



Department
for Work &
Pensions

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

23rd January 2019

Dear Co-Chairs of the DBC,

Thank you for your recent letter regarding Universal Credit Managed Migration.

We continue to work with a range of stakeholders to ensure that we design a smooth, supported and effective process for moving claimants onto Universal Credit. As you point out, a large number of these stakeholders are members of the Disability Benefits Consortium, and I would first like to thank you for the time and effort you and your members are putting in to help us explore the critical issues for the Universal Credit migration process and refine our approach.

I welcome the opportunity to discuss some of the challenges that we face in doing this. As you will know, we have committed to the Social Security Advisory Committee that we will continue to consider possibilities regarding the conversion of legacy claims to Universal Credit through a review process.

There are some things that we do not want to lose sight of in these discussions. We need to ensure that data is accurate and up to date to avoid transferring errors from legacy benefits – where we have pre-populated information previously, we have missed the opportunity to ensure that claimants are getting the right entitlement. This is extremely important; following the completion of the process to move individuals onto Universal Credit, an additional £2.4 billion will be going to 700,000 families who currently do not take up their full entitlement (owing to the complexity of the legacy system). We also want to make sure that we are supporting claimants to engage with the digital service quickly and effectively.

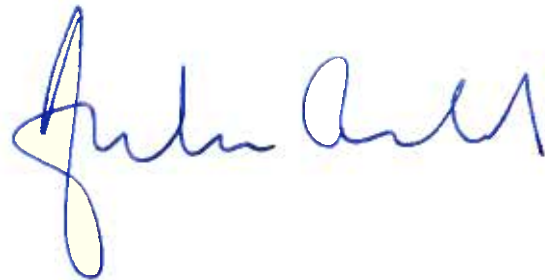
We want to maintain a close working relationship with stakeholders, including your members, to design the best processes for all concerned. I have said very clearly that I will listen to the concerns that are raised, and I am continuing to do so. We will need to strike the right balance between ensuring that the process that we design are robust, give everyone their correct entitlement, and enable us to build from a strong base of accuracy - whilst supporting everyone safely through that process. These things are, in my view, not incompatible.

We have already said that, where possible, we will of course use existing decisions or verification to make aspects of the process simpler. For example, if claimants have an existing Work Capability Assessment decision, they will not be required to have another assessment in order to receive the disability additions of Universal Credit. Furthermore, for claimants who do not have any work-related requirements, we already operate a digital claimant commitment acceptance process and we will carry that forward as part of the transition process. We are also looking at other possibilities,

including the re-use of Tax Credits verification information where it exists – meaning that a number of claimants would not need to attend a face-to-face interview.

I am greatly encouraged by the willingness of stakeholders, including members of the Disability Benefits Consortium, to work with us collaboratively. However, I recognise that this does not mean you automatically support every aspect of what we do, and I would like to reassure you that I have not misunderstood your position. It is right, of course, that you should ensure that you have made this clear and we, in turn, will work to ensure the widest possible range of insights are played into the design of the process to move individuals smoothly and effectively onto Universal Credit.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Arl". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'J' and 'A'.