

To: UC Programme Board

From: JP Marks
Work and Health Services
Director General

Universal Credit Operations Update

Payment Timeliness in the first Assessment Period is healthy at 86.4% and has increased for the last six weeks. Week commencing 27 May, 17 Service Centres performed over 85%. Subsequent Assessment Period payment timeliness is at 94% with 304,350 claimants paid in full on time during this week. The claims to pay remain steady at 30K.

Unit Cost and Caseloading Total unit cost per Caseload (Claims) went down by 2% to £417. We anticipate that the unit cost will continue its downward trend in 2019/20. The caseloading ratio has continued to improve, with increased efficiency across mature Service Centres reaching its highest level.

PCS Union Despite pro-active engagement and positive changes to resourcing and workload in Walsall and Wolverhampton Service Centres, PCS called for a further two days of Industrial Action on 28 & 29 May under their live mandate. Following robust preparation, the sites, supported by wider colleagues in DWP, were able to minimise any disruption and prioritise payments for their customers over the two days.

Securing Advances Following recent discussions at PDE and ET we are currently planning Test & Learn activity to inform development of any strategic solution provisionally scheduled for progress in P8; and in the meantime we are pushing ahead with increasing number of Fraud prosecutions.

Telephony

- For June 2018 to May 2019, UC telephony performance for calls answered was 86%, with an average speed of answer of 4 minutes 27 seconds;
- In May 2019, 95% of calls in integrated telephony were answered, with an average speed of answer of 1 minute 2 seconds;
- We are refining the way we measure calls per Case Manager per week and will have an update for the Board next month.

The **Labour Market Operational Group** (LMOG) has developed a roadmap that focuses on key priorities, transforming the delivery of labour market interventions. There has been considerable focus across Operations and Policy colleagues to collect and collate numbers and activity levels on the **Youth Obligation Support Programme**. We have shared robust numbers for publication with the Minister for Employment – the MI gives us rich information to use with our Group Leads to discuss and better understand variance in outcomes. A couple of headlines 1) of those who completed the programme 49.5% have gone in to work, 2) of those gone in to work – c50% did so within 2 months of joining the programme.

Delivery of **Labour Market Campaign** Year 2 activity is now underway. As well as maintaining the focus on 'Health Confident' and 'Single Parents and Women into Work', the campaign will also promote the six additional priority areas identified by LMOG, as updated in the last paper.

Childcare - From early June new account codes will be available to report Flexible Support Fund Childcare costs, including upfront Childcare costs uniquely. We estimate robust data available from September onwards.

Childcare Late Reporting Trial - All stakeholders are content with the approach to roll out childcare costs late reporting. Work has started to update the relevant guidance, learning and Agent Led Process. We are working on our implementation approach to land the change nationally, ideally by the end of June.

Latest Labour Market stats released this month show:

- More people are in work than ever before. The employment rate is at a record high – 76.1%. The unemployment rate is 3.8%, the lowest rate since the 1970's
- Female employment is at a record high – 72.0%
- The ethnic minority employment rate is 66.5% – a record high
- The disability employment rate is 51.7%

UC complaints as a percentage of the caseload are 0.04% in April, which is down from 0.06% in March.

Decision Making Work continues to drive down the outstanding work on HRT decisions. Volumes have reduced from 27K to 23K over the last four weeks and trajectories reflect a decrease moving forward. Improvement work is underway to ensure all arms of the business accurately complete their responsibilities within the journey. Overall UC DMA Head of Work is currently 9.6 days, down from last month's 11.3.

Mandatory reconsideration work within the decision making area has reduced to 1.4K with the final clearance to be delivered by 14 June.

Achieving 95% payment accuracy - The April payment accuracy Caseload Growth Measure is 89%, and the three Month Rolling Average is at 93%. Although the underlying trend remains broadly positive, we are examining root causes in view of the in-month dip.

Health - The four trials testing alternative arrangements for Work Capability Assessment (WCA) referrals have now finished. We are progressing putting the Work Coach at the heart of the referral process to ensure customers feel supported throughout, that referrals are on time and to improve the quality.

Landlords - As of May 2019, there are 750 landlords using the Landlord Portal (up from 723 in March 2019). This number includes 16 Landlords from Northern Ireland. No landlords were enrolled in April.

ID Verification - GOV.UK Verify performance has improved slightly in recent months. 58.6% of claimants who made a Universal Credit Full Service declaration in May 2019 attempted to verify their ID via GOV.UK Verify, with 43% of those attempting it doing so successfully.