

MIGRATION TO UNIVERSAL CREDIT

Analysis of the impact of natural and managed migration from legacy benefits to Universal Credits



“

People should be able to check what impact a move to Universal Credit will have on their income before making life changing decisions.

”

Zoe Charlesworth, Head of Policy, Policy in Practice

INTRODUCTION

Universal Credit (UC) is the government’s flagship welfare reform, combining six of the main means-tested benefits into one single, monthly payment. Its intent, beyond simplifying the administration and payment of benefits, is to better incentivise work. The policy is very much at the heart of the government’s anti-poverty strategy, which seeks to promote financial independence by providing better work prospects for individuals, starting with the benefits system.

This white paper contains previously published analysis, commentary and case studies covering some of our work on natural and managed migration to Universal Credit to date.

In February 2019 Zoe Charlesworth gave evidence to the Work and Pensions Select Committee on how moving onto Universal Credit will affect people and the differences between ‘natural’ and ‘managed’ migration. In March and May 2019 Paul Howarth attended DWP webinars on the managed migration to Universal Credit. The Guinness Partnership, a Policy in Practice client, is one of a handful of housing providers taking part in the managed migration pilot in Harrogate this summer. A guest blog post kindly written by Michelle Birley, Customer Support Manager at The Guinness Partnership, titled *How Universal Credit Impacts Our Customers And Business*, is reproduced here, along with a case study about how our software helps.

UNIVERSAL CREDIT ROADMAP



Universal Credit changes are complex. This roadmap shows past and future changes. Details subject to change, correct at 29 May 2019.

NATURAL MIGRATION ONTO UNIVERSAL CREDIT

In February 2019 Zoe Charlesworth, Head of Policy at Policy in Practice, gave evidence to the [Work and Pensions Select Committee](#) on how moving onto Universal Credit will affect people and the differences between 'natural' and 'managed' migration.

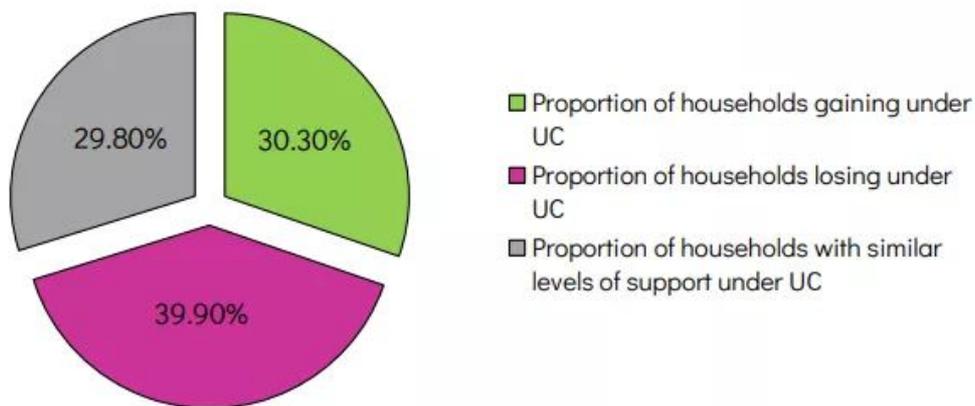
The Committee's questions follow the government's announcement that the roll-out of managed migration will be delayed and limited to a pilot of 10,000 claimants in 2019. As a result, around half a million more households will migrate 'naturally' onto Universal Credit, meaning their existing benefits claim will end and they'll have to make a new claim for Universal Credit if they have a change in their circumstances. Unlike managed migration, households who naturally migrate onto Universal Credit are not given any transitional protection.

Zoe was joined on the panel by policy experts from the Resolution Foundation and the Institute for Fiscal Studies. This was followed by a panel discussion which heard about experiences from the frontline, with experts from Scope, Citizens Advice, the National Association of Welfare Rights Advisers and the Child Poverty Action Group all sharing evidence.

KEY FINDINGS FROM OUR EVIDENCE

- 40% of households (around 200,000) who move onto Universal Credit without transitional protection will be **worse off**, by an average of £59.45 per week.
- 30% of households (around 150,000) who move onto Universal Credit without transitional protection will be **better off**, by an average of £44.30 per week. The other 30% will experience no change in income.
- Certain groups are particularly affected by natural migration onto Universal Credit: 72% of all low-income **self-employed** households and 90% of **homeowners** in receipt of tax credits will lose out. Additionally, **people with savings** over £16,000 were eligible for tax credits, but are not eligible for any Universal Credit.
- The way unearned income is treated under Universal Credit is different to how it's treated under the legacy benefits system, and this results in **significant changes to take home income** for some groups.

