

Department for Work and Pensions

Independent Review of Move to Universal Credit

> February 2021 Final Report Version 1.0

> > Department for Work & Pensions

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This report is based on information and inputs provided by DWP and provides recommendations, which are intended to be guidance only and against which DWP should make its own conclusions.

Section 1 - Executive Summary

1.1 Background

- The rollout of the Universal Credit system and processes across Job Centres completed in December 2018. This covered new claimants and the transfer of existing claimants with specific changes of circumstance but not the claimants who at the time claimed benefits on legacy systems. From December 2018 as well as managing changes and improvements to the Universal Credit core systems and process there was still a need to address the existing benefits claimants on legacy systems and move them on to Universal Credit.
- 2. The Move to UC programme commenced a pilot in Harrogate Job Centre in July 2019 as the first stage to developing a solution which could be rolled out to the circa 2.9M claimants who continue to receive legacy benefits. The pilot ran until March 2020 when the DWP-wide response to Covid-19 required the redeployment of those working on Move to UC to higher priority activities.
- 3. The DWP Secretary of State and Permanent Secretary commissioned an external review of the Move to UC plan, as agreed by the UC Programme Board, to explore the scope for:
 - (1) A faster mobilisation into the phase than 2022 by understanding prioritisation and capacity constraints?
 - (2) Whether there are viable alternatives which might allow any capacity constraints to be removed to facilitate the above?
 - (3) Whether an alternative approach to the Harrogate agile discovery can be constructed; with a particular focus on whether taking tax credit cases first is feasible/sensible?
 - (4) And if not does the overall approach seem sensible, practicable and optimal in the current circumstances?

1.2 Findings

- 4. In this report, we have confined ourselves to answering the four specific questions we were set in the requirement for our study. We have not examined the overall delivery timeline for completing managed migration of claimants, currently estimated by the Department as September 2024 and we have not developed a detailed strategy or plan for restart, as these are outside the scope of our proposal.
- 5. More detail on each of the findings is provided in the main body of the report along with supporting evidence. We have also set out four key recommendations which we believe will enable the Department to restart the Move to UC programme as early as possible and complete the migrations of legacy claimants in the shortest possible time.

Question 1: Is there a faster mobilisation into the phase than 2022 by understanding prioritisation and capacity constraints?

- 6. Given the current programme prioritisation in the Department, there is limited UC product development and operational resource that can be applied to the Move to UC programme in 2021. These critical resources are currently being impacted by:
 - The ongoing operational and product development challenge of responding to the CV-19 pandemic
 - The possibility of a further spike of claimants following the closure of the furlough scheme
 - The work already agreed with UC stakeholders for delivery in 2021 e.g. Labour Market reforms.
- 7. The portfolio management analysis which Atkins has undertaken (see separate Review of DWP Change Report) indicates that prioritisation processes regarding the allocation of Change team resources could be improved. However, the Move to UC programme needs experienced team members and leaders who can build on the learning to date and therefore re-allocation of DWP Change team resource without UC experience will not enable a faster mobilisation.
- 8. The root cause of the delay in being able to restart the Move to UC programme is the lack of skilled resources in the UC Product development and operational teams. The Department needs an ambitious and credible plan to address this issue.
- 9. We believe that investing time during 2021 in preparing for restart through developing a comprehensive strategy and roadmap will enable the programme to hit the ground running in January 2022. Our recommendations set out key activities we believe can be progressed this year which will de-risk the programme and protect the end date (see Section 1.3 Recommendations).

Question 2: Are there viable alternatives which might allow any capacity constraints to be removed to facilitate a faster mobilisation?

- 10. We do believe that there are viable alternatives which should be developed in parallel with the "who knows me" hypothesis. These alternatives are based on encouraging voluntary claimants to move to UC and, being voluntary, they can make use of existing functionality of UC without the need for additional product development for transitional protection or managed move.
- 11. We believe that additional hypotheses should be explored to determine whether voluntary moves can be encouraged. In particular, the Harrogate pilot identified a persona type of "I will and I can" claimants who are willing and able to transition to UC. Further persona types such as "I will but I can't" can be explored as well, as the

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blockage may not be their vulnerability, it could be for example be that they do not have the digital access required.

- 12. A key aspect to determine, through the proven "test and learn" approach is the support structures these claimants require, considering for example the role that Job Centres and Citizens Advice could play. Caution is needed to ensure that claimants are not persuaded to move to UC when this would be contrary to their interests, as this could cause distress to claimants and result in legal action.
- 13. By encouraging voluntary moves as early as possible, the Department can reduce the overall managed move population which has the potential to de-risk the programme and protect the end date.

Question 3: Can an alternative approach to the Harrogate agile discovery be constructed; with a focus on whether taking tax credit cases first is feasible/sensible?

- 14. Learning from the Harrogate pilot has indicated that the tax credit claimant population includes both persona types who are willing and able to move and more vulnerable claimants. Therefore, just taking tax credit cases first while feasible is not necessarily optimal, as this runs the risk of financial harm to vulnerable tax credit claimants. We believe the Harrogate agile discovery phase should consider additional hypotheses with the aim of accelerating voluntary moves to UC (as set out in our response to question 2 above). These hypotheses would supplement the "who knows me" hypotheses and be developed using a proven "test and learn" approach.
- 15. We believe that a PR campaign to change claimants' perception and emphasise the advantages of UC would be effective in encouraging voluntary moves. For example, some tax credit claimants feel UC does not apply to them as they are in work and there is a stigma in having to attend Job Centres.
- 16. The PR campaign is likely to be more effective with the engagement of third parties, so it is not solely branded DWP. This could include for example Local Authorities, Housing Associations, and Citizens Advice. Influencers such as the Resolution Foundation and Joseph Rowntree could support the campaign on the basis that the emphasis is to encourage claimants to move if this is in their best interests.
- 17. One key message could be that UC is the gateway to opportunities under the Plan for Jobs. Depending on the success of a PR campaign there may be the opportunity to target additional persona groups such as "I won't but I can" in convincing them of the benefits to transition to UC.

- 18. The interviews and workshops on Move to UC have also highlighted an issue with the data in legacy systems which in some cases is inaccurate and incomplete. UC benefits are calculated using data from various sources including legacy systems and UC updates the benefit calculation more frequently. We understand the Transitional Protection (TP) calculation is designed to eliminate these differences and ensure that whatever is in payment in a legacy system, on a Move to UC, is the amount to be taken into account. So even if there are errors under the legacy system it doesn't adversely impact the claimant, the policy outcome sought is that claimants do not see a difference in cash received pre and post their move to UC.
- 19. While a conscious decision has been taken to exclude any legacy data cleansing exercise from the Move to UC programme, the Department needs to ensure this is resolved over the medium term e.g. explore options as to how and when this could be addressed for example including in the Fraud, Error and Debt programme could be one option.

