

Universal Credit Programme

Infrastructure and Project Authority Report Publication Strategy

1. DWP is committed to Transparency in line with the commitment to Open Government. The Universal Credit Programme is an exemplar of transparency in major government projects. In line with other major government projects the UC Programme is required by the Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA) to provide regular project updates required by the IPA and is also the focus of regular routine scrutiny from the National Audit Office and public discussion of progress at the Public Accounts Committee and the Work and Pensions Select Committee.
2. The Universal Credit Programme also fulfils its commitments under the Freedom of Information act and works closely with the Information Commissioners Office to ensure that the public "right to access" to information held by the Programme is a reality. DWP is of course subject to Parliamentary scrutiny and has answered hundreds of Parliamentary questions to address parliamentarians interest in Universal Credit.
3. In March 2018 we published 5 Project Assessment Review reports(PAR) produced by the independent IPA from 2011 to 2015. In June 2018, DWP published a summary of the Universal Credit business case. During 2018, as part of the wider consideration of the Universal credit transparency agenda, the decision was made to routinely publish Programme Assurance reports. To do this, we have put in place a publication schedule to release the independent reviews of the Universal Credit Programme.
4. This degree of openness and sharing of the detail of the development and implementation of a major government programme demonstrates further progress in the DWP transparency agenda.
5. We do, however, need to strike a balance between the transparency that we are committed to and the need to give space for officials to provide unfettered advice to Senior Programme officials, such as the Senior Responsible Owner, as the project progresses.
6. We will be publishing PAR reports in annual batches, three years after they have been produced for the Senior Responsible Owner to consider and take any necessary action. We will make these independent Project Assessment Reviews publicly available by publishing them as deposited papers in the House of Commons library. We have taken a similar approach to the publication of Universal Credit guidance and Universal Credit Project Board papers. This approach has been well received by a range of external stakeholders.
7. The decision to schedule publication of these independent review reports for 3 years was taken following discussions with Cabinet Office and the Infrastructure and Project

Authority. The first release of the Programme's assurance documents will be in October 2019 when we will publish the PAR reports from September 2016.

8. DWP has made this decision in line with the UC programme's transparency agenda and it should not be taken as agreed practice across Government.