

Citizens Advice



Welfare Reform - the emerging issues

Sue Royston

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- Welfare reform – big picture
- Changes to current system
- DLA to PIP
- Universal Credit

Key elements of reform

- **Cuts** - £18bn of welfare cuts 2011-2014 - HB cuts, benefit uprating changes, tax credit cuts. Further capping of benefit uprating in Autumn Statement
- **Universal Credit** - integration of means-tested working age benefits and tax credits from late 2013.
- **PIP** - Personal Independence Payments to replace DLA

Welfare Reform Act – key changes

Two new benefits:

- **Introduces Universal Credit**
- **DLA replaced by PIP**

Other changes:

- cap on total household benefits
- benefits uprated by CPI
- ESA(CB) for those in work-related activity group limited to 12 months
- Longer and harsher sanctions - up to 3 years
- Social fund – abolition of CCGs and crisis loans. Budget transferred, unring-fenced, to LAs
- Abolition of council tax benefit and transfer budget (less 10%) to LAs
- HB cuts where social housing tenants are under-occupying

Some small wins during passage of Bill

Personal Independence Payments

- Starting point: cut costs by 20%
- Mobility & Daily Living elements: standard & higher rates – concern that distance can walk now limited to 20 metres
- End of automatic entitlements for conditions (except terminal illness)
- Independent assessments, (aim should be accuracy not independence) periodic review & penalties for failure to notify of changes in condition.

Universal Credit

- **How it will work**

- Combines working age benefits and tax credits into one household allowance - “personal allowance”

- **Payment levels**

- Full allowance if household has no other income and up to £6,000 of savings; tapered if savings between £6,000 & £16,000; no UC where savings over £16,000.
- Households to be entitled to varying earnings disregards
- Single taper set at 65%

- **Implementation**

- pathfinders April 2013
- Rollout from October 2013

Additional support for disabled people in UC

- All additional support for disabled people will be through the work capability assessment (WCA) and for those in work the disability disregard
- Work related activity group (WRAG) - limited capability for work (LCW) addition
- Support group - limited capability for work and work related activity component (LCWRA)
- Additions in the maximum amount will remain
 - out of work
 - in work also disability disregard but see slide on disabled people in work – who can qualify for WCA

Universal Credit - concerns

- Delivery
- Structure of support for disabled people
- Help with childcare costs
- Passporting
- Support with council tax not included
- Pensioners can only claim PC when both reach pension age
- Complexity in transition period for those who are entitled to transitional protection

How it works

- Someone on JSA (£71) and paying rent of £70 (HB £70) and council tax of £15 (CTB £15)
- Universal Credit of £141 – apply for council tax support
- First £25 disregarded
- Earns £25 – keeps all £141 UC
- 65% taper so:
 - Earns £125 loses £65 of UC so now UC is $£141 - £65 = £76$
- Total income $£76(\text{UC}) + £125(\text{wages}) = £201$
- Income after housing costs = $£201 - £85 = £116$

Delivery

- Monthly payments
- Payment into one account – payments for children no longer to main carer
- No direct payments
- Digital by default
- Will be some exclusions from above

Structure of payments for disabled people

- **Some disabled people will gain but cuts for others not well targeted and will cause severe hardship**
- **Severe disability premium abolished – SDP gives additional financial help to severely disabled people who live alone and don't have a carer**
- **Disability additions for most disabled children reduced**
- **No equivalent of the disability element of WTC for disabled people who would be found fit for work**
- **Inquiry by Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson**
 - Disability and UC – calculations showing who will lose and who will gain
 - Holes in the safety net – likely impact of these changes - based on survey of 3500 disabled people

Severe disability premium

Current system

- £58 a week in means tested benefits
- Live on own and don't have a carer or only young carer

Under UC

- No equivalent in UC – money saved into support group
- Those in support group who live on their own £28/wk worse off**
- Evidence this group already very socially isolated
- Unlikely to have social care or only for essentials of care
- Many extra costs such as cleaning, minor household maintenance jobs, transport etc

Support for disabled people in work

Current system

- Work less than 16 hours – permitted work
- 16 hours or more – WTC with disability element

Under UC

- Earn less than £97 (16hrs min wage) - if in WRAG get WRAG comp and disability disregard
- Earn more than £97 no extra help unless on DLA/PIP and in WRAG (cant have WCA unless on DLA/PIP or already assessed)
- Survey showed lots of extra costs not covered by Access to Work eg energy used for work means need for cleaner

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Any questions?

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