Proportion of households gaining or losing support under Universal Credit, post-budget



WHO GAINS AND LOSES WHEN MOVING TO UNIVERSAL CREDIT WITHOUT TRANSITIONAL PROTECTION?

1. Self-employed households lose

Self-employed households are likely to lose support when they move from legacy benefits to Universal Credit. This is because the minimum income floor, which assumes people are earning at least minimum wage, is applied under Universal Credit. 72% of all low-income self-employed household will lose out, losing on average £51 per month.

2. Households with savings lose

Households with over £16,000 also tend to lose out, because Universal Credit has a capital limit of £16,000. That means any household on Tax Credits with savings over £16,000 will lose their entire benefits award if they experience a change of circumstances which triggers natural migration. If they moved over through managed migration, they would be protected for one year.

In one of our case studies, someone with savings over £16,000 who increases their working hours from 15 to 20 hours per week will be worse off by £107.43 per month after the change in circumstances, and £549.04 per month worse off than it would be if it experienced the same change of circumstances under the legacy benefits system.

Even though Universal Credit tends to benefit working households and rewards those who increase their working hours, this is not the case if a household has savings over £16,000.

3. Disabled households and working lone parents lose

Other groups who lose out include disabled households; those in receipt of DLA or PIP see an average loss of £55 per week. Working lone parents will see an average loss of £8 per week.

4. Households that gain

The 150,000 (30%) of households that tend to gain through Universal Credit include employed households; they see an average gain of £9.13 per week. Households in receipt of ESA gain an average of £14 per week.

To read more about who gains and who loses support under Universal Credit, read our full report [here](#).

HOW DO CHANGES TO THE WAY UNEARNED INCOME IS TREATED IN UNIVERSAL CREDIT AFFECT CLAIMANTS' INCOME?

The detailed regulations about non-earned income differ between the legacy benefit system and Universal Credit. Specifically, there are differences in the types of unearned income that is taken into account and deducted from a benefits award, and which is disregarded when calculating benefits awards.

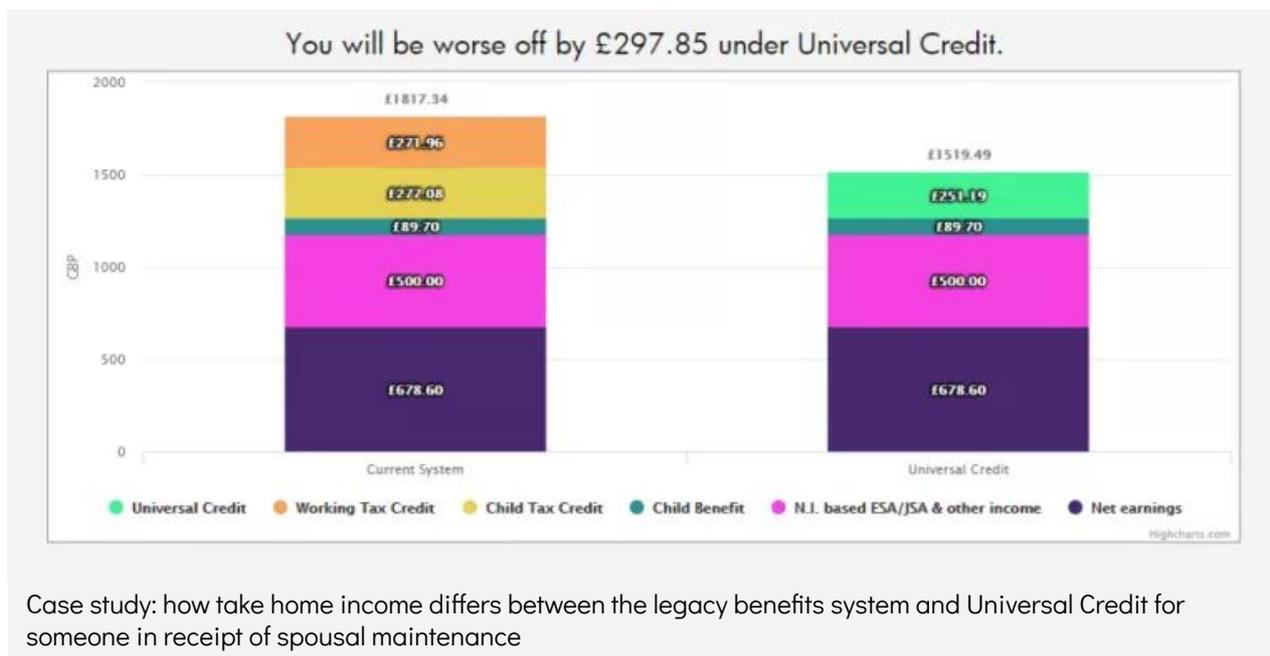
Three important types of unearned income that are treated differently under the legacy benefits system and Universal Credit are:

1. spousal maintenance
2. industrial injuries disablement benefit
3. student grants for lone parents

These are all disregarded under the legacy benefits system yet taken into account under Universal Credit. This means that people in receipt of these types of income are likely to be worse off under Universal Credit.

