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| DBC colour landscape Logo-small | **children & ADULTS SERVICES**  Town Hall, Darlington DL1 5QT  DX 69280 Darlington 6  web site: http://www.darlington.gov.uk | |
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|  | | Date :  Please ask for :  Direct Line :  Email Address :  Your Reference :  Our Reference :  Document Name : |  |

Dear Parent/carer

Do you know that a number of changes to Universal Credit and benefits are taking place in April and June?

* Even if your family are not currently claiming anything, it is worth checking whether you are eligible before these changes take place. Even if you are in work, your family may well be entitled to receive support.
* If you are already claiming some benefits or tax credits, it is worth checking that your family is receiving everything it’s entitled to and that you are ready for Universal Credit, which is being rolled out across Darlington in June.
* If you are eligible for support then your children could be entitled to a free meals in school, which could save you almost £400 per year per child (and help the school receive an extra £2,000 per year extra funding per child). If you haven’t already applied for Free School Meals, because your child doesn’t take them or are in reception or KS1, then you should apply now. From April, some families who are currently eligible for free school meals will no longer be, however **children assessed as eligible before April will continue to be eligible until 2022.**

To make sure you don’t miss out:

* Visit the Turn2Us website now at [www.turn2us.org](http://www.turn2us.org) to **check your benefit or tax credit eligibility** using their calculator. It’s estimated that the average unclaimed award in Darlington is almost £3,000 per year, so it’s worth checking!
* If you are eligible for Free School Meals and not currently claiming them, **please** **apply before 1st April** *by completing and returning the enclosed form.*

Yours Sincerely