



House of Commons
Work and Pensions Committee

Universal Credit: support for disabled people

**Twenty-First Report of Session
2017–19**

*Report, together with formal minutes relating
to the report*

*Ordered by the House of Commons
to be printed 12 December 2018*

Work and Pensions Committee

The Work and Pensions Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration, and policy of the Department for Work and Pensions and its associated public bodies.

Current membership

[Frank Field MP](#) (*Independent, Birkenhead*) (Chair)

[Heidi Allen MP](#) (*Conservative, South Cambridgeshire*)

[Jack Brereton MP](#) (*Conservative, Stoke-on-Trent South*)

[Alex Burghart MP](#) (*Conservative, Brentwood and Ongar*)

[Neil Coyle MP](#) (*Labour, Bermondsey and Old Southwark*)

[Rosie Duffield MP](#) (*Labour, Canterbury*)

[Ruth George MP](#) (*Labour, High Peak*)

[Steve McCabe MP](#) (*Labour, Birmingham, Selly Oak*)

[Nigel Mills MP](#) (*Conservative, Amber Valley*)

[Chris Stephens MP](#) (*Scottish National Party, Glasgow South West*)

[Derek Thomas MP](#) (*Conservatives, St Ives*)

Powers

The Committee is one of the departmental select committees, the powers of which are set out in House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in SO No 152. These are available on the internet via www.parliament.uk.

Publication

Committee reports are published on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website and in print by Order of the House.

Evidence relating to this report is published on the [inquiry page](#) of the Committee's website.

Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are Anne-Marie Griffiths (Clerk), Katy Stout (Second Clerk), Libby McEnhill (Senior Committee Specialist), Kemi Duroshola (Committee Specialist), George Steer (Assistant Policy Analyst), Jessica Bridges Palmer (Senior Media and Policy Officer), Esther Goosey (Senior Committee Assistant), Michelle Garratty (Committee Assistant).

Contacts

All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerk of the Work and Pensions Committee, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA. The telephone number for general enquiries is 020 7219 8976; the Committee's email address is workpencom@parliament.uk.

Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Summary | 3 |
| Transitional protection and Universal Credit entitlements | 3 |
| Claiming Universal Credit | 4 |
| Jobcentre Plus | 4 |
| 1 Introduction | 6 |
| 2 Universal Credit entitlements | 8 |
| “Managed” migration | 10 |
| The process of managed migration | 11 |
| ESA underpayments | 14 |
| Severe and Enhanced Disability Premia | 15 |
| The impact of removing SDP and EDP | 17 |
| Support for disabled children | 21 |
| 3 Claiming Universal Credit | 24 |
| Online claims | 24 |
| Assistive technology | 26 |
| Claimants with terminal illness | 27 |
| Disabled students | 29 |
| 4 Support in Jobcentre Plus | 32 |
| Conditionality and claimant commitments | 32 |
| Employment support for disabled people | 34 |
| Work and Health Programme | 35 |
| Work Coaches, Disability Employment Advisers and Community Partners | 36 |
| Conclusions and recommendations | 39 |
| Formal minutes | 46 |
| Witnesses | 47 |
| Universal Credit | 47 |
| Disability employment | 49 |
| Universal Credit: Managed Migration | 49 |
| Published written evidence | 50 |
| List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament | 58 |

Summary

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP/The Department) provides vital financial support to approximately 2 million disabled people claiming out of work benefits. Through Universal Credit (UC), DWP aims to make it easier for disabled people to move into work or increase their hours, and to provide more support to some of the most severely disabled people amongst its caseload. Those aims are laudable. But whether the Department can deliver them—and the impact on people who do not fit the Department’s definition of “severely disabled”—is much less certain.

The Department should start by getting the basics right. It has made progress in paying UC on time. But still just a third of new claimants whose award includes a payment for disability receive their UC on time and in full. The Department says that these delays are down to long waits for Work Capability Assessments—tests of claimants’ capacity to work, carried out by the Department’s contractors. DWP therefore has a choice. It can either take steps to reduce the wait for an assessment—for example, by introducing new targets for its contractors or conducting assessments in house—or find a way for claimants to receive disability support while they wait for an assessment. One interim solution, ensuring claimants are not left without vital income while awaiting an assessment, would be to allow disability amounts of UC to be paid on production of a valid Fit Note stating that the claimant is unable to work.

Transitional protection and Universal Credit entitlements

Under the benefit system UC replaces (the “legacy system”), disabled people without an adult carer could, in some circumstances, claim top-ups to their benefits to help them meet additional costs resulting from their health conditions. These are called “disability premia”. They do not exist under UC, meaning new claimants cannot receive them. The Department argues it is, instead, making support for the most “severely disabled” UC claimants more generous than under the legacy system. This is true, but it still does not match what those claimants could have received under the legacy system, with the premia in place. And it leaves those who are not designated “severely disabled”—but who the Department itself has nonetheless assessed as unable to work—substantially worse off than they would otherwise have been.

The Department has taken some steps to protect people already receiving the premia. It announced in June 2018 that it would provide “transitional protection” for claimants receiving them who move to UC without a change in their circumstances—a process it calls “managed migration”. But new claimants will not receive this protection, and the protection will lose value over time. This risks disabled people living more isolated lives, relying more on unpaid care (including from their own young children), or simply being unable to gain support to complete basic daily tasks. The Department has carried out no analysis of its own to assess the effect of removing the premia. It must do so urgently. It should include in this an assessment of the costs and benefits of introducing a new “self-care” payment in UC for claimants who would have received the disability premia. This would help disabled people who have opted not to have a paid for carer to meet ad hoc care and living expenses.

Changes to support for disabled children under UC similarly mean that some families with severely disabled children, who are in receipt of higher-rate Disability Living Allowance, will receive more than they would have under the legacy system. And households already receiving this support who move via “managed migration” will receive transitional protection. But this comes at a price for other families. Households who migrate “naturally” due to changed circumstances, and new claimants, will receive no such protection. The result is that once UC is fully rolled out, 100,000 families with a disabled child will be entitled to less money than they would have been under the legacy system. Those receiving the middle rate care component of Disability Living Allowance, in particular, are likely to struggle to make up the shortfall through work due to caring responsibilities. The Department must urgently reinstate support for new claimant households with children receiving the middle rate care component of Disability Living Allowance.

Claiming Universal Credit

The Government is committed to a digital by default process for Universal Credit claims. Digital cannot work for everyone, however. Some disabled people—for example, people with severe learning disabilities—will never be able to use all online systems independently. The Department must ensure Universal Credit’s systems meet their needs. It should enable providers of its Universal Support provision—including Citizens Advice—to offer proactively on-going support to claimants who cannot use the online system, and ensure they have the funding necessary to deliver this. The support on offer must reflect the differing needs of disabled people, with home visits and telephone support available where necessary at no additional cost to the claimant.

Certain people can apply for UC under the Department’s Special Rules for Terminal Illness (SRTI): a simplified process that allows them to receive their benefit more quickly. To do so they need to supply a form stating that they have less than six months to live. But this process is failing claimants with terminal, progressive illnesses when they need support most. The strict six month requirement is too restrictive, and can exacerbate what is already a difficult and distressing time. The Department must introduce a more humane approach. This should make access to the SRTI dependent only on medical professionals’ judgement about whether an individual has a progressive illness that is likely to cause their death; not whether that is expected to occur within six months. This reflects the approach taken in the Access to Welfare (Terminal Illness Definition) Bill, which is scheduled for its second reading in January 2019.

Jobcentre Plus

Jobcentre Plus (JCP) Work Coaches—front line support staff—have two key roles in supporting UC claimants. They agree with claimants the conditions attached to their receipt of benefit, called “conditionality”, and ensure they are meeting them. They also refer claimants to additional, external employment support.

Work Coaches are generalists. They undergo basic training on disability, but they do not specialise in working with disabled claimants. Many of the roles they have to perform, however, require specialist knowledge. The Department is confident that its Disability Employment Advisers and Community Partners—specialist JCP staff who

advise front-line Work Coaches—are the best way of delivering this. Yet funding for all 200 Community Partners, and 300 of JCP’s 500 DEAs, is due to expire in 2019—just as the Department plans to begin moving existing benefit claimants onto Universal Credit. The lack of a concrete plan or funding beyond that point is deeply worrying. The Department should commit to funding Community Partners and the additional Disability Employment Advisers throughout the process of moving legacy benefit claimants to Universal Credit.

1 Introduction

1. Universal Credit (UC) rolls six existing (“legacy”) benefits into one single payment. Claimants receive a basic amount (the “standard allowance”) alongside additional payments if, for example, they are disabled, receive support with rent, or have children. Amongst the benefits UC will replace is income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA): a benefit intended to support people with health conditions that limit their capacity to work.¹ In 2017/18, over 1.7 million people claimed income-related ESA.² A further 37% of Jobseeker’s Allowance (JSA) claimants—147,260 thousand people—told the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP/The Department) in 2016/2017 that they considered themselves disabled.³ This means that the Department is currently supporting in the region of 2 million disabled claimants of out of work benefits.

2. The Government has pledged to increase the number of disabled people who are in work by one million by 2027.⁴ Disabled people have much lower employment rates than non-disabled people. As of mid-2018, 51.3% of disabled people—3.9 million—were in employment, compared to 81.4% of non-disabled people: a gap of 30.1 percentage points.⁵ Although the number of disabled people in employment has risen by around 600,000 since 2013, progress on reducing the gap has been slow. Since 2013 the gap has narrowed by just 4.1 percentage points.⁶

3. To enable the successful rollout of UC and to improve disabled peoples’ employment rates the Department offers a range of support to disabled UC claimants. This includes:

- UC itself. UC is paid to claimants in and out of work. Payment amounts are adjusted in relation to earnings. The Department intends UC to ease the transition into work and make it easier for claimants to try to work without losing their benefits.⁷
- Disabled UC claimants receive a “work allowance” each month. This means their UC award only begins to reduce if they earn over the work allowance. The Department intends this to increase incentives to work.⁸
- Claimants moving to UC from legacy benefits are eligible for “transitional protection” in some circumstances. Transitional protection should ensure that claimants do not experience a reduction in income when they move from legacy benefits to UC without a change in their circumstances.⁹ A change in

1 Universal Credit also replaces Jobseeker’s Allowance, Income Support, Child and Working Tax Credit and housing benefit.

2 [Letter from Minister for Employment to Committee Chair re. Benefit sanctions](#), September 2018

3 [Benefit expenditure outturn and caseloads, 2018](#)

4 Conservative Party, [Forward, together \(2017 general election manifesto\)](#), 2017, p.57

5 Powell, A., [People with disabilities in employment](#), House of Commons Library briefing paper no.7540, November 2018. Data refers to April-June 2018.

6 Ibid.

7 See, for example, DWP, [Statement in response to the Social Security Advisory Committee’s report on the Universal Credit \(Miscellaneous Amendments, Saving and Transitional Provision\) Regulations 2018 \(SI 2018/65\)-Transition to UC Housing Payment](#), January 2018, p.1

8 See Kennedy, S. [Permitted work rules](#), House of Commons Library briefing no. 7909, June 2017, p.5. Universal Credit claimants who are assessed as having Limited Capability to Work (i.e. those who would have been entitled to ESA) are entitled to a work allowance. Claimants not assessed as having Limited Capability for Work do not receive a work allowance.

9 See Chapter 2.

circumstances includes when earnings rise or fall for at least four successive months above or below UC earnings thresholds. The adequacy of this protection will be particularly important for disabled people with fluctuating conditions or those “trying out” work, who may be discouraged from working by the risk of losing transitional protection.¹⁰

- Universal Support. This is the Department’s provision to help claimants adjust to UC. It can include support with making a UC claim and with budgeting. The Department identifies disabled people and people with learning disabilities as particularly likely to require this support.¹¹ From April 2019 Universal Support will be delivered by Citizens Advice and Citizens Advice Scotland.
- Access to the Work and Health Programme (WHP): an employment support programme delivered by specialist contractors. The Department expects 275,000 disabled people to participate in WHP up to 2019/20.¹²
- Additional support in Jobcentre Plus (JCP): for example, JCP Work Coaches can refer claimants on a discretionary basis to a range of externally delivered, ad hoc employment support.¹³

4. We started this phase in our Universal Credit inquiry in response to concerns about the suitability of UC systems and arrangements for disabled people. We also heard wider concerns about the support that is and will be available to disabled UC claimants via JCP, in light of our previous inquiries into the *Disability employment gap* and *Assistive technology* and our evidence session on Universal Credit and disabled people.¹⁴ We are grateful to everyone who gave evidence to this inquiry.

10 See Work and Pensions Committee, [Universal Credit: Managed migration](#), 20th Report of Session 2017–19, HC 1762, November 2018, p.16

11 Work and Pensions Committee, [Universal Support](#), 18th Report of Session 2017–19, HC-1667.

12 Q25 (James Wolfe)

13 DWP and DH, [Improving lives: the future of work, health and disability](#), Cm 9526, November 2017, pp.16–19

14 Work and Pensions Committee, [Disability employment gap](#), Seventh report of Session 2016–17, HC-56, February 2017; Work and Pensions Committee, [Assistive technology](#), Tenth report of Session 2017–19, HC-673, April 2018; Work and Pensions Committee, [oral evidence on Universal Credit](#), 4 July 2018

2 Universal Credit entitlements

5. Disabled people can come to claim UC in three ways:
- a) New claims. In areas where the UC full service is available, no new claims to legacy benefits are permitted. The full service is due to be available in all Jobcentre Plus offices by December 2018.¹⁵
 - b) “Natural” migration, where an existing claimant’s circumstances change and they have to reapply for benefits. They can only claim UC, rather than legacy benefits.
 - c) Migration from a legacy benefit without a change of circumstances. DWP refers to this process as “managed migration”.¹⁶ The Department intends to begin this process on a pilot basis from mid-2019, and to move to scale from 2020. It should be complete—and with it UC fully rolled out—by 2023.¹⁷

The way that people come onto UC affects how much benefit they receive. People who go through managed migration will be eligible to receive transitional protection. This should ensure that their UC award is, at the outset, at least equal to their existing benefit entitlements.¹⁸ Claimants who begin new claims or who “naturally” migrate due to a change of circumstances are generally not eligible for transitional protection. This can mean that they receive less under UC than they did, or would have, under the legacy system.

6. The UC application process is essentially the same for all three routes.¹⁹ Assuming all processes are completed correctly, claimants should receive their first UC payment five weeks after completing their claim. In August 2018, 16% of claimants did not receive their full UC award on time in full, and 11% did not receive any payment at all on time (see Figure 1).²⁰ The National Audit Office (NAO) reported that claimants whose award includes an additional amount for a health condition or disability are particularly unlikely to receive their full payment on time after the initial five week wait. Only one in three (33%) claimants whose award included an additional amount for disability received their full payment in time at the end of 2017; up from just one in twenty at the start of the year.²¹

15 DWP, [Universal Credit transition roll-out schedule](#), March 2018 to December 2018.

16 Social Security Advisory Committee (SSAC), [The Draft Universal Credit \(Managed Migration\) Regulations 2018 \(SI 2018/****\)](#) Report by the Social Security Advisory Committee under Sections 172(1) and Section 174(1) of the Social Security Administration Act 1992 and statement by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions in accordance with Section 174(2) of that Act, November 2018

17 SSAC, [The Draft Universal Credit \(Managed Migration\) Regulations 2018](#), p.2

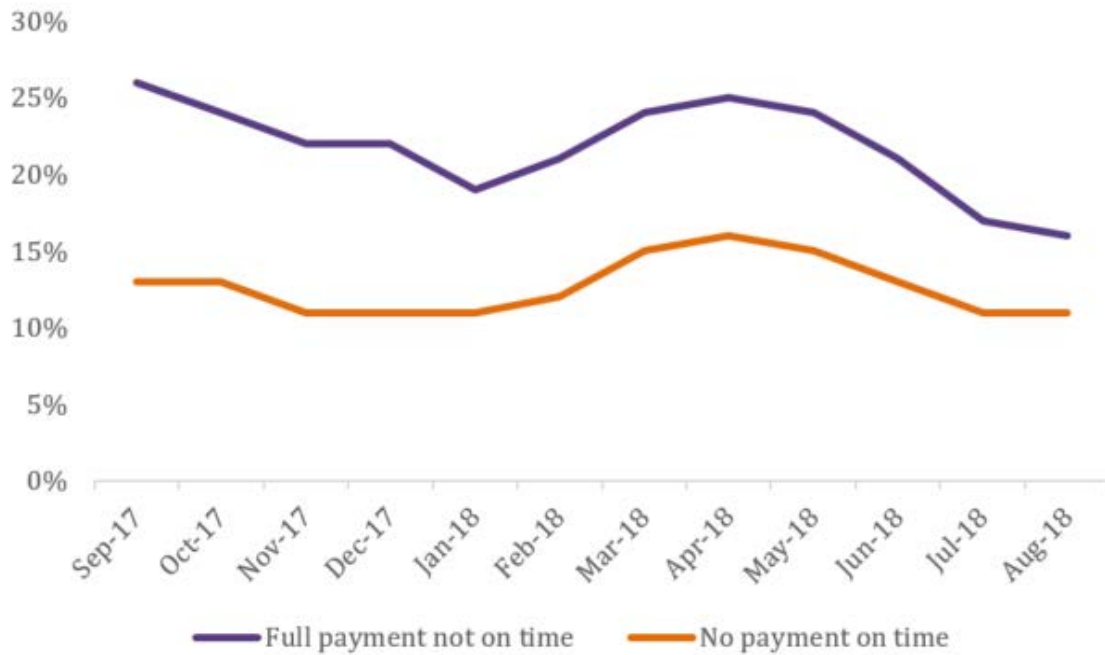
18 DWP, [The Universal Credit \(Transitional Provisions\) \(Managed Migration\) Amendment Regulations 2018: Letter from the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions](#), November 2018

