

To: *UC Programme Board Members **From:** Lara Sampson
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cc:

Move to Universal Credit Update

Issue: The purpose of this paper is to provide UC Programme Board with an update on the learning from the Move to UC pilot in Harrogate, and to share our updated plans to give confidence in generating volume for the evaluation and respond to the challenge of demonstrating pace.

UC Programme Board are asked to:

- Note the learning from Harrogate
- Note our plans to expand the pilot
- Provide their continued support on the approach to the pilot – in particular to retain the focus on learning and iterative design

Timing: For meeting 18th February 2020

Introduction

1. Since the launch of the Move to UC pilot in Harrogate Jobcentre on 24th July 2019, we have been steadily learning what works and where the challenges are in moving people safely from legacy benefits to UC. Our ambition is to have identified a number of successful models which we can start to scale by the end of the pilot phase.
2. At a meeting on 15th October 2019 the Secretary of State asked the Programme to consider increasing the pace and volume of claimants moving through the pilot.
3. This paper therefore covers:
 - An update on the Move to UC pilot in Harrogate focusing on what we have learned so far - we will provide an introduction to initial learnings to Programme Board, based on the slides in the annex

- Our proposals to give confidence in generating volumes while retaining a focus on learning in response to the request from Ministers
- The delivery risks associated with the acceleration of moving to new sites earlier than originally planned

An update on the Move to UC pilot in Harrogate

4. We have been continuing to test our overarching hypothesis that we will be more successful in helping people move onto UC by working with the grain of the existing relationships they have. We call this model ‘who knows me’ as we are looking for where claimants have meaningful relationships that could support their move.
5. We started in Harrogate by using the existing relationships that DWP claimants have with their Work Coaches. We refer to this as the Work Coach led approach as it uses business as usual interventions that claimants have in Harrogate Jobcentre with their Work Coaches.
6. Our user researchers have been observing and obtaining feedback from both claimants and Work Coaches to capture learning on how best to move those claimants safely to UC. By safely we mean without increasing vulnerability, causing a break in income or resorting to stopping benefits. That learning has been feeding into the design which is changing rapidly in response. A presentation summarising early learning is provided in **Annex 1**.
7. At the time of writing, approximately 80 claimants are currently engaged in the Move process with 24 of them having moved onto UC. Ministers have expressed a concern that if it has taken 6 months to achieve these volumes, it seems over ambitious to expect that we will be around 1k by June as in the plan below. It is worth making sure Programme Board is able to explain this to stakeholders especially as a version of these numbers was shared in Parliament recently.
8. We started in Harrogate exactly as we started in Sutton in 2014 which is to say, with a very basic minimum viable product (no automation, few defined processes and some early products such as the migration notice). The first few months are spent establishing repeatable learning processes and artefacts, building up processes for new use cases as they emerge on a daily basis, adjusting the tone and frequency of the conversations with claimants, very closely monitoring and adjusting the user journey and checking the accuracy of the transitional protection calculation. It is only having established these basic functions that we allow an increase in the flow of new claimants to engage. So the projection forward of the number of

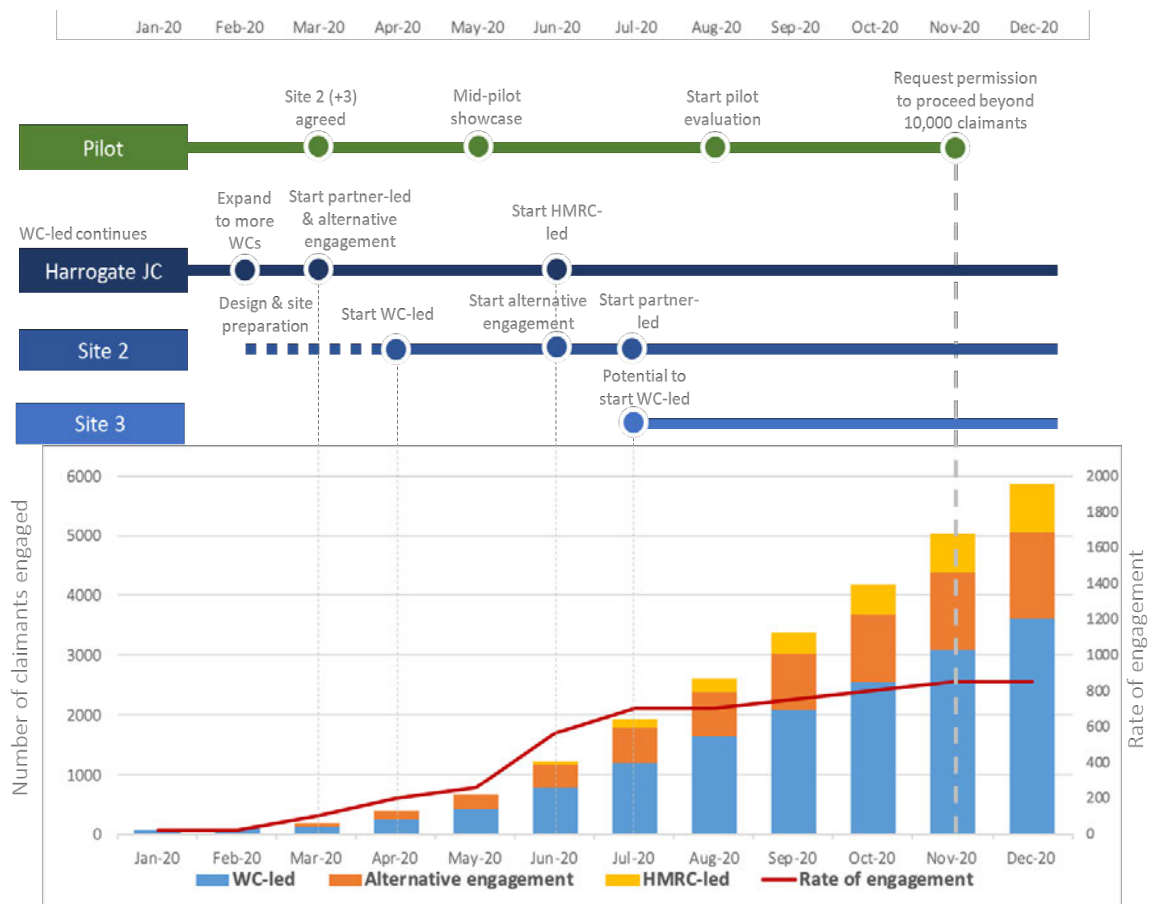
cases that we can engage is not based on what we have done to date but on our learning and support capacity as we grow.

