

**SUPPLEMENTARY DOCUMENTS FOR
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Tuesday, 13 March 2018 at 7.30 pm
Council Chamber - Civic Centre**

The attached documents are due to be considered at the meeting listed above and were unavailable for circulation when the agenda for the meeting was published. The agenda item to which the documents relate is noted below.

AGENDA

8. Review of Universal Credit in Harlow - Interviews with DWP and Claimants (Page 2)

Responses from Support Organisations

Streets2Homes

1. What evidence is there to suggest that the transfer to UC has caused:

- Rent arrears, or increased rent arrears.

At first this was an issue however, now we can arrange direct payments to be made and the waiting time has been greatly reduced.

- Debt issues for claimants .

Again not since the changes.

- Referrals to agencies such as the FoodBank / CAB, or an increase of referrals.

We have seen in an increase in referrals but this has little to nothing to do with UC.

- People to approach pay day loan type facilities to support themselves or their families?

Not that we aware.

2. What impact is the introduction of UC having on the rental/housing market?

Before the changes to UC we were extremely concerned as to how we could possibly expect landlords to work with us due to the long wait and the rules around the housing element part of UC, the changes have meant UC is more attractive to landlords in the fact direct payments can be arranged, one monthly payment, 100% of rent is paid and the waiting time has been cut drastically, also the advance can be made within a reasonable time frame.

3. What is the impact of UC on your organisations resources?

We have need to train all staff, inform landlords and assist clients to change over to UC, this has impacted on our staffing hours.

4. Are there any requirements for the links between agencies to be strengthened and if so in what way?

We have certainly needed and achieved to build stronger links with DWP, better communication, assistance with difficult cases, to tap into expert knowledge of UC.

5. Are there any areas in which you believe Harlow Council can provide additional assistance to help in managing the challenges of Universal Credit?

No as it seems to be working well now.