Question 4: If there are no viable alternatives, does the overall approach seem sensible, practicable and optimal in the current circumstances?

- 20. The overall approach to the Move to UC programme as set out in the documents provided and built on the proven "test and learn" approach with a hypotheses of "who knows me" appears sensible, given the need to support the most vulnerable claimants and the political conditions at the time.
- 21. However, we believe that alternative hypotheses, in addition to "who knows me," based on targeting voluntary claimants provides the opportunity to deliver a more practicable and optimal solution. Also, the Department's response to the pandemic and the transition to remote working provides an opportunity to look at alternative service delivery models for the Move to UC programme.

1.3 Recommendations

22. We set out four key recommendations, all of which are critical and will enable the Department to restart Move to UC as early as possible and complete the migration of legacy claimants in the shortest possible time.

Recommendation 1

- 23. Explore alternative hypotheses to increase the rate of transfer of legacy claimants to UC:
 - Prioritise hypotheses for increasing voluntary moves, specifically the "I will and I can" persona type;

- Further persona types such as "I will but I can't" can be explored as well, as the blockage may not be their vulnerability, it could be for example be that they do not have the digital access required;
- Develop understanding of the support structures required for voluntary movers the aim being to make a reduction in the numbers of claimants in the shortest time possible;
- Consider the role that Job Centres and Citizens Advice can play in providing support.
- 24. By focussing on claimants who are willing to make the transition on a voluntary basis the aim would be to use features of the UC product which exist today hence removing the need to draw on scarce UC product development resources. This approach would need to be tested through the exploration of these hypotheses which could potentially commence early in 2021.

Recommendation 2

- 25. Launch a PR campaign to leverage the positive image of UC developed during the CV-19 pandemic and stimulate a large volume of voluntary moves. A key finding from the Harrogate pilot was that "fear" was the number one blocker to claimant willingness to transfer to UC based on their perception and understanding. A positive PR campaign which addresses claimants "fear" will help stimulate voluntary moves by:
 - Engaging partners such as Local Authorities, Housing Associations, and Citizens Advice, together with support from influencers such as Resolution Foundation, Joseph Rowntree, in being a voice for UC, explaining the advantages and encouraging moves (rather than just a DWP labelled initiative);
 - Highlighting that UC is a gateway to the opportunities provided through Plan for Jobs including the Kickstart scheme.
- 26. We believe there is a window of opportunity to launch this PR campaign so work should commence early in 2021 with communications specialists to develop the messaging and roll out a detailed communication plan. The communications plan will need to align with the outcome of the policy decisions around continuing the £20 uplift in the UC Standard Allowance.

Recommendation 3

- 27. Develop a strategy and roadmap for the Move to UC programme to enable the Department to restart at pace in January 2022. The strategy and roadmap should take account of the context of the overall Move to UC activity post the pandemic, rather than simply planning to resume and expand on the original Harrogate pilot.
- 28. A conceptual roadmap up to 2024 is set out in figure 1 below and could be made up of four phases as shown.

Move to UC High-level Roadmap 2021 2023 2024 2022 Phase 1 Phase 3 Phase 4 Phase 2 Restart the pilot phase Prepare & launch PR campaign Scale the migration of vulnerable Fully scaled migration and mop claimants Focus on voluntary moves Focus on voluntary moves up of remaining claimants · Learn how to migrate Continue focus on voluntary vulnerable claimants with the support moves H2 2021 Prepare to restart the pilotphase and engagement of third parties (HMRC, housing associations Develop strategy and roadmap and local authorities etc.) Ramp up necessary resources Universal Credit Claimants Legacy claimants **ATKINS** Department for Work & ensions Official Sensitive

Figure 1 Conceptual roadmap showing key activities by Phase

- 29. Each of these phases increases the number of claimants on UC while reducing the number of claimants on legacy benefits with a faster rate of transfer towards the later years. Considerable care needs to be taken to develop structures to support the move of vulnerable claimants to UC, which requires expert product development resource that is not available in 2021. The complexity of managing vulnerable claimants means that development of the support structures will inherently be slow as the programme learns how to do this successfully.
- 30. The voluntary moves in phases 1 and 2 will reduce the number of legacy claimants that need to move alongside the vulnerable claimants, and help protect the end date of September 2024.
- 31. Using this framework will enable the programme to plan more effectively and deliver a strategy and roadmap for restarting the pilot for vulnerable claimants at pace in January 2022.
- 32. This is a vital building block to enable the Department to hit the ground running on the Move to UC programme restart in a fully mobilised state. Partner organisations such as HMRC and Housing Associations will also need to be re-mobilised and so need to be engaged from the outset.
- 33. The strategy needs to set out the most efficient and productive organisational structure for both product and operational teams and a viable operational delivery model based on learning to date and taking account of the new ways of working the Department is now deploying following the pandemic. It should also set out how it will provide increased

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visibility of the overall programme through agreed metrics and reporting, with a wider set of metrics which include the pace of learning.

34. As part of the strategy to restart Move to UC every contact with claimants through legacy systems should be used as an opportunity to improve legacy data. One approach discussed was "making every contact count" in that every contact with claimants in legacy systems needs to be taken as an opportunity to improve legacy data for example ensuring their contact details are updated and encouraged to get an online HMRC account, etc. We believe this will help prepare the claimants for their transition to UC.

Recommendation 4

- 35. Increase the UC product development team capacity to enable the Move to UC programme to restart at pace in January 2022 and with sufficient headroom for further growth in demand for UC changes. In particular:
 - Determine the most appropriate organisational structure for the team taking account of the Move to UC resource requirements, based on learning from the Harrogate pilot;
 - Define the geographical location/s based on the opportunities now available with remote working;
 - Recruit the team members and seed the team with experienced UC programme team members;
 - Establish the physical location requirements and prepare the infrastructure.
- 36. Whilst the risk of contractor resource leaving due to the change in IR35 legislation has currently diminished with the uncertain job market, team planning should make allowance for a resurgence of this issue.
- 37. We understand it currently takes four to six months to stand up additional UC product theme teams which have been seeded with some experienced staff. Ideally this work would commence immediately but at a minimum, this work needs to commence Q2 2021 to de-risk and protect the restart date of Jan 2022.

Section 2 - Introduction

2.1 Background

 The Universal Credit programme commenced in 2012, with the objective of providing a single benefit in place of six existing benefits: Income-Related Jobseeker's Allowance, Income-Related Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support, Child Tax Credit, Working Tax Credit and Housing Benefit.



