



Department  
for Work &  
Pensions

**THE RT HON. SIR STEPHEN TIMMS MP**  
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08 July 2025

**Graeme Downie MP**  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

Dear Graeme Downie MP,

I am writing to explain a correction we have proposed to the response I gave to your question during DWP Oral Questions on 23<sup>rd</sup> June, about your constituent Nicola Smith and her husband's Universal Credit claim.

I have copied the question and original answer here for your reference:

**Q.** My constituent, Nicola Smith, works for NHS Fife. Like many people across the country, she is not paid on the same date each month. This leads to incorrect calculations for her husband Steven's universal credit, often leaving the family without a payment or being sanctioned before the system catches up the following month, and I am aware of thousands of others in a similar position. What reassurance can the Minister provide that he is addressing these issues, ensuring smooth and fair payment for NHS workers and their families on universal credit, and will he meet me to discuss this issue in more detail?

**A.** We are reviewing universal credit to ensure that it makes work pay and tackles poverty, and we are looking at exactly the kind of problem that my hon. Friend highlights. I would be delighted to meet him to discuss it, because Nicola, Steven and all 7,000 households claiming universal credit in his constituency will benefit from the standard allowance increase proposed in the Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment Bill, which we will be debating next week; it is the biggest increase in the headline rate of benefits since at least 1980.

We've applied to amend a line from my response to remove the word "all," as it inaccurately implied that every household would benefit from the UC standard rate increase. While all 7,000 UC households in your constituency will have the increase in the standard allowance reflected in their overall UC entitlement, a very small number may not see an increase in their UC award due to being subject to the benefit cap or because the increase will erode their transitional element. Additionally, as set out in the bill, any claimants who receive the

UC health element will see their combined UC standard allowance and UC health element increase in line with inflation.

I will place a copy of this letter in the Library.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Stephen Timms". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line above the name.

**Rt Hon. Sir Stephen Timms MP**  
**Minister for Social Security and Disability**