

FOI REF:	16508
RESPONSE SENT:	21/01/2026

Request

Dear Winchester City Council,

Over recent years the government has been operating a program of managed migration which is seeing people being invited to migrate to Universal Credit (UC) or their current benefits will be terminated. The government has accelerated this process and according to the House of Commons library all income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) claimants will receive their migration notices by Autumn 2025 and be moved by April 2026.

Reading comments on forums and groups some disabled people who have completed their move to UC from ESA are saying their council tax bills and/or social care charges have changed as a result, with most saying they have increased.

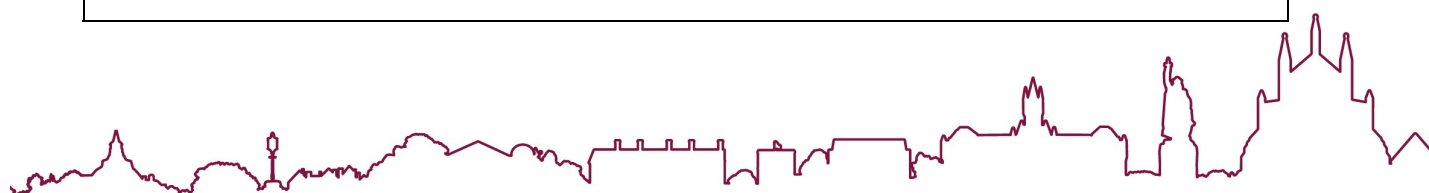
As a billing authority you will have been notified by the Department for Work and Pensions when an ESA claimant is migrated to UC. As a result you will have recalculated their council tax and any reduction they were getting. Therefore, I request the following information about this group:

How many ESA to UC claimants have you been notified about?
How many have seen their council tax bill increase?
How many have remained the same?
How many have decreased?

While not every claimant who migrated from ESA to UC will be getting social care, some will. Therefore please share the following information.

How many ESA to UC claimants are getting social care?
How many have seen their social care charges increase?
How many have remained the same?
How many have decreased?

As a disabled person it is easiest for me to read data in an excel format.



Response

A Local Authority is not obliged to provide information where the cost of complying with the request exceeds £450 (s.12 of the Freedom of Information Act and the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004). Staff time in complying with a request is usually calculated at £25 per hour.

We do not hold a record of the number of migration notices received where a claimant has moved from Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) to Universal Credit (UC).

We have made several attempts to obtain this information by running a series of reports from our processing system, spending approximately four hours to date. However, these reports have not provided reliable data or information that fully addresses the questions raised, including the impact of migration on Council Tax liability.

We have identified approximately 1,600 potential claims. Each case would require manual checking to confirm whether the claimant migrated from ESA to UC and to establish whether this resulted in a change to their Council Tax charge. This process is estimated to take between 10 and 15 minutes per claim, representing a total time of approximately 267 to 400 hrs. As the estimated time required to comply with this request significantly exceeds the 18-hour cost limit, we are therefore unable to comply with your request.

Winchester City Council does not hold information regarding social care. This part of the request would need to be directed to Hampshire County Council.

