



Work and Pensions Committee

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From the Chair

19 June 2019

Will Quince MP

Minister for Family Support, Housing and Child Maintenance

Department for Work and Pensions

Dear Will

Post Grant Advisory Service

Thank you for your letter dated 3 June and summary of findings from the informal assessment of the Post Grant Advisory Service.

The Committee welcomes the progress that has been made on its recommendations from its report on *Benefit delivery*. As you state in your letter, the outcomes for refugees claiming Universal Credit are generally encouraging. I note, however, that of the sample of 100 refugees, only 20 claimed Universal Credit. As UC rollout advances, clearly what will matter most is outcomes under UC rather than legacy benefits. Do you plan to undertake further assessment work with a larger UC sample to assure yourself that the PGAS is working for refugee claimants?

The findings include that 7 out of 20 Universal Credit claimants received an advance, and therefore received some payment within the 28-day period. The original 28-day period was framed at a time when there was no assessment period for means-tested benefits, as is the case under Universal Credit. The report notes the risk of refugees falling into destitution if they do not secure a claim within the 28-day period. Are you therefore, in the light of the waiting period built into UC, considering extending the 28-day period, or providing additional discretionary support by means other than advance payments (given the likely debt aversion of such claimants)?

Lastly, the report notes that between 40-50% of eligible refugees were not successfully contacted by the Home Office. Might you please detail what efforts are made to contact eligible refugees (e.g. how many calls are made, or follow-up messages sent), and what further steps you expect the external provider would take to increase the proportion of those successfully contacted?



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

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Rt Hon Frank Field MP
Chair

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