

**APPENDIX 1: 5 February 2020 - Revenues and Benefits Joint Committee – Welfare Reform Strategy Action Plan update
January 2020**

Autumn Budget 2018		
Update	Details	Update for 5 February 2020
Universal Support	<p>Universal Support currently helps with digital support, such as using a computer to make or maintain their claim, and assistance in budgeting and managing their finances.</p> <p>DWP will enter into a new partnership with Citizens Advice immediately, and they will run their developing service alongside local authorities until 31 March 2019, when Citizens Advice will deliver the full service solely from April 2019.</p> <p>DWP will provide £39 million of funding from April 2019 to Citizens Advice and Citizens Advice Scotland to provide this service. DWP will fund Citizens Advice and Citizens Advice Scotland a further £12 million to set up delivery in the run up to April 2019 to ensure a smooth transition to the new delivery model. This funding is from Universal Support's £200 million budget, which was launched in 2015.</p> <p>There is still a great deal of clarity still required regarding how this arrangement may work, what the exact scope is, and what local authorities' role may be, with concerns as to how this model may operate and whether or not it will match the holistic service to UC customers currently being provided by our shared service to residents of Lincoln and North Kesteven.</p>	<p>January 2020: Citizens Advice 'Help to Claim' arrangements commenced 2019/20, supported by internal arrangements at both City of Lincoln and North Kesteven.</p>

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Universal Credit and Supported Housing	<p>Consultation on a new way of providing funding for supporting housing and a “sheltered rent” closed earlier this year. The new arrangements were intended to start next year and this would have reduced drastically the number of Housing Benefit claims (including for those of pension age). Instead, ring fenced funding would have been provided to local authorities to provide support for these customers.</p> <p>On 9th August 2018, Government announced that all these plans have been dropped and that local authorities will therefore be maintaining Housing Benefit for all supported housing, including short-term. This reflects the particular needs of these vulnerable groups of people, and the government’s commitment to protect them. The plans to introduce a sheltered rent have also gone.</p>	
Universal Credit Work Allowance increase	<p>The Budget provides additional support for people transferring onto Universal Credit, and an increase in the Work Allowance that will mean 2.4 million households keep more of their income.</p> <p>The work allowance is the amount that households with children, and people with disabilities can earn before their Universal Credit award begins to be withdrawn.</p>	<p>January 2020: No new update since last Committee</p> <p>August 2019: No new update since last Committee</p> <p>The Work Allowance will be increased by £1,000 from April 2019. This means that 2.4 million households will keep an extra £630 of income each year.</p>

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		<p>Higher work allowance = £503pcm Lower work allowance = £287pcm</p> <p>However if you are a worker who has no children or you or your partner have not been assessed as having limited capability for work, you will still not receive help in the form of work allowances.</p> <p>The allowance will result in customers who are entitled to it will be better off by £1000 per year.</p>
Extra help for households moving onto Universal Credit	<p>The government has listened to representations made by stakeholders on Universal Credit, and the Budget announces an extensive package of extra support for claimants as they make the transition to Universal Credit.</p> <p>Building on the Autumn Budget 2017 announcement that Housing Benefit claimants will receive an additional payment providing a fortnight's worth of support during their transition to Universal Credit, the government will extend this provision to cover the income-related elements of Jobseeker's Allowance and Employment and Support Allowance, and Income Support. This will be effective from July 2020, and benefit around 1.1 million claimants.</p> <p>To support the transition to Universal Credit for all self-employed people, the government is also extending the</p>	<p>January 2020: No new update since last Committee</p> <p>August 2019: No new update since last Committee</p> <p>2 week run on for JSA, ESA and IS customers</p> <p>These means those who are migrated to UC from July 2020 will receive 2 weeks of HB, 2 weeks of either JSA/IS or ESA and 2 weeks of UC, which adds further financial security to dealing with moving to monthly payments and lessens the need for advanced loans and threat of eviction/court.</p>

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	<p>12-month grace period (the period before the Minimum Income Floor applies) to all gainfully self-employed people; giving claimants time to grow their businesses to a sustainable level. This will be introduced from July 2019 and implemented fully from September 2020.</p> <p>From October 2019, the government will reduce the maximum rate at which deductions can be made from a Universal Credit award from 40% to 30% of the standard allowance. This will ensure that those on Universal Credit are supported to repay debts in a more sustainable and manageable way. From October 2021, the government will also increase the period over which advances will be recovered, from 12 to 16 months.</p>	<p>By reducing the maximum amount that deductions can be made and extended the repayments, this will reduce hardship.</p>
Funding previously announced measures	<p>for In addition, the Budget provides funding for the announcements made by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions in April and June 2018 to support the roll-out of Universal Credit. This provided additional protections for welfare claimants, including: enhancements to transitional protection for people moving onto Universal Credit; extending existing support for non-parental carers and adopters in tax credits and Universal Credit; and enhanced protections for those currently receiving the Severe Disability Premium to provide additional support as Universal Credit is implemented.</p>	<p>January 2020: No new update since last Committee</p> <p>August 2019: No new update since last committee</p>

