

Press release: Housing support for young people

The government will amend the regulations so that all 18 to 21-year-olds will be entitled to claim support for housing costs within Universal Credit.

Alongside the Youth Obligation, this change will mean young people get comprehensive and intensive work-focussed support, whether they are 'learning' or 'earning' as they set off into adulthood. They will also be assured that if they secure a tenancy they will be entitled to receive support towards their housing costs in the normal way.

Work and Pensions Secretary of State Esther McVey said:

We want every young person to have the confidence to strive to fulfil their ambitions.

For those young people who are vulnerable or face extra barriers, Universal Credit provides them with intensive, personalised support to move into employment, training or work experience; so no young person is left behind as they could be under the old benefits system.

As we rollout Universal Credit, we have always been clear we will make any necessary changes along the way. This announcement today will reassure all young people that housing support is in place if they need it.

The employment rate is at 75.3% – up from 74.6% compared to a year ago and the joint highest rate since records began. Meanwhile, the number of unemployed young people is down 40% since 2010.

St Basils CEO Jean Templeton said:

We welcome this decision to reinstate housing cost entitlement for 18 to 21-year-olds. This means no young person will need to disclose vulnerability in order to find somewhere to live. We hope this decision will increase landlord confidence in offering accommodation to younger people, knowing they can access assistance with their rent if needed. The decision is particularly timely as the Homelessness Reduction Act comes into force.

This change means that there are no barriers to young people accessing housing because of their age and is in line with the Homelessness Reduction Act which comes into force next month, and the government's commitment to eradicate rough sleeping by 2027.

The Youth Obligation is available in areas offering Universal Credit full service. It means 18 to 21-year-olds receive intensive work-focussed support from day one of their claim. If they are still unemployed and claiming Universal Credit after 6 months they are referred to work-related training or guaranteed work experience to give them the skills to gain an apprenticeship, move into education or work.

St Basils provides support for young people, including emergency accommodation, supported accommodation, advice services and skills services.

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