

WYCOMBE REFUGEE PARTNERSHIP – WRITTEN EVIDENCE (EUC0114)

The economics of Universal Credit

1. Wycombe Refugee Partnership is a CIO which is currently resettling its 20th refugee family in High Wycombe. One of the things we do is to help refugees apply for Universal Credit when they first arrive. Able, well-educated, native-speaker volunteers have not understood some of the questions being put online to claimants, many of whom (whether refugees or local people) are neither well-educated nor native speakers.
2. We are currently helping a family of seven. In round numbers, the government says that it costs £1500pcm to rent a 4-bedroom house in High Wycombe – and a 4-bed house is necessary for a family of seven, as anything smaller would be deemed overcrowding. The government estimates that it costs £1700 pcm excluding rent to support a family of seven. They add the £1500 and £1700 together, apply the benefits cap and then tell the family that they have to cope on £1666pcm **total**. You don't have to be an economist to see the problem!

I do hope your enquiry can make significant improvement to this very flawed system.

4 February 2020