

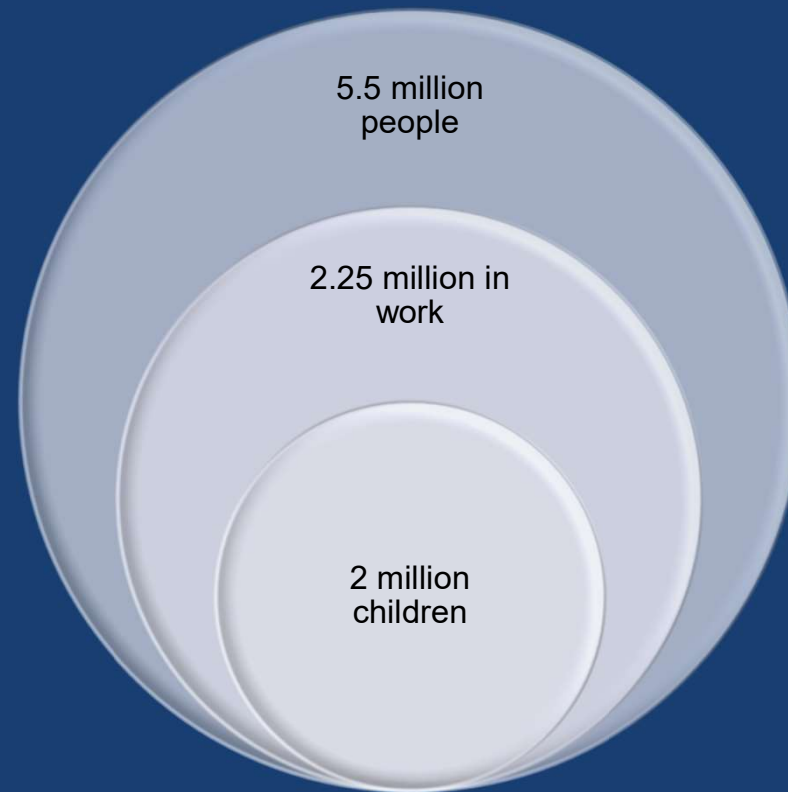


Understanding Children's views on Universal Credit using creative methods (ages 5-11 – ongoing))

Universal Credit – Welfare Reform Act 2012



Universal Credit in the UK - August 2022

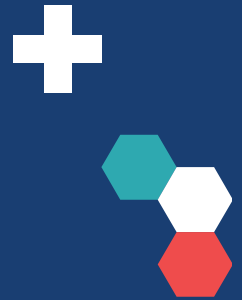


Department for Work and Pensions, 2022

Universal credit – several elements – and rules

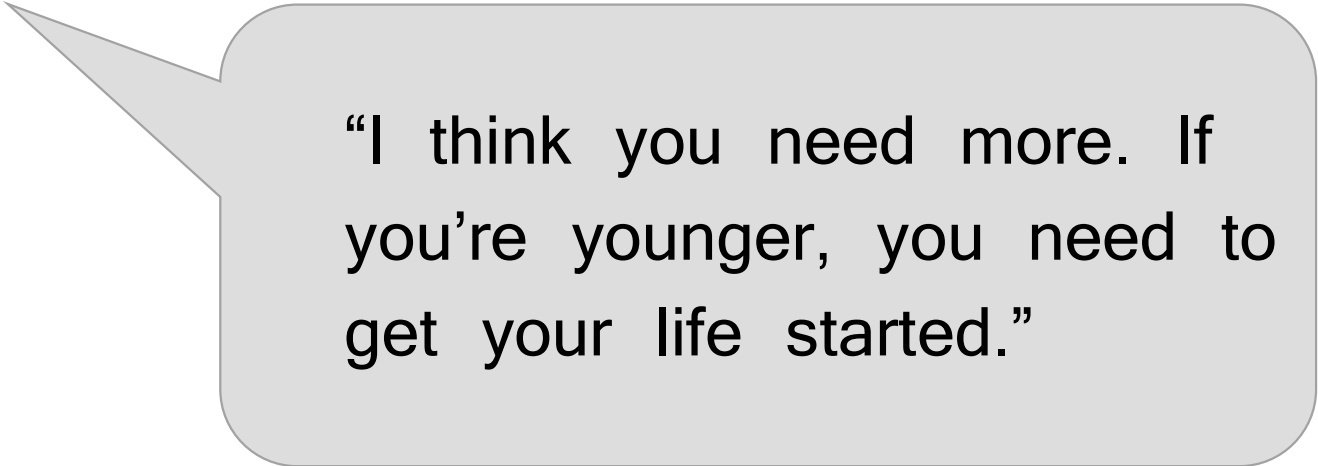
- A standard allowance (ranging from £292.11 a month for single claimants aged under 25 years, to £578.82 a month for joint claimants aged over 25.
- Allowances for children – and two-child limit
- Allowances for housing
- Claimant Commitment
- Sanctions

