Universal Credit Payment of Direct Housing Costs: – Landlord Payment Alignment Feature, 2020

Overview

This Guidance is intended to provide landlords with information to help access payment reconciliation information as part of the improvements to the payment of direct housing costs to landlords.

The improvements will allow direct payments of housing costs (known as a "Managed Payment to Landlord" or "MPTL") to be made in line with the payment of a tenant's personal element, removing the current delays.

Payments will be made via BACS transfer to the bank account associated with the CRN used to set up your Landlord Portal account.

You will receive one payment per tenant, per assessment period. If multiple tenants have the same payment date, you will receive multiple payments per day.

This feature will enable Portal Landlords to view payment reconciliation details for all Direct Payments of Housing Costs.

The information below will enable you as a landlord to access the payment reconciliation information, as well as where to seek help should you encounter any issues with the service.
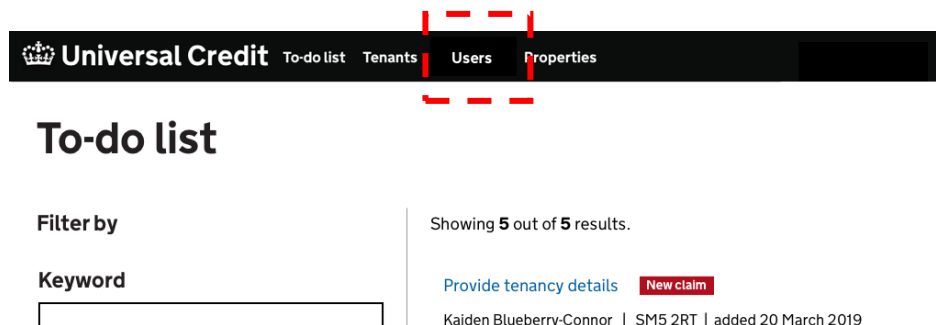
Accessing Payment Reconciliation Information: Portal User Management

Access to tenant payment information is restricted to users with the following user roles:

- "View Payments" – this enables a user to search for and view payment information within the Landlord Portal.
- "Export Payments" – this enables a user to search for and download a CSV file containing payment information.

These user roles can be allocated and managed by any of your users who currently have the "Manage Users" user role allocated; this will normally be your Primary and Deputy Primary Users.

The relevant user roles are managed by clicking on the "Users" tab in the portal
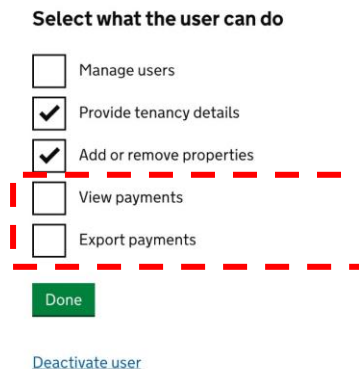
Select the user that you wish to allocate (or remove the user role(s) from), and the following screen will be displayed

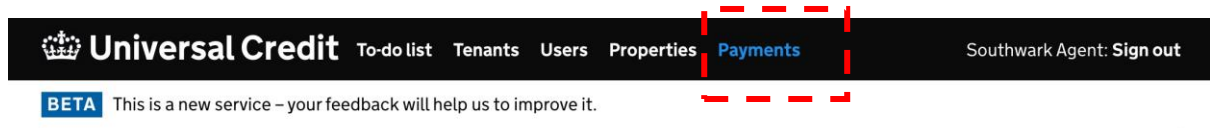The highlighted user roles control access to payment reconciliation information

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Note: It is your responsibility to control & manage who has access to tenant payment information

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Accessing Payment Information

All information relating to payments can be found via the "Payments" tab in the Landlord Portal

Viewing Payment Information Via The Portal

Clicking on the **Payments** tab will present the following view

A number of search options are available

- **Claimant name** or **payment reference:**
  - Searching on a single name (e.g. "John") will return search information for any claimants with that name.
  - Searching on additional names (e.g. "John Smith") will narrow down the number of returns presented.
  - Searching on a payment reference will only produce returns for that reference.
- **Date range:**
  - This can be a single date or a range of dates.
  - This allows searching on claimant name or payment reference search results to be refined if necessary.
  - Searching on a date range only (i.e. without any criteria in the **Payment Reference or Name** field) will return all payments made (i.e. received in your bank account) within that date range.