19 We return to the application process in Chapter 3.

20 DWP, [Universal Credit statistics, November 2018](#), p.9. Data correct to August 2018.

21 National Audit Office (NAO), [Rolling out Universal Credit](#), Session 2017–19, HC-1123, p.37–38

Figure 1: Universal Credit (new claims) not paid on time



Source: DWP Universal Credit official statistics, Table 6.1, November 2018

7. The Department attributes the large proportion of late payments for disabled claimants to those claimants frequently experiencing long waits for a Work Capability Assessment (WCA)—an assessment of their capability to work.²² In March 2018, the median wait from application to receiving a WCA decision was 17 weeks.²³

8. WCAs are delivered by the Department’s external contractor, Maximus, under a contract due to expire in 2019/20.²⁴ Our previous inquiry into *PIP and ESA assessments* considered the quality of service that the Department receives from its contracted assessment providers.²⁵ It noted the NAO’s conclusion that the transition between the previous contractor, Atos, and Maximus, had been rushed. This had led to “missed opportunities to improve contracting arrangements” and a “largely reactive approach to managing contractors’ performance”.²⁶ Maximus subsequently struggled to meet DWP performance targets, and only managed to meet all of its targets in May 2018.²⁷ The NAO recommended that the Department must undertake much more detailed preparatory work in advance of Maximus’s contract expiring. This should include building a clear understanding of what standards of service it requires from assessment providers and the costs of providing that service.²⁸ Witnesses to this inquiry suggested this should include

22 Ibid.
 23 DWP, [Employment and Support Allowance: Work Capability Assessments, Mandatory Reconsiderations and Appeals](#), September 2018. Data correct to March 2018
 24 Q379 (Janet Smethurst)
 25 Work and Pensions Committee, [PIP and ESA assessments](#), Seventh report of Session 2017–19, HC 829, February 2018
 26 Work and Pensions Committee, [PIP and ESA assessments](#), p.45
 27 [Letter from Maximus to the Chair of the Committee](#), May 2018
 28 NAO, [Contracted out health and disability assessments](#), Session 2015–16, HC-609, p.35

stipulating shorter target timescales for completing assessments.²⁹ We concluded that the Department must then consider whether the market is capable of delivering the service and, if it cannot, whether assessments might be better delivered in-house.³⁰

9. The Department has made welcome progress on paying Universal Credit on time in recent months. But one in eight claimants still do not receive their benefit on time and in full. One in ten receive nothing at all on time. Disabled people fare even worse. Just a third of new claimants whose award includes an additional amount for disability receive payment on time and in full.

10. The Department says that the delays in paying disabled claimants are down to long waits for Work Capability Assessments. But assessments are carried out by the Department’s own contractors. They are within the Department’s gift to fix. It has a choice: it can either take steps to reduce the wait for an assessment, or find a different way for claimants to provide evidence of their disability while they wait for an assessment.

11. We recommend that as part of its preparatory work for the expiry of the Work Capability Assessment contract the Department investigate the cost of bringing target times for Work Capability Assessment turnarounds down: for example, to no longer than a month from referral. We also recommend it devise an interim solution to ensure that disabled claimants are not left without vital income while awaiting an assessment. For example, it could allow disability amounts of UC to be paid on production of a valid Fit Note stating that they are unable to work.

“Managed” migration

12. The Department is due to pilot moving claimants from legacy benefits to UC from mid-2019—a process it calls “managed” migration. It anticipates moving around 10,000 claimants between then and mid-2020. It will start requiring claimants to migrate in larger numbers from mid-2020.³¹ Managed migration is due to be complete—and UC fully rolled out—by the end of 2023.³² The Department estimates it will eventually migrate 2.09 million households—2.87 individuals—via this process.³³ ESA claimants are the single largest claimant group within the managed migration caseload. The Department estimates that 36% of all people—745,000 people—who go through managed migration will be ESA claimants.³⁴

13. The Department set out its approach to managed migration in draft Regulations published in June 2018.³⁵ The publication of the Regulations was accompanied by the launch of a consultation on managed migration by the Social Security Advisory Committee (SSAC). The consultation concluded in August 2018. SSAC’s report was published and the revised draft Regulations laid in Parliament on 5 November 2018.³⁶

29 Scope (DMP0010)

30 Work and Pensions Committee, [PIP and ESA assessments](#), p.46–47

31 Q36 (Alok Sharma)

32 SSAC, [The Draft Universal Credit \(Managed Migration\) Regulations 2018](#), p.2

33 SSAC, [The Draft Universal Credit \(Managed Migration\) Regulations 2018](#), p.138–139

34 SSAC, [The Draft Universal Credit \(Managed Migration\) Regulations 2018](#), p.139

35 [The Universal Credit \(Managed Migration\) Regulations 2018](#)

36 SSAC, [The Draft Universal Credit \(Managed Migration\) Regulations 2018](#)

14. Currently the Department is seeking approval for Regulations covering the entirety of “managed migration”: the pilot stage, from mid-2019 to mid-2020, and the subsequent acceleration. On 6 December 2018 the House of Lords Secondary Legislation Scrutiny Committee (Sub-Committee B) (SLSC) published its report on the draft UC Regulations.³⁷ The report expressed concern that once the draft Regulations are approved, there will be no scope for Parliament to further influence the programme. The SLSC concluded that although DWP’s plans for “managed migration” are “well intentioned”, they are also currently “vague and aspirational”. They continued:

Given the large number of unknowns, and the particular difficulty and risks involved in transferring three quarters of a million very vulnerable claimants to Universal Credit, it seems that DWP may have acted prematurely in seeking such extensive powers. We welcome the Department’s intention to consult representative groups in formulating their arrangements, but consider that those plans should be far more developed before Regulations permitting the full conversion to Universal Credit are put before the House.

The SLSC’s report concluded that the Department should consider splitting Regulations covering the pilot phase from those covering the subsequent period. It said:

Splitting the regulations should not require any significant delay to the DWP’s programme; it would simply create a pause in 2020 to allow the results of the pilot to be evaluated before Parliament gives its agreement for the remainder to be migrated.

15. The Department has argued that it is necessary for Parliament to approve the existing Regulations before the end of this year in order to provide transitional payments to people who are currently receiving Severe Disability Premium (SDP).³⁸ This corrects a problem of the Government’s own making. The SLSC was not persuaded, however, by the Government’s argument that “the various elements [of the Regulations] are ‘inextricably linked’”.

16. The Department is committed to carrying out a “pilot” of “managed migration”, involving 10,000 claimants, from mid-2019 to mid-2020. The Regulations currently before the House require Parliament to agree not just to this pilot, but to the subsequent acceleration of “managed migration”. We recommend, in line with the House of Lords Secondary Legislation Committee, that the Department seek Parliamentary approval only for the 10,000 person “managed migration” pilot and the Severe Disability Premium transitional protections. It should lay further Regulations for the acceleration of “managed migration” only when it has clearly and publicly set out its findings from the pilot and how these will be incorporated into the process.

The process of managed migration

17. The Department plans to require people who are being moved on to UC to make a new claim. Legacy benefit claimants will receive a letter inviting them to make a new application for UC. The letter will also set a “deadline day” at least three months in the

³⁷ Secondary Legislation Scrutiny Committee (Sub-Committee B), [8th Report - Proposed Negative Statutory Instruments under the European Union \(Withdrawal\) Act 2018; Includes 3 Recommendations; Draft Universal Credit \(Managed Migration\) Regulations 2018](#), December 2018

³⁸ See Chapter 2.

future by which they must apply.³⁹ During the intervening notice period claimants will receive communications from the Department reminding them to apply. The Department intends to test using a “variety of communications methods” during the 2019–20 pilot phase and has committed to providing information in accessible formats.⁴⁰ The initial Regulations permitted claimants who missed their deadline day to apply to have their UC award backdated and their transitional protection retained in some, very limited circumstances.⁴¹ Following SSAC’s consultation, the Department agreed to revise the Regulations so that all claimants who miss their deadline day will be able to have their UC award backdated and retain transitional protection if they apply within a month of the deadline.⁴² Witnesses told us this revision is very welcome.⁴³ It is not clear from the Regulations or the Department’s accompanying response to SSAC what steps—if any—the Department will take to contact those claimants who miss their deadline.⁴⁴

18. Mind, the mental health charity, told us that people at risk of failing to apply in time are likely to include the most vulnerable claimants.⁴⁵ If the Department does not manage to identify those people and support them effectively during the migration notice and subsequent “grace period” then they risk losing transitional protection, or being left without any benefit payments at all. Sir Ian Diamond, Chair of SSAC, similarly told us that those most at risk from the Department’s approach to migration were “people who have been on benefits often for some time [and] for whom there was very little safety net of any sort”. He told us it is especially important that they are not “allowed to fall out of the benefit system through a lack of support” during migration.⁴⁶ Given the risks inherent in the Department’s approach—even with improved safeguards—several organisations, including SSAC, questioned the extent to which it constitutes a “managed” migration at all.⁴⁷ Victoria Todd, a member of SSAC, told us that the migration process “needs to minimise the risk on claimants” as they move from legacy benefits to UC. She explained that currently, SSAC believes that risk “should be more on the Department”, especially in making sure that claimants’ legacy benefits do not stop before they have made a successful claim for UC.⁴⁸

19. The Department has said that it will ensure there is flexibility in the process for claimants identified as “vulnerable”. Its response to SSAC said that “agents will check for evidence of complex needs or vulnerability” amongst claimants who have failed to apply for UC before stopping their legacy benefits.⁴⁹ This means that DWP’s ability to support claimants effectively through the migration process will hinge on its ability to

39 The Department’s initial draft Regulations set a one month minimum notice period. This was extended to three months in its revised draft Regulations. See SSAC, [The Draft Universal Credit \(Managed Migration\) Regulations 2018](#), p.8

40 SSAC, [The Draft Universal Credit \(Managed Migration\) Regulations 2018](#), p.9

41 [The Universal Credit \(Transitional Protections\) \(Managed Migration\) Amendments 2018](#), Regulation 45(1)b

42 SSAC, [The Draft Universal Credit \(Managed Migration\) Regulations 2018](#), pp.15–16

43 Child Poverty Action Group ([UCM0004](#)), Trussell Trust ([UCM0008](#)). See also: Mind ([UCR0253](#)), National Housing Federation ([UCM0009](#)), Joseph Rowntree Foundation ([UCM0013](#))

44 SSAC, [The Draft Universal Credit \(Managed Migration\) Regulations 2018](#); see also: [Letter from the Secretary of State to the Committee Chair re. managed migration](#), 13 November 2018

45 Mind ([UCR0253](#))

46 Q915 (Sir Ian Diamond); SSAC, [The Draft Universal Credit \(Managed Migration\) Regulations 2018](#), p.32

47 SSAC, [The Draft Universal Credit \(Managed Migration\) Regulations 2018](#), p.26. See also: Child Poverty Action Group ([UCM0004](#)), Mencap ([UCM0014](#)), National Association of Welfare Rights Advisers ([UCM0016](#))

48 SSAC, [The Draft Universal Credit \(Managed Migration\) Regulations 2018](#), p.26, Q916 (Victoria Todd)

49 SSAC, [The Draft Universal Credit \(Managed Migration\) Regulations 2018](#), p.119

identify vulnerable claimants.⁵⁰ SSAC reported that it was not clear how the Department would go about this task. London Councils and the National Housing Federation both told SSAC that there was a key role for local authorities, housing associations and councils in helping the Department identify vulnerable claimants.⁵¹ Such organisations—as well as support organisations such as Citizens Advice—will often already be aware of claimants’ circumstances and vulnerabilities. SSAC reported “considerable frustration” amongst those organisations, however, that, as late as summer 2018, the Department had “not yet started to engage with them on the plans for the managed migration process”.⁵²

20. The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) found that the Department is not able to systemically identify and monitor the progress of vulnerable people, including those with disabilities or mental health conditions, who have started the UC claim process.⁵³ This is because it does not collect data that would enable it to do so. Our inquiry on *Benefit sanctions* noted, for example, that there is currently no marker for disability or health conditions within UC applications.⁵⁴ The Minister explained that instead of gathering data systematically the Department is working on developing a “text mining” approach, using data entered by Work Coaches into claimant journals to build a picture of claimant vulnerabilities.⁵⁵ Legacy benefit claimants would not be included in this approach, however, since the journal is part of UC. Neither would people who have started a claim but not yet met with their Work Coach. Furthermore, as PAC observed:

This approach is reliant on the text that Work Coaches write in a claimant’s journal, and will not provide the Department with clear data to allow it to measure what challenges certain vulnerable groups face or how well its solutions are working for them.⁵⁶

Witnesses therefore emphasised that simply saying that the migration programme will contain safeguards is not enough.⁵⁷ As Victoria Todd explained: “having that safeguard is one thing”, but “being able to deliver it and having the information they need to be able to do that is entirely another”.⁵⁸

21. So-called “managed” migration will see over a million ESA claimants move onto Universal Credit. Amongst them will be some of the most vulnerable claimants the Department supports: people who have been on benefits for long time, have little in the way of a safety net, and have severe disabilities and health conditions. The Department says that it will safeguard claimants moving from ESA to Universal Credit. But it has provided next to no detail on how it will deliver those safeguards and ensure no one’s benefits are stopped before they have made a successful claim for Universal Credit.

50 NAO, [Rolling out Universal Credit](#), pp.31–32. See also: Trussell Trust ([UCM0008](#)), Child Poverty Action Group ([UCM0004](#)), Low Incomes Tax Reform Group ([UCM0012](#))

51 SSAC, [The Draft Universal Credit \(Managed Migration\) Regulations 2018](#), pp.34–35. See also: Policy in Practice ([UCM0015](#)), Residential Landlords Association ([UCM0005](#))

52 SSAC, [The Draft Universal Credit \(Managed Migration\) Regulations 2018](#), p.34

53 Public Accounts Committee, [Universal Credit](#), Sixty-fourth Report of Session 2017–19, HC 1183, October 2018

54 Work and Pensions Committee, [Benefit sanctions](#), Nineteenth Report of Session 2017–19, HC-955, November 2018, p..28–29

55 [Letter from the Minister for Employment to Committee Chair](#), 11 October 2018

56 Public Accounts Committee, [Universal Credit](#), p.6

57 Low Incomes Tax Reform Group ([UCM0012](#)), National Housing Federation ([UCM0009](#)), Residential Landlords Association ([UCM0005](#)), Child Poverty Action Group ([UCM0004](#)), Mind ([UCR0253/UCM0006](#))

58 Q945 (Victoria Todd)

22. **The Department intends, throughout the process of moving claimants from legacy benefits to Universal Credit, to identify people who are “vulnerable” and provide extra flexibilities and support to them if necessary. But it does not collect data that would enable it to do this consistently, and its engagement with front-line organisations that could help it do so has so far been limited.**

23. We recommend that throughout the pilot stage for managed migration the Department trial different ways of systematically collecting data on claimant vulnerability. Given the lack of data it holds currently, this should begin from the principle that all former ESA claimants who do not manage to claim by the deadline that the Department sets them are vulnerable. We also recommend that the Department immediately begin its engagement with local authorities and support organisations such as Citizens Advice over the design of “managed” migration and their role in it. This should include planning for how support services—such as Universal Support—will be promoted to claimants and funded through managed migration.

24. We recommend the Department build its capacity to identify existing Universal Credit claimants who have potentially complex needs. This might include, for example, introducing a marker for disability and health conditions under Universal Credit. It should not be limited, as the Department’s current “text mining” approach is, to analysing the information that claimants choose to divulge to their Work Coach and that the Work Coach decides to record. We also recommend the Department shares, in response to this report, any internal assessment carried out of its “text mining” exercise.

25. We further recommend that the Department share with the Committee, and with Citizens Advice, the existing data that it holds on claimant vulnerabilities and its plans for developing and further sharing this as managed migration rolls out.