We carried out case studies using our Benefit and Budgeting Calculator and found that:

- A person working part time and in receipt of £450 monthly spousal maintenance would be £297.85 per month worse off under Universal Credit
- A person in receipt of Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit who works part time and has 70% assessed level of disability would be £414.30 per month worse off under Universal Credit
- A student lone parent in receipt of a maintenance loan, childcare grant and parents' learning allowance would be £277.08 per month worse off under Universal Credit



WHAT SORT OF CHANGES IN CIRCUMSTANCES TRIGGER NATURAL MIGRATION?

Natural migration is triggered when a household experiences a change in circumstances which means they would have previously had to make a new claim for any of the six legacy benefits which Universal Credit replaces. As a result, the types of changes in circumstances that trigger natural migration vary considerably. They can range from moving house to a new local authority, becoming a full-time carer, having a child or becoming too ill to work.

Whilst claimants might expect big life changes, such as having a child, to affect their benefits claim, they are likely to be surprised by some of the changes that trigger natural migration. For example, lone parents claiming Income Support will naturally migrate when their youngest child reaches five, a seemingly insignificant change that is outside the control of the claimant.

It is vital that the DWP makes claimants aware of all changes in circumstances that will lead to natural migration onto Universal Credit, and informs them of how their income will change under Universal Credit.

Frontline organisations have also expressed concern that the changes of circumstances that trigger natural migration can often happen as a result of difficult personal changes, such as bereavement, separation, or becoming ill. This means that some households who lose income under Universal Credit will find natural migration particularly hard since this loss in income comes at an already tough time.

For example, a person who is unemployed and becomes disabled and ill, and therefore unable to work or prepare for work, will naturally migrate onto Universal Credit, and is likely to lose income.

Some people maybe better off under Universal Credit after a change in circumstances, but not as better off as they would have been under the legacy benefit system.

In one of our case studies, a job seeker who moves from claiming JSA to Universal Credit, and who is assessed for having Limited Capability for Work Related Activity and is in receipt of the standard daily living and mobility components of PIP, is better off after their change in circumstances, but is worse off by £183.44 per month under Universal Credit, compared to if they experienced the same change of circumstances under the legacy benefits system.



Case study: how take home income changes under the legacy benefits system and Universal Credit for someone moving from JSA to Universal Credit after becoming disabled and ill

CONCLUSION

Natural migration results in households moving to Universal Credit through changes in their circumstances. For some, this will result in higher awards, but others could lose significantly compared to if they remained on legacy benefits after the change in circumstances. This is particularly the case for those with income that is treated less favourably under Universal Credit assessment rules.

Under managed migration households receive transitional protection to ensure that they don't lose benefit as they migrate. If these households have certain changes in circumstances that would cause a loss of income under natural migration, they may still retain their transitional protection if they move to Universal Credit under managed migration. The changes in circumstance that would result in loss of transitional protection for those moved to Universal Credit under managed migration are a change in relationship status, no longer working, ending of the claim, or earned income dropping below claimant commitment levels for over 3 months.

This means that there are significantly fewer changes that lead to a loss of transitional protection under managed migration than the myriad that lead to natural migration with no protection of benefit levels. For example, the change in working hours that triggers natural migration to Universal Credit would not cause a loss of transitional protection.

In effect, some households will lose benefit support due to the timing of the change in their circumstances.

UNIVERSAL CREDIT: TAKE AWAYS FROM DWP'S MANAGED MIGRATION WEBINAR, MARCH 2019

Paul Howarth, Policy Consultant, has attended DWP's managed migration webinars for Policy in Practice. In this post, first published on our blog, he recaps on the information shared in the March 2019 webinar.

It was good to see DWP sharing information about managed migration openly, with partners interested in and engaged with the rollout of Universal Credit. The purpose of the webinar, shared by Richard d'Souza, Head of Engagement on the Universal Credit programme, was to:

1. Outline the DWP approach to the managed migration pilot in Harrogate due to start in July
2. Provide feedback after the service design workshops

THE OVERALL APPROACH TO THE MANAGED MIGRATION PILOT

DWP recognised the concerns expressed by stakeholders that vulnerable people might get left behind in the managed migration process and/or become stressed by it. They outlined the 'who knows me' approach which essentially involves finding a personal connection for each claimant going through the process.

