

To: UC Programme Board Members **From:** Will Garner
Sponsor: Neil Couling
Date: 16/11/2021

Product Development: Phase 10 Mid-phase Checkpoint

Issue: Prioritisation of the UC product development backlog is done in phases.

Recommendations/Decisions required:

- *Programme Board members acknowledge the phase 10 progress and endorse the Service Goals for use in planning for Phase 11 and beyond.*

Timing: Phase 11 commences 25 November 2021

Introduction

1. Phase 10 was the first phase following the transition from COVID phase and back to longer phase planning periods. This was a six-month phase running between 27th May and 24th November 2021.
2. The phase priorities were shared with the Programme Board on 18 May 2021. A mid-phase stock take was undertaken and approved by PDE in September.

Changes at midphase

3. As set out in the phase 10 prioritisation paper from May, one of the additional strands in the phase was discovery work into the concept of targeted case reviews on stock cases in order to identify incorrect payments and correct them.
4. PDE authorised the creation of an additional team to conduct this discovery for phase 10 and at the midphase review point authorised the team to continue their discovery work and testing the concept with a model office. If successful this will be scaled up gradually in 2022 as part of our Monetary Value of Fraud and Error (MVFE) reduction plan.
5. As the government placed additional focus in the summer on economic recovery, we also made adjustments to priorities to support colleagues in Work and Health Services to increase face to face appointments. Specifically this involved deprioritising work on video appointments in favour of focusing on improvements to appointment booking and improvements to the work coach dashboard.

6. At the outset of Phase 10 there were some choices for prioritisation that were deferred until the midphase review. These were taken as follows:
 - Correcting claims where the same child appears on multiple claims was prioritised ahead of discovery into the carers journey. The carers' journey work will be looked at in phase 11.
 - Work on integrating with Health Transformation Programme is to be deferred as the requirements for integration are not yet clear.
7. The following additions to phase 10 were also agreed by PDE:
 - Reintroduction of conditionality for claimants in Northern Ireland
 - Additions to scope associated with EUSS verification, reintroduction of the Minimum Income Floor and the Rapid Estates Expansion Plan
8. Since the midphase checkpoint in September, the product development team have additionally brought into scope of phase 10 changes announced in the budget to amend the taper rate and work allowance ahead of the standard uprating window. These will be released on 24 November 2021.
9. The following items were removed from the backlog or deferred to future phases:
 - Retiring Gov.UK Verify will be delivered in P11 as the verify service continues to be available until April 2022
 - The 'Fratila' JR pertaining to claimants with pre-settled status has been deferred due to a delay to the hearing
 - Upper tribunal ruling on Genuine Prospect of Work (GPOW) for EEA nationals in some circumstances not needing to show GPOW and retaining status indefinitely. This problem was deferred until we know the outcome of the Fratila case.
 - Refinements to the multiple housing rule (using UPRN and Ordnance Survey data) – discovery work into the data will be undertaken in phase 10 with follow on work in phase 11.
 - Cold weather payments for mixed age couples did not become government policy therefore was removed from the phase.
 - Some accessibility improvements to Word document forms for agents were deferred until phase 11.
 - Journal messages from claimants at risk of self-harm are not flagged on the service. There is a process for this but automation would make it more effective. This is to be picked up in future phases.

Look ahead to Phase 11

10. PDE have just considered the backlog for Phase 11 and this will be shared with the Programme Board in December. Key themes for phase 11 include:
 - Mobilising for Move to UC and commencing Discovery Phase
 - Moving Kickstart towards BAU and closing applications to the programme

- Developing a strategic approach to Labour Market for UC claimants and Agents
- Improving the health journey via the UC50
- Reducing fraud and error through the MVFE reduction plan and further exploration of Targeted Case Reviews.

Applying Service Goals

11. With the UC Product Development team now operating 6-month long phases, there are now only 6 development phases left between now and the end of the programme. Within this time-frame we must:

- meet the UC business case goals;
- deliver UC-related goals of the department's 2021 Spending Review proposal
- provide a high quality service for our users; and
- ensure the department is ready to govern, operate and evolve the service in a sustainable way after the end of the programme.

12. The aim of the service goals is to describe what we need to achieve before completion of the programme, so that we can keep focused across the remaining phases. Good service level goals and measures will:

- Provide a target for the service as a whole, not just the digital elements
- Help us prioritise the major problems we need to solve, and align everyone around the same priorities
- Be as close to real outcomes (for claimants) as possible, while being achievable by the programme
- Be measurable
- Be motivating

13. Our proposed service goals are as follows:

1. **DWP can manage and iterate the Universal Credit service post-programme.**
2. **Claimants have equity of outcomes regardless of potential barriers**
3. **Fraud, error and the associated monetary loss are minimised and we have the capability to continue to design it out.**
4. **Agents focus more of their time on supporting claimants, and not on unnecessary and wasteful tasks.**
5. **Claimants progress towards finding work or getting better paid work.**
6. **Claimants have an excellent end-to-end experience of the Universal Credit service.**
7. **Claimants are getting the correct payment at the right time.**
8. **All legacy claimants entitled to Universal Credit are claiming it.**

14. We will be developing service measures for each of these goals to understand and report on progress. With the Programme Board's endorsement, we will use these goals to support prioritisation for Phase 11 and develop measures to

understand our balance of investment across the goals and our progress towards meeting them.

Summary

15. This paper has been brought to this meeting to provide details of the movements in scope through phase 10 product delivery and a look ahead to how we are planning for phase 11.
16. Draft measures against each of the goals are included as an Annex for information.

Decision / Recommendation

- Programme Board are asked to note the changes to the phase 10 backlog and to endorse the use of the Service Goals for prioritisation approaches in future phases.