ESA underpayments

26. In March 2018, the NAO published a report on errors in ESA payments dating back to 2011. It found that the Department had underpaid approximately 70,000 people who had transferred to ESA from other benefits (such as Incapacity Benefit). The average underpayment is likely to be £5,000, with the Department owing an estimated total of £340 million to affected claimants.⁵⁹ In July 2018, the former Secretary of State for Work and Pensions told the House that the Department had agreed to pay arrears to all claimants affected, backdated to when they moved on to ESA.⁶⁰ The Department is in the process of identifying those claimants affected, contacting them, and arranging to make back-payments. It plans to complete this work by the end of 2019.

27. The Department is currently in the process of reviewing cases where it has underpaid ESA claimants and correcting them. It plans to complete this process by the end of 2019: six months after it will start to pilot “managed migration”. To avoid creating further complication and confusion amongst claimants, we recommend the Department does not start to migrate ESA claimants until the process of reviewing and correcting ESA underpayments is complete.

59 NAO, Investigating into errors in Employment and Support Allowance, Session 2017–19, HC 837, March 2018

60 [HCWS877](#)

Severe and Enhanced Disability Premia

28. Disabled claimants of some means-tested benefits are eligible to receive top-up payments to help with additional costs associated with a disability or health condition. Under the legacy system disabled people may be able to claim:⁶¹

- a) The Severe Disability Premium (SDP). The SDP is worth £64.30 per week for single person households or £128.60 per week for couples where both partners are eligible. It is paid to severely disabled adults who do not have a paid for carer. This usually means that they live alone, with dependent children, or with another disabled adult.
- b) The Enhanced Disability Premium (EDP). EDP is worth £16.40 per week to single person households and £23.55 per week to couples where at least one person is eligible.

29. Most claimants of SDP and EDP qualify for them by being in receipt of income-related ESA. To be eligible for SDP, claimants must also receive other qualifying benefits: usually either the Personal Independent Payment (PIP) daily living component or the Disability Living Allowance (DLA) care component at the middle or higher rate. EDP claimants must receive either the PIP daily living component at higher rate, or DLA care component at the higher rate.⁶² The Department estimates that there are 500,000 people receiving SDP.⁶³

30. Neither the SDP nor EDP exist under UC. New UC claimants and people who lose their transitional protection due to a change of circumstances will not be able to claim or reclaim SDP or EDP. The Department's 2011 Equality impact assessment of UC stated that its intention in removing SDP and EDP was to "recycle the savings" from abolishing the top-ups. Specifically, it would enable people in the Support Group equivalent in UC to claim an additional amount "that is substantially higher than the current Support component in ESA" (see Box 1). It said that this would offer additional help to "the most severely disabled" people.⁶⁴ The UC "limited capability for work related activity" (LCWRA) component—the equivalent of the ESA Support Group component—is more generous than the benefit it replaces. It will be increased in value by around £38 per week, to be worth £76 in 2018.⁶⁵

61 Gov.uk, [Disability premiums: what you'll get](#), December 2018

62 For a full list of qualifying benefits for all disability premia see Gov.uk, [Disability premiums: eligibility](#), December 2018

63 [WQ170753](#)

64 DWP, [Welfare reform bill: Universal Credit, Equality impact assessment](#), November 2011, p.9

65 Gov.uk, [Universal Credit: what you'll get](#), December 2018

Box 1: ESA and Universal Credit payments for disabled people

People who undergo a WCA receive different amounts in benefits, depending on the outcome of the assessment.

Claimants who are “fit for work” would receive Jobseeker’s Allowance under the legacy system or the “standard allowance” under UC.

Claimants who have “limited capability for work” would be placed in the ESA-Work Related Activity Group (WRAG). This means they have been assessed as unable to work now, but are expected to take some steps to prepare for work. The UC equivalent is the Limited Capability for Work group (LCW).

Claimants who have “limited capability for work-related activity” would be placed in the ESA Support Group or the UC Limited Capability for Work-Related Activity group (LCWRA). They are not expected to take any steps to look for work.

31. We heard that, while the increase in payments for the LCWRA group is welcome, it does not fully address the impact of removing SDP and EDP.⁶⁶ This is because:

- a) While the overall amount paid to a UC claimant in the LCWRA/Support Group is typically higher than it would have been had they claimed ESA with EDP, it is lower if the claimant had received the SDP as well. The Children’s Society supplied us with a worked example, reflecting their particular concerns about the impact of the change on young disabled people (see Box 2).⁶⁷ Citizens Advice explained that “net impact for somebody who would qualify for the SDP and LCWRA element is that they can be over £180 a month worse off than they would have been in the legacy system”.⁶⁸
- b) People in the UC equivalent to the ESA Work-Related Activity Group—the Limited Capability for Work (LCW) will not benefit from the recycled savings. A new, lower rate of ESA—set at the same level as JSA—for new WRAG claimants and their UC equivalent was introduced in April 2017.⁶⁹ The Department’s Equality Impact Assessment of this change stated that it would be offset by greater support to help disabled people in this group into work.⁷⁰ Scope, the disability charity, however pointed out people in receipt of LCW have been assessed by the Department as too unwell to work at present.⁷¹ Those claimants will not benefit from the additional money for LCWRA claimants unless they are subsequently moved to the LCWRA group.⁷²

66 Children’s Society ([UCR0245](#))

67 Children’s Society ([UCR0245](#))

68 Rahman, A., [Universal Credit for single disabled people](#), Citizens Advice, October 2018

69 Gov.uk, [Universal Credit: what you’ll get](#), December 2018

70 DWP, [Welfare reform bill: Universal Credit, Equality impact assessment](#), November 2011, p.9

71 Scope ([DMP0010](#)). See also: Pluss ([DMP0012](#)), RNIB ([DMP0006](#))

72 Scope ([DMP0010](#)). See also Work and Pensions Committee, [Disability employment gap](#)

Box 2: Worked example: entitlements under Universal Credit and the legacy system

Tom is 22 and has applied for ESA under the legacy system as a result of a serious illness. During the assessment phase he receives ESA of £58 (the young person's rate of personal allowance).

Following the assessment, Tom is found to be unfit for work-related activity and is placed in the Support Group. Since he is no longer in the assessment phase, his personal allowance increases to £73. He also receives the Support component of ESA worth £38, and EDP of £16.

Tom also receives the mid-rate care component of DLA. As he lives alone and doesn't have a carer looking after him, he is entitled to receive SDP worth £64 per week. **This gives him an overall ESA entitlement, under the legacy system, of £191 per week.**

Under UC, Tom would receive a total of £134: comprising a standard allowance of £58 plus a Limited Capability for Work-related Activity amount of £76. He would not be able to claim SDP or EDP top-ups. **This is £57 per week less than he would have received under the legacy system** (this would be £42 less if he was 25 or over, since he would receive the over 25 rate of standard allowance under UC).

Source: The Children's Society

32. In a written statement in June 2018, the former Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Esther McVey MP, announced new measures to protect the benefit entitlements of existing SDP recipients.⁷³ These included:

- Ensuring that SDP claimants only move to UC under managed migration. This means that they would be entitled to transitional protection and should not be left worse off at the point of moving over.
- On-going and backdated payment to claimants who have already migrated “naturally” and have lost access to SDP as a consequence, if they would have remained eligible under the legacy system.

Witnesses including the Child Poverty Action Group and Citizens Advice welcomed the steps that the Government has taken to ameliorate the loss of SDP and EDP for existing claimants.⁷⁴ They and others noted, however, that these steps only help existing claimants. New disabled claimants will be entitled to less money than they would have had they applied earlier, under the legacy system.⁷⁵ The value of transitional protection will also erode over time, bringing the value of benefits paid to migrated claimants gradually in line with the lower rates of benefit paid to new claimants.⁷⁶

The impact of removing SDP and EDP

33. The Department explained its rationale for removing SDP and EDP from UC further in response to Parliamentary questions. It said that ,while designing UC, it had designated the disability premia as “payment for care costs rather than daily living costs”. It maintained that these are “not part of Universal Credit”, because “costs for care are picked up by

73 Written statement [HCWS745](#)

74 Child Poverty Action Group ([UCM0004](#)), Citizens Advice ([UCM0014](#)), Children's Society ([UCR0245](#))

75 Child Poverty Action Group ([UCM0004](#)), Citizens Advice ([UCM0014](#)), PCS Union ([UCM0011](#)), Children's Society ([UCR0245](#))

76 [Letter from the Secretary of State to SSAC](#), 5 November 2018

the social care system”.⁷⁷ When asked about the subsequent impact on local authorities, however—which share responsibility for adult social care with the Department of Health and Social Care—the former Minister for Employment explained that “the fact that the severe disability premium does not feature within the structure of Universal Credit (UC) has no financial effect on local authorities”.⁷⁸ This suggests that these costs are not expected to be met through the social care system. Neither the UC impact assessment in 2012 and or Equality impact assessment in 2011 set out in any detail the effects of removing SDP and EDP from UC.⁷⁹

Box 3: What are EDP and SDP used for?

Disability premia are intended to help disabled people with additional living and care costs associated with their health condition. Disability Rights UK, The Children’s Society and Citizens Advice set out some of the ways that claimants reported using the premia:

- Paying expenses such as petrol for relatives and friends who provide ad hoc assistance to them, but do not receive Carers Allowance;
- Paying someone to do chores such as cleaning or cooking, or for buying ready meals;
- Needing to pay someone to do very minor household tasks such as changing a smoke alarm battery or carrying out small repairs;
- Additional transport costs such as taxis or having to pay someone to drive their Motability car if they were too ill to do so;
- Essential personal care: many claimants already had someone to help them get up and dressed, for example, but needed to top up privately the amount of care they received.

Source: [Disability Rights UK, Citizens Advice and the Children’s Society, Holes in the safety net](#)

34. We heard that claimants use SDP and EDP to cover additional costs resulting from their health conditions. These are not necessarily easily separated into “daily living” and “care” expenses (see Box 3). The Children’s Society, Citizens Advice and Disability Rights UK reported that many respondents to their survey work on SDP and EDP were, even with the additional benefit, “clearly very distressed and living very isolated lives”.⁸⁰ 83% of people eligible for SDP reported that a reduction in the amount of benefit they received would result in them needing to cut back on food. 80% said that they would have to reduce spending on heating their homes.⁸¹ This was in spite of those claimants necessarily being in receipt of ESA and PIP, DLA or equivalents—all of which are intended to help cover the additional costs arising from a disability or health condition. Our predecessor Committee heard during its inquiry on the *Disability employment gap* in 2017 that benefit levels for

77 [WQ20446](#)

78 [WQ24311](#)

79 DWP, [Welfare reform bill: Universal Credit, Equality impact assessment](#); DWP, [Universal Credit impact assessment](#), December 2012

80 Disability Rights UK (DRUK), The Children’s Society and Citizens Advice, [Holes in the safety net: the impact of Universal Credit on disabled people and their families](#), December 2012, p.9. See also Children’s Society ([UCR0245](#))

81 DRUK, The Children’s Society, Citizens Advice, [Holes in the safety net](#), p.10

disabled people at that point already fell short of meeting the care and living costs that claimants face—before the option of claiming SDP and EDP was removed, and before the new, lower rate of ESA-WRAG/UC-LCW was introduced for new claimants.⁸²

35. Our predecessor Committee also heard evidence of the effect on work incentives of paying claimants insufficient levels of benefit. Kennedy Scott, a specialist employment support provider, told the Committee that “the greater the poverty a jobseeker is living in, the harder to find sustainable work”. They continued: “Poverty leads to unstable housing, mental health conditions, worsening physical health, debt, and, at best, can provide a major distraction from the business of finding work”.⁸³ The overwhelming majority of other witnesses to that inquiry agreed with this sentiment. With disabled people facing higher living costs than non-disabled people, the effect of reducing the amount they receive in benefit could be to make it less, not more, likely that they will in time return to work.⁸⁴

36. The effect of removing financial support offered by the SDP and EDP may go beyond disabled people directly affected. The Children’s Society explained that the impact on disabled parents with dependent children is likely to be particularly significant. Disabled parents without adult carers tend to manage their care and support needs in a mixture of ways: paying for care, receiving some support from their children, and leaving some jobs undone.⁸⁵ We heard that if financial support to disabled parents without adult carers was reduced, they might respond by further increasing the number of jobs left undone, or by relying to a greater extent on their children to help.⁸⁶ The Children’s Society told us that although the Government argues that children should not be primarily responsible for care, only around a third of households where there are non-disabled children and no non-disabled adults has alternative means of support from other agencies.⁸⁷ In many such households children already take on very substantial care work:

40% of respondents’ children were spending more than 15 hours a week assisting their parents and 60% were spending more than 10 hours a week. This was for all the respondents in the survey who had children of any age. 70% of households with at least one child aged over 10 or over were assisting their disabled parent for more than 10 hours each week.⁸⁸

82 MRC/CSO Social and Public Health Sciences Unit, University of Glasgow ([DEG0073](#)). “Current benefit levels” refers to ESA rates prior to the 2017 reduction. See also: Ben Baumberg Geiger (Q31), Leonard Cheshire Disability ([DEG0039](#)), Breakthrough UK ([DEG0053](#)), Macmillan Cancer Support ([DEG0068](#)), Citizen’s Advice Scotland ([DEG0047](#)), Mencap ([DEG0084](#)), Citizen’s Advice Derbyshire Districts ([DEG0088](#)), Essex County Council ([DEG0051](#)), Advice Nottingham ([DEG0052](#)), Brawn, E., Priced out: ending the financial penalty of disability by 2020, Scope, April 2014.

83 Kennedy Scott ([DEG0056](#))

84 Q31 (David Finch), Disability Benefits Consortium ([DEG0054](#)), Rethink Mental Illness ([DEG0037](#)), RNIB ([DEG0025](#)), Advice Nottingham ([DEG0053](#)), Citizen’s Advice Scotland ([DEG0047](#)), Citizen’s Advice Derbyshire Districts ([DEG0088](#)), Salford Welfare Rights and Debt Advice Service ([DEG0064](#)), MRC/CSO Social and Public Health Sciences Unit, University of Glasgow ([DEG0073](#)), Papworth Trust ([DEG0043](#)), Twist Partnership ([DEG0054](#)), Disability Rights UK ([DEG0041](#)). See also RNIB ([DMP0006](#)), Action for ME ([DMP0005](#)), Mind ([DMP0004](#)), Mencap ([DMP0003](#))

85 Children’s Society ([UCR0245](#))

86 Children’s Society ([UCR0245](#))

87 Children’s Society ([UCR0245](#))

88 DRUK, The Children’s Society, Citizens Advice, [Holes in the safety net](#), p.11

Witnesses told us that the removal of the SDP and EDP, used often to pay for ad hoc care and support, is only likely to increase disabled parents' need to rely on their children. In turn, this could negatively affect the life chances of children of disabled parents.⁸⁹ The Children's Society, Citizens Advice and Disability Rights UK provided a case study:⁹⁰

Ben has been a young carer for his mother, Andrea, for many years, carrying out a range of household tasks as well as helping his mother to get around. He has had to take on a lot of responsibility at an early age and has grown up very fast. The only support/respite he gets is from attending his young carers group and some sport activities he is involved in. Andrea is very concerned about the abolition of the SDP particularly about the impact this loss in financial support would have on her son's quality of life. She worries that without this, Ben would not be able to go to his young carers group and the social activities they can only just afford to take him to. His life would just involve school and carrying out his care responsibilities.

37. We heard suggestions for offsetting the effect of removing the SDP and EDP for new UC claims. The Children's Society, Citizens Advice and Disability Rights UK advocated reinstating the SDP in full under UC for all claimants.⁹¹ Recognising the potentially substantial costs involved, however, the same organisations offered the alternative of introducing a "self-care" component into UC for claimants who would have been eligible for premia in the legacy system. This could be paid at the same rate as the existing UC Carer amount (currently £156 per month).⁹² Afzal Rahman, Senior Policy Researcher at Citizens Advice, told us that this would introduce "parity between people who have a carer who lives with them and those who do not".⁹³ Sam Royston, Director of Policy, Research and Public Affairs at The Children's Society, agreed. He explained that:

The bare minimum [should be] where someone is providing that care, or effectively a disabled person is providing that care for themselves, they are given the same amount of financial support that you would provide to a carer for looking after them so that they can purchase that care in for themselves.⁹⁴

38. Changes to disability benefit top ups—the "disability premia"—under Universal Credit are amongst the most complex differences between Universal Credit and the system it replaces. And they are also one of the areas where disabled people could find themselves with lower levels of benefit under Universal Credit than under legacy. But there is currently a lack of clarity and accessible information on how benefit entitlements differ between the two systems. This makes it very difficult for disabled people, and the organisations that support them, to understand what they will or will not receive under Universal Credit.