Figure 2: Move of legacy benefit claimants to Universal Credit

- The full benefit case of 2018 estimated a £34 billion return over 10 years on a £2 billion programme spend. These programme benefits comprised: £19.3 billion from 200,000 more people in work and 103 million more hours worked; £8.7 billion from distribution of welfare payments; £7.5 billion from reduced fraud and error; £1.2 billion from net Departmental costs.
- 3. The rollout of the Universal Credit system and processes across Job Centres completed in December 2018 for new claimants and the transfer of existing claimants with specific changes of circumstance. This left claimants on legacy benefits where their move to UC will require a managed migration.
- 4. The programme commenced a pilot in Harrogate Job Centre in July 2019 as the first stage to developing a Move to UC solution which could be rolled out. The pilot ran until March 2020 when the DWP-wide response to Covid-19 required the redeployment of those working on Move to UC.
- 5. The Programme Board have been informed by the SRO that given the Departmental workload and priorities, mobilisation of the Move to UC phase will need to wait until 2022. There are expected to be around 2.9m claimants in this phase (by April 2021).

- 6. The DWP Secretary of State and Permanent Secretary commissioned this external review of the Move to UC project phase plan, as agreed by the UC Programme Board, to explore the scope for:
 - (1) A faster mobilisation into the phase than 2022 by understanding prioritisation and capacity constraints?
 - (2) Whether there are viable alternatives which might allow any capacity constraints to be removed to facilitate the above?
 - (3) Whether an alternative approach to the Harrogate agile discovery can be constructed; with a focus on whether taking tax credit cases first is feasible/sensible?
 - (4) And, if not, does the overall approach seems sensible, practicable and optimal in the current circumstances?
- 7. The output of this work is a series of findings and recommendations which will inform the Universal Credit Programme to mobilise the Move to UC phase. The following sections of this report from section 3 onwards are structured around answering these four questions and providing a list of key recommendations.
- 8. Atkins was appointed in December 2020 to undertake this review across a six-week period.
- 9. Please note that in addition to this requirement DWP have asked Atkins to undertake a wider review of the DWP Change Portfolio. This review is available in a separate report.

2.2 Scope

- 10. Our Move to UC review considers what can be learned from the previous Universal Credit programme activity but concentrates on the specific plans for the Move to UC phase. The review can be read in the context of the overall review of the DWP portfolio.
- 11. We have not examined the overall delivery timeline for completing managed migration of claimants, currently estimated by the Department as September 2024 and have not developed a detailed strategy or plan for restart, as these are outside the scope of our work.

2.3 Method

12. We have adopted a pragmatic approach with two overarching phases; a discovery phase, and a recommendations phase as set out in Figure 3.

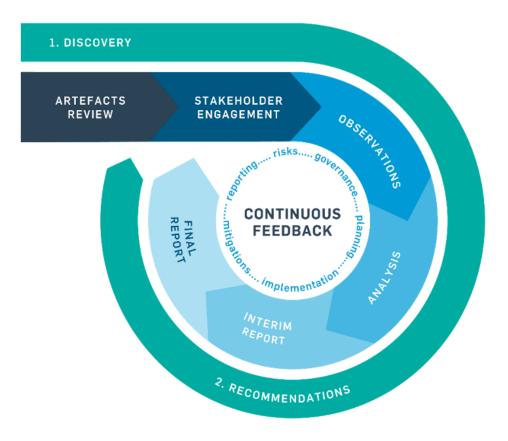


Figure 3: Atkins approach to the independent review

Document Review

13. A total of 71 programme documents were reviewed, including:

- Board reports and minutes
- Current and proposed UC Product Theme team structure
- Plans for the Harrogate pilot
- Hypotheses and results from pilot testing
- Learnings from the pilot
- Proposals for the next stage of the pilot.
- 14. The documents requested for the review were received over a period of weeks as shown on the following chart in Figure 4, with some early delays in receiving the documents requested. A full list of documents reviewed is included in Annex A.

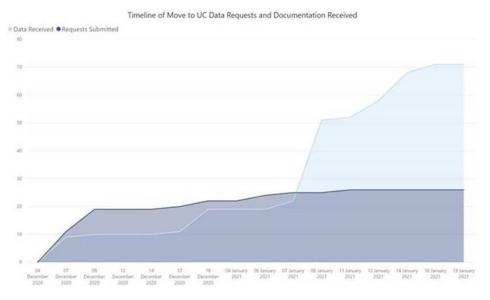


Figure 4: Timeline of requests and receipt of documentation

Questionnaire

- 15. A questionnaire was issued for senior members of the programme team to complete, enabling quantitative analysis and an initial assessment of their views prior to the interview stage. Of the 31 questions, 16 were scaled on a range of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) to enable quick response, with 5 open questions for more qualitative response.
- 16. The high-level quantitative results showed that the overall programme team were relatively comfortable with the delivery approach and the way that change, customer impact and priorities were managed, but were less confident about the readiness of the programme to progress migration.

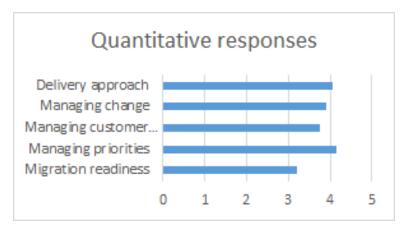


Figure 5: Quantitative results from the questionnaire

- 17. The responses to the questionnaire also provided further insight into the confidence of migration readiness. Whilst there was a high level of confidence in the application of learning to plans (84% gave the top 2 scores of 4 and 5), there was low confidence in long-term plans (35% scoring 1 or 2). We believe that it is critical to the success of the Move to UC programme that planning is accelerated during 2021.
- 18. There was also a mixed view of confidence in risk management (43% scored 4, but 28% scored 1 or 2). The very low confidence in resourcing (57% scoring the lowest score of 1) is not surprising given that resources were re-allocated to assist with the DWP response to the pandemic and have not returned to the Move to UC programme.

Independent Review of Move to UC

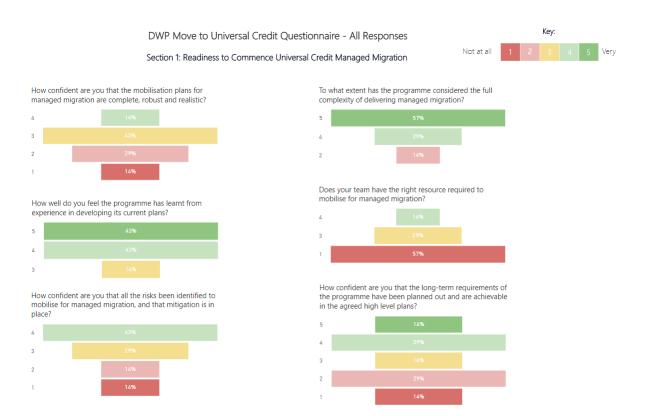


Figure 6: Migration readiness results from the questionnaires

19. Concerns on migration readiness were reflected in the open responses, particularly emphasising the limited long-term planning to date.

Question: What additional actions do you feel could be taken to safely start managed migration before 2022?

Response 1: I don't think I see a path to safely starting managed migration in 2022 - neither the Programme nor Operations have the bandwidth and capacity to learn and start building a service.