9. Having explained that, it is important that we do not track these numbers on an ongoing basis. We must avoid getting diverted by a focus on volume, when our approach and focus needs to be on understanding our learning, so that we know how we might scale and move quicker later during the course of the Programme.
10. Our next steps beyond the Work Coach led approach was to start trialling other approaches within ‘who knows me’ (i.e. HMRC and Partner-led) to understand whether our hypothesis proves true for claimants who do not have a relationship with a DWP Work Coach. We are still planning to test these models alongside a push to expand the reach of the pilot as described below.

Our proposals to expand the pilot

11. In response to the request to increase the pace of the pilot, we met with Ministers on 20th January to propose a package of alterations to the pilot some of which increase pace and some of which were already in the plan but have a firmer commitment to numbers. These are to:
 - Accelerate the current Work Coach-led approach by bringing forward a second Jobcentre - generating additional volume as well as expanding learning through testing in an area with different demographic characteristics. We may also expand to a third Jobcentre in July/August 2020
 - Trial an ‘alternative engagement approach’ in Harrogate, to learn the most effective ways to move those DWP claimants who we do not have strong relationship with as they do not come into the Jobcentre on a regular basis
 - Continue work to co-design and trial a Partner-led approach, starting initially in Harrogate as planned, but with a view to expanding to the second site earlier than planned – generating evidence for the evaluation of how partners can help us move certain types of claimants (particularly those the DWP do not have a relationship with)
 - Commencing design activity for the HMRC-led approach as planned to establish how far ‘who knows me’ will work for tax credit claimants, which forms a significant proportion of the overall claimant base to be moved
12. The **chart** below provides further detail of the time-line and volumes associated with our proposals, although it is important to note that while

HMRC is working in partnership with us during the pilot phase, we do not yet know how successful we will be in encouraging claimants to move through HMRC channels, and therefore the extent to which we need that to extend beyond November and how we would do so. We will return to the Programme Board with proposals to move beyond November later in the year:



13. There are positive aspects to these changes - expanding to other Jobcentres early and trialling a wider variety of approaches enables us to simultaneously bring forward our learning and firm up the evidence base for the evaluation, as well as accelerating the pace of the pilot in terms of volume. However, it does also create greater levels of risk. The above plans were pulled together very quickly in response to the request from Ministers to increase the pace and volumes in the pilot. We are in the process of scrutinising and validating them against the following key risks:

- Engaging with and supporting the needs of multiple sites and approaches may divert resources away from learning and growing the service. This may create handling issues; duplication of effort and an inability to effectively collate and apply learning consistently across the pilot
- November 2020

- Operating with more manual processes, which increases the risk for operations (e.g. inaccurate and/or late payment), both for Move to UC activities and BAU activities; impacting on the reputation of UC and DWP
 - Increases pressure on product development to support use of manual processes at scale
 - Risk to operational delivery and customer service
 - Further pressure to add in volume to the pilot, risks overwhelming it, and stunting our ability to learn how to scale our processes and delivery approaches
 - The impact on the Move to UC project resources may create delays to automation activity, resulting in a delay to our ability to scale beyond
14. The greatest risk to delivery is the same as that for the wider UC product development team which is to maintain fully resourced teams with all the skills necessary represented in each team. The two teams in Leeds currently focused on Move are not currently fully resourced and there is a need to stand up a third team by the end of February to support the HMRC model. The work in train to combat the negative impact of IR35 on the wider product development team is being prioritised to support the Leeds team in the first instance and other routes are being considered – such as asking for support from wider Digital Group activity – to ensure that resources do not become a barrier to successful delivery.
15. Our overall imperative remains to have created sufficient evidence to assess how far any of these “who knows me” approaches will enable us to successfully move people onto UC and at what cost. That evidence will be required to lift the 10,000 limit by returning to Parliament in Autumn 2020 with some successful models that can start to scale. We will continue to assess and adapt the pilot to meet this imperative.
16. We believe that, subject to sufficient mitigation of the risks, the plan above balances the imperative to learn, iterate design and create credible evidence for evaluation alongside providing confidence in scale and pace. It has inevitably resulted in a focus on numbers (both current and projected) and we are likely to come under continued pressure to provide detailed and frequent updates on volumes. Of course, the numbers of claimants we are engaging is only important in so far as it enables us to learn and change the design of the Move experience.
17. We will continue to provide Programme Board with evidence of that learning and changing design as it emerges to enable the Board to continue to advocate an evidence based test and learn approach to this phase of the Programme. We propose returning to Programme Board in April with a

further update and a proposal for planning the move out of the pilot phase and into the next stage of the Move to UC approach.

Decision / Recommendation

18. UC Programme Board are asked to:

- Note the learning from Harrogate
- Note our plans to expand the pilot
- Provide its continued support and to champion the approach to the pilot – in particular to retain the focus on learning and iterative design rather than on volumes

Annex 1: Move to UC User Research