39. The Department made a serious error in removing disability premiums from Universal Credit and in failing initially to provide existing recipients of those benefits

89 Children's Society (UCR0245)

90 DRUK, The Children's Society, Citizens Advice, [Holes in the safety net](#), p.10

91 DRUK, The Children's Society, Citizens Advice, [Holes in the safety net](#),

92 DRUK, The Children's Society, Citizens Advice, [Holes in the safety net](#), Children's Society (UCR0245), Mind (UCM0006)

93 Q722 (Afzal Rahman)

94 Q724 (Sam Royston)

with transitional support. The steps it has since taken to correct this are both necessary and very welcome. But transitional protection can still be lost, and protection erodes over time. And the core problem of lower benefit entitlements for new Universal Credit claimants remains. DWP claims that it is recycling savings to offer more support to the “most severely disabled” claimants—those in the Universal Credit equivalent of the ESA Support Group. This still falls short of what they would have been entitled to under the legacy system. And it does nothing to help disabled people in the equivalent of the Work-Related Activity Group. These disabled people have been assessed by the Department as not well enough to work—but they are not covered by the protections that the Department has committed to providing to “severely disabled” people.

40. Disabled people use the Severe and Enhanced Disability Premiums—along with other benefits—for essential living and care costs, in the absence of a paid for carer. Even with this additional money, meeting costs can be a struggle. Removing vital additional support offered by the disability premia from Universal Credit risks disabled people living more isolated lives, relying on unpaid care (including from their own, dependent children), or simply being unable to complete certain basic daily tasks. The Department has carried out no analysis of its own to assess the effects of this change. It nonetheless confidently asserts that costs and consequences will not emerge elsewhere: for example, in the social care system.

41. *We recommend the Department carry out and publish by March 2019 an assessment of the impact of removing the disability premia from Universal Credit for new claimants. It should include in this an assessment of the costs and benefits of introducing a “self-care” amount in Universal Credit, paid at the same rate as the Care component to claimants who would have been eligible for disability premia. It should also include clear worked examples of the financial support that disabled people claiming different benefits (including disability premia and tax credit disability additions) under the legacy system will receive under Universal Credit.*

Support for disabled children

42. Under the legacy system, families with disabled children who are entitled to Disability Living Allowance or PIP can in some circumstances receive additional financial support.⁹⁵ This reflects the additional costs associated with caring for a disabled child. The support is paid via the disability elements of Child Tax Credit. In 2018/19, families with a child receiving DLA could receive an additional £273 per month via the “disabled child element”.⁹⁶ Parents with children on higher-rate DLA or PIP can receive a further £110 per month via the “severely disabled child” element.⁹⁷

43. Under UC, this support is paid via “disability additions”. Children who would have received the higher rate will receive slightly more under UC than they would have under the legacy system.⁹⁸ The only families eligible for this rate, however, will be those with a child with either a severe visual impairment, or who receive the higher-rate of DLA or the enhanced rate of PIP’s daily living component. Families with a child on the lower rates of

95 Children and young people under the age of 16 can only apply for DLA. Young people over the age of 16 have to apply for PIP.

96 HMRC, [Guidance on Tax credits, Child benefit and Guardian’s allowance](#), April 2018

97 Contact a Family, [Universal Credit and cuts to the disabled child element \(research briefing\)](#), April 2016

98 The higher rate Disability addition was set at £383.86 per month in 2017/18. The lower rate is £126.11

either benefit will receive substantially less. Their entitlement is halved to £126 per week for new claimants and those migrating “naturally”. Existing claimants will be eligible for transitional protection if they move via “managed migration”.⁹⁹ Contact a Family, an organisation that supports families with disabled children, cited DWP research on the effect of the change. This showed that at least 100,000 families would be left with a lower entitlement to support under UC than they had under the legacy system once UC is fully rolled out.¹⁰⁰

44. The Children’s Society told us about possible consequences of this decision for people they support. They found:¹⁰¹

- Two thirds of those likely to be affected told The Children’s Society that the reduction would cause them to have to cut back on food. More than half said they would likely get into debt, and one in ten said they would need to move house.
- Lone parents were particularly likely to experience difficulties, since they find it more difficult to make up the shortfall in income by working more hours. In a “few particularly worrying cases” lone parents were concerned that they would “no longer be able to afford to support their child [and] would need to move them into residential care”.
- There was likely to be a consequential impact on local authorities, as most of those affected were not already receiving additional support.

45. As with reductions to the Severe Disability Premium and Enhanced Disability Premium, several organisations called for the reduction in the value of support for disabled children under Universal Credit to be reversed in full.¹⁰² The Children’s Society told us that, should this prove not to be possible, their survey evidence had suggested that families in receipt of the mid-rate care component of DLA were likely to find it particularly challenging to recoup the money they would have received under the legacy system.¹⁰³ This is because their “level of care responsibilities, combined with a high likelihood of high childcare costs in work [...] make it particularly difficult to offset the impact” of the new rate through work. They recommended the Department protect this group by maintaining their disability additions at the current tax credit rates under Universal Credit.¹⁰⁴

46. Changes to support for disabled children under Universal Credit mean that some families with severely disabled children will receive more than they would have under tax credits. But this increase in support comes at a substantial price for other families. Once Universal Credit is fully rolled out, 100,000 families with a disabled child will receive less money than they would have under the legacy benefit system. The consequences—for claimants unable to make up the shortfall, and for local services that need to step in and support them—could be disastrous.

99 Letter from the Children’s Society to the Committee Chair, November 2018

100 Contact a Family, [Universal Credit and cuts to the disabled child element \(research briefing\)](#). See also: Child Poverty Action Group ([UCM0004](#))

101 The Children’s Society ([UCR0245](#))

102 Contact a Family, [Universal Credit and cuts to the disabled child element \(research briefing\)](#), WinVisible ([UCR0226](#)), Letter from the Children’s Society to the Committee Chair, November 2018

103 Letter from the Children’s Society to the Committee Chair, November 2018

104 Letter from the Children’s Society to the Committee Chair, November 2018

47. The Department provides transitional protection to households moving to Universal Credit via “managed migration”. This includes households receiving support for disabled children. But households who migrate “naturally” due to a change of circumstances, or who make a new claim, will receive no such protection.

48. *We recommend the Department provide in response to this report any assessment it has carried out of the impact of the reduction in support for disabled children under Universal Credit. We also recommend the Department adjust eligibility conditions for disability support for children under Universal Credit to include families with children claiming the middle rate care component of Disability Living Allowance. These households are likely to find it particularly difficult to make up the shortfall through work owing to both their care responsibilities, and the high costs of specialist childcare for disabled children. It should also arrange to provide backdated transitional protected to claimants who have already lost money by moving onto Universal Credit through “natural migration”.*

3 Claiming Universal Credit

Online claims

49. The Department forecasts that once UC is fully rolled out it will deliver £100 million per year in efficiency savings, relative to the legacy system.¹⁰⁵ Achieving these savings relies to a large extent on the Department moving away from costly ways of administering claims—such as telephone and in-person support—towards a single digital claim service and digital channels of communication.¹⁰⁶ Claimants should make and manage their claims online, including verifying their identities and costs such as rent, and communicating with their Work Coach via the UC online journal. Both the NAO and the Government’s Infrastructure and Projects Authority agreed that the successful delivery of UC and its promised efficiency gains relies on ensuring that “complex cases and vulnerable claimants” are able to use the automated systems successfully.¹⁰⁷

50. The Department’s research suggests claimants frequently experience difficulties making and managing their claim online.¹⁰⁸ Three quarters (74%) of all (disabled and non-disabled) claimants surveyed made their claim online. Half of those (54%) were able to do so without assistance. A further four in ten (41%) did so with help—either from JCP (20%) or another source (21%). Claimants with long-term health conditions were more likely to experience difficulties than those without. 79% of claimants with no health conditions were able to register online (with or without help), compared to 69% of claimants with health conditions. Of disabled claimants who did register online, over half (52%) needed assistance. People with long-term health conditions were also more likely than the wider UC caseload to report needing more help than they received in setting up their claim, and more likely to say that they required ongoing support with managing their claim.¹⁰⁹

51. The Department provides some help for claimants who need additional support setting up their claims. Its Universal Support offer, to be delivered by Citizens Advice from 2019–20, currently includes a single session of digital support for each claimant, intended to help them make their claim online.¹¹⁰ Our report on *Universal Support* concluded that this is insufficient to address the challenges that many claimants face in using UC’s digital systems. We heard it is especially likely to fall short for groups of claimants with lower levels of digital literacy—such as some disabled people.¹¹¹ The Department acknowledged this problem in its guidance to Universal Support providers. This states that if claimants have “no or extremely low IT skills”, it may be “appropriate to signpost them to existing locally available opportunities (for example Adult Education)”. The guidance further states that: “Claimants who cannot and may never be able to self-serve online [...] should be directed to the Universal Credit Service Centre who will provide/arrange the

105 NAO, [Rolling out Universal Credit](#), p.13

106 Ibid.

107 Ibid.; Infrastructure and Projects Authority, UC Health Check, September 2016, p.3, para 5.1.2 and para 5.4.2

108 DWP, [Universal Credit full service claimant survey](#), June 2018, pp.30–36

109 DWP, [Universal Credit full service claimant survey](#), p.37

110 DWP, [Press release: Citizens Advice to provide support to Universal Credit claimants](#), October 2018. For full details of the existing Universal Support offer as of December 2018, see Work and Pensions Committee, [Universal Support](#).

111 Work and Pensions Committee, [Universal Support](#), pp.11–12

appropriate support for the person to make the Universal Credit claim and the on-going administration of their claim”.¹¹² This relies on claimants disclosing their circumstances, making a request for alternative support, and calling the Service Centre to arrange it.

52. Witnesses to this inquiry repeated that there is a need for more intensive, systematic support for disabled people to make and manage their UC claims online.¹¹³ But we also heard that the Department needs to offer suitable alternatives to the digital service for claimants who will never be able to use it independently and successfully. Daphne Hall, Vice Chair of the National Association of Welfare Rights Advisers (NAWRA), explained that “there are some people who are never going to be able to make an online claim”.¹¹⁴ Rob Holland, a co-Chair of the Disability Benefits Consortium and Public Affairs Manager at Mencap, gave the example of people with learning difficulties:

People with learning difficulties, for example, might need support from a family member, a carer or support worker, which is going to be absolutely critical. If you are lucky enough to have that support you might be able to complete the application but if you don't have that support you are reliant on either contacting the UC helpline and them completing it for you or going to a third-sector agency that might be able to help you.¹¹⁵

Gemma Hope, Director of Policy, Marketing and Communications at Shaw Trust, a specialist employment support provider, therefore told us that although the Government is “committed to digital by default [...] it can't be a default for everyone”.¹¹⁶ Sir Ian Diamond, Chair of the Social Security Advisory Committee, told us that in these situations the Department needs to proactively provide non-digital support to claimants. This should include the option of in-person home visits and freephone telephone appointments for those claimants who would struggle to attend meetings at JCP.¹¹⁷

53. The Government is committed to a digital by default process for Universal Credit, but digital cannot work for everyone. Some disabled claimants will never be able to use the online system. They will require flexible, intensive support to manage the transition to Universal Credit. The Department's current approach to providing this relies on claimants disclosing that they need alternative support, and approaching the Universal Credit service centre to request it. Mirroring the Department's approach to “managed” migration, the onus and the risk of failing to make or maintain a claim altogether is placed largely on the claimant.

54. We recommend that the Department permits Universal Support providers to offer proactively on-going support to claimants who cannot use the online system, and provides them with the funding necessary to deliver this. This must take into account the differing needs of disabled people, with home visits and freephone telephone support made available where necessary. The Department should proactively ensure that claimants who struggle with the digital service do not miss out on vital communications. It could, for example, ask for a second email address (for a support worker or family member) for UC-related notifications to make sure they do not go unnoticed or unanswered. The

112 DWP, [Universal Support 2018/19 guidance](#), September 2018

113 Citizens Advice Scotland (UCM0010)

114 Q673 (Daphne Hall)

115 Q667 (Rob Holland)

116 Q676 (Gemma Hope). See also Shaw Trust ([UCR0255](#)), Mind ([UCR0253](#))

117 Q952 (Sir Ian Diamond). See also Mind ([UCR0253](#))

Department must also help providers to proactively identify and contact Universal Credit claimants who might require such help: for example, through early sharing on data on vulnerable claimants. We discuss this point further in Paragraph 22.

Assistive technology

55. We heard that the Department could make it much easier for disabled people to use its existing systems. Assistive technology is technology designed to support and enhance the independence of people with health conditions. It can help them do daily tasks and participate more fully in society and employment. Where once assistive technology usually meant expensive, specialist equipment, it is now increasingly low-cost or free and integrated as standard with devices such as computers, tablets and laptops.¹¹⁸ We heard, however, that many disabled people do not own devices that, with the benefit of assistive technology such as screen readers or magnification software, could help them use UC's online systems. They are therefore reliant on what is provided for public use in JCP.¹¹⁹

56. The Department told us that across the JCP network it has “over 8,000” computers and devices that have “standard assistive functionality available with the user being able to configure keyboard and mouse settings, use a magnifier function, sticky keys, high contrast and an on screen keyboard”.¹²⁰ These are spread across around 700 JCP offices. It told us it is also “undertaking a programme of upgrading the current devices” and is “exploring opportunities to increase the availability of user-specific or individually configured assistive technology”.¹²¹ Witnesses told us, however, that the availability of assistive technology in JCP is often poor, and its functionality limited. NAWRA's Daphne Hall said that the majority of computers available in JCP are “bog standard”: they “generally don't have screen readers or anything like that”. She also highlighted substantial variation between Jobcentres, whereby some flagship sites have good access to a range of helpful technology and others have very little.¹²²

57. More fundamentally, witnesses reported that the UC online service is not optimally configured so that disabled people can use it. For example, Gemma Hope told us that, in Shaw Trust's experience, incompatibility with basic assistive technology can be a problem. She said, for example, that the system “does not always work very well with screen readers”, presenting a barrier to people with visual impairments being able to make and manage their claim successfully.¹²³

58. Assistive technology could help disabled people use Universal Credit's systems independently. This is good for disabled claimants, who will be able to manage their claim and work with Universal Credit on the same basis as non-disabled claimants. It is also good for the Department, since Universal Credit's efficiency savings rely on claimants using the digital system wherever possible. But we heard that the availability and quality of assistive technology in Jobcentre Plus is too often patchy and poor. We recommend the Department set minimum standards for the availability of assistive technology across the JCP network, in consultation with disabled people and the organisations who support them.

118 Work and Pensions Committee, [Assistive technology](#)

119 Q666–668 (Gemma Hope and Daphne Hall)

120 [WQ186221](#)

121 *Ibid.*

122 Q668 (Daphne Hall). See also RNIB ([DMP0006](#))

123 Q676 (Gemma Hope). See also Shaw Trust ([UCR0255](#))

59. Disabled people are one of the largest claimant groups that Universal Credit will support. It is entirely unacceptable that, in building the Universal Credit online service, the Department has failed to ensure it is compatible with some of the most basic assistive technologies that those claimants might use. *We recommend the Department reviews and reforms the Universal Credit online system to ensure it is compatible with different forms of assistive technology, consulting with disabled people and the organisations that support them to ensure an appropriate standard. It should not begin moving disabled people to Universal Credit via managed migration until it has completed this work.*

Claimants with terminal illness

60. Certain people can apply for UC under the Department’s Special Rules for Terminal Illness (SRTI). This means they bypass the standard UC application process and instead use a simplified process that allows them to receive their benefit more quickly.¹²⁴ To use the SRTI claimants must provide a document called a DS1500. This is issued by doctors if the person is expected to live for less than six months.¹²⁵

61. Witnesses told us that it would be preferable for some claimants with degenerative illnesses to be able to access UC via the SRTI. They are prevented from doing so, however, because at the point of application they are expected to live for longer than six months. Medical staff therefore will not issue a DS1500 form. The Motor Neurone Disease (MND) Association explained that this is a particular problem for people who they support. People with MND frequently have to leave work soon after diagnosis. In many cases this will also be the first point at which they come to need support from the benefit system.¹²⁶ The MND Association also told us that MND can progress unpredictably. GPs are, therefore, often hesitant to state that someone only has six months to live: owing both to this unpredictability and the distress that such a declaration might cause someone with MND.¹²⁷ Despite having a terminal and rapidly progressive illness, people who cannot obtain a DS1500 have to claim UC via the standard application process. Policy in Practice, a consultancy, pointed out that this can involve steps such as going through a UC “Claimant Commitment” interview to agree conditions for receipt of UC.¹²⁸ They described this as “difficult and inappropriate” for people living with terminal illness.¹²⁹

62. There are different definitions of “terminal illness” used in different pieces of social security legislation. We heard adopting one of these might provide a more appropriate basis for determining eligibility for the SRTI than the Department’s current approach. The MND Association pointed out that the Social Security Act (Scotland) 2018, for example, allows people to access disability assistance if:¹³⁰

124 DWP, [The benefits system: a short guide for GPs](http://policyinpractice.co.uk/the-implications-of-universal-credit-on-people-living-with-motor-neurone-disease/), March 2018, p.17 Policy in Practice <http://policyinpractice.co.uk/the-implications-of-universal-credit-on-people-living-with-motor-neurone-disease/>

125 Ibid.

126 MND Association ([UCR0270](http://www.mnda.org.uk/UCR0270))

127 MND Association, [Briefing: Access to Welfare \(Terminal illness definition\) Bill](http://www.mnda.org.uk/Briefing:Access-to-Welfare-(Terminal-illness-definition)-Bill), June 2018

128 Policy in Practice and the MND Association, [The implications of Universal Credit for people living with motor neurone disease](http://www.policyinpractice.co.uk/the-implications-of-universal-credit-for-people-living-with-motor-neurone-disease), 2018. See Chapter 4 on claimant commitments.

