



Work and Pensions Committee

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From the Chair

18 October 2018

Neil Couling CBE
Director General, Universal Credit
Department for Work and Pensions
Caxton House
Tothill Street
London SW1H 9NA

Dear Neil

Universal Credit advertising

Thank you for giving evidence to the Committee on managed migration this morning.

The Committee was pleased to hear that the Department shares our concerns about the need for openness and transparency in the ongoing roll-out of Universal Credit. I was also glad to hear that the Department understands the impact that a failure to properly communicate with claimants about the next steps of the roll-out can have on their perception and experiences with Universal Credit.

With this in mind, I was interested to see the following graphic from DWP's Twitter account on 17 October.



As you are aware, many low paid workers are not paid monthly. The Department's own briefing on Universal Credit stated that half of all workers earning under £10,000 per year are paid on weekly, two-weekly or four-weekly cycles.¹ More recent data supplied to the Committee by the ONS shows that of those earning under £12,000 per year, 19% are paid weekly, 5% two-weekly, and 16% four-weekly.² These workers are, of course, those more likely to be claiming Universal Credit.

You will also be aware of the Committee's concerns about Universal Credit payment arrangements for couples. Universal Credit is paid, in its entirety, into the bank account of one nominated partner. This is in no way "like wages", which are paid to the individual who has earned them, irrespective of their personal circumstances.

Might you please therefore explain how misleading advertising such as this is compatible with, and supportive of, the Department's commitment to transparent and open communication with claimants and stakeholders over Universal Credit?

With best wishes and I look forward to hearing from you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Frank Field', written in a cursive style.

Rt Hon Frank Field MP
Chair

¹ <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130125102853/http://dwp.gov.uk/docs/ucpbn-2-payment.pdf>

² Data correct as of April 2016.