This will present information as follows

Day	Month	Year					

Select date 📅

To date

Day	Month	Year		Select date 📅

Search   Reset

Payment reference	Name	Postcode	Payment issued	Amount
12345678MP	Social Test	SE1 1AA	09/03/2020	£600.00
12345678MP	Social Test	SE1 1AA	09/02/2020	£600.00

Clicking on an individual line's Payment Reference will bring up details of that payment as follows

Payment Information

Claimant details

Name	**Social Test**
Address	**Test SE1 1AA**
Payment reference	**12345678MP**

Payment details

Date
09/03/2020

Amount
£600.00

Payment period
03/02/2020 - 02/03/2020

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Downloading Payment Information

This is only available if a user has the **Export Payments** user role

Click on the **Download Statement** link

This will present the following view:

Select a date range, and press the **Download** button.

This will allow you to save a CSV file to your PC

What's in the CSV File

The CSV contains a list of payments made to you within the date range selected

The spreadsheet fields are as follows

Column name	Description	Maximum Field Length
Payment Reference	This is the Tenancy ID provided by you when verifying the claim (either via the Portal or via e-mail verification).	23

	Note: in some circumstances where the payment was triggered by a UC Case Manager as a "manual Payment", this reference may be replaced by the claimant's NINO Each payment reference will end with an "MP" suffix	
Payment Due	The date the payment was made	10
AP Start Date	The start date of the claimant's assessment period	10
AP End Date	The end date of the claimant's assessment period	10
Amount	The total amount paid, including any eligible service charges	8

Note: You are responsible for the safe handling of this information once downloaded, and the information should not be stored in an unsecure manner.

Support Routeways

Payment Award Queries – any queries relating to the amount of any payment received, or queries relating to a payment not being issued, should be directed to your local UC Service Centre Helpline, or escalated via the Third Party Escalation route

Payment Receipt Issues – any issues relating to the receipt of payments should be directed to paymentservices.landlordportalenquiries@dwp.gov.uk

Third Party Payments Issues - If the query relates to payments of arrears or corrections to underpayments, these will continue to be made via the existing Third Party Payments Service and should be directed to them for resolution: tpp.enquiries@dwp.gov.uk

Landlord Portal Access Issues – If you are experiencing any issues in accessing information via the portal, you should contact your local Partnership Manager for support. If you are unaware who your Partnership Manager is, details of regional Group Partnership Leads can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dwp-partnerships/national-partnership-teams

Other Issues - any issues that do not relate to the feature should continue to be directed via the existing support routes (i.e Third Party Escalation route for claimant specific queries, Partnership Managers for general queries)

Frequently Asked Questions:

Will all payments be visible via the portal, or just payments that are managed on the portal?
All direct payments of housing costs made against your landlord portal CRN – whether the claimant is currently visible as an active claim managed via the Portal or not – will be included in payment reconciliation details available through the Portal.

I have payments being made against more than one CRN, will these be paid using the new process?
No – only payments requested against the CRN which was used to set up your Landlord Portal account will be made using the new system. This includes all payments requested via the Landlord Portal, as well as any requests made using form UC47, where the CRN used was the same as the Landlord Portal).
This means that if you have APAs pertaining to other CRNs these will continue to be made via the existing Third Party Payment Service.
NB: We are exploring how APAs against non-portal CRNs can also be aligned. In the meantime, it is important that landlords do not request any movement of APAs between CRNs as this may interfere with payments.

Will all existing direct payments move over to the new payment method in one go, or will they be gradually migrated?
All payments will move to the new payment method at the point that you go live.

Will I receive one bulk payment per day or multiple payments?
You will receive one payment per tenant per assessment period. If multiple tenants have the same payment date, you will receive multiple payments per day.

How will rent arrears be paid?
These will continue to be paid via the existing Third Party Payments route.