129 Policy in Practice (blog), [The implications of Universal Credit for people living with motor neurone disease](http://www.policyinpractice.co.uk/the-implications-of-universal-credit-for-people-living-with-motor-neurone-disease), June 2018

130 “Disability assistance” includes PIP, DLA and Attendance Allowance. These benefits are paid in Scotland by Social Security Scotland rather than by DWP. MND Association, [Briefing: Access to Welfare \(Terminal illness definition\) Bill](http://www.mnda.org.uk/Briefing:Access-to-Welfare-(Terminal-illness-definition)-Bill), June 2018 and MND Association ([UCR0270](http://www.mnda.org.uk/UCR0270))

It is the clinical judgement of a registered medical practitioner that the individual has a progressive disease that can reasonably be expected to cause the individual's death.¹³¹

This diverges from UC's requirement that the claimant should be expected to live less than six months, and instead makes identifying terminal illness contingent on medical professionals' judgements. We heard that adopting this approach under UC could make claiming that benefit substantially easier and less stressful for claimants with terminal illness.¹³² This is the approach proposed in the Access to Welfare (Terminal Illness Definition) Bill, due to receive its second reading in January 2019.¹³³

63. The MND Association further told us that even obtaining an DS15000 does not guarantee being able to claim UC under SRTI rules. They had experienced difficulties getting DS15000 forms submitted by third parties accepted by the Department. This is because Universal Credit requires "explicit consent" to allow a third party to act on behalf of a claimant—unlike the legacy system where "implicit consent" was assumed. UC claimants have to explicitly tell DWP that a support organisation or individual is authorised to act on their behalf. This could mean confronting the fact that they only have six months left to live before they are ready to do so.¹³⁴ The MND Association further explained that giving consent can be particularly difficult for people they support because of the effects of their condition:¹³⁵

As part of the severely disabling physical symptoms, [MND] can limit a person's ability to communicate. MND can affect someone's ability to breathe, speak and some people also experience changes to their thinking and behaviour; a small number of people with MND may develop frontotemporal dementia.

Accordingly they recommended that the Department establish a process whereby DS1500 forms can be submitted by third parties, without the need for the explicit consent of the claimant.¹³⁶

64. Being diagnosed with terminal illness is already difficult and distressing. The Department should do all in its power not to exacerbate this distress. This includes making it as simple and quick as possible for people with a terminal diagnosis to claim benefits that often provide a vital backstop once work is no longer an option. The process for claiming Universal Credit under the Special Rules for Terminal Illness (SRTI) is failing some claimants when they need support most. The strict requirement for claimants to have under six months to live is unnecessarily restrictive. And the process for giving consent to another individual or organisation to act on their behalf is unworkable for people with some conditions. The Department must introduce a more humane approach.

131 [Social Security \(Scotland\) Act 2018](#), Schedule 5.1(2)

132 MND Association ([UCR0270](#))

133 Access to Welfare (Terminal Illness Definition) Bill 2017–19

134 MND Association ([UCR0270](#))

135 MND Association ([UCR0270](#))

136 MND Association ([UCR0270](#))

65. *We recommend the Department adopt the approach taken in the Social Security Act (Scotland) 2018 in determining who can use the SRTI. This would permit claimants to use the SRTI if:*

“It is the clinical judgement of a registered medical practitioner that the individual has a progressive disease that can reasonably be expected to cause the individual’s death”.

We also recommend the Department allow evidence for SRTI to be submitted by third parties, without the need for explicit consent.

Disabled students

66. Under the legacy system, disabled people in full time education can apply for ESA. To be eligible they must also be in receipt of either the Personal Independence Payment (PIP) or its predecessor, DLA, and must be able to demonstrate that they have limited capability for work. Disability Rights UK explained that, for full time students only, being in receipt of PIP or DLA in itself is taken as evidence of limited capability for work. This entitles disabled students to claim ESA at the lower, WRAG rate during their studies.¹³⁷ The Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland noted that this then acts as a passport to other benefits, including housing benefit.¹³⁸ Disability Rights UK told us that this additional financial support can be vital in enabling young disabled people to participate in education on an equal footing to their non-disabled peers.¹³⁹

Although income-related ESA is often paid at low levels during term-time—as it can act as a means-tested top-up to student loans—it can be particularly useful during summer vacations, when disabled students are often unable to secure employment. And claiming housing benefit is often the only way a disabled student can move away from home for the first time. In some cases, the course a disabled student may want to pursue at a college and university that is suitable for example in terms of accessibility, may not be available to them locally.

So ESA helps towards the extra costs of a student’s disability and housing benefit gives disabled students potential access to educational institutions nationwide.

67. To claim UC, disabled students in full time education must meet two requirements. They need to be in receipt of PIP or DLA. They also need to be able to demonstrate limited capability for work: but unlike in the legacy system, simply being in receipt of PIP or DLA is not sufficient evidence. Instead they have to have undergone a Work Capability Assessment (WCA).¹⁴⁰ The Child Poverty Action Group reported that in practice these requirements mean that disabled students who are new claimants are not able to claim UC. Their UC claims are rejected because they do not hold the required proof of limited capability for work from the outset of their application (having not completed the Work Capability Assessment). But they cannot be referred for a WCA because they do not have

137 DRUK ([UCR0249](#)). Disabled students only have to attend a Work Capability Assessment if they want to determine whether they are also eligible for the higher, Support Group payment.

138 Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland, [Universal Credit and disabled students](#), May 2018

139 DRUK ([UCR0249](#))

140 UC 2013 Regs 14 (b) and Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland, [Universal Credit and disabled students](#)

an active UC claim.¹⁴¹ Disability Rights UK explained that students are rarely entitled to claim UC on other grounds because “they cannot actively seek work [and] are not lone parents with young children or carers”. CPAG concluded that this means there are effectively two different tiers of eligibility for UC: disabled students who have already completed a WCA and are within their review timeframe are able to claim it, but new claimants are not. Disability Rights UK referred to the current arrangements as a “Catch 22” situation.¹⁴²

68. Witnesses suggested ways of addressing this problem. Disability Rights UK and the Child Poverty Action Group suggested that if the Department is determined that disabled students follow the same process as other UC applicants, it could place applications for UC from disabled students on “hold” until they have completed a WCA. Students could then go back to the Department and re-open their application, with the required proof. The Child Poverty Action Group said that “assessment of limited capability for work is the DWP’s responsibility, so [DWP] should refer the claimant for a WCA”.¹⁴³ The Department told Disability Rights UK, however, that this was not possible because disabled students do not meet the entitlement conditions for Universal Credit. Referring to Regulation 41 of the Universal Credit Regulations 2013, it said:¹⁴⁴

A person who meets entitlement conditions for Universal Credit is referred for a Work Capability Assessment where appropriate. As the Work Capability Assessment is not part of determining whether a person is entitled to Universal Credit, determining entitlement to Universal Credit cannot be delayed until a person has had a Work Capability Assessment.

69. As an alternative, Disability Rights UK recommended amending Schedule 8 of the Universal Credit Regulations 2013, which set out the circumstances in which UC claimants should be treated as having limited capability for work. If claimants undertaking a course of education and in receipt of PIP or DLA were added to this list then they could be treated as having limited capability for work, allowing them to begin a claim for the ESA equivalent.¹⁴⁵ This would be administratively simple: it would effectively mirror arrangements under the legacy system, requiring claimants to undergo a WCA only if they wanted to determine eligibility for the higher, support group element. Disability Rights UK were unable to estimate how much this approach would cost because the Department does not hold data on how many students have been awarded ESA. They told us, however, that the number of disabled students receiving ESA at any one time “is likely to be very low”. They concluded it was “difficult to see how the effective exclusion of disabled students could be justified on public purse cost grounds”.¹⁴⁶

70. We heard some evidence that top-ups enabling disabled students to meet the increased costs of education resulting from a health condition should not come from UC or DWP’s budget at all, but from the Department for Education (DfE).¹⁴⁷ Child Poverty Action Group’s Daniel Norris suggested that there are “positives to supplying all of the payments

141 CPAG, [Universal Credit and disabled students](#), December 2017; DRUK ([UCR0249](#))

142 DRUK ([UCR0249](#))

143 CPAG, [Universal Credit and disabled students](#), December 2017

144 DRUK ([UCR0249](#))

145 DRUK, [Letter to the Minister for Employment](#), 21 June 2017 and DRUK ([UCR0249](#))

146 DRUK ([UCR0249](#))

147 Q701–708

or support for disabled students” via DfE.¹⁴⁸ This would, for example, avoid disabled students having to go through the protracted UC application process, and could reduce the stigma associated with claiming additional support. He explained, however, that it was difficult to see how this would work in practice at the moment because “the existing student financial system does not have a particularly sophisticated or all-encompassing assessment of disability” for the discretionary support that is available.¹⁴⁹ DWP, by contrast, “already has this procedure in place through Work Capability Assessments”. He felt it might be possible for the two Departments to work more closely together on this issue in the longer term: for example, by carrying out assessments under DWP and making payment via DfE.¹⁵⁰

71. The Government wants to improve the employment rates of disabled people. It should be doing all it can to support disabled people to reach their potential: including accessing higher and further education. Disabled students who try to claim Universal Credit for the first time find themselves in a catch-22 situation. Their claims are refused because they cannot demonstrate limited capability for work via a Work Capability Assessment (WCA). But they cannot be referred for an assessment unless their claim is accepted. Meanwhile disabled students who have a current WCA decision are able to claim Universal Credit as they would have claimed ESA. The result is an incoherent two-tier system which leaves some disabled students unable to access support that is vital for them to continue their studies and to which they are entitled. *We recommend that DWP replicate under UC arrangements under the legacy system for disabled students. This would mean taking receipt of PIP or DLA as evidence of Limited Capability to Work, allowing them to open a UC claim. Students who wanted to claim the higher, Limited Capability for Work-Related Activity amount, would then have to undergo a WCA.*

72. There are bigger questions to ask about which department should fund additional support for disabled students and how eligibility should be determined. We have heard repeatedly, however, that existing benefits and entitlements for disabled people only go part of the way to meeting the increased costs resulting from their conditions. The introduction of Universal Credit may provide a useful opportunity to consider those questions—but it is important that disabled people do not lose out on support in the meantime. *We recommend the Department for Education and DWP convene a joint working group of organisations that support disabled students on financial support for those students, with a view to determining where funding should come from and how eligibility should be assessed.*

148 Q707 (Daniel Norris)

149 *Ibid.*

150 *Ibid.*

4 Support in Jobcentre Plus

Conditionality and claimant commitments

73. As in the legacy system, some Universal Credit claimants are required to take steps towards work as a condition of receiving the benefit. This is referred to as “conditionality”. The level and intensity of conditionality varies according to the claimant’s circumstances. Failure to meet conditionality requirements can result in claimants receiving a sanction. This means that their benefits are stopped or reduced for a fixed period of time. Our detailed conclusions and recommendations on setting claimant conditionality are set out in our recent report on *Benefit sanctions*.¹⁵¹

74. UC claimants who have a health condition that they consider affects their ability to work, or look for work, are required to declare it at the outset of their claim. They may then be required to attend a Work Capability Assessment (WCA): a functional assessment of their capacity to work. JCP Work Coaches use the outcome of the WCA to determine which conditionality group claimants are placed in:¹⁵²

- a) Claimants assessed as “fit for work” are subject to “full conditionality” or “all work related requirements”. They are required to undertake intensive searches for work.
- b) Claimants assessed as having “limited capability to work” (LCW) now but who are expected to be able to look for work in future are placed in the “work preparation” group. They are expected to take steps to prepare for work, but not to actively search for work. This is the equivalent of the ESA-Work Related Activity Group (WRAG) in the legacy system.
- c) Claimants assessed as having “limited capability to work” *and* “limited capability for work related activity” (LCWRA) are not subject to any conditions, and not expected to take any steps to look for or prepare for work. This is the equivalent of the ESA Support group.

75. Most UC applicants are required to attend a meeting with their Work Coach at the outset of their claim to discuss and agree the conditions attached to their receipt of benefits. The resulting agreement is called a “Claimant Commitment”.¹⁵³ The appointment at JCP must be arranged within seven days of applying for UC. Failure to do this means the application is terminated. The wait for a WCA is often much longer, however.¹⁵⁴ In the interim period, Work Coaches have to set conditionality based on their understanding of the claimant’s health condition, how it affects their ability to work, and any other extenuating circumstances (such as having young children). This differs from the legacy system where claimants do not have any conditionality set while they are waiting for a WCA.¹⁵⁵

151 Work and Pensions Committee, [Benefit sanctions, November 2018](#)

152 See Box 1, ESA and Universal Credit payments for disabled people and Work and Pensions Committee, [Benefit sanctions, p.7](#)

153 Work and Pensions Committee, [Benefit sanctions, p.31](#)

154 See Chapter 2

155 Work and Pensions Committee, [Benefit sanctions, p.31](#)

76. The Department told us that Claimant Commitments should reflect individual claimants' needs and circumstances, irrespective of whether a WCA has already taken place. Work Coaches can, for example, choose not to apply any conditionality while a claimant is waiting for a WCA if they feel that the effects of a health condition are sufficient to prevent a claimant from taking steps towards work.¹⁵⁶ The NAO, citing the Department's own research, reported that Work Coaches frequently struggle to identify claimant support needs accurately. This can be because:¹⁵⁷

- a) Work Coaches lack the time, knowledge and ability to identify claimants who need additional support;
- b) They lack the confidence to apply processes flexibly and to put in place appropriate adjustments;
- c) They feel overwhelmed by the volume of claimants who report health problems—even though the vast majority of current UC claimants do not have health conditions that would be assessed via the WCA as preventing them from working.¹⁵⁸

Mencap's Rob Holland echoed these concerns. He explained that there is often a large gap between how agreeing interim Claimant Commitments should work, and what happens in practice:¹⁵⁹

How it should work with these interim Claimant Commitments is that you should be sitting down with the Work Coach and talking through what might be reasonable for you to do in the timeframe, how many applications you should be putting in, and so on. Instead, we have had cases where people have been presented with a generic Claimant Commitment and said, "Well, you need to really agree this in order to progress your application" and people agreeing that, not necessarily understanding what they are signing up to and being sanctioned following that.

77. Gemma Hope from Shaw Trust, a specialist disability employment support provider, told us that requiring people to take steps towards work that are inappropriate or unmanageable too early on in their claim can erode trust between claimants, Work Coaches and other JCP support providers from the outset.¹⁶⁰ Work Coaches then "don't have enough time to build that relationship and try to regain that trust" further down the line. She explained that imposing conditionality prior to the WCA can be counterproductive, concluding that "our advice would be don't, because we can't see how it would really support people moving into work".¹⁶¹ NAWRA's Daphne Hall emphasised that even if claimants are not sanctioned as a result of inappropriate conditionality, "the stress that is put on people is overwhelming".¹⁶² This can be unhelpful in aiding a return

156 Q21 (Esther McVey), Q59 (James Wolfe)

157 NAO, [Rolling out Universal Credit](#), p.31

158 See Chapter 2 on UC caseloads.

159 Q683 (Rob Holland)

160 Q683 (Gemma Hope)

161 *Ibid.*

162 Q684 (Daphne Hall)

to work compared with a lighter touch, voluntary approach.¹⁶³ She, and others, suggested that there should be no conditionality for people awaiting the WCA: “it should just be about support, support, support, until we know where we are”.¹⁶⁴

78. Under the legacy system, claimants awaiting a Work Capability Assessment cannot have conditionality applied to them. This is a vital safeguard. It protects claimants from having to meet conditions that may be unmanageable and inappropriate. It also helps avoid souring the relationship between claimants and their Work Coaches from the outset. But no such safeguard exists under Universal Credit. We recommend that the Department immediately amend its guidance to Work Coaches to state that Universal Credit claimants who are awaiting a Work Capability Assessment and who can present a valid Fit Note stating that they are not able to work should not be subject to any conditionality. We set out this recommendation and the evidence underpinning it in greater detail in our recent report on Benefit sanctions.¹⁶⁵

Employment support for disabled people

79. Disabled people who are claiming UC or a legacy benefit can access a range of support to help them prepare for a return to work. This includes:

- a) The Work and Health Programme (WHP). The WHP is delivered by external contactors. It replaces the previous Work Programme and the Work Choice specialist disability employment support scheme.¹⁶⁶
- b) Ongoing support from their Work Coach. The Department intends for UC claimants, as far as possible, to have the same Work Coach for the duration of their claim.¹⁶⁷ It hopes this will enable them to build an understanding of claimants’ specific circumstances and signpost or refer them additional discretionary employment support.
- c) Discretionary, ad-hoc support available via Work Coaches. Work Coaches can select from a range of external services via the JCP District Provision Tool, which lists available local employment support, and refer claimants to this support as appropriate.