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	<p>The government will deliver these changes slowly and carefully. In response to feedback on Universal Credit, the implementation schedule has been updated: it will begin in July 2019, as planned, but will end in December 2023. The scope of the surplus earnings policy in Universal Credit will also be temporarily reduced: it will continue to affect large earnings spikes (above £2,500) until April 2020, when it will revert to affecting earnings spikes of £300.</p>	
<p>Support for 18 to 21 year olds and supported Housing</p>	<p>In the Autumn Budget 2017, Ministers have reversed a 2014 move stopping individuals under the age of 21 automatically being entitled to Universal Credit housing costs. This decision has not yet been passed through legislation, and it is likely this will not take place in Autumn 2018 as the legislation has been delayed by 6 months.</p> <p>As a result, currently, 18 to 21 year olds are not eligible for support towards their housing costs, unless they are classed as vulnerable (as defined by DWP). Around 90% of 18-21 year olds are in these categories.</p> <p>The DWP provides a programme of intensive support for all 18 to 21 year olds making a new claim to Universal Credit. This programme is being rolled-out in line with the roll-out schedule for Universal Credit. It aims to encourage and support all young people into employment, work-related training or an apprenticeship,</p>	<p>January 2020: No new update since last Committee</p> <p>August 2019: No new update since last Committee</p> <p>From 31/12/2018 there is no longer any conditionality attached to 18-21 year olds to get help with housing Costs, any tenant that was previously tuned down help with Housing Costs will automatically be awarded from their assessment period following 31/12/2018.</p> <p>Allows those 18-21 to have the rent element paid, they will still be subject to the intensive work scheme (providing they are not exempt) and will allow them to look to enter the labour market with the correct support, whilst being able to live in a stable environment.</p>

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	including a programme of intensive support that is tailored to the individuals' needs and job goals. If the individual is attending training or work experience, travel and childcare costs may also be reimbursed.	

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Severe Disability Premium and Universal Credit	January 2019	<p>Claimants receiving the Severe Disability Premium (SDP) in a legacy benefit will not be able to move on to Universal Credit for the foreseeable future.</p> <p>The SDP is an amount paid to severely disabled people as part of the following legacy benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JSA(IB) • ESA(IR) • IS • HB <p>These claimants also need to be in receipt of one of the following disability benefits, and live alone (or be classed as living alone) and no one must be in receipt of Carer's Allowance (CA) or</p>	<p>January 2020: No new update since October 2019 committee</p> <p>The 'transitional payments' will comprise of: an ongoing monthly payment to those who are eligible for it; and an additional lump-sum payment to cover the period since they moved to UC.</p> <p>The monthly 'transitional payments' reflect the amount of SDP that a claimant was receiving prior to migration, and are a flat rate of: £285 a month for claimants not in the UC limited capability for work related activity (LCWRA) group (the broad monthly equivalent of the lower rate SDP at £65.85 a week) £120 a month where the UC claimant has been determined as having LCWRA, and who therefore already receives an additional amount in their UC award because of</p>

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		<p>the UC Carer Element for caring for them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability Living Allowance (DLA) care component at the middle or higher rate • Personal Independence Payment (PIP) daily living component at the standard or enhance rate • Attendance Allowance or Constant Attendance Allowance • Armed Forces Independence Payment (AFIP). <p>If the claimants are in a couple, they get the higher amount of severe disability premium if the claimant and partner are eligible.</p> <p>Claimants who receive a legacy benefit which includes the SDP, will no longer receive SDP or any other premium once they make a claim to UC. These premiums are not payable under UC regulations.</p>	<p>their health condition. The higher rate of the LCWRA component is taken into account against the extra payments offered by the transitional protection £405 a month where joint claimants were receiving the higher couple rate SDP in their existing benefits</p> <p>£285 a month where joint claimants were receiving the lower couple rate SDP and are not receiving the LCWRA component in UC</p> <p>£120 a month where joint claimants were receiving the lower couple rate SDP and are receiving the LCWRA component in UC</p> <p>August 2019: The Universal Support team are currently reviewing cases who may be eligible for an SDP. All customers with Disability Living Allowance (DLA) Care and Personal Independence Allowance (PIP) will have a review where there is a deduction for under occupation. The team will look to reduce this through increasing the carers allowance within the claim calculation or Discretionary Housing Payment. There are 188 Lincoln tenants who are in receipt of either DLA or PIP – Officers are currently reviewing the best way to proceed with these cases.</p>

