Rt Hon Frank Field MP  
Chair  
Work and Pensions Committee  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

15 March 2019

The Rt Hon AMBER RUDD MP  
Secretary of State for Work & Pensions

Dear Frank,

Moving to Universal Credit through a change of circumstances

Thank you for your letter of 27 February 2019.

Having viewed the hearing, I want to clarify some of the policy and practice around moves to Universal Credit following a change of circumstances.

It is not the case that this summer “millions of tax credit claimants” will be faced with a choice about whether to move over to UC. That is not our policy nor is it our experience to date. Tax Credit renewals ran last summer, when UC was in over 50% of the country without people electing to make choices to terminate claims and apply for UC.

We have had some isolated reports of individuals either triggering a move themselves (because they are in the majority of claimants who will gain from the introduction of UC and have worked that out) or because they have been wrongly advised to do so. But it is not, and has never been, the policy to encourage that; not least because we have carefully balanced resources between the legacy and new UC system to ensure claimants can continue to receive their entitlements in either system. However, if NAWRA or anyone else has examples, we would be happy to look into them but we currently have no evidence beyond a handful of cases.

There may be some conflation of the move across of cases from the Live Service of UC to the Full Service system, with claimants being notified that they are moving from the Live Service to Full Service. Over the course of the last year we have successfully moved around 250,000 cases. But I will review any evidence people may have.
Finally you asked about the legal basis has for refusing to allow claimants to revert to legacy benefits in cases of appeals. This is set out in regulations\(^1\) and was the subject of a challenge (TD, AD & PR vs SSWP). The court found in favour of the Government and the regulations.

The Rt Hon Amber Rudd MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WORK AND PENSIONS