



**Guest Blog: Tanya King. Social Inclusion Manager, Stockport Homes**

Universal Credit was rolled out for singles/couples in Stockport in November 2014. To date, there have been over 500 claimants borough wide, including around 70 Stockport Homes' tenants.

Instigating a regular meeting with our local DWP Jobcentre has been invaluable in helping Stockport Homes to support customers moving onto Universal Credit. For example:

All tenants attending their work interview are asked to telephone us from the Jobcentre to request an up to date rent statement. This is immediately emailed over by our Customer Finance Team, ensuring Stockport Homes is aware of all new claimants and DWP get accurate housing costs, a win-win process.

Our dedicated Welfare Reform Support Officer arranges a home visit to discuss the claimant's situation and apply for an Alternative Payment Arrangement or make a Money Advice referral where needed. These meetings have also allowed us to get a better borough wide picture, and to provide the Jobcentre with information about support offered by Stockport Homes, such as:

- customer training,
- our Digital Heroes project,
- budgeting courses,
- pre-tenancy workshops,
- employment support, and
- Money Advice.

Information is used to refer tenants onto the various initiatives, some of which can form part of their Claimant Commitment.