

18 March 2019

Dear Colleagues

First of all, I would like to say a big thank you to those of you who were able to attend the Universal Credit Managed Migration Progress update event on Wednesday 6 March. Your questions, insight and challenging discussion throughout the day have and will prove invaluable as we, collectively, continue to develop and test the managed migration approach. For others, I hope that the details below and the key slides from the day, which are attached, will help to bring you up to speed. Please contact us at

 if you were unable to attend and would like further explanation.

We have listened to what you have told us and this is completely aligned to our objectives, i.e., to ensure that no one falls through the cracks. Building on this and your other insights, we have devised the 'who knows me' approach and we will be starting very small to test key concepts and the design approach. We will only learn through doing in the pilot; we do not have the answers yet.

At the event, we said that we do not intend to stop anyone's existing benefits during the pilot. This is because the point of the pilot is to learn how to move as many people as possible across to UC without resorting to this, in line with our stated aim of moving everyone safely across. We already have a rich dataset about moving people to UC from the activity shifting Live Service claims onto the Full Service. We plan to take the group through this data when it has been finalised (there are a handful of cases still on the Live Service right now).

This evidence suggests that there may be a small group of people that we cannot move without prompting them by the possibility of stopping existing benefits and this has been accepted by the Social Security Advisory Committee. We do need to be able to stop benefits – but only where absolutely necessary – or we will never be able to close down the old system. We want to understand how far we can get with the 'who knows me' approach to avoid this. There is time to refine our

approach, understand what is driving a lack of engagement and develop tools and messaging to remedy this. I hope this clarifies why this power is in the Regulations even though we do not intend to use it in the pilot.

Since we met, the Secretary of State has announced on 11 March that we will begin the pilot in Harrogate. The link to the announcement press release is below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/universal-credit-pilot-to-launch-in-north-yorkshire>

We will be in touch shortly with your local Harrogate contacts to explore how we can closely involve them and you in the local testing. Some of you have already let us know who that might be; please do so if you have not yet forwarded contact details.

As I said at the update event, we are committed to getting together with you on a regular basis so you can input to the work and receive regular progress updates.

I thought it would be helpful to set out the next stages of this engagement as follows:

- 19 March Service Design Outputs Webinar – either you or your organisation should have received an invitation; if you have not please contact us at: [REDACTED]
- 1 April Vulnerable Claimants workshop;
- Mid-April – Delivery Opportunities workshop;
- 13 June – next progress update meeting;
- Autumn – Communication workshop.

As I also said at the event, we will not be able to invite everyone to the next three workshops – that is why we asked for your preferences either at the October 17 event or more recently. Instead, we will have post-workshop webinars with everyone so that you can comment and contribute even if you did not get an invitation to the workshop itself.

Thank you once again for your engagement and I look forward to seeing you all again at the 13 June update, if not before.

Yours sincerely



Neil Couling
Director General, Universal Credit Programme