The idea to be tested is that if an organisation knows a claimant, that organisation will be best placed to assess readiness to migrate, and to support the claimant through the process. ('Knowing a claimant' is defined as having recent face-to-face or telephone contact with the claimant, with an organisational or financial interest in supporting the claimant through the process.)

DWP estimate that around 50% of claimants have this sort of relationship with the Jobcentre, HMRC, their local authority, or their social landlord.

The idea is to see how far they can go with the 'who knows me' concept and assess whether it will work. In the pilot, they will start with Jobcentre Plus who may be able to deal with around 100 claimants through their own contacts. They would need to be convinced that the claimant was sufficiently engaged to understand the process and to claim UC at the right time, and that appropriate support mechanisms were in place.

DWP is deliberately starting locally with one pilot area, Harrogate, with one Jobcentre and one set of partners. It will be collaborative, bringing front-line colleagues into the design process. The idea is to establish what support people need, and what support partners need to help claimants. It will be iterative, open to change as the design is developed, and will focus on what works, not what will scale or what is affordable. It will grow 'safely', i.e. they are not chasing the 10,000 figure. That is a ceiling not a target. All groups will be covered – they won't avoid 'hard cases'.

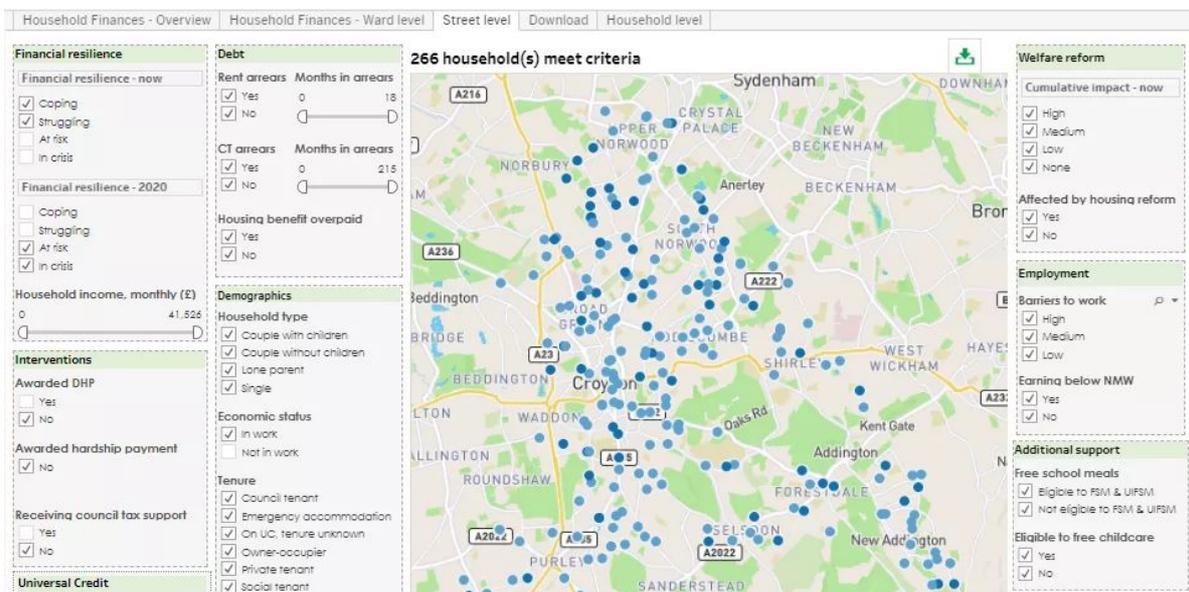
In summary, 'who knows me' is an idea not an answer, and a genuine test. The pilot can start in earnest, now an area has been selected.

Paul was able to ask whether the DWP would "Use household-level data to help local authorities and others identify vulnerable people who need support."

Whilst Policy in Practice agrees with the needs-led 'who knows me' approach, we believe it would be helpful to have a supplementary source of information to ensure an effective approach could be scaled, and that vulnerable claimants were not missed out. When we met the DWP recently we showed them how our LIFT Dashboard can quickly identify specific households, such as those in more than one month's council tax arrears, facing a cash shortfall, who would be worse off under UC.

Lara said that there may come a time for modelling but not yet, they wanted to start with a bottom-up approach and see how far they could get.

In response to other questions, DWP said that no decision had yet been made about involving private landlords, that any involvement of third-parties could not lead to breaches of data security, measurement of success would be empirical and subject to change, the Citizens Advice contract to provide budgeting and IT support did not extend to managed migration, and the pilot process would not involve stopping benefits.



