From the Chair

12 September 2017

Rt Hon David Gauke MP
Secretary of State for Work and Pensions
Department for Work and Pensions
Caxton House
Tothill Street
London, SW1H 9DA

Dear David

Universal Credit rollout

Thank you for meeting on 6 September to discuss Universal Credit (UC), and for agreeing to come before the Committee on 18 October. I would be grateful if you could please supply some information regarding the rollout of full service UC prior to that evidence session.

Delays

You mentioned that the latest data showed that approximately 80% of full service claims were paid within 6 weeks.

1. For each month since May 2016, what (a) number and (b) proportion of UC full service claims were paid within (i) six weeks; (ii) seven weeks; (iii) eight weeks; (iv) nine weeks; (v) 10 weeks; (vi) 11 weeks and (vii) 12 weeks?

2. Of those claims not paid within 12 weeks, what (a) number and (b) proportion were paid (i) after that period and (ii) remained unpaid?

3. Your assessment of reasons why claimants have waited more than six weeks for payment; the relative contributions of those different reasons to the overall picture; and any related substantiating data.

4. Do you please have any statistics of the characteristics of claimants who have waited over 6 weeks for their first payment? Have any groups been particularly likely to face delays?

5. What geographical variation is there in the proportion of claims that have been paid within six weeks? What proportions are being achieved by the highest and lowest performing Jobcentres by this measure?
Advance payments

You noted that advance payment loans had increased in use, mitigating the effects of waiting for first payments.

6. For each month since May 2016, what (a) number and (b) proportion of UC full service claimants have (i) applied for and (ii) received an advance payment?

7. Are you able to provide statistics of the reasons why applications for advance payments have been refused?

8. What has been the average value of advance payments awarded (a) as a proportion of the value of the first payment and (b) in £ terms.

Alternative Payment Arrangements and the Landlord Portal

9. For each month since May 2016, the (a) number and (b) proportion of claimants using an Alternative Payment Arrangement.

10. The current proportion of (a) social landlords who have access to the Landlord Portal and (b) the proportion of social housing stock covered by it, and your schedule for the rollout of that service.

Telephone helpline

11. For each month since May 2016, (a) the number of claimant calls made to the UC telephone helpline, (b) the average wait for calls to be answered and (c) the number of complaints received by the Department that relate to UC full service.

Rollout

12. Could you please provide details of the quality control you will apply at each stage of the UC full service rollout in order to ensure that it is ready to continue, and any (a) local and (b) national benchmarks that the service is expected to achieve.

I would be very grateful if you could please respond by Thursday 12 October.

With best wishes,

Rt Hon Frank Field MP
Chair