

External Scrutiny Committee

Meeting to be held on Tuesday, 25 February 2020

Electoral Division affected: (All Divisions);
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Universal Credit in Lancashire

(Appendices A and B refer)

Contact for further information:

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Executive Summary

Amena Patel, Equality and Welfare Reform Transformation Project Lead & UC Help to Claim Best Practice Lead from Citizens Advice Rossendale and Hyndburn and Joanne Barker, Welfare Rights Manager, Welfare Rights Service, Lancashire County Council will attend the meeting to deliver the presentations set out at appendices A and B respectively.

Recommendation

The External Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

1. Receive and consider the presentations as part of the continued review of Universal Credit in Lancashire.
2. Determine next steps for the review of Universal Credit in Lancashire and any key lines of enquiry for future meetings of the External Scrutiny Committee.

Background and Advice

Following on from the last meeting of the External Scrutiny Committee on 21 January 2020, requests were made for attendance from the Lancashire County Council's Welfare Rights Service and Citizens Advice to attend this meeting and to present their findings and experiences on the roll out of Universal Credit in Lancashire.

Amena Patel, Equality and Welfare Reform Transformation Project Lead & UC Help to Claim Best Practice Lead from Citizens Advice Rossendale and Hyndburn and Joanne Barker, Welfare Rights Manager, Welfare Rights Service, Lancashire County Council will attend the meeting to deliver the presentations set out at appendices A and B respectively.

At the last meeting of the committee it was "felt that there were two key points to investigate with the county council's Welfare Rights Service being; issues of dehumanisation as people try and work the system rather than finding work and how

people would fall into a hole while they wait for the first payment (five week wait – or longer in some circumstances).

The following key lines of enquiry in preparation for when it hears evidence from the Welfare Rights Service were developed:

- How fit for purpose the county council's Welfare Rights Service was?
- Where can the most disadvantaged people go to for help and how the county council might assist?
- How can we use the county council's influence as the fourth largest local authority to instigate change?
- How will the gap in funding the county council's crisis support scheme be bridged?"

In considering the presentations set out at appendices A and B, the External Scrutiny Committee is asked to determine next steps for this review and agree any key lines of enquiry for future meetings.

Consultations

N/A

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Risk management

The presentation set out at appendix A represents the views of Citizens Advice and are not those of Lancashire County Council.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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None

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A