



CURRENT ISSUES

Universal Credit

I have received several pro-forma communications relating to the roll out of Universal Credit. While none of these do not appear to relate to individual cases or experience and are simply part of a political campaign that do not require an individual response. I would like to make it immediately plain, however, that I am always willing to take up personal concerns (where a full name, address, contact telephone number and, most importantly, national insurance number are provided) in relation to this or indeed any other issue. It is inevitably the case that with the introduction any new system unforeseen errors occur and that these sometimes cause inconvenience. It is vital that these errors are identified, corrected and remedied as swiftly as possible.

As a rule, where Universal Credit has been rolled out in a Jobcentre site all new claims to existing benefits will cease and claimants in the area will need to make a fresh application for Universal Credit. (My office will be pleased to endeavour to assist if that causes difficulty). Existing claimants will only move to UC in one of two ways. First, if a claimant experiences a change in circumstances (such as the separation of a relationship) that triggers a fresh claim then that claim will be to UC (what is known as `natural migration`). For all other existing claimants, the DWP will begin the `managed migration` process from current benefits to UC this year, completing the process in 2020.

The Government has made a commitment that anyone moving onto Universal Credit without a change in circumstances will have their existing benefit entitlement safeguarded until circumstances do change. This is called `transitional protection`.

