

Message

From: Minister for Welfare DELIVERY [/O=EXCHANGE/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=101541001M-MINISTER FOR WELFARE DELIVERY023]
Sent: 11/05/2020 10:02:52
To: Prestidge Jess DWP SPECIAL ADVISER [jess.prestidge@dwp.gsi.gov.uk]; **Name Redacted**
Name Redacted
CC: Minister for Welfare DELIVERY [I&S @dwp.gsi.gov.uk]; Minister for Employment [I&S @dwp.gsi.gov.uk]; Minister Lords [I&S @dwp.gsi.gov.uk]; Minister for Disabled People [I&S @dwp.gsi.gov.uk]; Minister for Pensions [I&S @dwp.gsi.gov.uk]; Secretary of State [I&S @dwp.gsi.gov.uk]; Marks John-Paul DWP Director General for Work and Health Services [john-paul.marks@dwp.gsi.gov.uk]; Couling Neil DWP CHANGE DIRECTOR GENERAL [neil.couling@dwp.gsi.gov.uk]; **Name Redacted**
Name Redacted
Subject: 200507 Readout of MfWD meeting on uprating legacy benefits

Dear all,

Please see below for the read out from the Thursday 7th May meeting on uprating legacy benefits.

Attendees

MfWD

NR PS, DWP

Name Redacted – APS, DWP

Jess Prestidge – Special Adviser, DWP

Name Redacted

Devolution, Pensioner Benefits & Carer's Allowance, DWP

- Devolution, Pensioner Benefits & Carer's Allowance, DWP

- Digital group, DWP

Read Out

- MfWD and policy officials on the call agreed that a Judicial Review on this matter is likely, given the Parliamentary and public interest so far.
- **NR** provided useful background by explaining the policy rationale behind the decision to uplift Universal Credit (UC) and not legacy benefits. The UC uplift was intended to support those who had faced the biggest economic shock due to Covid-19. Specifically, those coming onto UC, possibly in crisis, rather than legacy claimants who are likely to have been on benefits for a longer time and therefore won't have faced the same change.
- Also, legacy and UC systems differ greatly. The system used for legacy benefits does not have the capacity to uplift benefits mid-year without a risk that a claimant's benefits would stop altogether. Officials have made the judgement that the risk of system failure is too great to go ahead with a change.
- However **NR** explained that the Department now has the capability to deliver one off payments to certain groups. Previously, this had only been deliverable to pensioners through Winter Fuel Payments. Legacy benefit claimants could therefore receive a one-off uprated amount of benefits if Ministers wished to pursue this. This would likely require primary legislation and likely put a strain on the system operationally.
- MfWD noted that the arguments around system failure are persuasive, especially when set against the backdrop of the wider supportive measures that the Government has already introduced such as the Local Housing Allowance uplift.
- MfWD was thankful for this one-off payment option being brought to his attention but didn't want any further action to be taken at this stage. [He will likely discuss with SoS at his next 1:1]
- Jess asked if the Department has any data which shows that more people have been moving from legacy to UC due to the uplift. **NR** clarified that we do not have this data yet.

Best wishes,

Name Redacted

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