OUTCOME OF SERVICE DESIGN WORKSHOPS

DWP gathered the evidence from the workshops and grouped it into particular themes or ‘problem statements’. These would be explored further with particular groups, some would be explored in the pilot but others might need a different approach. The nine areas were:

1. Barriers experienced by people who are **hard to reach**, e.g. experience difficulty following instructions or using online resources, don’t seek help or experience other factors that make their lives difficult to manage.
2. The needs of **vulnerable people** and those with complex circumstances, e.g. lack of evidence, lack of perseverance, difficulty with bank accounts, identity verification and tenancy confirmation.
3. The risks of people **not engaging** through not receiving information, not understanding what is asked of them, choosing to ignore what is asked of them perhaps because they are unaware or fearful of the migration exercise, or responding incorrectly. A letter by itself may be unexpected and not enough to prompt action. Third party organisations may not be aware what is happening.
4. Issues around the ability to **act on behalf of claimants**, e.g. need to identify friends or family to give support and need to alert them when migration is happening. Some of them may not have the expertise to help sufficiently.
5. Issues claimants have in getting **access to the correct or appropriate channels**, e.g. they may not be aware of non-digital channels or may need support at home which third-parties can’t provide.
6. Accessing **third parties who have knowledge** of the people they are supporting, e.g. they may have in-depth information about the needs of people but won’t necessarily be alerted about the roll-out schedule.
7. Risks associated with **termination of benefits, debts and arrears** experienced by claimants, essentially the need to help avoid termination and understand the implications of arrears and debt.
8. Critical evidence and easements from legacy benefits that may be lost, essentially how to make sure such **evidence is made available** fully and applied to the UC claim.
9. **Landlord time and resources** spent supporting UC claimants and their claims, e.g. DWP may underestimate the administration effort involved in supporting tenants and reconciling payments.

Paul was struck by how similar all this was to the evidence we obtained in our supported housing and Universal Credit project which you can read here. I was very encouraged by the fact that DWP have clocked all these issues and will now be turning their minds to how they are addressed. On sharing information, I made the point that DWP should share information wherever possible, whilst protecting privacy.

UNIVERSAL CREDIT: TAKE AWAYS FROM DWP'S MANAGED MIGRATION WEBINAR, MAY 2019

Paul Howarth, Policy Consultant, recaps on information shared during the DWP's managed migration webinar, held in May 2019.

Ahead of the face-to-face stakeholder workshop on managed migration on Thursday 13 June, DWP held another webinar on Universal Credit managed migration in May. This followed a webinar in March when DWP set out the 'who knows me' approach to the managed migration pilot and explained the themes emerging from the service design workshops.

Richard d'Souza welcomed all the participants to the latest webinar and said that the purpose of the webinar was to report back on:

- The 'vulnerable and complex needs workshop' on Monday 1 April
- The service delivery workshop on Thursday 11 April

VULNERABLE AND COMPLEX NEEDS WORKSHOP

DWP reported on the workshop which involved around 35 charities and stakeholders. The objective was to develop a framework that describes vulnerable people's needs in the Universal Credit process but to do so in a way which avoids stigma and categorisation. It should not, for example, be assumed that all disabled people are vulnerable.

The workshop defined certain types of needs:

- Access (e.g. to the internet, the phone, availability for visits, difficulty in travelling)
- Daily life (e.g. difficulties preparing for or making a claim, lack of planning/financial skills, anxiety, fluctuating needs)
- Communication (e.g. difficulties communicating verbally or in writing, concentration issues)
- Connections (e.g. social isolation, unable to ask for support, necessary support lacking)
- Availability (e.g. difficulty in providing ID, opening bank accounts, or obtaining and using assistive technology)

It was emphasised that this was still work in progress. I asked how the really good work emerging from the workshops would be applied in the Harrogate pilot. The helpful and re-assuring answer was that it will be used in the conversations taking place in the 'who knows me' approach in the pilot, and by making advisers more aware of what to look for.

There were quite a few questions and contributions this time so DWP were kept busy! Some of the main points were:

- Inevitably there will need to be some prioritisation in meeting all the various needs that had been identified– not all needs can be fully met, and different needs will be met in different ways – it is all about trying to lower barriers
- The Harrogate pilot will include those who might not be able to have a face to face interview easily (e.g. in hospital) but not at the outset
- It has not yet been decided whether claimants with a severe disability premium will be included in the pilot
- There were no current plans to allow trusted partners (e.g. housing associations) to refer claimants to the visiting or telephone claim services, but the point was noted
- Every effort will be made to ensure that claimants will not lose support if they fail to engage with the managed migration process.
- DWP will take a deliberately slow approach to managed migration, reviewing as they go along, and learning from engaging with real claimants in the pilot.