Response 2: We can't. The discovery was interrupted. We don't yet know enough to even put a viable plan together. What we have is an approach - a plan to learn. When we have learned we can then put together a plan.

20. There were also helpful suggestions as to how to move the programme forward.

Response 1: A media campaign that could be run to encourage voluntary Moves to UC - this would need to be honest, clear and explicate as there is an inherent risk that volunteers may not achieve financial gain / parity when they move.

Response 2: A reconsideration of the work coach role. It is nuanced and this nuance has not really been explored.

21. A summary of all the results from the questionnaires is included in Annex B.

Interviews and workshops

- 22. One-hour interviews were held with senior members of the programme, enabling a deeper understanding of the activity of the programme from their perspectives and how the programme could move forward. The interviewees are listed in Annex C.
- 23. A workshop on Ways of Working was held on 7th January 2020 and included:
 - Background to the test and learn approach;
 - How change is delivered, including organisational design;
 - Supporting growth in the service, scalability and performance demands;
 - Factors influencing the product backlog, and 2021 goals.
- 24. A further workshop was held on 12th January 2020 focusing on the Harrogate pilot, covering:
 - The timeline prior to the pilot commencing;
 - The stakeholder engagement and options analysis;
 - The operational aspects of setting up the Job Centre;
 - The learning from each of the three models Work Coach, HMRC and Housing Association, including the key claimant concerns and challenges;
 - Subsequent learning from analysis after the pilot;
 - Opportunities for the next stage.
- 25. The attendees from each of these workshops are listed in Annex D.
- **26.** These interviews and workshops have informed the findings and shaped the recommendations.

2.4 Reading this report

27. This report is set out in the following sections;

- Section 3 Findings for Question 1 Faster mobilisation
- Section 4 Findings for Question 2 Removing Capacity Constraints
- Section 5 Findings for Question 3 Alternative Approaches
- Section 6 Findings for Question 4 Overall Approach
- Annexes:
 - Annex A Documentation Received
 - Annex B Questionnaire Results
 - Annex C Interviews Conducted
 - Annex D Workshops
 - Annex E Roadmap in Feb 2020.

Section 3 – Findings for Question 1 - Faster Mobilisation

Q1: Is there a faster mobilisation into the phase than 2022 by understanding prioritisation and capacity constraints?

28. **Programme Team**: The Move to UC programme design and implementation team has been disbanded and allocated to other priorities in supporting the main UC system and supporting the rapid increase of new claimants due the pandemic. It will take time to reestablish a replacement team and, in some cases, regain the experience and insights from the Harrogate pilot.

Question: What changes to current priorities could be made to enable quicker mobilisation?

Response: Plan for Jobs is a huge focus, but I don't think it could be deprioritised in light of the pandemic and wider economic situation.

A typical questionnaire response regarding prioritisation.

- 29. **Prioritisation**: The UC product development team is under considerable strain already with the work prioritised with stakeholders, so unless existing work is deprioritised, there appears to be limited capacity for work to progress on Move to UC until 2022. Due to the complexity of UC and the interplay between policy and product, it can take 4-6 months to fully understand all aspects of the system and be able to fully contribute to development activities. Releasing resource from other parts of DWP will not enable more product development capacity in UC in the short-term.
- 30. **Capacity:** The Move to UC programme team is competing for constrained resources, given the demands on the main UC system, other DWP change and business as usual. The scaling of the programme to additional Job Centres will require significantly more resource than was previously working on the pilot (over 60 FTE plus representatives from HMRC and partners).
- 31. **Third party constraints**: The current "who knows me" hypothesis has significant dependencies on third parties such as HMRC and Housing Associations who in turn have their own objectives and priorities.
- 32. **Strategy:** The Harrogate pilot was halted abruptly to provide support for new claimants and there is no defined and agreed strategy for the next phase. There is an opportunity to increase the pace of the next phase by developing and applying an appropriate strategy during 2021 in readiness for the restart at the beginning of 2022.

33. **Roadmap**: A provisional high-level roadmap for the remainder of 2021 was in place when the Harrogate pilot was halted. This needs to be refreshed and expanded to cover the work that can be progressed in 2021 as set out in the recommendations of this report. A roadmap for the restart in 2022 also needs to be developed.

Atkins Response

- 34. Given the current programme prioritisation in the Department, there is limited UC product development and operational resource that can be applied to the Move to UC programme in 2021. These critical resources are currently being impacted by:
 - The ongoing operational and product development challenge of responding to the CV-19 pandemic;
 - The possibility of a further spike of claimants following the closure of the furlough scheme;
 - The work already agreed with UC stakeholders for delivery in 2021 e.g. Labour Market reforms.
- 35. The portfolio management analysis which Atkins has undertaken (see separate Review of DWP Change Report) indicates that prioritisation processes regarding the allocation of Change team resources could be improved. However, the Move to UC programme needs experienced team members and leaders who can build on the learning to date and therefore re-allocation of DWP Change team resource without UC experience will not enable a faster mobilisation.
- 36. The root cause of the delay in being able to restart the Move to UC programme is the lack of skilled resources in the UC Product development and operational teams. The Department needs an ambitious and credible plan to address this issue.
- 37. We believe that investing time during 2021 in preparing for restart through developing a comprehensive strategy and roadmap will enable the programme to hit the ground running in January 2022. Our recommendations set out key activities we believe can be progressed this year which will de-risk the programme and protect the end date (see recommendations).

Section 4 – Findings for Question 2 - Removing Capacity Constraints

Q2: Whether there are viable alternatives which might allow any capacity constraints to be removed to facilitate the above?

- 38. Viable alternatives: We believe there are alternative hypotheses which could encourage claimants to move voluntarily and this would leverage the current UC capability with less product development and operational demands. The Harrogate pilot identified a persona type "I will and I can" claimants who are willing and able to transition to UC. Further persona types such as "I will but I can't" can be explored as well, as the blockage may not be their vulnerability, it could be for example be that they do not have the digital access required.
- 39. Any approach which starts to reduce the overall numbers down from the estimated 2.9m legacy benefit claimants will therefore reduce capacity constraints and protect the overall end date of the programme.
- 40. **Product development constraints**: The UC programme has 14 feature teams. Each feature team has a defined "theme" set which allows focus and ownership and each team is responsible for new functionality and live (3rd level) product support including incidents, problems and vulnerabilities. The Move to UC programme was allocated two theme teams in Leeds and support from development teams in London, however these theme teams have now been re-allocated to other priorities.
- 41. Product development constraints arise from:
 - UC's mission critical role in DWP delivering benefits to working age claimants and supporting the UC product following the rapid increase in claimants during the pandemic;
 - The size and scale of the UC product (circa 2M lines of Java code);
 - The technical debt which has built up (product features requiring amendment) to safeguard long term maintainability and to facilitate ongoing development.
- 42. The UC development team has grown substantially over the past two and a half years from eight development teams to the current 14 teams (circa 400 people) and is currently transitioning to a new portfolio structure to increase flexibility and control as it continues to grow. However, there remains a need to be able to surge capacity when required (analogous to getting more heads under the car bonnet). The challenge is to grow this specialist team whilst not disrupting the current development programmes and support.
- 43. **Operational constraints:** Operational capacity remains under strain, with the recruitment of additional work coaches still in progress and many of the frontline staff working in service centre operations. This is likely to continue during the CV-19

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lockdown period and the attention then will be concentrated on resuming business as usual operations. There will therefore be limited resource available to support the development of the "who knows me" hypotheses during 2021.

