

Move to UC - 13 January 2022

Questions/queries in red

Managed move to UC - started Jan 2022

- Not sending migration notices yet - just means have 2 teams looking at design phase of what needs to be put in place
- Focus for 2022 is learning, not about numbers - no targets - about how to move people safely and what needs to be put in place, what channels are needed, what support is needed
- Rollout scheduled to be complete by end 2024
- Main way to learn is by actually moving people though...
- Started designing earliest testable service - may be more clerical in first instance
- Overall approach - want wide variety of claimants with different benefit mixes to maximise learning and different geographical places and different demographics
- Need further understanding of claimant's motivations, don't want to make assumptions
- Taking forward learning from Harrogate pilot but different approach this time - context has changed and timescale still same so shorter time left now

Responses to questions -

- Want to start actually moving people asap so can start learning - hopefully spring... - will be low numbers to start with but perhaps not quite as low as Harrogate!
- Selection - **will they be able to volunteer / opt out?** - no not necessarily - will include people who might be worse off so can look at communicating TP to claimants
- have space in regulations to extend notice periods if needed or indeed to cancel them
- Not so many people on JSA now so often claimants won't have much contact with JCP - that creates challenge on how to contact and build understanding and trust
- TP calculation in Harrogate was clerical so digital version needs to be designed

Voluntary move to UC

- Info in tax credit renewal notices - looking to provide claimants with a checklist to support voluntary migration - aimed at making sure people take necessary steps - first draft says
 - Check eligibility
 - Use benefits calculator
 - Check how UC recovers any debts (**question - sometimes debts only appear on move to UC - how will that be navigated** - having conversations with HMRC - where there is debt, claimants should be getting yearly letter telling them about that debt - but are looking at this)
 - £16k warning - wait for managed move (**question - highlighting 16K may ease anxieties on lots of other groups that could miss out - list needs to be more comprehensive** - DWP says has eligibility at top, but will consider)

- Renew tax credit award first to ensure you have finalised 21/22 amount - finalisation of 21/22 award may not be till end July - lot of layers of correspondence - potential overpayments / underpayments - not as simple as presented - may need lot of handholding - discussing these points with HMRC - when is right time to move - looking to explore
- Question - can they be referred for advice - DWP are looking at that - hope to announce in next couple of weeks details of who is doing contract, can say already that it will not include face to face! - question - big concern no face to face - how will DWP fund the F2F advice that will be needed - only 12 month contract so can be looked at again
- Looking to explore other things including - for entitlement/claim
 - HRT
 - Self-employment
 - Students
 - Mixed age couples
 - Benefit cap
 - Fluctuating earnings (fluctuating hours also important - people moving round 16 hours can make tax credits difficult)
 - Understanding debts
 - joint/untidy tenancies
 - Household composition
- And also general considerations -
 - First 5 weeks and financial support available
 - Calculators are snap shot in time
 - Digital capability
 - When to claim - time of year / month
 - Council tax reduction - needs to be reclaimed (? or is it change of circs - DWP says may be the case for some councils - will check tho)
 - People paid weekly/ fortnightly/weekly
 - TP
 - Childcare costs - payment and calculation
 - Passported benefits
- Comms on voluntary move is already happening yet checklist not yet available - also calculators are not advice - they are not backup - need more warnings on understanding universal credit website - will come back on this