Work Coaches are generalists: they provide support to mixed caseloads of claimants, and do not usually specialise in supporting particular groups (such as disabled people).¹⁶⁸ As such, Jobcentre Plus also employs disability specialists. They include:

- a) Disability Employment Advisers (DEAs). DEAs do not work directly with disabled claimants. Their role is to act as a “coach to the Work Coach”, providing a source of specialist advice.¹⁶⁹
- b) Community Partners. These are people with personal and professional experience of disability. Their role is to provide first-hand insight into the barriers that

163 Mind ([ANC0064](#)), CPAG ([ANC0056](#)), DRUK ([ANC0054](#))

164 Q686 (Daphne Hall)

165 Work and Pensions Committee, [Benefit sanctions](#)

166 Powell, A. [Work and Health Programme](#), House of Commons Library briefing no. 7845, January 2018

167 Q141 (Damian Hinds), DWP ([FJP0064](#))

168 Q141 (Damian Hinds)

169 Q140 (Penny Mordaunt)

disabled people face in moving into and staying in work; to use local knowledge to identify sources of tailored local employment support, and to work with local employers on improving the recruitment and retention of disabled people.¹⁷⁰

Work and Health Programme

80. The WHP was rolled out in the North of England and Wales in late 2017. It will become available across the rest of England during 2018. The programme is available to disabled claimants, the long-term unemployed, and some other groups who face disadvantages in the labour market (such as ex-offenders).¹⁷¹ It is delivered by external contractors.¹⁷² JCP's Work Coaches are responsible for identifying claimants within their caseloads who could benefit from the kind of provision that the WHP offers and referring them to providers.

81. The WHP is in its very early stages. In November 2018 the Department published its first data on WHP starts, showing that 24,720 people had started on the programme up to August 2018.¹⁷³ ERSA, the industry body for employment support providers, cautioned that there is unlikely to be any "meaningful" data on employment outcomes available for some time. This is because WHP providers can offer up to 15 months of out-of-work support and six months for those who move into work. Even the very first participants will not yet have received this duration of support.¹⁷⁴ The Minister, assured us, however, that the programme is rolling out broadly as the Department expects. She said that "anecdotally in terms of referrals and how it is working I am getting good feedback that the profile that we would expect into those contracts is broadly on track".¹⁷⁵

82. We heard, however, that providers had so far seen somewhat lower referral rates to WHP than expected. ERSA told us that "the success of the Work and Health Programme will be squarely dependent on the ability of Jobcentre Plus" to identify and refer claimants who could benefit from, and are eligible for the programme.¹⁷⁶ We heard that Work Coaches are struggling to identify and refer claimants consistently.¹⁷⁷ Shaw Trust told us that this can be partly attributed to WHP being a new programme and taking some time to bed in. They explained that low referral rates could be partially addressed through better training for Work Coaches and improving awareness of the existence of the programme amongst JCP staff and claimants alike.¹⁷⁸

83. Shaw Trust also explained, however, that in some areas it is the rollout of Universal Credit itself that is creating a barrier to referrals. Gemma Hope told us that the UC rollout is taking up so much Work Coach time that Coaches are "maxed out in capacity so they don't have time to learn about the Work and Health Programme and the referral process to it".¹⁷⁹ Concurrently, the former, much larger contracted-out employment support programmes that WHP replaces (the Work Programme and Work Choice) have been phased out, bringing claimants who might otherwise have been referred to those

170 DWP and DH, [Improving lives: the future of work, health and disability](#), p.17–18, Q16 (Sarah Newton)

171 Powell, A. [Work and Health Programme](#)

172 The WHP contractors are Shaw Trust, Pluss, Reed in Partnership, Ingeus and Remploy. See Powell, A. [Work and Health Programme](#)

173 DWP, [Work and Health Programme statistics](#), November 2018

174 ERSA (DMP0009). See also Pluss ([DMP0012](#))

175 Q15 (Sarah Newton)

176 ERSA ([DMP0009](#))

177 Q689–690

178 Q692 (Shaw Trust)

179 Q689 (Gemma Hope)

programmes back into JCP for support.¹⁸⁰ This means that Work Coaches have to assume greater responsibility for supporting claimants with a range of different needs, potentially placing substantial additional demands on their time. At the same time, the Department expects Work Coach caseloads to increase as UC rolls out: from 85 claimants per Work Coach in March 2018, to 373 by 2024–25.¹⁸¹

84. The Department launched the Work and Health Programme (WHP) at a time of considerable change in Jobcentre Plus. The roll-out of Universal Credit itself, and the decision to scale down externally delivered employment support, both place substantial new demands on Work Coaches. The success of the WHP and its contribution to closing the disability employment gap depends squarely on Work Coaches identifying and referring people who could benefit from the programme. But competing demands on Work Coach time bring the risk of this slipping down their agendas, and pressure on them will only increase at the UC rollout progresses. We recommend the Department ensure all Work Coaches undertake specific training on the WHP and its referral process. It should outline its plans for rolling out this training to Work Coaches in response to this Report. We also recommend the Department launch a publicity campaign for the programme in JCP. This should be aimed at both Work Coaches and claimants themselves.

Work Coaches, Disability Employment Advisers and Community Partners

85. The former Minister for Employment, Rt Hon Damian Hinds MP, told our predecessor Committee that the Department had chosen a generalist, mixed-caseload model for its front-line Work Coaches while recognising that “there is always going to be a debate about whether your frontline staff should be specialists in one area or [...] generalists able to cover a range of areas”.¹⁸² Throughout successive inquiries, we have heard repeatedly that Work Coaches are expected to perform a range of tasks that require in-depth understanding of disability and of the barriers to employment that can accompany a health condition. Selecting appropriate discretionary support or knowing when the WHP might be appropriate, coaching, and setting conditionality all require a level of expertise.¹⁸³ The Department told us that while all Work Coaches undergo basic training on disability, this expertise is provided predominantly by DEAs and Community Partners.¹⁸⁴

86. The Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work emphasised that Disability Employment Advisers (DEAs) and Community Partners have a “really important role to play” in providing a source of specialist support.¹⁸⁵ James Wolfe, the Department’s Director for Disability Employment, explained that “every Work Coach has the opportunity to draw on the expertise” of specialist staff. He concluded this was a “better model to provide [...] personalised support” than using front-line specialists because “because people have complicated lives that have complex needs, and their disability is just one part of that overall picture”.¹⁸⁶

180 Work and Pensions Committee, [The future of Jobcentre Plus](#), Second Report of Session 2016–17, HC-57, November 2017, p.7

181 NAO, [Rolling out Universal Credit](#), p.4

182 Q141 (Damian Hinds)

183 Work and Pensions Committee, [The future of Jobcentre Plus](#) and [Disability employment gap](#)

184 Work and Pensions Committee, [Disability employment gap](#), pp.17–18

185 Q19 (Sarah Newton)

186 Q21 (James Wolfe)

87. The Department announced plans to introduce Community Partners, and to expand the number of DEAs, in its 2017 *Work, health and disability* green paper. It planned to recruit 300 new DEAs, taking the total to over 500, and 200 Community Partners. Prior to that announcement the number of DEAs had been in decline (see Table 1).¹⁸⁷ As of September 2018 the Department had 458 DEAs in post: a ratio of one DEA to every 28 claimants. The Minister explained that “the actual headcount [is] above 500 when taking account of part time and dual role workers”. 182 Community Partners had also been recruited as of November 2018.¹⁸⁸

Table 1: Number of Disability Employment Advisers (DEAs): Full-time equivalent

| | April 2014 | April 2015 | April 2016 | April 2017 | July 2018 |
|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| DEAS (FTE) | 413.28 | 306.71 | 202.78 | 480.28 | 458.12 |

Source: [WQ188029](#)

88. Witnesses told us that, even with these extra resources, Work Coaches are struggling to support disabled claimants.¹⁸⁹ As UC continues to roll-out, getting the right expert support in place for disabled people will only become more challenging. Managed migration will see Work Coaches taking on a much larger cohort of ESA claimants amongst their caseloads.¹⁹⁰ They will include claimants who have been on benefits for a long time, and who may have multiple health conditions and complex and challenging barriers to work.¹⁹¹

89. Sir Ian Diamond, Chair of the SSAC, told us that the scale of the challenge Work Coaches will face as the UC roll-out progresses means it is vital that JCP ensures it has “people with the skills to conduct interviews with complex people”.¹⁹² The Department confirmed, however, that funding for the additional DEAs and Community Partners is only agreed up to April 2019. In answer to a Parliamentary Question in November 2018, the Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work said:

Funding for Jobcentre Plus Community Partners and additional Disability Employment Advisers has been agreed up until 31st March 2019 [...] We are carrying out continuous evaluation, including a review of the Community Partner and Disability Employment Adviser role functions. Recommendations from this review will be considered by Ministers and DWP Senior Leaders as they decide how to ensure that we continue to provide a cohesive support offer beyond 31 March 2019.¹⁹³

This means that funding is not guaranteed throughout the UC roll-out, which is not currently due to be complete until 2023.

187 [WQ169365](#)

188 [WQ188029](#)

189 NAO, [Rolling out Universal Credit](#), p.31, Q683 (Rob Holland), RNIB ([DMP0006](#)), Action for ME ([DMP0005](#))

190 SSAC, [The Draft Universal Credit \(Managed Migration\) Regulations 2018](#)

191 See Chapter 2 on “managed migration”

192 Q947 (Sir Ian Diamond)

193 [WQ188029](#)

90. **Work Coaches are generalists. They undergo basic training on disability, but they do not specialise in supporting particular groups of claimants. Many of the roles they have to perform, however, require specialist knowledge. The Department is confident, and has told us on multiple occasions, that its Disability Employment Advisers (DEAs) and Community Partners are the best way of delivering this. Yet funding for all Community Partners, and 300 of JCP's 500 DEAs, is due to expire in 2019. This will coincide with the Department's plans to begin migrating legacy benefit claimants onto UC. The lack of a concrete plan or funding beyond that point is deeply worrying, and threatens to undermine the Government's laudable goal of getting more disabled people into work. *We recommend that the Department commit to funding Community Partners and the additional Disability Employment Advisers throughout the process of migrating legacy benefit claimants to Universal Credit.***

Conclusions and recommendations

Universal credit entitlements

1. The Department has made welcome progress on paying Universal Credit on time in recent months. But one in eight claimants still do not receive their benefit on time and in full. One in ten receive nothing at all on time. Disabled people fare even worse. Just a third of new claimants whose award includes an additional amount for disability receive payment on time and in full. (Paragraph 9)
2. The Department says that the delays in paying disabled claimants are down to long waits for Work Capability Assessments. But assessments are carried out by the Department's own contractors. They are within the Department's gift to fix. It has a choice: it can either take steps to reduce the wait for an assessment, or find a different way for claimants to provide evidence of their disability while they wait for an assessment. (Paragraph 10)
3. *We recommend that as part of its preparatory work for the expiry of the Work Capability Assessment contract the Department investigate the cost of bringing target times for Work Capability Assessment turnarounds down: for example, to no longer than a month from referral. We also recommend it devise an interim solution to ensure that disabled claimants are not left without vital income while awaiting an assessment. For example, it could allow disability amounts of UC to be paid on production of a valid Fit Note stating that they are unable to work.* (Paragraph 11)
4. The Department is committed to carrying out a "pilot" of "managed migration", involving 10,000 claimants, from mid-2019 to mid-2020. The Regulations currently before the House require Parliament to agree not just to this pilot, but to the subsequent acceleration of "managed migration". *We recommend, in line with the House of Lords Secondary Legislation Committee, that the Department seek Parliamentary approval only for the 10,000 person "managed migration" pilot and the Severe Disability Premium transitional protections. It should lay further Regulations for the acceleration of "managed migration" only when it has clearly and publicly set out its findings from the pilot and how these will be incorporated into the process.* (Paragraph 16)
5. So-called "managed" migration will see over a million ESA claimants move onto Universal Credit. Amongst them will be some of the most vulnerable claimants the Department supports: people who have been on benefits for long time, have little in the way of a safety net, and have severe disabilities and health conditions. The Department says that it will safeguard claimants moving from ESA to Universal Credit. But it has provided next to no detail on how it will deliver those safeguards and ensure no one's benefits are stopped before they have made a successful claim for Universal Credit. (Paragraph 20)

6. The Department intends, throughout the process of moving claimants from legacy benefits to Universal Credit, to identify people who are “vulnerable” and provide extra flexibilities and support to them if necessary. But it does not collect data that would enable it to do this consistently, and its engagement with front-line organisations that could help it do so has so far been limited. (Paragraph 21)
7. *We recommend that throughout the pilot stage for managed migration the Department trial different ways of systematically collecting data on claimant vulnerability. Given the lack of data it holds currently, this should begin from the principle that all former ESA claimants who do not manage to claim by the deadline that the Department sets them are vulnerable. We also recommend that the Department immediately begin its engagement with local authorities and support organisations such as Citizens Advice over the design of “managed” migration and their role in it. This should include planning for how support services—such as Universal Support—will be promoted to claimants and funded through managed migration.* (Paragraph 22)
8. *We recommend the Department build its capacity to identify existing Universal Credit claimants who have potentially complex needs. This might include, for example, introducing a marker for disability and health conditions under Universal Credit. It should not be limited, as the Department’s current “text mining” approach is, to analysing the information that claimants choose to divulge to their Work Coach and that the Work Coach decides to record. We also recommend the Department shares, in response to this report, any internal assessment carried out of its “text mining” exercise.* (Paragraph 23)
9. *We further recommend that the Department share with the Committee, and with Citizens Advice, the existing data that it holds on claimant vulnerabilities and its plans for developing and further sharing this as managed migration rolls out.* (Paragraph 24)
10. The Department is currently in the process of reviewing cases where it has underpaid ESA claimants and correcting them. It plans to complete this process by the end of 2019: six months after it will start to pilot “managed migration”. To avoid creating further complication and confusion amongst claimants, we recommend the Department does not start to migrate ESA claimants until the process of reviewing and correcting ESA underpayments is complete. *To avoid creating further complication and confusion amongst claimants, we recommend the Department does not start to migrate ESA claimants until the process of reviewing and correcting ESA underpayments is complete* (Paragraph 26)
11. Changes to disability benefit top ups—the “disability premia”—under Universal Credit are amongst the most complex differences between Universal Credit and the system it replaces. And they are also one of the areas where disabled people could find themselves with lower levels of benefit under Universal Credit than under legacy. But there is currently a lack of clarity and accessible information on how benefit entitlements differ between the two systems. This makes it very difficult for disabled people, and the organisations that support them, to understand what they will or will not receive under Universal Credit. (Paragraph 37)

12. The Department made a serious error in removing disability premiums from Universal Credit and in failing initially to provide existing recipients of those benefits with transitional support. The steps it has since taken to correct this are both necessary and very welcome. But transitional protection can still be lost, and protection erodes over time. And the core problem of lower benefit entitlements for new Universal Credit claimants remains. DWP claims that it is recycling savings to offer more support to the “most severely disabled” claimants—those in the Universal Credit equivalent of the ESA Support Group. This still falls short of what they would have been entitled to under the legacy system. And it does nothing to help disabled people in the equivalent of the Work-Related Activity Group. These disabled people have been assessed by the Department as not well enough to work—but they are not covered by the protections that the Department has committed to providing to “severely disabled” people. (Paragraph 38)
13. Disabled people use the Severe and Enhanced Disability Premiums—along with other benefits—for essential living and care costs, in the absence of a paid for carer. Even with this additional money, meeting costs can be a struggle. Removing vital additional support offered by the disability premia from Universal Credit risks disabled people living more isolated lives, relying on unpaid care (including from their own, dependent children), or simply being unable to complete certain basic daily tasks. The Department has carried out no analysis of its own to assess the effects of this change. It nonetheless confidently asserts that costs and consequences will not emerge elsewhere: for example, in the social care system. (Paragraph 39)
14. *We recommend the Department carry out and publish by March 2019 an assessment of the impact of removing the disability premia from Universal Credit for new claimants. It should include in this an assessment of the costs and benefits of introducing a “self-care” amount in Universal Credit, paid at the same rate as the Care component to claimants who would have been eligible for disability premia. It should also include clear worked examples of the financial support that disabled people claiming different benefits (including disability premia and tax credit disability additions) under the legacy system will receive under Universal Credit.* (Paragraph 40)
15. Changes to support for disabled children under Universal Credit mean that some families with severely disabled children will receive more than they would have under tax credits. But this increase in support comes at a substantial price for other families. Once Universal Credit is fully rolled out, 100,000 families with a disabled child will receive less money than they would have under the legacy benefit system. The consequences—for claimants unable to make up the shortfall, and for local services that need to step in and support them—could be disastrous. (Paragraph 45)
16. The Department provides transitional protection to households moving to Universal Credit via “managed migration”. This includes households receiving support for disabled children. But households who migrate “naturally” due to a change of circumstances, or who make a new claim, will receive no such protection. (Paragraph 46)
17. *We recommend the Department provide in response to this report any assessment it has carried out of the impact of the reduction in support for disabled children under Universal Credit. We also recommend the Department adjust eligibility conditions*

for disability support for children under Universal Credit to include families with children claiming the middle rate care component of Disability Living Allowance. These households are likely to find it particularly difficult to make up the shortfall through work owing to both their care responsibilities, and the high costs of specialist childcare for disabled children. It should also arrange to provide backdated transitional protected to claimants who have already lost money by moving onto Universal Credit through “natural migration”. (Paragraph 47)

