

External Scrutiny Committee

Meeting to be held on 11 January 2022

Report of Clare Platt, Head of Health Equity, Welfare & Partnerships

Electoral Division affected:
(All Divisions);

Corporate Priorities:
Caring for the vulnerable;
Improving Services

Universal Credit Update

(Appendices A and B refer)

Contact for further information:

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Brief Summary

The presentation (as at Appendix B) provides an update on changes to Universal Credit and outlines the potential impact of the continued migration of people from legacy benefits onto Universal Credit on a range of Lancashire County Council service areas. This follows the initial findings of the report that was presented to the Committee as part of the Chair's update at its meeting on 16 March 2021.

Recommendation

The External Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider:

- i. The information presented.
- ii. The implications of the continued roll out and changes to Universal Credit across Lancashire, including the implications for Lancashire County Council as a consequence of service user contributions to the cost of care.

Detail

Universal Credit was one of the topics External Scrutiny Committee agreed to review as part of its workplan under the previous administration. At its meeting on 12 January 2021, County Councillor Gillian Oliver was asked to produce a report for the Committee outlining her findings in respect of changes to Universal Credit.

As part of the Chair's Update to the meeting of 16 March 2021, County Councillor Gillian Oliver presented the initial findings, as agreed at the previous meeting. The full report is attached at Appendix A. At this meeting the committee also suggested that the topic of Universal Credit should be a continuing item for the External Scrutiny Committee to review.

At its meeting on Monday 29 November, members of the Committee requested that an update on Universal Credit be provided. This report provides that update. The information (as at Appendix B) will be presented at the meeting. Whilst providing some background to Universal Credit and details of recent changes, the main purpose is to inform members of the likely impact the migration of people from legacy benefits to Universal Credit may have on our services.

The Care Financial Assessment Team undertake financial assessments for those receiving adult social care services to determine how much service users are required to contribute to their care costs in accordance with the Care Act 2014.

It is anticipated that the changes will have a financial impact on a range of council services including:

- Financial Safeguarding Team – Manage the financial affairs of vulnerable people assessed as lacking mental capacity.
- The Shared Lives Service – Supports adults who have a social care assessment and an identified need for support to live in the community. Shared Lives matches those adults with a carer who shares their home and provides all the support required to live as independent a life as possible.

Consultations

N/A

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Risk management

Financial

There is an estimated reduction in income to the council of c £3.5 million per annum as a result of the changes set out in this report, as a consequence of reduced service user contributions to care costs. It is understood that this potential risk has been considered as an element of the Council's updated Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Legal

There are no legal implications as there are no proposals contained within the report.

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