Atkins Response

- 44. We do believe there are viable alternatives which should be developed in parallel with the "who knows me" hypothesis. These alternatives are based on encouraging voluntary claimants to move to UC programme and being voluntary, they can make use of existing functionality of UC without the need for additional product development for transitional protection or managed move. We believe that additional hypotheses should be explored, initially the "I will and I can" persona type. Further persona types such as "I will but I can't" can be explored as well, as the blockage may not be their vulnerability, it could be for example be that they do not have the digital access required.
- 45. A key aspect to determine through the proven "test and learn" approach is the support structures these claimants require, considering for example the role that Job Centres and Citizens Advice could play. Caution is needed to ensure that claimants are not persuaded to move to UC when this would be contrary to their interests, as this could cause distress to claimants and result in legal action.
- 46. By encouraging voluntary moves as early as possible the Department can reduce the overall managed move population which has the potential to de-risk the programme and protect the end date.

Section 5 – Findings for Question 3 - Alternative Approaches

Q3: Whether an alternative approach to the Harrogate agile discovery can be constructed; with a particular focus on whether taking tax credit cases first is feasible/sensible?

- 47. **Tax credit cases first**: Tax credit households represent 60% of all households receiving legacy benefits, so this is an important segment of the overall population of claimants. However, there are risks and constraints around this community in that:
 - Some of these households are also receiving other benefits as well as tax credits (e.g. housing allowances) and we understand that it is difficult to undertake a partial transition to UC for tax credits whilst remaining on legacy benefits for others. The estimated number of households just receiving tax credits is estimated to be just over a third of the households on legacy benefits;
 - User research in Harrogate has identified that some tax credit claimants have fragile incomes and any disruption could make them vulnerable;
 - Data quality is poor on legacy systems, tax credits are reviewed annually and often auto renewed with little or no household intervention.

"Data is needed such as capital, that the claimant needs to volunteer themselves and the partners may also now need to claim"

"Universal Credit is a very active service compared to tax credits and needs accurate up-to-date data, it could not just be reviewed annually"

Harrogate pilot workshop

48. User research during the Harrogate pilot also found that some claimants are not willing and / or able to get into Job Centres due to a reluctance to visit a centre or time constraints. Some tax credit claimants do not perceive that UC applies to them as they are in work.

"Going into the Jobcentre would probably be quite inconvenient. At the moment, I'm getting child tax credits so why would I need to go into a jobcentre? ID would be ok for a one off. If it was for an interview, or going in about work, it would be annoying, my tax credits are child ones."

"It's for people who are not working... you get people like who have just come out of prison, it puts me off, the type of people that go there..."

Show and Tell - Team Lego

Discovery for HMRC-led Approach for Move to UC

- 49. **Overlap with voluntary movers:** User research in the Harrogate pilot suggests that there are overlaps between tax credit claimants and the "I will and I can" population, but also that the tax credit claimant population includes vulnerable or potentially vulnerable claimants. In particular, the user research found there were tax claimants with fragile income streams where any disruption in receiving benefits would result in their becoming vulnerable.
- 50. An emphasis on exploring the "I will and I can" persona type, and encouraging voluntary moves, rather than a wholesale focus on tax credit claimants as an entire population would mitigate the risk of impacting on vulnerable claimants receiving tax credits.

Atkins Response:

- 51. Learning from the Harrogate pilot has indicated that the tax credit claimant population includes both persona types who are willing and able to move and more vulnerable claimants. Therefore, just taking tax credit cases first while feasible is not necessarily optimal, as this runs the risk of financial harm to vulnerable tax credit claimants.
- 52. We believe the Harrogate agile discovery phase should consider additional hypotheses with the aim of accelerating voluntary moves to UC (as set out in our response to question 2 above). These hypotheses would supplement the "who knows me" hypotheses and be developed using a proven "test and learn" approach.
- 53. We believe that a PR campaign to change claimant's perception and emphasise the advantages of UC would be effective in encouraging voluntary moves. For example, some tax credit claimants feel UC does not apply to them as they are in work and there is a stigma in having to attend job centres.
- 54. The PR campaign is likely to be more effective with the engagement of third parties, so it is not solely branded DWP. This could include for example Local Authorities, Housing Associations, and Citizens Advice. Influencers such as the Resolution Foundation and Joseph Rowntree could support the campaign on the basis that the emphasis is to encourage claimants to move if this is in their best interests.

- 55. One key message could be that UC is the gateway to opportunities under the 'Plan for Jobs'. Depending on the success of a PR campaign there may be the opportunity to target additional persona groups such as "I won't but I can" in convincing them of the benefits to transition to UC.
- 56. The interviews and workshops on Move to UC have also highlighted an issue with the data in legacy systems which in some cases is inaccurate and incomplete. UC benefits are calculated using data from various sources including legacy systems and UC updates the benefit calculation more frequently. We understand the Transitional Protection (TP) calculation is designed to eliminate these differences and ensure that whatever is in payment in a legacy system, on a Move to UC, is the amount to be taken into account. So even if there are errors under the legacy system it does not adversely impact the claimant, the policy outcome sought is that claimants do not see a difference in cash received pre and post their move to UC.

Section 6 – Findings for Question 4 - Overall Approach

Q4. And if not does the overall approach seems sensible, practicable and optimal in the current circumstances?

- 57. **Programme roadmap:** The team had a roadmap for 2020 which was put on hold when the team was re-allocated (included in Annex E for reference). This roadmap set out the overall approach to the pilot and included an estimate on the cumulative growth of claimants engaged in the process over the 12-month period. There is currently no roadmap leading up to the restart of the programme nor a roadmap of what a restart programme could look like. We believe the development of replacement roadmaps will be an essential step in being able to communicate the objectives of Move to UC. The roadmap can be used together with other metrics to demonstrate progress on learning to stakeholders according to agreed plans, as well as simply the number of legacy claimants who are engaged with the process.
- 58. **Test and learn:** The test and learn approach has been very effective in delivering a robust and scalable UC system, ably demonstrated by its ability to handle the large increase in claimants resulting from the CV-19 pandemic lockdowns. While the Harrogate pilot was still at an early stage when it was halted, there are signs that the learning is resulting in understanding what is required to develop a workcoach operating model that can support the needs of vulnerable claimants.
- 59. Who knows me: The "who knows me" approach was developed through discussion with stakeholders who understand the issues that vulnerable claimants face. Problem statements were agreed and a common theme identified of "fear" of moving to UC, (primarily that they would not respond appropriately to the UC notifications or miss them completely, hence losing entitlements). A hypothesis was identified that claimants would be more willing to move to UC if they were supported in their transition by someone they already knew and trusted their workcoach, HMRC for tax credits, or their Housing Association. This appears to be an appropriate approach to safely move more vulnerable claimants who already have support relationships.
- 60. **Policy:** Detailed policy is a strong influencer on the design of the solution, but consideration of this is outside of the scope of the review.