Claiming Universal Credit

18. The Government is committed to a digital by default process for Universal Credit, but digital cannot work for everyone. Some disabled claimants will never be able to use the online system. They will require flexible, intensive support to manage the transition to Universal Credit. The Department’s current approach to providing this relies on claimants disclosing that they need alternative support, and approaching the Universal Credit service centre to request it. Mirroring the Department’s approach to “managed” migration, the onus and the risk of failing to make or maintain a claim altogether is placed largely on the claimant. (Paragraph 52)
19. *We recommend that the Department permits Universal Support providers to offer proactively on-going support to claimants who cannot use the online system, and provides them with the funding necessary to deliver this. This must take into account the differing needs of disabled people, with home visits and freephone telephone support made available where necessary. The Department should proactively ensure that claimants who struggle with the digital service do not miss out on vital communications. It could, for example, ask for a second email address (for a support worker or family member) for UC-related notifications to make sure they do not go unnoticed or unanswered. The Department must also help providers to proactively identify and contact Universal Credit claimants who might require such help: for example, through early sharing on data on vulnerable claimants. (Paragraph 53)*
20. Assistive technology could help disabled people use Universal Credit’s systems independently. This is good for disabled claimants, who will be able to manage their claim and work with Universal Credit on the same basis as non-disabled claimants. It is also good for the Department, since Universal Credit’s efficiency savings rely on claimants using the digital system wherever possible. But we heard that the availability and quality of assistive technology in Jobcentre Plus is too often patchy and poor. *We recommend the Department set minimum standards for the availability of assistive technology across the JCP network, in consultation with disabled people and the organisations who support them. (Paragraph 57)*
21. Disabled people are one of the largest claimant groups that Universal Credit will support. It is entirely unacceptable that, in building the Universal Credit online service, the Department has failed to ensure it is compatible with some of the most basic assistive technologies that those claimants might use. *We recommend the Department reviews and reforms the Universal Credit online system to ensure it is compatible with different forms of assistive technology, consulting with disabled*

people and the organisations that support them to ensure an appropriate standard. It should not begin moving disabled people to Universal Credit via managed migration until it has completed this work. (Paragraph 58)

22. Being diagnosed with terminal illness is already difficult and distressing. The Department should do all in its power not to exacerbate this distress. This includes making it as simple and quick as possible for people with a terminal diagnosis to claim benefits that often provide a vital backstop once work is no longer an option. The process for claiming Universal Credit under the Special Rules for Terminal Illness (SRTI) is failing some claimants when they need support most. The strict requirement for claimants to have under six months to live is unnecessarily restrictive. And the process for giving consent to another individual or organisation to act on their behalf is unworkable for people with some conditions. The Department must introduce a more humane approach. (Paragraph 63)

23. *We recommend the Department adopt the approach taken in the Social Security Act (Scotland) 2018 in determining who can use the SRTI. This would permit claimants to use the SRTI if:*

“It is the clinical judgement of a registered medical practitioner that the individual has a progressive disease that can reasonably be expected to cause the individual’s death”.

We also recommend that the Department allow evidence for SRTI to be submitted by third parties, without the need for explicit consent. (Paragraph 64)

24. The Government wants to improve the employment rates of disabled people. It should be doing all it can to support disabled people to reach their potential: including accessing higher and further education. Disabled students who try to claim Universal Credit for the first time find themselves in a catch-22 situation. Their claims are refused because they cannot demonstrate limited capability for work via a Work Capability Assessment (WCA). But they cannot be referred for an assessment unless their claim is accepted. Meanwhile disabled students who have a current WCA decision are able to claim Universal Credit as they would have claimed ESA. The result is an incoherent two-tier system which leaves some disabled students unable to access support that is vital for them to continue their studies and to which they are entitled. *We recommend that DWP replicate under UC arrangements under the legacy system for disabled students. This would mean taking receipt of PIP or DLA as evidence of Limited Capability to Work, allowing them to open a UC claim. Students who wanted to claim the higher, Limited Capability for Work-Related Activity amount, would then have to undergo a WCA. (Paragraph 70)*

25. There are bigger questions to ask about which department should fund additional support for disabled students and how eligibility should be determined. We have heard repeatedly, however, that existing benefits and entitlements for disabled people only go part of the way to meeting the increased costs resulting from their conditions. The introduction of Universal Credit may provide a useful opportunity to consider those questions—but it is important that disabled people do not lose out on support in the meantime. *We recommend the Department for Education and*

DWP convene a joint working group of organisations that support disabled students on financial support for those students, with a view to determining where funding should come from and how eligibility should be assessed. (Paragraph 71)

Support in Jobcentre Plus

Under the legacy system, claimants awaiting a Work Capability Assessment cannot have conditionality applied to them. This is a vital safeguard. It protects claimants from having to meet conditions that may be unmanageable and inappropriate. It also helps avoid souring the relationship between claimants and their Work Coaches from the outset. But no such safeguard exists under Universal Credit. *We recommend that the Department immediately amend its guidance to Work Coaches to state that Universal Credit claimants who are awaiting a Work Capability Assessment and who can present a valid Fit Note stating that they are not able to work should not be subject to any conditionality. (Paragraph 77)*

26. The Department launched the Work and Health Programme (WHP) at a time of considerable change in Jobcentre Plus. The roll-out of Universal Credit itself, and the decision to scale down externally delivered employment support, both place substantial new demands on Work Coaches. The success of the WHP and its contribution to closing the disability employment gap depends squarely on Work Coaches identifying and referring people who could benefit from the programme. But competing demands on Work Coach time bring the risk of this slipping down their agendas, and pressure on them will only increase at the UC rollout progresses. (Paragraph 83)
27. The Department launched the Work and Health Programme (WHP) at a time of considerable change in Jobcentre Plus. The roll-out of Universal Credit itself, and the decision to scale down externally delivered employment support, both place substantial new demands on Work Coaches. The success of the WHP and its contribution to closing the disability employment gap depends squarely on Work Coaches identifying and referring people who could benefit from the programme. But competing demands on Work Coach time bring the risk of this slipping down their agendas, and pressure on them will only increase at the UC rollout progresses. *We recommend the Department ensure all Work Coaches undertake specific training on the WHP and its referral process. It should outline its plans for rolling out this training to Work Coaches in response to this Report. We also recommend the Department launch a publicity campaign for the programme in JCP. This should be aimed at both Work Coaches and claimants themselves. (Paragraph 83)*
28. Work Coaches are generalists. They undergo basic training on disability, but they do not specialise in supporting particular groups of claimants. Many of the roles they have to perform, however, require specialist knowledge. The Department is confident, and has told us on multiple occasions, that its Disability Employment Advisers (DEAs) and Community Partners are the best way of delivering this. Yet funding for all Community Partners, and 300 of JCP's 500 DEAs, is due to expire in 2019. This will coincide with the Department's plans to begin migrating legacy benefit claimants onto UC. The lack of a concrete plan or funding beyond that point is deeply worrying, and threatens to undermine the Government's laudable goal

of getting more disabled people into work. *We recommend that the Department commit to funding Community Partners and the additional Disability Employment Advisers throughout the process of migrating legacy benefit claimants to Universal Credit.* (Paragraph 89)

Formal minutes

Wednesday 12 December 2018

Members present:

Rt Hon Frank Field, in the Chair

Heidi Allen Steve McCabe

Rosie Duffield Nigel Mills

Ruth George Chris Stephens

Draft report (*Universal Credit: support for disabled people*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 90 read and agreed to.

Summary agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Twenty-First Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

[Adjourned till Wednesday 19 December at 9.15am

Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Universal Credit

Wednesday 13 September 2017

Councillor Fiona Colley, Cabinet Member for Finance, Modernisation and Performance, Southwark Council, **Councillor Jane Corbett**, Assistant Mayor of Liverpool and Mayoral Lead on Fairness and Tackling Poverty, Liverpool City Council, **Donna Gallagher**, Universal Credit Implementation Manager, Your Homes Newcastle, **Nicky Kingston**, Area Manager, Incomes Team, Plymouth Community Homes

[Q1–46](#)

Jeremy Hewer, Policy Advisor, Scottish Federation of Housing Associations, **Kayley Hignell**, Head of Policy (welfare, work and family), Citizens Advice, **Richard Roberts**, Manager, Wirral Foodbank, **Nicola Smith**, Advice Services Manager, Citizens Advice Southwark, **Natalie Williamson**, Senior Policy Officer, Residential Landlords Association

[Q47–71](#)

Wednesday 18 October 2017

Rt Hon David Gauke MP, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions and **Neil Couling CBE**, Director, Universal Credit Programme, Department for Work and Pensions

[Q72–172](#)

Wednesday 29 November 2017

David Finch, Senior Economic Analyst, Resolution Foundation, **Deven Ghelani**, Director, Policy in Practice, **Andrew Hood**, Senior Research Economist, Institute for Fiscal Studies, **Victoria Todd**, Senior Technical Manager, Low Incomes Tax Reform Group

[Q173–249](#)

Wednesday 17 January 2018

Sally Beadle, Children's entertainer, **Richard Betton**, self-employed farmer, **Luke Johnstone**, founder, Pack'd, **Andrew Kozman**, Founder, Mercury Digital

[Q250–267](#)

Andy Chamberlain, Deputy Director of Policy and External Affairs, IPSE, **Andrew Clark**, Director of Policy, National Farmers Union, **Mark Hooper**, Founder and Policy Lead, indycube, **Lindsay Owen**, Deputy Director of Policy and Evaluation, The Prince's Trust

[Q268–303](#)

Wednesday 24 January 2018

Jeane Freeman MSP, Minister for Social Security, **Dawn Abell**, Social Security Policy Team Leader and **Stephen Kerr**, Social Security Director, Scottish Government

[Q304–337](#)

Alok Sharma MP, Minister for Employment and **Neil Couling CBE**, Director, Universal Credit Programme, Department for Work and Pensions

[Q338–408](#)

Wednesday 18 April 2018

Nicola Kyser-Forrest, Homelessness Service Manager and Temporary Accommodation and Support Service Team Manager, Calderdale MBC, **Demelza Lobb**, Technology abuse lead, Refuge, **Melissa Altman**, Director of frontline services for violence against women and girls, Advance Charity, **Dr Nicola Sharp-Jeffs**, Director and Founder of Surviving Economic Abuse, **Marilyn Howard**, Research Associate, University of Bristol

[Q409–529](#)

Tuesday 24 April 2018

Kit Malthouse MP, Minister for Family Support, Housing and Child Maintenance, Department for Work and Pensions, **Neil Couling CBE**, Director General, Universal Credit Programme, Department for Work and Pensions

[Q530–603](#)

Wednesday 23 May 2018

Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith MP, MP for Chingford and Woodford Green, **Allan Gunn**, Head of Revenues and Customer Service, Highland Council, **Emma Revie**, Chief Executive, Trussell Trust, **Zena Cooke**, Corporate Director, Resources, London Borough of Tower Hamlets and Local Government Association

[Q604–664](#)

Wednesday 4 July 2018

Rob Holland, Co-Chair, Disability Benefit Consortium and Public Affairs Manager, Mencap, **Gemma Hope**, Director of Policy, Marketing and Communications, Shaw Trust, **Daphne Hall**, Vice Chair, National Association of Welfare Rights Advisors

[Q665–699](#)

Afzal Rahman, Senior Policy Researcher, Citizens Advice, **Daniel Norris**, Welfare Rights Adviser, Early Warning System, Child Poverty Action Group, **Sam Royston**, Director of Policy, Research and Public Affairs, The Children's Society

[Q700–724](#)

Wednesday 17 October 2018

Peter Schofield, Permanent Secretary, Department for Work and Pensions, **Nick Joicey**, Finance Director General, Department of Work and Pensions, **Tara Smith**, Finance Director Central Services, Department of Work and Pensions

[Q1-144](#)

Wednesday 24 October 2018

Steven McIntosh, Director of UK Poverty Policy, Advocacy and Campaigns, Save the Children, **Dalia Ben-Galim**, Director of Policy, Gingerbread, **Joe Shalam**, Researcher, Centre for Social Justice, **Jonathan Broadbery**, Head of Policy and External Relations, National Day Nurseries Association

[Q811-863](#)

Gaynor Rowles, Hairdresser, **Lucy Collins**, Beauty technician, **Vikki Waterman**, Administrator, **Thuto Mali**, full-time mum

[Q864-913](#)

Wednesday 14 November 2018

Sir Ian Diamond, Chair, Social Security Advisory Committee, **Victoria Todd**, Member, Social Security Advisory Committee

[Q914-958](#)

Disability employment

Wednesday 11 July 2018

Rt Hon Esther McVey MP, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, **Sarah Newton MP**, Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work, **Angus Gray**, Deputy Director, Work and Health Unit, and **James Wolfe**, Director, Disability Employment, Department of Work and Pensions

[Q1-115](#)

Universal Credit: Managed Migration

Thursday 18 October 2018

Alok Sharma MP, Minister for Employment, Department for Work and Pensions, **Neil Couling CBE**, Director General, Universal Credit Programme, Department for Work and Pensions

[Q725-810](#)

Friday 1 October 2018

Alok Sharma MP, Minister for Employment, Department for Work and Pensions, **Neil Couling CBE**, Director General, Universal Credit Programme, Department for Work and Pensions

[Q1-86](#)

Published written evidence

The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

UCM numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete.

- 1 Ability Net ([DMP0002](#))
- 2 Accord ([UCR0021](#))
- 3 Action for ME ([DMP0005](#))
- 4 Action on Hearing Loss ([DMP0008](#))
- 5 Albyn Housing Society ([UCR0009](#))
- 6 Albyn Housing Society ([UCR0056](#))
- 7 Archer, Mr Paul ([UCR0049](#))
- 8 Assn of British Insurers ([UCR0206](#))
- 9 The Association of Independent Professionals and Self Employed ([UCM0002](#))
- 10 Asylum Matters ([UCR0125](#))
- 11 BCHA Preston ([UCR0027](#))
- 12 Beadle, Ms Sally ([UCR0155](#))
- 13 Bennett, Ms Fran ([UCR0222](#))
- 14 Berry, Administrator Nicholas ([UCR0213](#))
- 15 BEXLEY, Mr Anthony ([UCR0127](#))
- 16 Birmingham City Council ([UCR0132](#))
- 17 Bowden, Corneli ([UCR0161](#))
- 18 Bradford University ([UCR0006](#))
- 19 Breakthrough UK ([DMP0014](#))
- 20 Bright Blue ([UCR0194](#))
- 21 Bristol University / Women's Budget Group ([UCR0215](#))
- 22 British Association of Social Workers ([UCR0108](#))
- 23 brown, Mr alexander ([UCR0131](#))
- 24 Business Disability Forum ([DMP0013](#))
- 25 Cameron, Aiden ([UCR0064](#))
- 26 Centre for Social Justice ([UCR0133](#))
- 27 Centre for Social Justice ([UCR0266](#))
- 28 Centrepont ([UCR0011](#))
- 29 Chesterfield Borough Council ([UCR0012](#))
- 30 Child Action Poverty Group ([UCR0020](#))
- 31 Child Poverty Action Group ([UCM0004](#))
- 32 Child Poverty Action Group ([UCR0096](#))
- 33 Child Poverty Action Group ([UCR0107](#))