How can I search for and access payment information in the portal?
Any user allocated the appropriate user roles (NB, this is managed by your own organisation) will be able to – depending on the user role – **View Payments**, or **Export Payments**

Search for a payment

Download statement

Payment reference or name

From date

Day   Month   Year

Select date 📅

To date

Day   Month   Year

Select date 📅

Search   Reset

This will return information in the following way:

| | | | Select date 📅 |

To date

Day   Month   Year

| | | | Select date 📅 |

[Search] [Reset]

Payment reference	Name	Postcode	Payment issued	Amount
12345678MP	Social Test	SE1 1AA	09/03/2020	£600.00
12345678MP	Social Test	SE1 1AA	09/02/2020	£600.00

By clicking on the details of individual payments, it is possible to view further details of that payment

Payment Information

Claimant details

Name	**Social Test**
Address	**Test SE1 1AA**
Payment reference	**12345678MP**

Payment details

Date
09/03/2020

Amount
£600.00

Payment period
03/02/2020 - 02/03/2020

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If a user has the **Export Payments** user role, they will be able to search for, and download payments in a .CSV file format

Download statement

Statements are in CSV format.

From date

Day   Month   Year

| | | | Select date 📅 |

To date

Day   Month   Year

| | | | Select date 📅 |

[Download]

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How will underpayments be corrected?
Corrections to underpayments of rent (caused by recalculations of eligible housing costs for a previous assessment period) are made directly by UCFS and will be paid via the existing Third Party Payments route.

When will payment information show in the portal?
The system will show "future payments" once they have been generated by UC at the end of a claimant's assessment period, however the date range for searching for these payments will need to include the date the payment is expected to be received: *For example – a payment generated on Monday 1st February, may not be received until Friday 5th February; searching on a date range of 1st- 4th February will not return this payment as it is not received until the 5th*

How will absent joint tenants and unequal apportionment of rent (Also known as "Untidy Tenancies") be paid?
For existing absent joint tenants, we will pay 50% of any housing costs via the new payment system, the remaining 50% will be paid via the existing Third Party Payments System.
NB. We continuing to look at ways to resolve the issue of absent joint tenants and unequal apportionment of rent.

How will More Frequent Payments be shown: one monthly payment or will it pay in line with the claimant payment?
There will be one payment to the landlord each month at the same time as the claimant's first payment.

How will payment references be formatted?
The payment reference is in the format <tenancy id>+MP e.g. A123456MP

How will the payment be identifiable on our bank account statements?
Each individual payment will contain the Payment Reference to enable matching, however the exact way it is presented may vary depending on your bank or building society.
The following information will be provided and aligns to the UK banking BACS Standards

Name	BACS Field	Description
Payment Reference	9	This is the Tenancy ID provided by you when verifying the claim (either via the Portal or via e-mail verification). Note: in some circumstances where the payment was triggered by a UC Case Manager as a "manual Payment", this reference may be replaced by the claimants NINO Each payment reference will end with an "MP" suffix NB – BACS Standards describes this field as "Users Name"
Payment Date	12	The date the payment was made NB – BACS Standards describes this field as "BACS Processing Day"
Amount	8	The total amount paid, including any eligible service charges

		NB – BACS Standards describes this field as "Amount"

Please be aware that depending on your banking provider or your IT systems, this information may not display in your financial systems in the same way other payments are reconciled. We have taken steps to ensure that this feature aligns to the UK BACS Standards, and it may be necessary for you to make changes to your payment systems in or contact your bank in order to correctly reconcile payments.

What information will I receive via the portal to allow payments to be reconciled?
The following information will be provided

Column name	Description	Maximum Field Length
Payment Reference	This is the Tenancy ID provided by you when verifying the claim (either via the Portal or via e-mail verification). Note: in some circumstances where the payment was triggered by a UC Case Manager as a "manual Payment", this reference may be replaced by the claimant's NINO Each payment reference will end with an "MP" suffix	23
Payment Due	The date the payment was made	10
AP Start Date	The start date of the claimant's assessment period	10
AP End Date	The end date of the claimant's assessment period	10
Amount	The total amount paid, including any eligible service charges	8

This information can be viewed via the portal or downloaded as a .CSV file to support payment reconciliation

Why is there a National Insurance number in some payment references?
Occasionally we need to make manual payments to landlords. We do not have the ability to specify a payment reference in this scenario – you will receive a payment for your tenant with their National Insurance number as the payment reference. This information will be available in the landlord portal so you should be able to identify your tenant by name and/or address.