SERVICE DELIVERY WORKSHOP

This was a fresh look at the ‘customer journey’ designed to establish what works and what doesn’t work, building on existing knowledge. The workshop considered:

- The warm-up/prep conversation
- Making a claim for Universal Credit
- Understanding money – my first Universal Credit statement
- Budgeting – financial assistance
- General support

Participants in the workshop were asked to comment on:

- What they currently do to support claimants?
- What are the pinch points or challenges?
- What would they change?

The issues raised by participants are familiar: for example, data-sharing, faster help-line access, improving the consent process, landlord portal development, lack of resources to support claimants were all cited as key challenges and areas that could be improved. In answer to questions, DWP commented that:

- Implicit consent is being looked at, jointly with SSAC. So there is some work going on in this area, but not in time for the pilot
- There have been and will continue to be some conversations with existing Universal Credit claimants in Harrogate to inform the pilot
- Data-sharing is being considered as a result of the workshops
- There are no plans at this stage to expand the pilot beyond Harrogate but this is not ruled out. DWP commented that they ‘need to understand the end- to- end journey before scaling’

I asked a question about the decision-making process: how would DWP respond in the face of all this valuable information and feedback? The answer was that looking at what works and what doesn’t is a continuous process and that, while very helpful evidence was being collected from stakeholders, DWP would need to understand this themselves and not take anything as given.

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

DWP’s general approach to managed migration is very welcome. Inevitably though expectations will be raised by the very full consultation with organisations who support claimants every day. It will be very helpful for DWP to say, as we go along, what points they are prepared to take on board as a result of all this activity and what they don’t feel able to accept (and why). A short explanation about why something can’t be done is often much better than no feedback at all. And, of course, we can all agree that the right outcome is more important than the right process.

DWP are clearly engaging with stakeholders and putting a great deal of effort into capturing a lot of detailed information from the process. All of this should help the exercise go well, and we look forward to many of the positive suggestions made by stakeholders being put into practice by DWP.

THE GUINNESS PARTNERSHIP: HOW UNIVERSAL CREDIT IMPACTS OUR CUSTOMERS AND BUSINESS

This guest blog post was kindly written by Michelle Birley, Customer Support Manager at The Guinness Partnership. It was originally published on Policy in Practice's website on 23 April 2019.

The Guinness Partnership was founded in 1890 to improve people's lives and create possibilities for them. Today, we provide 66,000 homes to 140,000 customers across England. As an organisation our purpose hasn't changed but major changes in policy, including changes in benefits, inevitably have an effect on us and our customers.

It's difficult to find fault with the original objectives of Universal Credit (UC) – making the benefits system fairer and less complex, reducing poverty, and making work pay. However, the introduction of UC has been a real challenge for both our customers and for us as an organisation.

So far almost 8,000 Guinness customers have moved onto UC, and we expect that to increase to 12,000 by April 2020. Our initial experience is that rent-arrears for those claiming UC are high compared with legacy benefits, and our customers need more support than ever with their claims.

In spite of the extensive support we provide, many of our customers claiming UC have found the new system challenging and are experiencing poverty and deprivation.

OUR CUSTOMERS' EXPERIENCE

In keeping with the original design objectives, there's no doubt that some customers have appreciated UC's simplicity and regular monthly payments. Others have struggled. And UC hasn't been rolling out in isolation of other major changes which include the benefit cap and a four-year freeze on most working-age benefits and tax credits.

One customer with a positive experience increased her monthly income by £400 per month by moving onto UC. She was in full-time work and in receipt of partial housing benefit but did not qualify for tax credits under the legacy system. With our support, she recognised she would be better off on UC.

For others, however, UC has been a less positive experience. For example, one self-employed customer was left £400 a month worse off after moving onto UC. She cares for her son who has learning difficulties and suffers from seizures. Prior to moving onto UC she was earning £60 a week and in receipt of full housing benefit. Following a change in circumstances, she moved onto UC and the minimum income floor was applied; it was this that left her worse off than under legacy benefits.

Sanctions have been unhelpful for some of our customers and we see little evidence that they are effective. In one case, a customer had a zero-hours contract and worked up to 20 hours per week. He was expected to look for additional hours. His work coach contacted him at work to ask what he had done to look for a job. Because our customer was at work he couldn't give a full update and his work coach judged that he should be sanctioned for three months.

The outcome was that our customer built up rent arrears and lost his job as he could not afford to travel to work. The decision was overturned by a tribunal but by this point, our customer's mental health had deteriorated and he had lived in poverty for months.

