



Councillor Cliff Lunn

Executive Member for Finance and Resources

Report to Council on 26 March 2019

Universal Credit Update

In the Selby District the largest area went full service Universal Credit (UC) in June 2018 and all the district was full service by November 2018. The numbers of claimants receiving UC has been steadily increasing and stood at 558 claimants as at Jan 2019. Claimants of legacy benefits were due to begin migration onto Universal Credit (UC) from January 2019, this has now been put back and a 12 month delay in the timetable has been announced. The process will begin now in July 2019 on a very small scale, and it has been announced this week that Harrogate will be one of the pilot sites. Due to our close links with the benefits teams in the North Yorkshire authorities we can use the experience that will be gained from Harrogate to ensure we are well prepared when the mass migration begins in our area.

Some further exceptions have recently been announced to new claims for UC, and those claimants with a severe disability premium included in their legacy benefit already will not claim UC. This means they will still be entitled to claim Housing Benefit from the local authority.

From April 2019 local Citizens Advice Bureau's will be funded to provide UC claimants with assisted digital and personal budgeting support.

From May 2019 new rules regarding mixed aged couples come into place, and previously those couples have been able to claim pension credit as a couple but from 15 May 2019 if the partner is not state pension age they will have to make a claim for UC. This change means these couples could be up to £500 worse off.

75% Business Rate Pool

Work is progressing on the preparations for the 2019/20 West and North Yorkshire Business Rates Pool. As a safety net authority, Selby will benefit from the increase in the threshold from 92.5% in the current 50% system, to 95% in the 75% pool pilot. As I highlighted in the budget report, this means an extra £63k for this Council in 2019/20.

The governance arrangements were specified in the application that was submitted to the government back in September 2019 – the district councils in North Yorkshire will be represented on the pool board by Harrogate and Scarborough borough councils.

It is anticipated that there will be opportunity to bid for project funding from the shared pool funds but we await further detail before we are able to assess any such opportunity from Selby's perspective.

Cliff Lunn

Lead Member for Finance and Resources