

Press release: Universal Credit pilot to launch in North Yorkshire

Benefit claimants in Harrogate who still receive old style benefits will be the first people moved onto Universal Credit Secretary of State for Work and Pensions Amber Rudd has announced today.

Amber Rudd has previously confirmed that up to 10,000 claimants across the country who are on the old system would be moved to Universal Credit under a pilot scheme to start in July 2019 once regulations have been passed in the House of Commons.

More than 1.6 million people currently claim Universal Credit, but these are new claimants or people who have had a change in circumstance. All new claimants in the United Kingdom now go straight onto Universal Credit.

The process of moving people from the old system to the new system is known as 'managed migration'.

All those in Harrogate moving to Universal Credit will be personally supported by Jobcentre Plus staff to ensure they get the best possible service.

The goal of the pilot is to learn as much as possible about how to help people to move onto Universal Credit. We will increase numbers as slowly and gradually as necessary, expanding to further locations as required.

Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Amber Rudd said:

Moving people from the old and outdated benefits system to Universal Credit is a positive and important moment.

Once on Universal Credit people will benefit from a more personal service and can expect to receive up to 6 benefits combined into one, making it easier for them to manage their money.

But the switch needs to be done carefully which is why we are taking a step-by-step approach to this, starting in Harrogate.

I want to be sure that the switch to Universal Credit is a hassle free process for claimants and everyone receives the personalised service they deserve.

The Department for Work and Pensions will begin to move a small number of people from existing legacy benefits (income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support, Housing Benefit, Working Tax Credits and Child Tax Credits) to Universal Credit.

As already confirmed, claimants will also receive transitional protection, to avoid cash loss at the point of moving to Universal Credit.

Harrogate was chosen after careful consideration because of a range of factors, including the local jobcentre's significant experience of Universal Credit.

And additional support will be put in place at Harrogate Jobcentre Plus including bespoke support that will also be on hand for vulnerable claimants, including home visits.

The completion of the moving legacy benefit claimants to Universal Credit is set to finish by December 2023.

Amber Rudd has already made changes to improve the fairness of Universal Credit, in January, including that the department would stop the introduction of a retrospective benefit limit on families with more than 2 children.

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