

Appendix G

Responses from Claimants

1. When did you transfer to Universal Credit?

- June -1
- July -1
- Sep -5
- October-9
- Nov -2
- Dec -14

2. How many weeks did you have to wait for your first Universal Credit Payment?

- 6-8 weeks
- Average 8 weeks
- Longest 15 weeks

3. Has switching to Universal credit caused you more or less financial problems?

All responded more financial problems.

4. Has Universal Credit impacted on your rent payments, and if so, how?

All clients apart from one responded they accumulated arrears as a direct result of claiming UC.

One client said he did not fall into arrears but he had 0 money to pay for anything else including food.

6 Claimants reported they could not afford rent as only receiving 50% of housing element, ex-partner on tenancy even though not in occupation of the property.

Workers report they did receive Tax credits and some Housing Benefit, now they do not receive help with under UC (0 award).

5. When you were going through the process of switching to Universal Credit:

- What worked?

The Council referred me to the CAB who helped me with the claim.

- What didn't work?

-lack of clear communication.

-unable to complain to DWP by telephone.

-having to take time off work to go to JC.

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- Was seeking help and advice easy for you to access?
 - Job Centre staff not helpful.
 - not told by applying for UC would stop me going back onto ESA if won appeal.
 - Couldn't get through on phones.
 - Called helpline and told to go online.
- What could have been done better and how?
 - Help with computers.
 - told what to expect.
 - someone to speak to my Landlord to tell him why I can't pay my rent.
 - told whether I would be worse off applying for UC than staying on the benefits I was on.
- Is there anything that you feel Harlow Council could have done to assist you during this process?
 - Accessed help for me.
 - The council were helpful.
 - It would have been helpful to have my DHP application processed quicker to prevent rent arrears.
- How did the on line claim process work for you especially with reference to ease of use and accessibility?
 - I couldn't claim as my partner did not have an email address.
 - I needed help but the helpline told me to go online.
 - I was unable to proceed with my claim so I was sanctioned.
 - I did not want an email account as I fled DV and worried my ex could find me
 - didn't understand what I needed to do to claim.
 - I couldn't use a PC.
 - I couldn't do it on my own but the CAB helped.

6. Are you aware that you can still claim for Council Tax Support from the Council?

No and yes equal responses.