Young people shared their views on Universal Credit



Universal Credit for under 25s

- Young people could not understand why people under 25 received a lower standard allowance



“I think you need more. If you’re younger, you need to get your life started.”

The two-child limit

- Most viewed this as unfair, they believed families with more children should get more money

A person with five kids means more uniforms, more clothes, more shoes, so a person with two kids gets the same amount as what that person is getting, yes they still need to provide uniform and clothes but she's still only got two kids and they've got five, like she needs more help

To accept any work offered

- Young people agreed that claimants should look for work but disagreed that they should take any job offered; they believed work should match a person's abilities and interests

They can't expect you to look for something that you know you're not going to be able to do. You're just going to get fired or sacked. It's going to waste your time

To work any hours offered

- Young people believed the hours worked should be determined by the person's caring responsibilities

Some people might have kids or like they could be carers to like mams, dads, nanas, grandads, so they should be able to put in for the hours they want to work around their family life

Hours spent travelling to work

- Young people thought the rule that people must spend up to ninety minutes travelling to and from work was unacceptable

If they have like a family and things, to travel ninety minutes in the evening, leaving the kids alone in the house for that amount of time isn't very safe

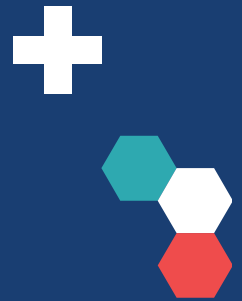
Sanctions

- Young people were concerned about sanctions, and about how people who are sanctioned manage to pay for essentials for their families,

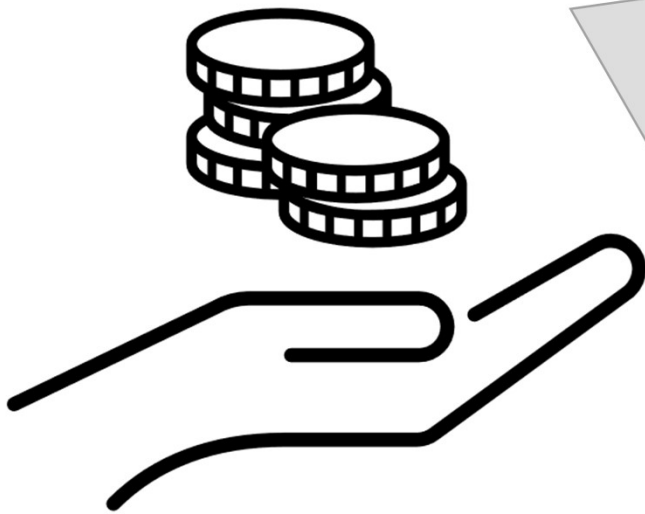
I just don't agree with it [sanctions], say that's the only money they're physically getting, say they've got kids, they're not able to provide for their kids, they're not able to put food on the table, they're not able to provide a roof, water, gas, electric, bills, they won't be able to provide any of that, or even for school, like school uniform

We asked young people what
they needed for a good life

They said:



A stable, adequate income



Like whoever provides this money needs to look at their life and think, well if I'm getting this, this and this, then I need to think ... this is what every person needs. Like that normal amount of money to provide everything that a person needs ... So a decent amount of money to be able to provide everything should be normalised

Education

Education ... which
preps you for life
after school, families,
housing and all that,
and it sets you up
for a good life



