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

05 March 2019

Dear Mr Field

Universal Credit Migration Notices and Transitional Protection

Thank you for your letter of 27 February. As you are aware we will be piloting managed migration from July this year where we will start with very small numbers of claimants, learn from their experience and rapidly develop the service on the basis of the feedback we get. A key part of this will be understanding how claimants react to all our communications, including during the warm up period, and we will develop these during the pilot to ensure that Universal Credit (UC) claims are made at the correct time.

On the specific points in your letter:-

1) The draft Universal Credit (Managed Migration Pilot and Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2019 state that a 'qualifying claim' for the purposes of transitional protection is a claim made by a 'notified person'. This means that claimants who have been issued a migration notice will be eligible for Transitional Protection (TP). Should a claim be made before the migration notice is issued the claimant would not qualify for TP. Communications during the warm up period will be very clear about when and how claimants need to make their UC claims to minimise the numbers of cases where this happens. But we need to be clear that should a claimant experience a change of circumstances in the warm-up period and consequently make a new application, then this would be natural migration and treated accordingly. There is no way to avoid that,
given the length of the warm-up period before the notice is issued. Particularly as a change of circumstances could be advantageous to the claimant and we could not prevent them from benefitting.

2) As well as clear communications during the warm up period, our staff will also provide support and guidance to claimants who may be unsure on when to make their claims and to ensure they only make them once they have received a migration notice.

3) It is our intention that Universal Credit Full Service (UCFS) will be able to recognise a managed migration claim once the migration notice has been issued. This is needed to support the initial payment of TP, to apply erosion and removal rules for TP and to apply certain other rules specific to migration claims (e.g. in self-employed cases) so is a key requirement for the system. Natural Migration cases, those who have a change of circumstances, are treated the same as new claims to Universal Credit within UCFS. In the absence of a business need to recognise them as a separate cohort within UCFS, there are no plans to identify these cases separately.

Yours Sincerely

Neil Couling
Director General, Universal Credit Programme