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			<p>By retaining those with SDP under HB this allows for them to continue to receive disability premiums, which there are currently none under UC.</p> <p>Those that have already moved over before the regulations changed will be given backdated “compensation” payments as a transitional payment”.</p>
Universal Credit Two-child Limit	1 February 2019	<p>Families with more than two children who make new claims for Universal Credit will no longer be directed to claim Child Tax Credit.</p> <p>The two child limit will not apply to those families.</p> <p>Those who have been awarded Universal Credit after April 2017 and have two or fewer children but who then have a third or subsequent child will have the two-child limit applied.</p>	<p>January 2020: No new update since last Committee</p> <p>August 2019: No new update since last Committee</p> <p>Those that have more than 2 children before April 2017 will get the child element under UC for all children, if a subsequent child is born after April 2017 they will not get the child element for this child.</p> <p>Those who have a 3rd child after April 2017 will not get the child element for this child (they would still be entitled to any disabled elements).</p> <p>Those with more than 2 children, who get the child element will in most cases be subject to the</p>

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			Benefit Cap of £20,000, which in most cases will then not make then any better off financially.
Pension Credit Child allowances	1 February 2019	People of Pension Credit age who are responsible for a dependent child or children, will receive help with the child or children in the form of dependent allowances paid within their Pension Credit award. This is because you will no longer be able to make a new claim for Tax Credits (Child Tax Credit or Working Tax Credit) if you are Pension Credit age.	January 2020: No new update since last Committee
Universal Credit Work Allowance Increases	April 2019	Work allowances are the amount of your earnings from employment that you are allowed to keep before it is taken into account as income for Universal Credit. These will increase by £1000 for the year, meaning that people in work who have children or have limited capability for work (or their partner has limited capability for work) will benefit by up to £630 per year.	January 2020: No new update since last Committee
National Minimum Wage Increase	April 2019	The National Living Wage will increase by 4.9% from £7.83per hour to £8.21 per hour in April 2019.	January 2020: No new update since last Committee

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		The National Minimum Wage increases from £7.38 per hour to £7.70 per hour for people aged 21 to 24; and from £5.90per hour to £6.15per hour for people aged 18 to 20.	
Universal Credit and Mixed Aged Couples	16 May 2019	<p>From 15 May 2019, mixed age couples (where one party of the couple is over Pension Credit qualifying age and the other under that age) will no longer be able to choose whether they claim Universal Credit or Pension Credit or pension age Housing Benefit. Both parties of a couple will have to reach the Pension Credit qualifying age before they can be entitled to Pension Credit and/or pension age Housing Benefit.</p> <p>Protections There is a protection for existing mixed age couples as though the changes had not come into force. This means that where a mixed age couple were entitled to the following on 14 May 2019, they will continue to be entitled on or after 15 May 2019:</p>	January 2020: No new update since last Committee

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pension age Housing Benefit • Pension Credit or • Both. <p>The protection will cease for the working age member of the couple, on any day on or after 15 May 2019, when that person is not entitled to either pension age Housing Benefit or Pension Credit as a part of the same mixed age couple.</p> <p>Single Pensioner forms a partnership If a single pensioner forms a couple with a person below the qualifying age on or after 15 May 2019, entitlement to pension age Housing Benefit and Pension Credit will end.</p> <p>Approaching mixed age: Couples who are under State Pension age and have an award of HB assessed under the Housing Benefit Regulations 2006 (SI 2006/213), ‘working age HB’, will become a mixed age couple once one member reaches pension age.</p>	

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		<p>At this point rather than re-assessing the claim under the Housing Benefit (Persons who have attained the qualifying age for state pension credit) Regulations 2006 (SI 2006/214) 'pension age HB', the couple should be advised that they need to claim Universal Credit (UC). The relevant provision is Article 6(2)(b) and (3)(a) of SI 2019/37.</p> <p>Where the younger partner is in receipt of Income Support (IS), Jobseeker's Allowance (income-based) (JSA(IB)), Employment and Support Allowance (income-related) (ESA(IR)), the couple will not be required to claim UC and can continue to receive working age HB if they have an existing claim until there is a relevant change in their circumstances which ends entitlement to those benefits. They will have to claim UC if they need further help with their housing costs.</p>	
Managed Migration	July 2019	The current plan in Great Britain is that DWP will begin testing the managed	January 2020: No new update since August committee

