

OFFICIAL SENSITIVE

**To: UC Programme Board****From : Susan Park  
UC Operations  
Director General**

## **Universal Credit Operations Update**

### **Summary**

Rollout of the 'full' service continues with 41 Jobcentres joining in November which brings our total to 187 Jobcentres supported by 25 Service Centres. As of 28th November the 'full' service caseload was 293k and 'live' service 407k. We have seen some encouraging performance improvement across both Universal Credit 'full' and 'live' services. We are working closely with Programme and Finance colleagues on resource planning for 2018/19 and the longer term. In the meantime we've brought in a further 680 people in Nov (2592 YTD) and training is underway for those going live in December and the New Year, all of which is on track.

The 2017 people survey results became available in November, with UC Operations registering 66% engagement (from a 74% response rate). The department's overall engagement score remained at 60%.

We worked with the programme during November to impact the proposed budget announcements and focussed on getting our teams in the best possible shape to confidently land any subsequent changes. Following the announcement we worked closely with partner organisations to ensure they too understand any changes impacting them. Feedback so far from partners and colleagues was that the changes have landed well with customers. We will continue to undertake detailed impacting now the announcement has been made to ensure we are prepared for the changes as they are implemented.

In addition to the Budget changes we introduced the Freephone numbers across UC telephone lines on 29<sup>th</sup> November. Universal Credit is the first service line to move to Freephone with the rest of the department following later in the year. It is too early to say anything about the impacts of introducing Freephone numbers.

We are progressing the telephony routing trial in Canterbury which we believe to be one of our key enablers to deliver multi-channel case management next year - our strategic operating model. Once we have evaluation later next year we will impact any revised telephony assumptions including any potential for channel shift.

General IT infrastructure problems continued during November with issues affecting both Live and Full Service. The majority of issues and outages experienced in UC occurred as a result of linked system failures for example Customer Information System (CIS) and Central Payment System. Internet connectivity issues with Mozilla Firefox also caused access issues to UCFS and Work Force Manager slow-running removed visibility of coverage across both 'live' and 'full' service lines. Digital colleagues are visiting our major sites to review server capacity, with visits to the majority of UC Service Centres to be completed by the New Year providing a clearer understanding of infrastructure and capacity requirements impacting specific geographies.

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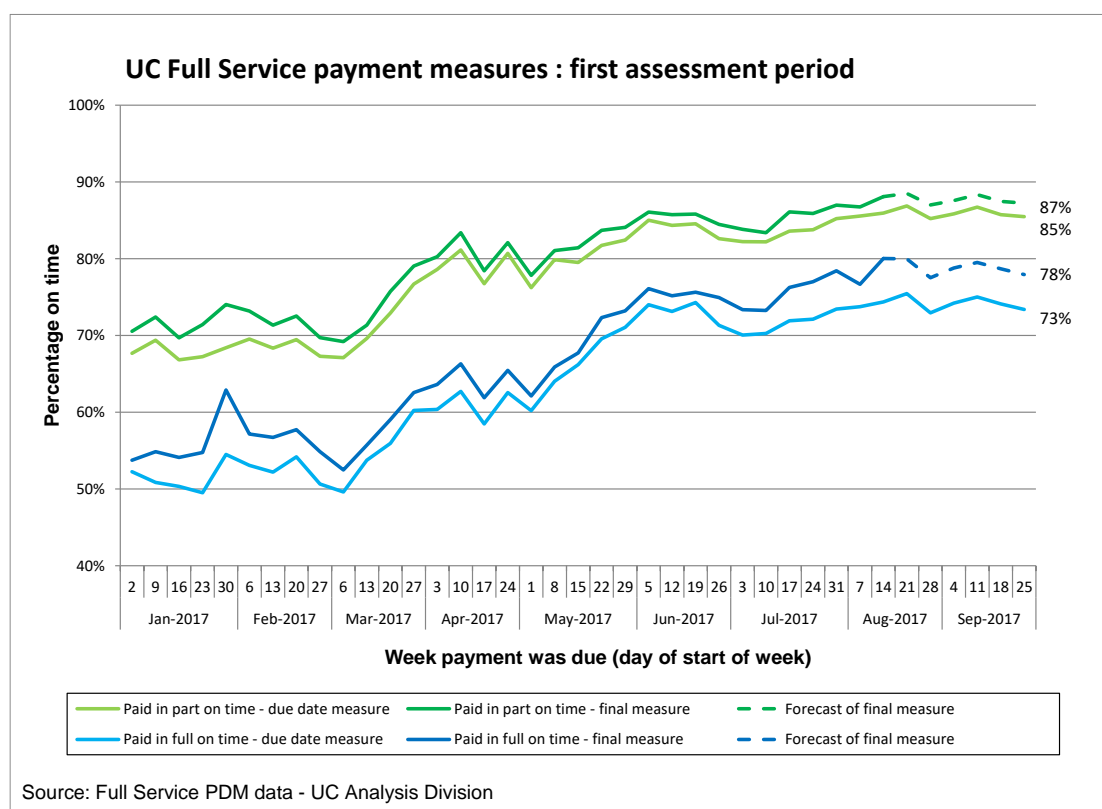
### Christmas and New Year Planning

