



Department
for Work &
Pensions

www.dwp.gov.uk

Neil Couling,
Director General, Universal Credit
Programme
6th Floor, Caxton House
Tothill Street
London
SW1A 9NA

neil.couling@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

1 October 2018

For the attention of:
Chief Executives,
Local Authorities

You will have seen today that the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions has announced a new partnership between DWP and Citizen's Advice to deliver the important service of Universal Support, from 1 April 2019. This means that Local Authorities will no longer be asked to deliver Universal Support from that date.

We have listened to views and feedback, including from yourselves, about many aspects of Universal Credit including the delivery of Universal Support. From that feedback it is clear that the model as currently configured is not delivering the support for vulnerable claimants as effectively as it could have been. I also know that many Local Authorities were unhappy with the referrals mechanisms and the processes involved.

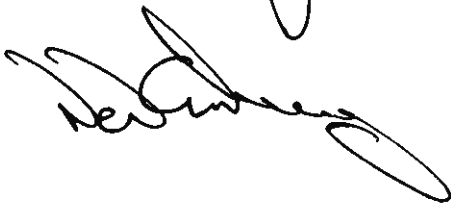
We have been keen to work more closely with third-parties to reach more widely the communities we work with, and as a result our Secretary of State has chosen to establish and launch a new partnership with Citizen's Advice and Citizen's Advice Scotland to deliver Universal Support. Funding arrangements will remain in place for Local Authorities until 31 March 2019, with joint running of the Citizens Advice offer alongside until this date, to ensure that there are no gaps in provision and to ensure that you are able to exit your annually-funded grant arrangements in good order.

I know, first hand, that Local Authorities have worked hard to deliver Universal Support, but it is right that we tackle issues that arise as we see them in the spirit of improving our service continuously. It is clear that despite the hard work, the

service as currently configured is not providing consistent support nationwide as the feedback from claimants, their representatives and the NAO has shown.

I would like to thank you sincerely for the hard work and effort you have put in to help us deliver Universal Support to date and your help to ensure the continued Success of Universal Credit. Our relationships will remain critical and I look forward to working with you to continue to deliver for, engage and support those who need it most in our society and I and my teams will continue to support and work alongside you to do just that.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Neil Couling', written in a cursive style.

Neil Couling
Director General, Universal Credit Programme