- 34 Child Poverty Action Group ([UCR0202](#))
- 35 Child Poverty Action Group ([UCR0233](#))
- 36 Child Poverty Action Group ([UCR0263](#))
- 37 The Children's Society ([UCR0094](#))
- 38 The Children's Society ([UCR0171](#))
- 39 The Children's Society ([UCR0245](#))
- 40 The Childrens Society ([UCR0248](#))
- 41 Chisnall, Richard ([UCR0176](#))
- 42 Christians Against Poverty ([UCR0130](#))
- 43 CIH ([UCR0019](#))
- 44 Citizen's Advice Scotland ([UCM0010](#))
- 45 Citizens Advice ([DMP0007](#))
- 46 Citizens Advice ([UCM0014](#))
- 47 Citizens Advice ([UCR0141](#))
- 48 Citizens Advice ([UCR0201](#))
- 49 Citizens Advice ([UCR0238](#))
- 50 Citizens Advice ([UCR0268](#))
- 51 Citizens Advice Craven and Harrogate Districts office ([UCR0079](#))
- 52 Citizens Advice Derbyshire Districts ([UCR0088](#))
- 53 Citizens Advice Scotland ([UCR0029](#))
- 54 Citizens Advice Scotland ([UCR0221](#))
- 55 Citizens Advice Sheffield ([UCR0047](#))
- 56 Citizens Advice Waltham Forest ([UCR0178](#))
- 57 City of Lincoln Council ([UCR0016](#))
- 58 City of Lincoln Council ([UCR0173](#))
- 59 Community ([UCR0134](#))
- 60 Community Housing Cymru ([UCR0124](#))
- 61 Community Housing Cymru ([UCR0181](#))
- 62 Connections, Deaf ([UCR0001](#))
- 63 COSLA ([UCR0053](#))
- 64 Cottsway Housing ([UCR0015](#))
- 65 Coventry Citizens Advice ([UCR0090](#))
- 66 Currell, Ms Suzy ([UCR0183](#))
- 67 Davido Ltd ([UCR0162](#))
- 68 Davies, Dr Christine ([UCR0062](#))
- 69 Davies, Dr Christine ([UCR0193](#))
- 70 Department for Work and Pensions ([UCR0186](#))
- 71 Department for Work and Pensions ([UCR0216](#))

- 72 Department for Work and Pensions ([UCR0240](#))
- 73 Department for Work and Pensions ([UCR0267](#))
- 74 Disability Rights UK ([UCR0249](#))
- 75 Donna ([UCR0060](#))
- 76 East Lothian Housing Assn ([UCR0003](#))
- 77 Eastern Landlords ([UCR0031](#))
- 78 Engender and Scottish Women's Aid ([UCR0224](#))
- 79 Equality and Human Rights Commission ([UCR0231](#))
- 80 Equity ([UCR0128](#))
- 81 Equity Tax and Welfare Rights Team ([UCR0191](#))
- 82 Equity Trade Union ([UCR0046](#))
- 83 ERSA ([DMP0009](#))
- 84 ERSA ([UCR0166](#))
- 85 Evans, Mr Kenneth ([UCR0058](#))
- 86 Families Need Fathers ([UCR0061](#))
- 87 Feeding Britain ([UCR0111](#))
- 88 Fimister, Geoff ([UCR0002](#))
- 89 Financial Mutual ([UCR0208](#))
- 90 First Point Basingstoke, The You Trust ([UCR0145](#))
- 91 The Fostering Network ([UCR0082](#))
- 92 Gingerbread ([UCR0106](#))
- 93 Gingerbread ([UCR0112](#))
- 94 Gingerbread ([UCR0198](#))
- 95 Gloucester City Homes ([UCR0024](#))
- 96 Godsiff MP, Mr Roger ([UCR0217](#))
- 97 GORST, Miss CLARE ([UCR0177](#))
- 98 Green Square Group ([UCR0041](#))
- 99 Gristock, Dr J. Gene ([UCR0195](#))
- 100 Gwent Welfare Reform Partnership ([UCR0223](#))
- 101 Gwent Welfare Reform Partnership (GWRP) ([UCR0189](#))
- 102 Gwent Welfare Support ([UCR0022](#))
- 103 Halton Housing ([UCM0001](#))
- 104 Halton Housing Trust ([UCR0008](#))
- 105 Halton Housing Trust ([UCR0120](#))
- 106 Halton Housing Trust ([UCR0211](#))
- 107 Hamilton, Hugh ([UCR0052](#))
- 108 Harrington, Mr Jim ([UCR0033](#))
- 109 Harrison, Mr Neil ([UCR0152](#))

- 110 Hastings & Rother Credit Union ([UCR0109](#))
- 111 Helen Bamber Foundation ([UCR0129](#))
- 112 The Highland Council ([UCR0185](#))
- 113 Homeless Link ([UCR0091](#))
- 114 Housing Justice ([UCR0086](#))
- 115 Housing Systems ([UCR0182](#))
- 116 Inclusion London ([UCR0117](#))
- 117 Ingram, Mark ([UCR0164](#))
- 118 Institute for Fiscal Studies ([UCM0003](#))
- 119 Institute for Fiscal Studies ([UCR0192](#))
- 120 Institute of Revenues, Rating and Valuation ([UCR0122](#))
- 121 IPSE ([UCR0174](#))
- 122 IPSE ([UCR0219](#))
- 123 Islington Council ([UCR0025](#))
- 124 Jackson, Mr Julian ([UCR0172](#))
- 125 Joseph Rowntree Foundation ([UCM0013](#))
- 126 Joseph Rowntree Foundation ([UCR0136](#))
- 127 Joseph Rowntree Foundation ([UCR0258](#))
- 128 Khatun, Miss Amina ([UCR0073](#))
- 129 Kirton, Ms Fiona ([UCR0153](#))
- 130 Knowsley Council ([UCR0026](#))
- 131 Krepski, Miss Hannah ([UCR0165](#))
- 132 Lambeth Council ([UCR0099](#))
- 133 Lancashire County Council ([UCR0013](#))
- 134 Leonard Cheshire ([DMP0001](#))
- 135 Liverpool City Council ([UCR0068](#))
- 136 Local Government Association ([UCR0237](#))
- 137 Local Government Association ([UCR0242](#))
- 138 Lock, Mr Richard ([UCR0212](#))
- 139 London Borough of Hounslow ([UCR0105](#))
- 140 London Borough of Lambeth ([UCR0179](#))
- 141 London Borough of Tower Hamlets ([UCR0243](#))
- 142 London Councils ([UCR0030](#))
- 143 London Councils ([UCR0250](#))
- 144 Low Income Tax Reform Group ([UCM0012](#))
- 145 Low Income Tax Reform Group ([UCR0260](#))
- 146 Low Incomes Tax Reform Group ([UCR0196](#))
- 147 Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) ([UCR0200](#))

- 148 Manchip, Mr Daryn ([UCR0059](#))
- 149 Marc Welham ([UCR0147](#))
- 150 Mencap ([DMP0003](#))
- 151 Mencap ([UCM0017](#))
- 152 MIND ([DMP0004](#))
- 153 MIND ([UCM0006](#))
- 154 Mind ([UCR0137](#))
- 155 Mind ([UCR0253](#))
- 156 Moran, Layla ([UCR0156](#))
- 157 Motor Neurone Disease Association ([UCR0270](#))
- 158 Musselburgh Citizens Advice Bureau ([UCR0110](#))
- 159 Name Withheld ([UCR0035](#))
- 160 Name Withheld ([UCR0038](#))
- 161 Name Withheld ([UCR0040](#))
- 162 Name Withheld ([UCR0042](#))
- 163 Name Withheld ([UCR0045](#))
- 164 Name Withheld ([UCR0063](#))
- 165 Name Withheld ([UCR0065](#))
- 166 Name Withheld ([UCR0066](#))
- 167 Name Withheld ([UCR0067](#))
- 168 Name withheld ([UCR0070](#))
- 169 Name Withheld ([UCR0071](#))
- 170 Name withheld ([UCR0074](#))
- 171 Name Withheld ([UCR0076](#))
- 172 Name Withheld ([UCR0081](#))
- 173 Name Withheld ([UCR0085](#))
- 174 Name Withheld ([UCR0100](#))
- 175 Name Withheld ([UCR0119](#))
- 176 Name Withheld ([UCR0121](#))
- 177 Name Withheld ([UCR0126](#))
- 178 Name Withheld ([UCR0138](#))
- 179 Name Withheld ([UCR0143](#))
- 180 Name Withheld ([UCR0144](#))
- 181 Name Withheld ([UCR0146](#))
- 182 Name Withheld ([UCR0148](#))
- 183 Name Withheld ([UCR0150](#))
- 184 Name Withheld ([UCR0151](#))
- 185 Name Withheld ([UCR0154](#))

- 186 Name Withheld ([UCR0158](#))
- 187 Name Withheld ([UCR0163](#))
- 188 Name Withheld ([UCR0175](#))
- 189 Name Withheld ([UCR0204](#))
- 190 Name Withheld ([UCR0207](#))
- 191 Name Withheld ([UCR0244](#))
- 192 Name Withheld ([UCR0254](#))
- 193 Name Withheld ([UCR0269](#))
- 194 National Association of Welfare Rights Advisers ([UCM0016](#))
- 195 National Association of Welfare Rights Advisers ([UCR0262](#))
- 196 National Housing Federation ([UCM0009](#))
- 197 National Housing Federation ([UCR0218](#))
- 198 NAWRA ([UCR0018](#))
- 199 NAWRA ([UCR0113](#))
- 200 New Charter Group ([UCR0004](#))
- 201 newbold, Miss michelle ([UCR0157](#))
- 202 NFU ([UCR0199](#))
- 203 North East Homeless Think Tank ([UCR0168](#))
- 204 O'Connor, Miss Siobhan ([UCR0044](#))
- 205 Onward Homes ([UCR0034](#))
- 206 Orbit ([UCR0209](#))
- 207 Papworth Trust ([UCR0087](#))
- 208 PCS ([UCM0011](#))
- 209 PCS Union ([UCR0247](#))
- 210 Peabody ([UCR0075](#))
- 211 Peopleplus ([UCR0180](#))
- 212 PLUSS ([DMP0012](#))
- 213 Plymouth Community Homes ([UCR0102](#))
- 214 Plymouth Community Housing ([UCR0023](#))
- 215 Policy in Practice ([UCM0015](#))
- 216 Policy in Practice ([UCR0160](#))
- 217 Prince's Trust ([UCM0007](#))
- 218 The Prince's Trust ([UCR0190](#))
- 219 Public and Commercial Services Union ([UCR0118](#))
- 220 Putterill, Mrs Gillian ([UCR0101](#))
- 221 Radian ([UCR0115](#))
- 222 RCH Accord ([UCR0104](#))
- 223 Refuge ([UCR0234](#))

- 224 Refugee Action ([UCR0140](#))
- 225 Residential Landlords Association ([UCM0005](#))
- 226 Residential Landlords Association ([UCR0028](#))
- 227 Resolution Foundation ([UCM0018](#))
- 228 Resolution Foundation ([UCR0229](#))
- 229 RNIB ([DMP0006](#))
- 230 Robinson, John ([UCR0037](#))
- 231 Royal Greenwich Welfare Rights Service ([UCR0048](#))
- 232 Royal Mencap Society ([UCR0184](#))
- 233 Runnymede Trust ([UCR0116](#))
- 234 SAMH (Scottish Association for Mental Health) ([UCR0080](#))
- 235 Save the Children ([UCR0257](#))
- 236 SCOPE ([DMP0010](#))
- 237 Scope ([UCR0057](#))
- 238 Scope ([UCR0197](#))
- 239 Scottish Federation of Housing Associations ([UCR0092](#))
- 240 Scottish Women's Aid ([UCR0236](#))
- 241 Shaw Trust ([DMP0011](#))
- 242 Shaw Trust ([UCR0255](#))
- 243 Sheffield, Alex ([UCR0159](#))
- 244 Shelter ([UCR0093](#))
- 245 Shelter ([UCR0203](#))
- 246 South London and Maudsley NHS Trust ([UCR0188](#))
- 247 Southampton Advice and Representation Centre Limited ([UCR0055](#))
- 248 Southwark Council ([UCR0103](#))
- 249 Southwark, Hounslow and Tower Hamlets ([UCR0010](#))
- 250 Sovereign ([UCR0007](#))
- 251 St Mungo's ([UCR0077](#))
- 252 St Mungos ([UCR0032](#))
- 253 St. Augustine's Centre ([UCR0139](#))
- 254 StepChange Debt Charity ([UCR0050](#))
- 255 StepChange Debt Charity ([UCR0261](#))
- 256 Stockley, Mr Dave ([UCR0187](#))
- 257 Surviving Economic Abuse ([UCR0230](#))
- 258 Surviving Economic Abuse ([UCR0241](#))
- 259 Tax Reform Group ([UCR0220](#))
- 260 Together Liverpool/Just Finance ([UCR0078](#))
- 261 Torus ([UCR0005](#))

- 262 The Trussell Trust ([UCM0008](#))
- 263 Trussell Trust ([UCR0017](#))
- 264 Trussell Trust ([UCR0083](#))
- 265 Turn2us ([UCR0123](#))
- 266 UK Women's Budget Group ([UCR0214](#))
- 267 UNISON ([UCR0095](#))
- 268 University of Birmingham ([UCR0259](#))
- 269 Visavadia, Haren ([UCR0264](#))
- 270 VIVID ([UCR0135](#))
- 271 Wakefield and District Housing ([UCR0014](#))
- 272 Wallis-Martin, J ([UCR0170](#))
- 273 Wardle, Jol ([UCR0169](#))
- 274 WDH ([UCR0054](#))
- 275 Welfare Conditionality Project ([UCR0098](#))
- 276 Wigan Council ([UCR0228](#))
- 277 WinVisible (women with visible & invisible disabilities) ([UCR0226](#))
- 278 Wirral Foodbank ([UCR0043](#))
- 279 Withheld, Name ([UCR0036](#))
- 280 Women's Aid Federation of England ([UCR0225](#))
- 281 Women's Aid Federation of England ([UCR0235](#))
- 282 Women's Budget Group ([UCR0227](#))
- 283 Women's Budget Group ([UCR0239](#))
- 284 Women's Budget Group ([UCR0246](#))
- 285 Women's Budget Group ([UCR0265](#))
- 286 Wood, Mr Michael ([UCR0072](#))
- 287 Your Homes Newcastle ([UCR0084](#))

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Session 2017–19

| | | |
|-----------------------|--|---------|
| First Report | Universal Credit: the six week wait | HC 336 |
| Second Report | A framework for modern employment | HC 352 |
| Third Report | Protecting pensions against scams: priorities for the Financial Guidance and Claims Bill | HC 404 |
| Fourth Report | PIP and ESA assessments: claimant experiences | HC 355 |
| Fifth Report | Universal Credit Project Assessment Reviews | HC 740 |
| Sixth Report | British Steel Pension Scheme | HC 828 |
| Seventh Report | PIP and ESA assessments | HC 829 |
| Eighth Report | European Social Fund | HC 848 |
| Ninth Report | Pensions freedoms | HC 917 |
| Tenth Report | Assistive technology | HC 673 |
| Eleventh Report | Universal Credit: supporting self-employment | HC 997 |
| Twelfth Report | Carillion | HC 769 |
| Fourteenth Report | Appointment of Professor Sir Ian Diamond as Chair of the Social Security Advisory Committee | HC 971 |
| Fifteenth Report | The Motability Scheme | HC 847 |
| Sixteenth Report | Collective defined contribution pensions | HC 580 |
| Seventeenth Report | Universal Credit and Domestic abuse | HC 1166 |
| Eighteenth Report | Universal Support | HC 1667 |
| Nineteenth Report | Benefit Sanctions | HC 955 |
| Twentieth Report | Universal Credit: managed migration | HC 1762 |
| First Special Report | Child Maintenance Service: Government's Response to the Committee's Fourteenth Report of Session 2016–17 | HC 354 |
| Second Special Report | Self-employment and the gig economy: Government Response to the Committee's Thirteenth Report of Session 2016–17 | HC 644 |
| Third Special Report | Disability employment gap: Government Response to the Committee's Seventh Report of Session 2016–17 | HC 652 |

| | | |
|---------------------------|---|---------|
| Fourth Special Report | Victims of modern slavery: Government Response to the Committee's Twelfth Report of Session 2016–17 | HC 672 |
| Fifth Special Report | Employment Opportunities for Young People: Government response to the Committee's Ninth Report of Session 2016–17 | HC 872 |
| Sixth Special Report | Protecting pensions against scams: priorities for the Financial Guidance and Claims Bill: Government Response to the Committee's Third Report | HC 858 |
| Seventh Special Report | A framework for modern employment: Government response to the Second Report of the Work and Pensions Committee and First Report of the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee | HC 966 |
| Eight Special Report | PIP and ESA assessments: Government Response to the Committee's Seventh Report | HC 986 |
| Ninth Special Report | British Steel Pension Scheme: The Pensions Regulator Response to the Committee's Sixth Report | HC 987 |
| Tenth Special Report | Pension freedoms: Government response to the Committee's Ninth Report | HC 1231 |
| Eleventh Special Report | Carillion: Responses from Interested Parties to the Committee's Twelfth Report | HC 1392 |
| Twelfth Special Report | Universal Credit: supporting self employment: Government Response to the Committee's Eleventh Report | HC 1420 |
| Thirteenth Special Report | Employment Support for Carers: Government Response to the Committee's Thirteenth Report | HC 1463 |
| Fourteenth Special Report | Carillion: Government Response to the Committee's Twelfth Report | HC 1456 |
| Fifteenth Special Report | Assistive technology: Government Response to the Committee's Tenth Report | HC 1538 |
| Sixteenth Special Report | Universal credit and domestic abuse: Government response to the Committee's Seventeenth Report | HC 1611 |