Approach to moving people claiming DWP benefits, Housing Benefit and combinations of benefits

(excluding ESA only & ESA/HB)

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Board/Authority/Group: UC Programme Board

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This paper is for discussion and decision

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Main objective

- Discuss the approach to continuing discovery with people claiming DWP benefits, Housing Benefit and combinations of benefits

- Share the approach and progress on integrating with external systems to support scaling in 2024.

- Programme Board is asked to support the approach and focus for discovery activity

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Goal for discovery

- Our goal for discovery continues to be: learn how to move claimants safely and what we need to do to move people at scale

- In order to do this we need to:

  - Build out the service to accommodate additional benefits and combinations

  - Build on learning from early cohorts and in particular test our riskiest assumption that we can safely stop legacy benefits if someone does not claim by their deadline date

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Continuing discovery

- We are planning to bring more benefit combinations into discovery **from the beginning of September**. This is based on team capacity given current priorities needed to scale tax credits only, as well as the additional work required to bring more benefit combinations into discovery. This will also enable us to learn enough across the journey by early 2024.

- **Current priorities needed to support scaling tax credits only:**
  - Testing with couples with a plan to scaling from October
  - Automating the sending of Migration Notices and reminders
  - Increasing automation in TE calculations
  - Removing claimants from the journey when they are no longer a Move claimant

- **Work required to build out the service to bring in more benefit combinations:**
  - Combining data sources for different benefit combinations to identify claimants
  - Sending different notifications, potentially using different channels
  - Agree a no claim journey where potential support needs are identified
  - Calculating TE for different benefits and combinations

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Scope

- We will issue migration notices to people claiming DWP benefits, Housing Benefit and combinations of benefits in mixed cohorts in order to maximise learning by early 2024. Starting with benefit-specific cohorts would not allow enough time to learn before we need to operate at scale.

- This will include both single and couple claims. In addition to what we are starting to learn from bringing tax credits couples into the journey, this will help us learn about any challenges where couples on legacy benefits interact differently with the department.

- Cohorts will not be used in the same way as ETS and Alpha – Foxtrot. The design will be iterated in the same way as Tax Credits only, using tests and experiments to learn and improve the service ready for scaling.

- Proposed volumes are 1000-2000 households, this will be dependent on the level of automation and Working Age and Move to UC operational capacity to support any manual tasks. An indicative breakdown of volumes by benefit combination for the proposed locations is annexed.

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Locations

- Our approach to selecting locations is:

  - Start with places where we already have a Move to UC footprint in order to minimise the impact on implementation activity

  - Identify LAs where there is positive engagement and no significant performance concerns

  - Ensure there is sufficient volume of cases across benefits and combinations

  - Identify any UC operational challenges within the identified areas

- We have identified three potential locations (in pink) and need to understand any UC operational challenges before any further engagement.
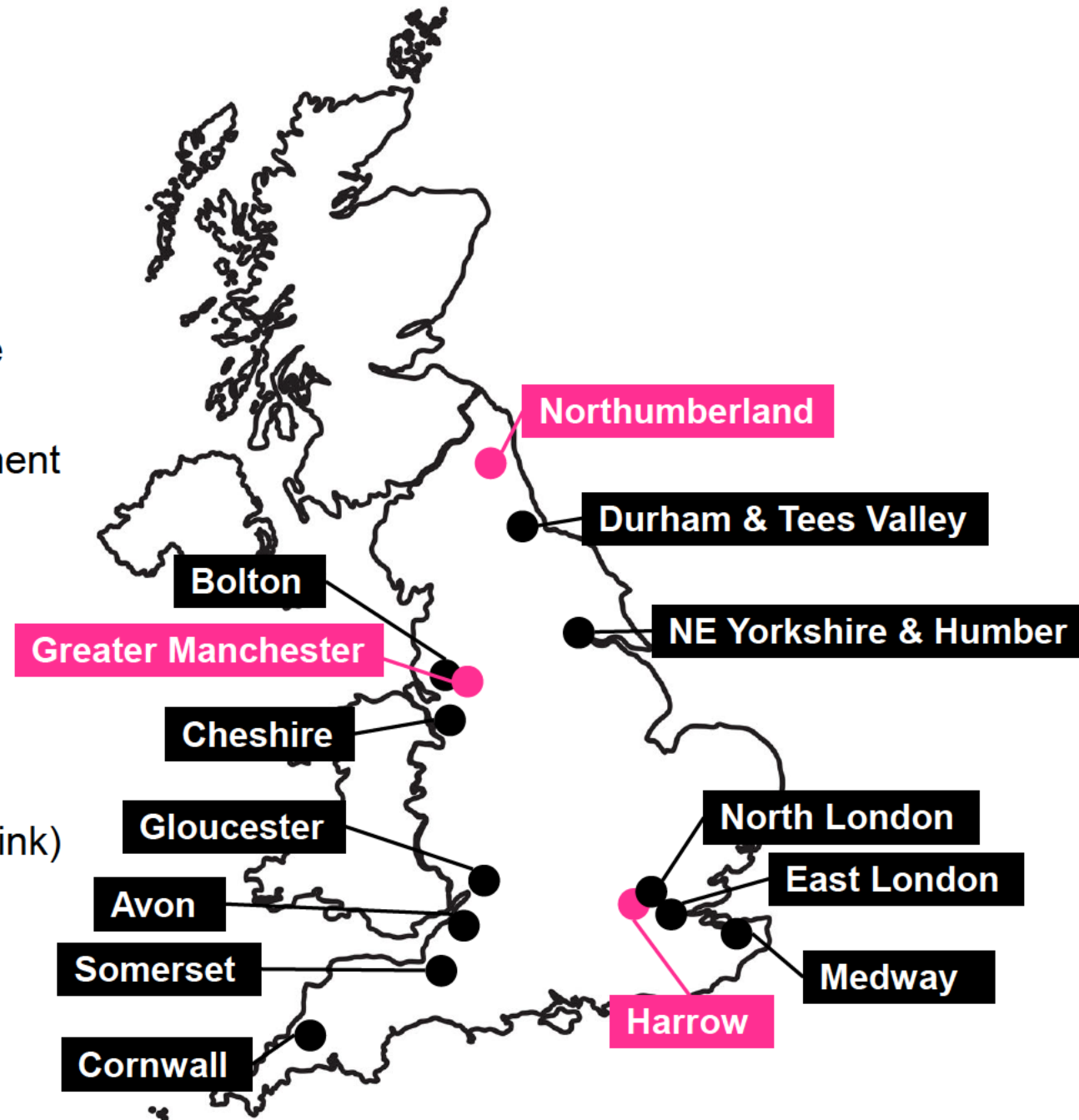
Operating model