Our highest priority remains ensuring payments get to our customers on time over the holiday period. We have worked with digital colleagues to continuously improve and enhance the process over this period e.g. extra batch days/closer monitoring etc. which provides us further confidence in our approach.

### Performance

#### Payments/1st AP

The latest chart from UC Analytical Directorate is below and shows forecast payment in full in the 1st AP (78%) and the latest data for the same measure across all APs (87%).



The rollout of the Landlord Portal has continued in November with 93 landlords now live, good feedback about the portal continues.

### Decision Making

Progress continues with decision making now at 8.4 days which is well within the 10 days within which we expect decisions to be made.

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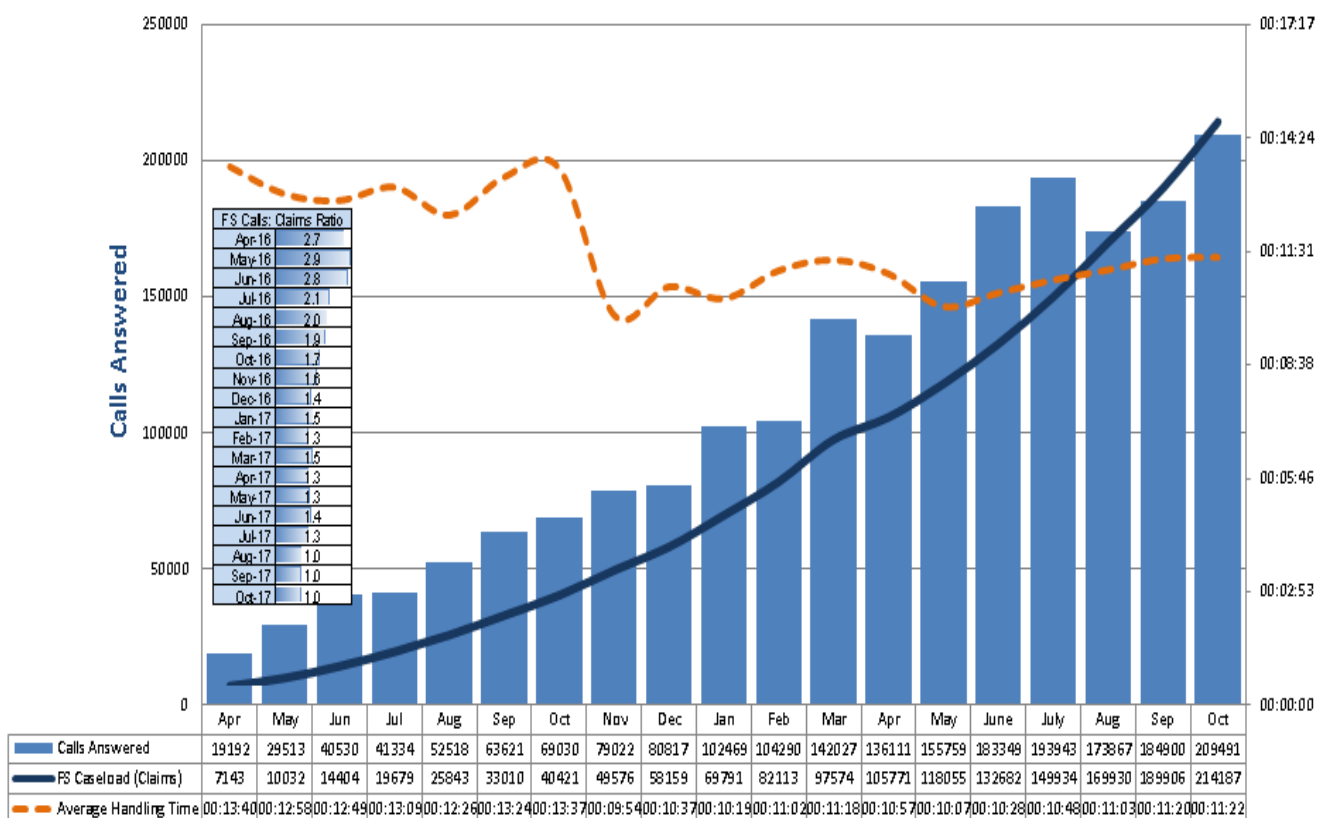
### Quality

The agreed quality measure for Full Service at this stage is for 'Trust Payment' to be on or over 90% and we have achieved that consistently between August and October. We are reviewing the definition and interpretation of 'Tier 2' payment errors in line with the Board's steer to ensure we can isolate error which impacts immediate payment outcomes, for targeted improvement, as well as sustaining wider continuous improvement activity.

