

Your neighbourhood

Need to know more about Universal Credit?

There has been an increase in customers in Hartlepool transferring to the new benefits system called Universal Credit. We have had calls from people telling us that they are concerned about how it works, so we'd like to give you a few details about the benefit.

Briefly, as part of Universal Credit (UC), customers receive any help with their housing costs along with other benefits as **one** UC payment. UC is paid to you monthly and in arrears.

This means that if you have received Housing Benefit in the past, it might take time to get used to budgeting for these monthly payments. If you receive UC, you will be

responsible for budgeting for your rental payments within this new system.

You should also bear in mind that you will need internet access and an email address to apply for UC.

If you have made a claim or you need more details about Universal Credit, you should contact Thirteen immediately on **0300 111 1000**.

We are here to help and can arrange for you to receive support from our money advice team or tell you how you can get more information. We also work with West View Advice and Resource Centre and can arrange for you to attend appointments there for money advice.

Neighbourhood walkabouts

Joanne Larkin and Carol Gage are the neighbourhood officers for your area and are regularly out and about in your neighbourhood. They carry out walkabouts on your estate and you're welcome to join in.

The walkabouts, also known as estate inspections, involve walking around the areas where our homes are located and identifying issues that might need to be addressed.

The dates, times and meeting places of walkabouts in your area are:

Area	Time	Meeting point	Dates
Central Estate 1	10am	Phoenix Centre	8 January 2018 and 26 March 2018
Central Estate 2	10am	Phoenix Centre	9 January 2018 and 27 March 2018

Please come along and tell us what you think about your neighbourhood. If you can't make it to one of the walkabouts and there's something you'd like us to look at, please contact us using the details below.

House vacancies

As you might know, there have been a range of government reforms that mean we have a number of three-bedroom properties and one-bedroom flats available on the estate. Many people do not fit the criteria to rent these properties as they're not eligible for the full housing costs of Universal Credit. Central Estate often has three-bedroom properties vacant that we would love to become someone's new home. If you know of any friends or family members that are interested in living on Central Estate, please pass on our contact number **0300 111 1000** so they can get more details.

Car theft

There have been a number of car thefts in the area over recent months.

With the Christmas and New Year period, it's more important than ever to make sure that your vehicle is secure. Please remember to properly lock your car, take all valuables with you or lock them away out of sight. Try and park your car in a brightly lit area and if you see anything suspicious or out of the ordinary, please call the police at once.

Get in touch

If you'd like more information about anything in this update or if you have any issues you'd like to discuss about your neighbourhood, please contact Joanne or Carol at:

- email: carol.gage@thirteengroup.co.uk or joanne.larkin@thirteengroup.co.uk

- tel: 0300 111 1000 or Joanne on **01642 947 630**; Carol on **07766 364 543**

Alternatively, visit the website for information about Thirteen or the self-service site to contact us:

- website: www.thirteengroup.co.uk
- self-service: www.thirteengroup.co.uk/SelfService