And there remains a major reputational issue at the heart of the new system which has left some customers reluctant to claim UC. In one case, a customer was so worried about the impact of UC that she stayed in an abusive relationship to avoid it.

IMPACT ON GUINNESS

Our experience so far is that it takes an average of 26 weeks for a UC rent account to stabilise, much longer than with housing benefit. When we apply for an Alternative Payment Arrangement to have the rent element of UC paid directly to us, it takes an average of nine weeks for the payment to reach us.

Average arrears for a customer claiming UC continue to be much higher than arrears across all of our tenancies, although we have reduced the gap significantly over the last year. It has taken considerable effort and resource to achieve this reduction.

SUPPORTING OUR CUSTOMERS

Guinness has a team of 19 dedicated support officers who provide additional advice and support to customers who need it. Last year the team supported 7,995 customers with 40% of those cases relating to UC claims.

We provide intense support to customers claiming UC in the first three months of their claim. With around 750 customers moving onto UC per month, the resource requirement from Guinness is substantial.

On top of our support and advice, Guinness has a hardship fund for customers which we use to provide emergency food, gas and electricity during customers' five-week waiting period.

We recently used the hardship fund to support one of our customers who was claiming UC and lost his job. This change left him facing a three-week period with just £3. He was not entitled to the short-term budgeting loan. With no food or money to heat his home, we were able to help him with emergency food and heating.

FIVE CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

The government has made a number of recent changes to UC, including increasing work allowances for some groups from April 2019, and we are working to understand the impact of those improvements. However, if UC is to deliver on its original objectives, further changes will be needed.

From our experience of helping our customers claim UC, we've identified five potential improvements:

1. **Consistency and consolidation.** There are 637 JobCentres across the UK each with their own Partnership Manager. There are also 26 DWP service centres that we understand from our customers are providing inconsistent advice. A single point of contact for Job Centres would help national organisations like Guinness resolve issues. Consistency across the DWP service centres would help our customers.
2. **Faster processing of Alternative Payment Arrangements.** This would prevent our customers from falling into rent arrears whilst waiting for the APA to start.
3. **Improved data sharing between the DWP and social landlords.** Landlords need to know in advance which customers are moving onto UC in order to provide timely advice. Continued improvement to the Landlord Portal for two-way communications will be key.
4. **Reduce or end the five-week wait at the start of a claim.** The wait causes our customers hardship and poverty in some cases. While the advance payment helps, it means people fall into debt before they have even received their first payment.
5. **Evaluate the effectiveness of sanctions.** Sanctions have caused hardship for some of our customers. We support the recommendation from the Work and Pensions' Committee that evaluation of the impact sanctions have on UC claimants' financial and personal well-being should be carried out.

Overhauling the benefits system and introducing UC was always going to be a major policy challenge. The Government has listened and made changes, and it must continue with that approach to address outstanding issues and concerns. Only then will it work for our customers who most need the system to succeed.

CASE STUDY: THE GUINNESS PARTNERSHIP

SOFTWARE HELPS GUINNESS PREPARE CUSTOMERS FOR WELFARE REFORM

As one of the country's largest housing associations, The Guinness Partnership has multiple teams working to provide support to 66,000 homes. Since 2016, Guinness has used Policy in Practice's software to help these teams work more closely together and create greater consistency across the organisation. The Lettings, Customer Accounts and Customer Support services all use the Benefit and Budgeting Calculator on the frontline to provide the best advice and support to their 140,000 customers, in preparation for Universal Credit rollout.

15,000 CUSTOMERS MOVING ONTO UNIVERSAL CREDIT IN NEXT 5 YEARS

When Marie Hardeman joined Guinness in 2016 three of the organisation's core services, Lettings, Customer Support and Customer Accounts, were each using different ways to track customer interactions. This structure gave little visibility over customers' data and created a lack of consistency. The data was potentially open to manipulation by customers and miscommunications across the organisation was possible, with the risk of unsuitable lettings being arranged. Customers were asked to give the same information repeatedly, creating negative experiences for them.

This inconsistency across departments, coupled with 750 customers moving to Universal Credit each month, created challenges for Guinness. They needed a solution that could record and amend data over time to give greater visibility and accessibility to multiple departments, ultimately giving them the consistency they needed.

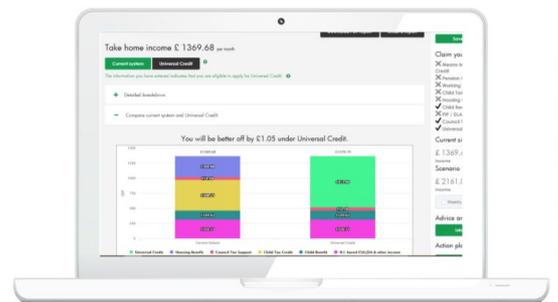
BETTER COMMUNICATION ACROSS TEAMS CREATES A BETTER SERVICE

Guinness wanted a tool that could help them build data around customers so they reached out to Policy in Practice. They needed something that was advanced enough to deal with ongoing changes, able to accurately log data and that could be accessed by multiple departments.