Atkins Response

61. The overall approach to the Move to UC programme as set out in the documents provided and built on the proven "test and learn" approach with a hypotheses of "who knows me" appears sensible, given the need to support the most vulnerable claimants and the political conditions at the time. However, we believe that alternative hypotheses, in addition to "who knows me", based on targeting voluntary claimants provides the opportunity to deliver a more practicable and optimal solution. Also, the Department's

response to the pandemic and the transition to remote working provides an opportunity to look at alternative service delivery models for the Move to UC programme.

Section 7 – Recommendations

62. We set out four key recommendations, all of which are critical and will enable the Department to restart Move to UC as early as possible and complete the migration of legacy claimants in the shortest possible time.

Recommendation 1

- 63. Explore alternative hypotheses to increase the rate of transfer of legacy claimants to UC:
 - Prioritise hypotheses for increasing voluntary moves, specifically the "I will and I can" persona type;
 - Further persona types such as "I will but I can't" can be explored as well, as the blockage may not be their vulnerability, it could be for example that they do not have the digital access required;
 - Develop understanding of the support structures required for voluntary movers the aim being to make a reduction in the numbers of claimants in the shortest time possible;
 - Consider the role that Job Centres and Citizens Advice can play in providing support.
- 64. By focussing on claimants who are willing to make the transition on a voluntary basis the aim would be to use features of the UC product which exist today hence removing the need to draw on scarce UC product development resources. This approach would need to be tested through the exploration of these hypotheses which could potentially commence early in 2021.

Recommendation 2

- 65. Launch a PR campaign to leverage the positive image of UC developed during the CV-19 pandemic and stimulate a large volume of voluntary moves. A key finding from the Harrogate pilot was that "fear" was the number one blocker to claimant willingness to transfer to UC based on their perception and understanding. A positive PR campaign which addresses claimants "fear" will help stimulate voluntary moves by:
 - Engaging partners such as Local Authorities, Housing Associations, and Citizens Advice, together with support from influencers such as Resolution Foundation, Joseph Rowntree, in being a voice for UC, explaining the advantages and encouraging moves (rather than just a DWP labelled initiative);
 - Highlighting that UC is a gateway to the opportunities provided through Plan for Jobs including the Kickstart scheme.
- 66. We believe there is a window of opportunity to launch this PR campaign so work should commence early in 2021 with communications specialists to develop the messaging and roll out a detailed communication plan. The communications plan will need to align with

the outcome of the policy decisions around continuing the £20 uplift in the UC Standard Allowance.

Recommendation 3

- 67. Develop a strategy and roadmap for the Move to UC programme to enable the Department to restart at pace in January 2022. The strategy and roadmap should take account of the context of the overall Move to UC activity post the pandemic, rather than simply planning to resume and expand on the original Harrogate pilot.
- 68. A conceptual roadmap up to 2024 is set out in Figure 7 below and could be made up of four phases.

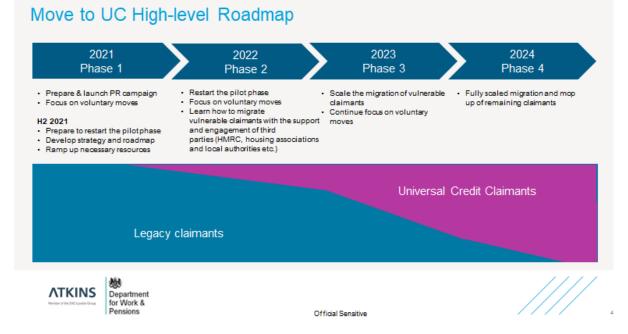


Figure 7 Conceptual roadmap showing key activities by Phase

- 69. Each of these phases increases the number of claimants on UC while reducing the number of claimants on legacy benefits with a faster rate of transfer towards the later years. Considerable care needs to be taken to develop structures to support the move of vulnerable claimants to UC, which requires expert product development resource that is not available in 2021. The complexity of managing vulnerable claimants means that development of the support structures will inherently be slow as the programme learns how to do this successfully.
- 70. The voluntary moves in phases 1 and 2 will reduce the number of legacy claimants that need to move alongside the vulnerable claimants, and hence protect the end date of September 2024.

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- 71. Using this framework will enable the programme to plan more effectively and deliver a strategy and roadmap for restarting the pilot for vulnerable claimants at pace in January 2022.
- 72. This is a vital building block to enable the Department to hit the ground running on the Move to UC programme restart in a fully mobilised state. Partner organisations such as HMRC and Housing Associations will also need to be re-mobilised and so need to be engaged from the outset.
- 73. The strategy needs to set out the most efficient and productive organisational structure for both product and operational teams and a viable operational delivery model based on learning to date and taking account of the new ways of working the Department is now deploying following the pandemic. It should also set out how it will provide increased visibility of the overall programme through agreed metrics and reporting, with a wider set of metrics which include the pace of learning.
- 74. As part of the strategy to restart Move to UC every contact with claimants through legacy systems should be used as an opportunity to improve legacy data. One approach discussed was "making every contact count" in that every contact with claimants in legacy systems needs to be taken as an opportunity to improve legacy data for example ensuring their contact details are updated and encouraged to get an online HMRC account, etc. We believe this will help prepare the claimants for their transition to UC.

Recommendation 4

- 75. Increase the UC product development team capacity to enable the Move to UC programme to restart at pace in January 2022 and with sufficient headroom for further growth in demand for UC changes. In particular:
 - Determine the most appropriate organisational structure for the team taking account of the Move to UC resource requirements, based on learning from the Harrogate pilot;
 - Define the geographical location/s based on the opportunities now available with remote working;
 - Recruit the team members and seed the team with experienced UC programme team members;
 - Establish the physical location requirements and prepare the infrastructure.
- 76. Whilst the risk of contractor resource leaving due to the change in IR35 legislation has currently diminished with the uncertain job market, team planning should make allowance for a resurgence of this issue.
- 77. We understand it currently takes four to six months to stand up additional UC product theme teams which have been seeded with some experienced staff. Ideally this work

would commence immediately but at a minimum, this work needs to commence Q2 2021 to de-risk and protect the restart date of Jan 2022.

