

31st August 2017

Dear Sir,

The UK Government decided to phase the rollout of Universal Credit (UC) on a 'test and learn' basis, prior to an accelerated rollout beginning in October this year. This was a sensible approach to a very major change.

In five years UC will be claimed by over 650,000 households in Scotland. In principle, it is a good idea which should make life easier for both the claimant and the delivery agencies alike.

However, having seen how UC has worked so far, it is clear that it is leaving thousands of people struggling to make ends meet.

The flaws include a six week waiting period between a person's claim and their initial payment.

Another issue is that UC is an entirely online system, yet our evidence is that many applicants don't have access to computers or the skills to use them.

Together, we believe the Government must halt the rollout of the benefit so that these and other flaws can be fixed before they harm any more people. This will require serious changes, not just minor adjustments.

Fundamentally, we need a benefits system that supports those in need, and it is in that spirit that we are calling to halt and fix UC.

Yours faithfully,

Ewan Aitken, CEO, Cyrenians; Jackie Brock, CEO, Children in Scotland; Graeme Brown, Director, Shelter Scotland; Yvette Burgess, Director, Housing Support Enabling Unit; Claire Cairns, Network Co-ordinator, Coalition of Carers in Scotland; Annie Gunner Logan, Director, Coalition of Care and Support Providers; Neil Henery, Director, Camphill Scotland; Delia Henry, Chair, Disability Agenda Scotland; Peter Kelly, Director, The Poverty Alliance; Jamie Livingstone, Director, Oxfam Scotland; Rory Mair, Chair, Citizens Advice Scotland; Richard Meade, Head of Policy and Public Affairs, Marie Curie Scotland; Robin McAlpine, Director, Common Weal; Suzanne Munday, CEO, Minority Ethnic Carers of People Project; Satwat Rehman, Director, One Parent Families Scotland; Emma Ritch, Executive Director, Engender; Pete Ritchie, Director, Nourish Scotland; Bill Scott, Director of Policy, Inclusion Scotland; Theresa Shearer, CEO, ENABLE Scotland; Martin Sime, CEO, Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations; Sally Thomas, CEO, Scottish Federation of Housing Associations; George Valiotis, CEO, HIV Scotland; Dr David Webster, Glasgow University; Meg Wright, Director, Carers Trust Scotland; Gavin Yates, CEO, Homeless Action Scotland.

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