### Full Service Telephony

We have seen a period of stability in telephony, supported by Dynamic Call Routing (delivered as part of Next Generation Contact Centre - NGCC). There were some reporting issues this month which means the calls answered figure is an estimate only, we do however expect to have maintained 90% of calls answered. The regularity of customers contacting us by phone continues to reduce to the equivalent of on average once every 21.7 days in November, this has reduced from once every 18.0 days in October.

FS Calls Answered/AHT/Calls per Caseload (Oct-17)

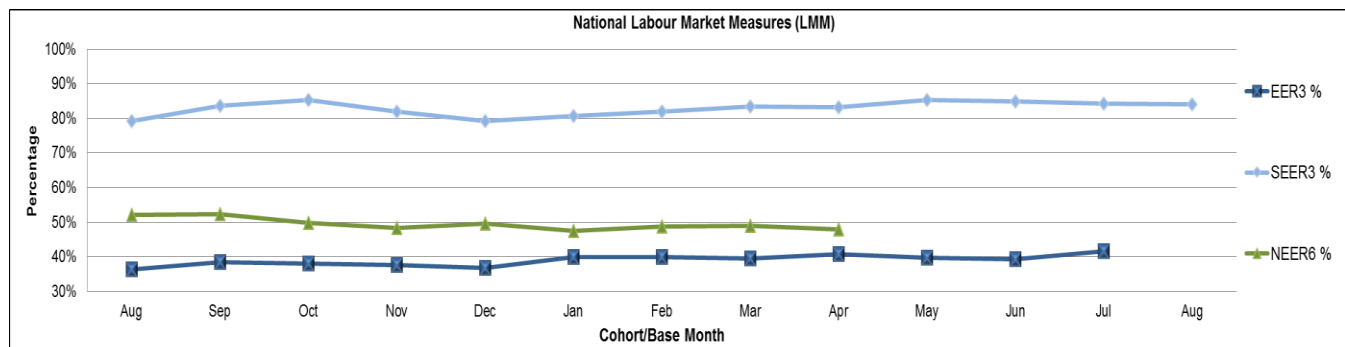


### Telephony Routing Pilot

As referenced earlier the trial continues across a number of teams in Canterbury, helping us build intelligence about how customers can successfully navigate to their case manager or team. The team is now concentrating on improving the claimant matching percentage (currently running at 65%) and how more can land with their linked Case Manager, not just into their linked team. The next phase is on track for expansion in Jan 18.

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### Labour Market



Labour Market results remain flat.

### **Operational Risks and Mitigations - this month our focus is on:**

**Decision Making /Habitual Residence Test (HRT)** – The risk in this space is manual and complex process which is difficult to navigate. Following a full review of the process Operational Excellence Directorate are working with the operational teams to support the move to centralise Migrant Access to Benefit (MABs)/Habitual Residency Test (HRT), decisions. We believe this move will improve both quality and speed of decision making. UC 'full' overall outstanding work remains within 10 days with payment blocking decision types cleared in 6 days. In UC 'live' the overall combined outstanding work now stands at 20.9 days. We will continue to work across live and full to balance resources and identify further improvements.

**Health** – This process is also flagged as a risk due to its complexity and because its process steps are difficult to navigate and manually intensive. Following a review of some of the more sensitive processes we have introduced a change which allows UC to reuse information already held in other benefits ensuring, for example, customers with a terminal illness receive the relevant element at the earliest opportunity.

**Claimant Orientation** - Evidence suggests claimants and 3<sup>rd</sup> parties may struggle to orientate to the right place quickly. We have been working with our customers and colleagues to support better orientation during this period of 'natural' migration to UC from 'existing' benefits.

Work continues in our other priority areas such as housing, ID verification and children and we will give a progress update in January.

### **UC Live Service**

The UCLS caseload reduced by a further 1.7% in November to 406,815 this has been a trend now for the last 6 weeks. Improved functionality in the IT Release 12.3 will start to remove some of the manual effort in live service around. 'Live' had the same reporting issues this month as 'full' which means the calls answered figure is an estimate only. We do however expect to have maintained 85% of calls answered with customers ringing us on average every 19.2 days.