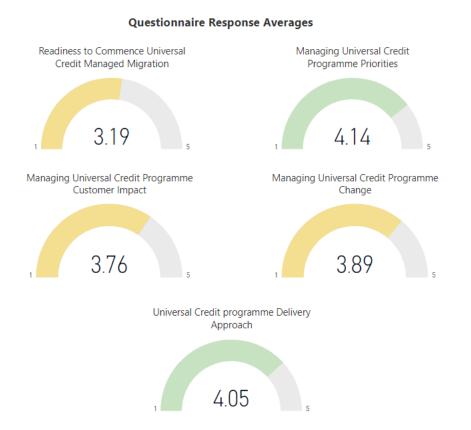
Annex A – Documentation Reviewed

Doc Ref	Date Received	Received From	Document Title
UC001	07/12/2020	Martin King	UC001 E - UC PB 27.10.20 - Paper 4 - Move to UC Update
UC002	07/12/2020	Martin King	NC Cover Note to Atkins
UC003	07/12/2020	Martin King	Agile methodologies in Universal Credit Paper 1
UC004	07/12/2020	Martin King	Prioritisation considerations in Universal Credit Paper 2
UC004a	07/12/2020	Martin King	UC Prioritisation Considerations Nov
UC005	07/12/2020	Martin King	DWP Long term plan and winter plan overview Paper 3
UC006	07/12/2020	Martin King	Digital team structures in Universal Credit Paper 4
UC007	07/12/2020	Martin King	Legacy Benefit and Tax Credit claimants Paper 5
UC008	07/12/2020	Martin King	What we learned in the Move Pilot Paper 6
UC009	07/12/2020	Martin King	Stakeholder Engagement and Co-design Paper 7
UC010	09/12/2020	Martin King	201208 NC to SoS MOVE TO UC SEGMENTING BY CASE TYPE
UC011	17/12/2020	Martin King	NC 201216
UC012	18/12/2020	Martin King	'Egg Diagram' External workshop 6th Feb Evaluation slides short
UC013	18/12/2020	Martin King	E - UCPB 27.10.20 - Paper 4 - Move to UC Update
UC014	18/12/2020	Martin King	F - UCPB 18.02.20 - Paper 5a - Move to Universal Credit Update
UC015	18/12/2020	Martin King	F - UCPB 18.02.20 - Paper 5b - Move to UC User Research Findings
UC016	18/12/2020	Martin King	F - UCPB 25.06.19 - Paper 5 - Move to UC Plans
UC017	18/12/2020	Martin King	G - UCPB 16.04.19 - Paper 6 - Move to Universal Credit Update
UC018	18/12/2020	Martin King	I - UCPB 16.07.19 - BTL02 - Move to UC Plans - Pilot Readiness
UC019	18/12/2020	Martin King	NC to SoS 200710
UC020	07/01/2021	Sue Whitman	D - UCPDE 09.12.20 - Paper 2 - Early thinking on 2021 product priorities
UC021	07/01/2021	David Yates	UCFS Test Learn Approach
UC022	07/01/2021	David Yates	UC WoW detail 2020 v1
UC023	08/01/2021	Mark Brine	UC023 Index of documents for Move to UC discussion as part of Atkins review
UC024	08/01/2021	Mark Brine	1. Stakeholder Event Update 4 March 2020

UC025	08/01/2021	Mark Brine	2. Move to UC show and tell
UC026	08/01/2021	Mark Brine	3. MM IOM Pilot Day 1 v1.0
UC027	08/01/2021	Mark Brine	4. BarriersFrameworkDRAFTv7
UC028	08/01/2021	Mark Brine	5. Move to UC Vision May 2020
UC029	08/01/2021	Mark Brine	6. Roadmap
UC030	08/01/2021	Mark Brine	8. Pilot+Readiness+Criteria
UC031	08/01/2021	Mark Brine	9. Move to UC Risks - PDE 25 03 20
UC032	08/01/2021	Mark Brine	10. 130220 stages of each model 2
UC033	08/01/2021	Mark Brine	11. 29-11-2019 Move to UC volumes update Autumn 19
UC034	08/01/2021	Mark Brine	12. Personas
UC035	08/01/2021	Mark Brine	13a. Deferrals+and+Exclusions
UC036	08/01/2021	Mark Brine	13b. Questions to answer
UC037	08/01/2021	Mark Brine	14. Move-To-UC-Service-View-V2-2
UC038	08/01/2021	Mark Brine	15a. Hypothesis evidence 22.11.19
UC039	08/01/2021	Mark Brine	15b. Programme Board User Research Slides v3
UC040	08/01/2021	Mark Brine	15c. 2020.05.13.Presentation of UR findings to date
UC041	08/01/2021	Mark Brine	15d. UR Case Studies M2 UC
UC042	08/01/2021	Mark Brine	16. dwp-processmap
UC043	08/01/2021	Mark Brine	17. Team Lego - Discovery TLDR
UC044	08/01/2021	Mark Brine	18. Sharing our approach to legacy NEW-2
UC045	08/01/2021	Mark Brine	20a. Conditions for restarting Move - steer pack v2
UC046	08/01/2021	Mark Brine	20b. Conditions to restart Move to UC
UC047	08/01/2021	Mark Brine	Excerpt from minutes of UC Programme Board - Nov 2019
UC048	08/01/2021	Mark Brine	Excerpt from UC Programme Board Minutes - April 2019
UC049	08/01/2021	Mark Brine	Excerpt from UC Programme Board Minutes - Feb 2020
UC050	08/01/2021	Mark Brine	Excerpt from UC Programme Board Minutes - June 2019
UC051	08/01/2021	Mark Brine	F - UCPB 12.11.19 - Paper 5 - Move to UC Update and Pilot Evaluation
UC052	11/01/2021	Mark Brine	PDE October-December prioritisation_Final
UC053	12/01/2021	Mark Brine	210108 DDG UC Labour Market Offer Update - FINAL
UC054	12/01/2021	Mark Brine	Kickstart Progress Status Report 06.01.21 v0.1
UC055	12/01/2021	Mark Brine	UCPB 14.05.19 - Paper 1 - Draft PB Mins - April 19
UC056	12/01/2021	Mark Brine	UCPB 16.07.19 - Paper 1 - Draft PB Mins - June 19

UC057	12/01/2021	Mark Brine	PB Mins - Draft - February 2020
UC058	12/01/2021	Mark Brine	UCPB 10.12.19 - Paper 1 - Draft PB Mins - November 2019
UC059	14/01/2021	Mark Brine	MM Vision and walkthrough
UC060	14/01/2021	Mark Brine	Migrate to UC User - Digital Journey
UC061	14/01/2021	Mark Brine	MM summary 25.04.18
UC062	14/01/2021	Mark Brine	Managed Migration ST
UC063	14/01/2021	Mark Brine	09.09.2016 Lab summary
UC064	14/01/2021	Mark Brine	Awareness communications timeline user research V2
UC065	14/01/2021	Mark Brine	Thorne Trial Evaluation
UC066	14/01/2021	Mark Brine	Letter Understanding Insights - July 2018
UC067	14/01/2021	Mark Brine	Insights into Legacy claimant behaviour
UC068	14/01/2021	Mark Brine	Data Summary Outputs
UC069	18/01/2021	Mark Brine	TP calc process day 1.vsdx
UC070	18/01/2021	Mark Brine	TP Calc template v0.7 provisional.xlsx
UC071	18/01/2021	Mark Brine	MM MGP1 (HMRC) v0.12.xls

Annex B – Questionnaire Responses



Independent Review of Move to UC

DWP Move to Universal Credit Questionnaire - All Responses

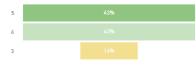
Section 1: Readiness to Commence Universal Credit Managed Migration



How confident are you that the mobilisation plans for managed migration are complete, robust and realistic?



