

63007

Request for information regarding the use of Universal Credit deductions in relation to debts owed to your local authority.

Use of Universal Credit Deductions

- Whether your local authority currently requests deductions from Universal Credit payments (via the Department for Work and Pensions) to recover debts owed to the council.

Yes

- If so, for which types of debt this applies (for example: council tax arrears, rent arrears, benefit overpayments, or other categories)

Council tax arrears, benefit overpayments and rent arrears.

Volume of requests

- The number of requests made by the council to the DWP for Universal Credit deductions in each of the last five completed financial years, if held –

We do not hold this information.

The Direct Deductions team issue requests to DWP via email using a template provided by DWP. A lot of our work is also automated and this produces multiple similar reports for sending on to DWP, these request can also include JSA, IS, ESA & Pension Credits.

Policy and Guidance

- Any current policies, guidance, or criteria used by the council when deciding whether to request deductions from Universal Credit.

Council Tax: Third Party deductions is legislated for in Schedule 9 of the Social Security (Claims and Payment) Regulations 1987 and the Social Security (Council Tax) Deductions from Income Support 1993. There must be a summary warrant granted in respect of the outstanding Council Tax account.

Benefit Overpayments: Payment Deduction Program (PDP) recovery is a DWP third party deductions method used to recover Housing Benefit Overpayments from claimants Universal Credit. DWP circular [A6/2016](#) dated 13/07/16 explains PDP

Rent Arrears: The decision to request a deduction for arrears is the responsibility of the housing officer. Deductions will only be requested if all attempts to seek direct payments from the tenants have failed. Request are submitted via the RET (Rent Escalation Team) and need to include reasons for the requests as laid out in the DWP Tiers. All requests are submitted by RET via UC portal. Request for deductions can only be made in respect of a current tenancy.

Changes Over Time

- Details of any significant changes in policy or practice over the past five years relating to the use of Universal Credit deductions

Council Tax: the only significant change over the past five years has been at the DWP's instruction. Previously, local authorities were permitted to include multiple summary warrants (for Council Tax) on a single request. The DWP changed its policy on this and we are now only permitted to submit one summary warrant per request.