

Minister visits Citizens Advice Swansea Neath Port Talbot to discuss Universal Credit

The Minister talked to staff who provide valuable information and advice to people across the Swansea and Neath Port Talbot area to learn about some of the concerns they have raised.

Rebecca Evans said:

“Citizens Advice provided advice and information to over 18,000 people last year – and they tell me that the largest number of enquiries were from people experiencing welfare benefit problems.

“Many vulnerable people across Wales are facing challenges as a result of the UK Government’s welfare reforms, including the introduction of Universal Credit, which have particularly hit low income earners, families and the poorest.

“The Welsh Government continues to fund Citizens Advice Swansea Neath Port Talbot, which enables the fantastic team here to help people make the most of their household income and to resolve problems with welfare benefit claims.

“The vital work done by this fantastic team working across Swansea and Neath Port Talbot makes a big difference to many people.

“However, I am deeply concerned about the fundamental flaws and complexities of Universal Credit. I am extremely disappointed that the UK Government is persisting with its roll-out, despite our calls on them to halt this and address the problems.

“There are still some claimants waiting more than six weeks for their first payment. I am seeking reassurance from Damian Hinds MP, the Minister for Employment that those claiming Universal Credit, including people living in Swansea, who will now have to claim it, will receive financial support over the Christmas period.

“The DWP’s solution to tackling the delays in payments is an advance of a claimant’s indicative award. This is not a robust solution for people who are struggling. This loan has the potential to push people into more debt and rent arrears.”