- We will initially use the Bolton discovery team(s) to operate the service for these claimants

- The team will manage pre-claim activities and support, as well as case managing move to UC claims for these discovery cohorts. The current assumption is that these cases will be moved to BAU after the second assessment period. Functionality will have been delivered prior to the start of discovery to enable this.

- This will enable us to gather feedback across the end-to-end journey and support running different tests to build our learning and confidence to scale.

- This will also help us learn about operational capacity required to offer help and support, and in particular manage complex cases and escalation routes where more specialist support is required.

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Building on what we have learned so far

- We have learned a lot through our discovery cohorts in 2022:

    - Migration notice was well understood and reminders were a useful prompt to claim

    - 43% of claimants contacted the helpline at least once, with 18% contacting more than once

    - 94% of claimants made a claim to UC

    - 18% of those who claimed UC made a telephone claim

    - Around 50% who made a claim reported needed help making a claim

    - The data we hold about claimants is not a great predictor of need or behaviour, but can be useful when in contact with the claimant

    - 6% of claimants required a home visit

- We will continue to learn in these areas as we bring more people into the journey. This will further build our confidence to scale the service to these claimants in 2024

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Focus of the learning

- The part of the journey where we know the least and therefore have least confidence in scaling is the no claim journey. Previous cohorts including DWP legacy benefits and HB had:

    – An automatic one-month extension

    – A complicated set of no claim scenarios based on principles agreed with ministers

    – Labour-intensive checks across legacy systems that took 30-40 mins per case

- The focus of our learning for will therefore be to test how we safely stop legacy benefits when someone does not claim by their deadline date

- We are currently developing problem statements and hypotheses to test so that we can develop an approach that balances being both safe and scalable

- There is a key dependency in this part of the journey on Working Age capacity to access support information from legacy systems. This may constrain what is possible as we scale the service.

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Preparations for scaling

- We are working closely with a number of teams in the department to ensure we automate access to or sharing of relevant data to support scaling in 2024

- Identification data:
  - Data and Analytics (D&A) will have a solution ready this year for us to automatically access DWP legacy and HB claimants in order to issue migration notices

- Transitional element data:
  - The Intelligent Automation Garage (IAG) are currently building a solution for us to automatically access TE data for DWP legacy benefits which is planned to be ready by September
  - The D&A solution will also enable us to access the Single Housing Benefit Extract (SHBE) to automatically access TE data for HB claimants

- Stop notices:
  - We are working with LA IT suppliers to automate additional stop notices required when someone manage migrates from Housing Benefit or does not claim by the migration deadline

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Engagement

- This next phase of Discovery work is part of the migration profile agreed with Ministers earlier in the year.

- Nonetheless, building on our fortnightly updates to the Minister for Employment, we will engage and inform the Ministerial team of our plans for continued Discovery work, subject to the agreement of the Programme Board. This will take place later this month.

- We also plan to use July stakeholder events to discuss future Discovery work.

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Summary

- Programme Board is asked to support the approach and focus for continuing discovery with DWP legacy benefits, Housing Benefit and combinations of benefits

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Annex

Indicative caseload by benefit combination across Greater Manchester, Northumberland and West London (Harrow)

Size of caseload for testing	ESA/TC	ESA/TC/HB	HB only	IS only	IS/HB	IS/TC	IS/TC/HB	JSA only	JSA/HB	JSA/TC	JSA/TC/HB	TC/HB	All No TC only No ESA ESA/HB
1,000	23	138	190	37	63	19	121	18	36	1	10	345	1,000
2,000	46	276	380	74	126	38	241	36	72	2	19	689	2,000
3,000	68	415	570	110	190	56	362	54	109	4	29	1,034	3,000
4,000	91	553	760	147	253	75	482	72	145	5	38	1,379	4,000

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