Nutritious Food



Because like food
is just like a basic
human need

A safe home and neighbourhood

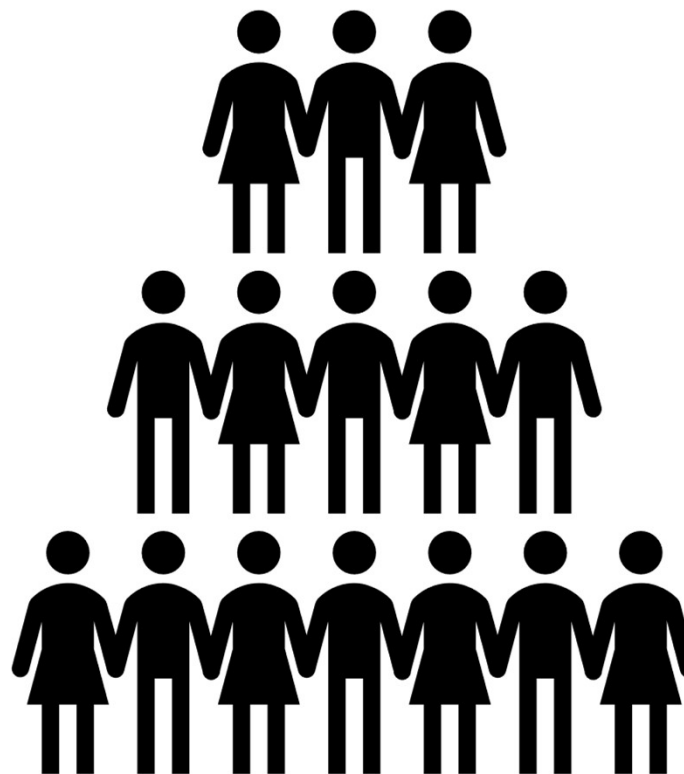


home and a good area, like there's not as much crime ... you don't have to like constantly be worried about, like what's going to happen

So like somewhere where like you're comfortable with, like you're not scared

Supportive family and friends

A good family situation, friends, I feel like if you didn't have friends you'd be quite lonely then it would impact you



We asked what might happen to
a young person if they did not
have access to what is needed to
live a normal life



They said:



A word cloud of terms related to homelessness and mental health. The words are arranged in a roughly circular pattern, with 'homelessness' being the largest and most central word. Other prominent words include 'depressed', 'lonely', 'anxiety', 'malnourished', 'feel-unwanted', 'criminality', 'unsafe', 'struggle', 'affecting-education', 'helplessness', 'mental-health', 'unemployment', 'unhealthy-lifestyles', 'reduced-opportunities', and 'depressed'.

anxiety
malnourished
depressed
feel-unwanted
criminality
unsafe
unhealthy-lifestyles
reduced-opportunities
struggle
unemployment
homelessness
affecting-education
lonely
mental-health
helplessness

Outputs

- Project report
- Co-produced summary report for young people
- Creative methods toolkit
- Evidence submission to a House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee inquiry
- Policy briefing for stakeholders

What's next?

INVITATION TO OUR POLICY WORKSHOP

Young people's views on Universal Credit in North East England - how might these inform policy?

Thursday 22nd June 1200-1600 at Newcastle University

Join our creative workshop to hear about our research findings and to discuss how young people's views can be used to inform future social security policy. To sign-up

<https://tinyurl.com/2t39ecb8>



Funded by Newcastle University Policy Academy

ANY QUESTIONS, CONTACT OUR RESEARCH TEAM



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- Newcastle University QR Policy Support Fund - Young people's views on Universal Credit in North East England
- NIHR Clinical Research Network NENC, Targeting health needs award - Understanding Children's views on Universal Credit using creative methods

References

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- El Zerbi, C., Cheetham, M., Bidmead, E., Morris, S. and Dodd, T. (2023) Young people's views on universal credit in North East England, how might these influence policy? <https://www.cumbria.ac.uk/media/university-of-cumbria-website/content-assets/public/researchoffice/documents/UC-12-16-Final-Report-May-23.pdf>

Thanks for listening

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