



Department
for Work &
Pensions

THE RT HON MEL STRIDE MP
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The Rt. Hon. Sir Stephen Timms MP
Chair, Work and Pensions Committee
House of Commons
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10 January 2023

Dear Stephen,

COMPLETING THE MOVE TO UC: LEARNING FROM THE DISCOVERY PHASE

I am writing to update you on our progress with our managed migration Discovery work, outlining some of the key learnings so far.

As you know, in January 2022, we restarted the design work on the Discovery phase, the focus being on learning how to successfully move people to Universal Credit (UC). We commenced the first managed migration test ("Earliest Testable Service" or ETS) in May, issuing 499 Migration Notices in Bolton and Medway. Within the ETS, all claimants who had not made a claim by their original deadline date were granted a one-month extension to their migration deadline. Since May, we have expanded Discovery and notified more people in Bolton and Medway as well as expanding the exercise to Cornwall in July, Harrow in August and Northumberland in September.

I am pleased to have today published a [report](#) on GOV.UK which sets out the key findings and insights gained. The report has been informed through a programme of observation, research (both internal and commissioned through Ipsos) and analysis examining many aspects of the Move to UC Discovery. Our approach included in depth interviews with claimants and staff, analysis of migration data, claimant insight to assess the content design of Migration Notices and other products and assessment of telephony contact and claimant support services.

In summary, the data published today shows that out of the 499 Migration Notices issued to claimants in the ETS cohort, 439 (88%) have made a claim. Of the remainder, 7 claimants are still to make a claim, 2 Migration Notices have been cancelled and 51 claims to legacy benefits have been terminated (49 tax credit claims and 2 from other DWP benefits). Of those who have claimed so far, 81% did so by their original three-month deadline. We recognise that the likelihood of vulnerabilities amongst ESA claimants is higher and have not terminated the remaining 7 ESA claims.

It is important to bear in mind that the ETS represents an early, baseline formulation of the service from which we can learn. Overall, however, we view this as a positive early outcome for the Discovery process, suggesting that most people will move across without the need for additional support. Where claimants have not yet claimed UC and we are aware they have enhanced support needs, we are taking steps to provide the necessary support to enable a successful claim to UC – this could include working with our Visiting Service, holding case conferences with the local Advanced Customer Support Senior Leaders (ACSSLs) and where appropriate, engaging with external organisations to provide additional support.

The research has provided a range of insightful feedback which we are carefully considering and will be taking on board as we progress further with managed migration.

Next steps

We are committed to learning and adapting our approach as we progress, and we will be using the insight gained here to adapt and improve the Move to UC customer journey going forward. This will include strengthening our messaging in the Migration Notice, tailoring this to different claimant groups, refining our guidance on GOV.UK and improving guidance on Transitional Protection. We will also seek to harness stakeholders' insight to identify further opportunities to improve the overall process and our understanding of how to engage and support some of the most vulnerable claimants.

While I fully recognise it is still early days in the Move to UC journey, I am reassured by the positive initial findings here.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Committee for their continued interest and involvement in the work to complete the implementation of Universal Credit. I will be happy to continue to update you on this critical area of work as it progresses.

I enclose a copy of the report with this letter.

With best wishes,



THE RT HON MEL STRIDE
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WORK AND PENSIONS