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		<p>migration process from July 2019 to July 2020 through a pilot in Harrogate.</p> <p>During this period, up to 10,000 existing legacy benefit claimants (including some tax credit claimants) will be moved across to UC through the new process.</p> <p>Benefit claimants in Harrogate in North Yorkshire will be the first to be transferred to Universal Credit by managed migration under a pilot scheme for 12 months. Transitional protection will be available to those taking part in the pilot. Only once the pilot scheme has been completed and assessed, claimants will be moved over to Universal Credit in greater numbers.</p>	<p>August 2019: The Universal Support team will monitor the process and outcomes of the managed migration.</p>
Self-employed minimum income floor grace period	July 2019	<p>Self-employed people whose earnings are low, may have their Universal Credit worked out on higher earnings than they have. This is called the Minimum Income Floor (35hours per week x £8.21(NLW) x 52 weeks/12</p>	<p>January 2020: No new update since August committee</p> <p>August 2019: No new update since last Committee</p>

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		<p>months). If the business has started within the last 12 months the minimum income floor does not affect the entitlement for the first 12 months of the Universal Credit claim. The government have announced that they will extend this 12-month ‘grace period’ to all people who are gainfully self-employed.</p> <p>However, this will only apply to people who have been transferred over to Universal Credit by managed migration from July 2019 at the earliest. Self-employed people who make a new Universal Credit claim or have a change of circumstance which moves them on to Universal Credit, will not benefit from this change until September 2020.</p>	
Universal Credit Advance Recovery Reduction	October 2019	From October 2019, the maximum rate at which deductions can be made from Universal Credit, to repay an advance payment, will be reduced from 40% to 30% of the standard allowance of Universal Credit.	<p>January 2020: No new update since August committee</p> <p>August 2019: No new update since last Committee</p>

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		The period over which advances can be recovered will be extended from 12 to 16 months, from October 2021.	
Parental Bereavement leave and pay	April 2020	The government will introduce a new legal entitlement to two weeks' leave for employees who suffer the death of a child under 18, or a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy. Employed parents will also be able to claim pay for this period if they meet the qualifying conditions. However, we are awaiting further announcements on what the qualifying criteria is going to be.	January 2020: No new update since August committee August 2019: No new update since last Committee
New Year upratings for NLW, NMW, SRP	April 2020	From 1 April 2020, the new hourly rates will be - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £8.72 for workers aged 25 and over - 6.2 per cent increase; • £8.20 for 21-24 year olds - 6.5 per cent increase; • £6.45 for 18-20 year olds - 4.9 per cent increase; • £4.55 for under 18s - 4.6 per cent increase; and • £4.15 for apprentices - 6.4 per cent increase. 	January 2020: No new update since August committee

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Benefit rates increase	April 2020	After four years the benefit freeze ends in April 2020....and the Government confirms rates will rise by 1.7 per cent approx. This will likely mean a rise in most local housing allowance (LHA) levels	
New update: State pension to rise at least 4%	April 2020	<p>Millions of pensioners will receive at least a 4% pay rise next year, in line with annual wage growth – the biggest increase since 2012.</p> <p>Pensioners would see their payments rise by up to £351 a year.</p> <p>The state pension is protected by the ‘triple lock’, which means it increases each April by the greater of price inflation, earnings growth or 2.5%. While September’s inflation figures are yet to be released, pensioners are currently on track to earn a 4% bump in line with workers for the second year running.</p>	Jan 2020: State retirement pension will increase by 3.9 per cent.
Removal of free TV Licence	June 2020	The free TV licence will no longer be available to all people 75 or over. From 1 June 2020 the criteria will be aged 75 or over and getting Pension	January 2020: No new update since August committee

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		Credit in order to qualify for the free licence.	August 2019: No new update since last Committee
2 weeks transitional payment for passported incomes	July 2020	Claimants will receive an additional fortnight's worth of Income-based Jobseekers' Allowance, Income-related Employment and Support Allowance or Income Support if they are on one of these benefits when they move over to Universal Credit	January 2020: No new update since August committee August 2019: No new update since last Committee
Self-employed Minimum Income Floor Grace Period	September 2020	Available to everyone	January 2020: No new update since August committee August 2019: No new update since last Committee
New update: Close SDP Gateway	January 2021	The new regulations abolish, from January 2021, the SDP Gateway that prevents claimants entitled to the SDP from making a claim to UC if they have a relevant change of circumstances. Once the Gateway is removed claimants will move to UC if they have a relevant change of circumstances and may be eligible to be considered for transitional payments.	January 2020: No new update since last committee October 2019: This is a new update

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