



Universal Credit and Welfare Reform

Business change and resources
scrutiny commission update



Universal Credit

Initial rollout:-

- November 2015 and December 2015 – Single, childless jobseekers (delivered through two tranches)
- After March 2017 – All new claims will be for UC going forward

Managed migration:-

- At least 2018 onwards – claimants who have not migrated to UC due to a change in circumstances

Universal Credit

Universal Credit (UC) (immediate impacts):-

- Approximately 750 out of 2,600 claims expected within 2015/16 will have housing costs. Mostly young males living in central and East Bristol

Universal Credit (UC) (immediate actions):-

- Mapping completed, training and infrastructure in place for Citizen Services to support those affected
- Exploring joint working with Citizen's Advice and Bristol Credit Union (Digital and Financial Inclusion)
- Process changes being made for benefits service and Housing Delivery

Welfare Reform

Benefit Cap (implemented over 2016/17):-

- Almost 1,100 households potentially affected losing an average of £4,500 per annum
- More social and council tenants than under current cap. Often single parent, female households

Other HB changes for 2016/17:-

- Loss of family premium for HB (new claims and births) (1,100 households losing £600 per annum)
- Restricting backdating to one month (400 households)

Welfare Reform

Other changes to working age benefits and tax credits for 2016/17:-

- Freeze on working age benefits for four years (includes HB)
- Reductions in tax credit entitlement for working households
- Social rents to be reduced by 1% per year for four years

Working Groups

Working groups set up for UC and WR:-

- Housing Delivery (Bristol as a landlord)
- Homelessness, Temporary and Supported Accommodation
- Personal Budgeting Support and UC enquiries
- Council debt

All developing work streams for UC and WR:-

- Urgent internal processes
- Impact assessment
- Developing longer term solutions and joint working

Communications

External Stakeholders and Citizens:-

- Updates to web pages for UC and development of pack for those claiming (where to get support etc.)
- Article in 'Housing News' (30,000 circulation to council tenants)
- Met with VOSCUR to discuss joint communications and briefings (40 volunteer managers in October)
- Community liaison and communications officer post being explored

Communications

External Stakeholders and Citizens:-

- Landlord panel meeting (Private Rented Sector) (September)
- Registered Social Landlords (also tying in with Housing Strategy work)

Communications

Internal Stakeholders and members:-

- Briefing to all members via MATI with further face to face meetings to be arranged
- Management and Senior Leadership Team briefings
- Briefing delivered electronically and managed subscription list
- UC page on source
- Specific briefing sessions for staff and meetings with business areas

Communications

Next steps:-

- Second round of communications (update)
- Develop pack for citizens applying for UC (to be distributed via Jobcentre Plus and partners)
- Awareness campaigns to be developed for citizens, staff and stakeholders as rollout progresses and different households affected (differing messages)