

Universal Credit Managed Migration: evidence to SSAC

1. The current proposals for managed migration mean that almost all the risk falls upon claimants and not on the DWP. This is not **appropriate or reasonable treatment of people legitimately seeking to access public services**.
2. **Managed migration means making a new claim for Universal Credit.** It is not evident why this is the case, it adds to the complexity for individuals and increases the risk of failures through errors and missing information. There will inevitably be gaps in income between legacy benefits and Universal Credit, as the new claim process takes some five weeks by design. This will leave some people with little or no money during the managed migration process, possibly for several weeks. For those without family or others to call on, this is likely to lead to debts and hardship, as we have already seen among new claimants to Universal Credit, with about two-fifths reporting financial difficulties in the DWP [full service survey](#).
3. **The proposed 'migration notice' will not be enough to ensure that people will be aware of the need to make a new claim in a timely fashion.** It is not clear how the migration notice will be delivered and what steps, if any, are proposed for a communication plan. There is a risk that people will miss the deadline day for making their new claim. People miss deadlines all the time. The migration notice informing people that they are required to make a new claim may go undelivered, be lost, or not read, or the requirements not understood. This is quite a complex message to absorb and act upon.
4. Then, for those who do **start their new claim, this is not always straightforward.** The DWP [full service survey](#) showed some of the difficulties and problems people have had in making their Universal Credit claim. Only just over half of all claimants were able to make their claim online without any help. About half were able to complete their online claim in one attempt, a fifth took three or more attempts. About a third experienced difficulties in gathering the necessary information and documents. There are a range of barriers that could prevent some – possibly many – people from being able to complete their claim by the deadline day.
5. Much therefore needs to be done within DWP **to communicate the requirements to make a claim in time and to make the system easier to access and use.**
6. **Miss the deadline - lose transitional protection.** There will be various groups of claimants, some with transitional protection but many without. This creates uneven and inequitable treatment. Transitional protection should be available to all, not dependent on the route onto Universal Credit.
7. **There is also a case for considering a fixed period of transitional protection,** rather than this ending when circumstances change, or when the Universal Credit award reaches the level of the previous award. This should be long enough to maintain incomes beyond the estimated time to reach the level of the legacy benefits. It would enable claimants to have some security in their income, and thus help with budgeting and planning.
8. **Transitional protection is needed because some people get less in Universal Credit than they did in legacy benefits.** Universal Credit is now much lower than was originally proposed and claimants have been affected by other benefit cuts, as shown by the [Child Poverty Action Group](#) and the [Equalities and Human Rights Commission](#). The DWP should provide data and an equality impact assessment of those who are losing income as a consequence of being migrated onto Universal Credit, and consider whether further steps are needed to mitigate this.

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