How well do you feel the programme has learnt from experience in developing its current plans?



How confident are you that all the risks been identified to mobilise for managed migration, and that mitigation is in place?



To what extent has the programme considered the full complexity of delivering managed migration?



Does your team have the right resource required to mobilise for managed migration?

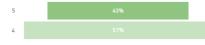


How confident are you that the long-term requirements of the programme have been planned out and are achievable in the agreed high level plans?

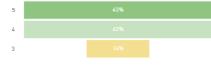


Section 2: Managing Universal Credit Programme Priorities

To what extent do you personally understand the priorities that the programme is working to?



How confident are you that the programme priorities are focused on the right outcomes?



How confident are you that the programme priorities are focused on delivering the agreed benefits?

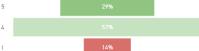


To what extent do you consider that the programme priorities are aligned to the needs of the Universal Credit clients?

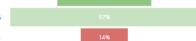


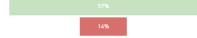
To what extent do you feel the capability of the delivery team is considered in terms of decisions around priorities?











Do you think the programme has the right capacity and

capability to respond to rapid change in a timely manner e.g. the CV-19 pandemic causing an increase in new UC cases?

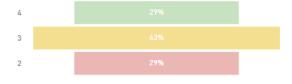


Section 3: Managing Universal Credit Programme Customer Impact

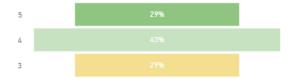
To what extent do you personally understand the priorities that the programme is working to?



How effective do you feel the policy changes to Universal Credit have been in resolving customer issues?



Do you feel that the pilots and trials conducted have been successful in resolving customer issues?



Section 4: Managing Universal Credit Programme Change

How well do you feel that the programme controls changes in scope?



How well do you feel that the programme handles changes in policy and legislation?



Do you feel that the programme has a full set of metrics to assess the impact of change?



How well does the programme communicate the impact of change to stakeholders, to "tell it how it is"?



To what extent do the use of agile pilots and trials enable changes to be implemented quickly?



Section 5: Universal Credit programme Delivery Approach

Are you confident that the overall delivery approach for the Move to UC plan is optimal?



Are you confident that the department has the necessary critical skills and capacity to deliver the Move to UC plan?



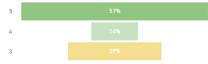
Are these critical skills primarily in DWP permanent staff or contractors working in DWP?



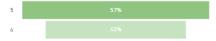
To what extent have you and your team been trained in the agile approach?



In your opinion, do you feel that the current agile approach is enabling a more effective delivery?



How effective do you feel the agile approach is in helping the programme understand the needs of Universal Credit claimants?



Annex C – Interviews Conducted

Name	Role	Date
Neil Couling	Director General for Change and UC SRO	09-Dec
Graeme Connor	Director of Universal Credit Analysis	16-Dec
Andrea Kirkpatrick	Universal Credit Social Research Lead	16-Dec
Lara Sampson	Universal Credit Product Director	16-Dec
lan Wright	Universal Credit Programme Director	17-Dec
Sarah Gaskell	Head of Universal Credit Product	17-Dec
Andrea Lewis	Universal Credit User Research Lead	18-Dec
Will Quince	Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Welfare Delivery)	09-Dec

Annex D – Workshops

Ways of working workshop

A workshop was held on 7th January 2021 with the following attendees to understand the team ways of working.

Name	Role
Lara Sampson	Universal Credit Product Director
Andrea Kirkpatrick	Head of Universal Credit Social Research
David Yates	Product Delivery
Will Garner	Head of Product
John Brett	Co-head of Project
Chris Thorne	Delivery Director
Tom Padgham	Engineering Director
Nurjahan Khatun	Head of Portfolio DWP

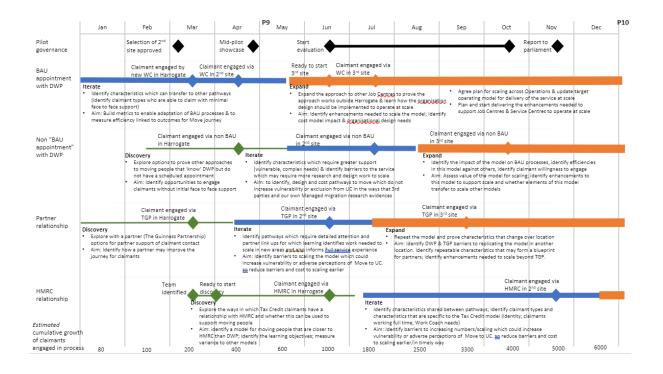
Harrogate pilot workshop

A workshop was held on 12th January 2021 with the following attendees to understand the detail of the Harrogate pilot, including the learning and the status of the pilot as it was left.

Name	Role
Lara Sampson	Universal Credit Product Director
Andrea Kirkpatrick	Head of Universal Credit Research
David Yates	Product Delivery
Graeme Connor	Universal Credit Analysis Director
Andrea Lewis	Universal Credit User Research Lead
Sue Whitman	Head of Portfolio Planning & Intelligence
Nurjahan Khatun	Head of Portfolio DWP
Liz Crowther	Product Strategy & Design Lead
Hazel Renwick	Universal Credit Transformation & Delivery Harrogate Pilot Lead
Will Garner	Head of Product
Jane Autherson	Product Strategy & Design Lead
Hayley Goldthorpe	Product Manager
Heather Lockley	Product Manager
Ben Medcalf	Product Manager
Raghu Shenoy	Digital Delivery manager
Dave Brookes	HMRC UC Programme Manager
Karen Camplin	Universal Credit Transformation & Delivery Harrogate Pilot
Shelagh Brown	HMRC UC Programme Director
Chris Sutton	Head of Universal Credit Policy Analysis

Annex E – Roadmap in Feb 2020

The team had a roadmap for 2020 which was put on hold when the team was re-allocated. This should be updated to align with planned activity.





For more information, please contact:

Malcolm.Shaw@atkinsglobal.com

John.McGlynn@atkinsglobal.com