They found that the Benefit and Budgeting Calculator was the most sophisticated solution. They were attracted by its broad functionality, however, it was the Universal Credit comparison feature that impressed the most: a feature which has become vital in preparing Guinness' customers for welfare reform.

Guinness says that a co-ordinated rollout was essential for managing the cultural shift across multiple departments. As part of the launch, Policy in Practice supported the classroom based training sessions which gave much needed consistency and buy-in across the organisation.

The Lettings, Customer Accounts and Customer Support teams now work in unison to provide a cohesive service and better support to their customers. One case alone saw the tool identify that a customer was missing out on £7,000 per year, which Guinness says has been life-changing for the customer.



"The Benefit and Budgeting Calculator has been fundamental in preparing our customers for Universal Credit."

Marie Hardeman, Lettings Manager, The Guinness Partnership

IMPROVED CONSISTENCY DELIVERS HUGE COST SAVINGS FOR GUINNESS

Guinness' Destination 2018 plan brought the organisation together in a consistent and coherent way. The strategy fundamentally redesigned the way Guinness was organised and the systems used, and it was in this context that the Benefit and Budgeting Calculator was adopted. With improved communication, departments now work better and smarter together to ensure customers are more financially resilient.

Since the launch of the plan Guinness has built 1,800 new homes, delivered £12 million of cost-savings and improved both customer and employee satisfaction year-on-year by delivering more consistent and accessible services.

With the help of the Benefit and Budgeting Calculator, Guinness has witnessed the following benefits:

- **IMPROVED CUSTOMER INTERACTIONS.** Customer satisfaction scores increased year-on-year (2016;76%, 2017;77%, 2018; 78%), giving clear evidence that interactions have improved.
- **HUGE USAGE ON ASSESSMENTS.** 56,000 assessments have been completed using the Benefit and Budgeting Calculator. 38% were new cases, compared with 62% which were ongoing. Access to more consistent data now steers these follow-up conversations in a better direction.
- **HIGHER STAFF ENGAGEMENT RATES.** Opportunities to improve the conversation skills of advisors were identified and addressed. Staff in the Customer Accounts department are now more confident in their work, which has been a key driver in the rising staff engagement scores in this service. (86% in 2018).
- **RELIABLE EVIDENCE.** In situations that resulted in court proceedings, Guinness can now use the Better-Off scenarios to provide evidence of support offered.
- **BETTER LETTINGS ARRANGED.** Access to more accurate data means that the Lettings service can confidently place tenants in the right home, knowing they can genuinely afford it. More sustainable arrears plans can be put in place so customers can build up credit and even pay rent in advance.
- **MORE DETAILED ADVICE GIVEN.** Management information captured from the 30,000 completed budget advice calculations shows how advice is linked to outcomes, such as Action Plan agreements that give customers a clear guide on managing and maximising their income.
- **CUSTOMERS ARE ENGAGED AND PROACTIVE.** As the process becomes more straightforward and conversations more fluid, customers are now more engaged and proactively update Guinness about changes in their circumstances. Conversations are more interactive with higher rates of self-identification by customers.

ABOUT POLICY IN PRACTICE

Government policy is complex, confusing and difficult to navigate. It tends to focus on the impact of individual policies in isolation, rather than the overall impact it has on each individual citizen.

Policy in Practice is a policy-led software and analytics business founded by one of the architects of Universal Credit. We help people toward independence by making government policy and the benefit system easier to understand and navigate.

Our policy engine models over 4,000 pieces of legislation, updated in real-time, across four government departments. This helps people to understand the combined impact of policy changes on them, and they can identify the choices they can make to become better off, and to lead more fulfilling lives.

We help over 150 local organisations and over 10,000 people each day to navigate the benefit system, to take control steps toward independence. We have built an analytics platform that tracks the living standards and the changing lives of over a million low-income households over the past two years.

Our analysis shows how each individual household is affected by all policy changes, now and in the future. Our work has had an impact on national policy, and is helping local authorities to target resources, meet their statutory obligations and spend money more effectively. A scientific approach to data visualisation drills down from national analysis to individual households, and links into engaging, tailored support to help people to take control and become better off.

We believe that administrative data is the future of social policy analysis, and can help the public sector to deliver more with less. We look forward to working with you to make this vision a reality.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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