

# CHC Update and Welcome

## Current areas of focus for welfare influencing – DWP

- Retaining the £20 UC uplift – indications from the DWP that it will be removed.
- We are keen to understand what support HAs might need, and will bring forward the timetable of our influencing
- Annual rent change meeting – Dan and Lisa to attend meeting with the DWP on 1<sup>st</sup> July

# CHC Update and Welcome

## Current areas of focus for welfare influencing – DWP

- Next stages on managed migration – no movement on this as yet, DWP has confirmed they are still focused on pandemic response but formulating plans.
- ‘Voluntary move to UC’ – DWP believes 1.4 million people would be ‘better off on UC’ – looking for feedback on ‘eligibility checker’
- Calling for EEA Nationals communications – to date the DWP has been unable to confirm this.

# CHC Update

## Current areas of focus for welfare influencing – Wales specific

- Welsh Government Charter on ‘Welsh Benefits System’
- Welsh Affairs Committee inquiry on ‘The Benefits System in Wales’
- Income maximisation – Paul Neave to update
- Digital inclusion – building on asks in Action Plan for Government
- Watching brief – Universal Basic Income pilots

# Universal Credit - £20 uplift

## Research with tenants

- Responses from 16 HAs – both individual and jointly as the Cwm Taf network, in addition to the Hwyl Dda data
- CHC plans to use the input provided as the basis of an influencing report on the £20 uplift
- We would like to discuss key messages and influencing tactics with you today

# Universal Credit - £20 uplift

## Key findings

- The majority of claimants unaware £20 is temporary
- People are still in crisis and feeling the effects of the pandemic
- Claimants are under increased financial pressure due to rises in living costs, reductions in working hours or loss of jobs, access to services in rural areas - shopping locally which is more expensive
- **However**, many claimants say the £20 means they are more able to meet their basic needs than previously on UC – e.g. for food at home, school dinners, gas/electricity, clothes for children, etc.

# Universal Credit - £20 uplift

## Key findings

Tenants say they will struggle financially without the £20. Some examples of what this would mean

- Choosing which bills to pay (rent, food utilities), being cold in the winter
- Reducing food intake and quality
- Disconnection of internet (UC claims, applying for jobs, food shops, online courses, order prescriptions etc)
- Debt would increase in Sept as result of additional costs in children returning to school
- Impact on physical and/or mental health
- More likely to need support via food banks, fuel vouchers etc
- Some people will become ineligible for UC as they are just on the threshold

# Universal Credit - £20 uplift

## Proposed key influencing messages

- In March 2020, managed migration to UC had been paused for further testing.
- UC has been tested over the past year by a sudden increase in claimants.
- The addition of £20 per week has been key to its success in helping people to cope financially.
- This £20 should be retained permanently in order to ensure that UC meets its intended aims.
- This will ensure that UC is fit for purpose as a benefit that helps people to find and keep work, and supports those who are on low incomes or cannot work to afford food, heating, water and clothing without falling into debt.

# Universal Credit - £20 uplift

## Proposed key influencing messages

- Our research has demonstrated that many tenants do not know that the £20 uplift was intended to be temporary.
- DWP must act now to communicate their intentions on the uplift, and landlords must be given time to put in place the processes required to support tenants.
- This is even more important based on what we have heard today

# Universal Credit - £20 uplift

## Proposed influencing tactics

- Launch report of these findings – ASAP
- Media work including case studies if possible – tenants/groups of tenants; HAs or networks
- Write to UK Government Ministers with recommendations
- Write to Welsh Government Ministers with recommendations
- Work with members and regional networks to provide report for use in letters for MPs regarding the uplift

# Questions

## Next steps

- Are you happy with this proposed approach? Do you have any comments or questions?
- Do you have any key messages to add?
- Do you have any additional influencing tactics to suggest?
- Would you be willing to work with our media team on a case study? [Post in chat]

# DRAFT Charter

To establish a rational and integrated Welsh benefits system for all means-tested benefits for which the Welsh Government are responsible, we will:

- Develop and deliver communications and processes which are clear and accessible to all.
- Develop an inclusive system demonstrating fairness and equality in the delivery of Welsh benefits.
- Develop and build a system which is flexible and not a one size fits all methodology.
- Raise awareness of people's entitlement to benefits to help maximise household income in Wales.
- Work in partnership with stakeholders in the development and delivery of a system which meets the needs of people in Wales.
- Encourage feedback to enable the delivery of the best service possible.
- Make a positive difference in Wales which is aligned with the Well-being of Future Generation Wales Act.

# Welsh Affairs Committee

**Deadline: 10<sup>th</sup> August**

## **Questions**

- What are the key challenges for the benefits system in Wales and how do they differ from the other nations and regions of the UK?
- Pre-pandemic, how effectively did the UK benefits system tackle poverty and socio-economic inequalities *in Wales as compared to England and Scotland?*
- **How has the COVID-19 pandemic changed the type and amount of support needed by people in Wales?**
- **How effectively has the UK benefits system responded to these needs, and what else should the UK Government do to deliver the right support in Wales?**

# Welsh Affairs Committee

Questions continued

- **How effectively do the Welsh Government's allowances and grants meet the particular needs of people in Wales?**
- What reforms are needed to the benefits system and should there be further devolution of powers?
- How effectively do the UK and Welsh Governments work together in the delivery of benefits in Wales?
- What are the implications of the UBI pilot in Wales?

**CHC proposes to draft response based on the evidence we have and previous discussions. We will share with members for comment.**

# Break out groups – 15 mins

- **What is your view on the draft Charter? What feedback would you give to Welsh Government at this stage?**
- **What key points do you think CHC should raise in our response to the Welsh Affairs Committee?**

**Please agree two key points on each Q, and decide on someone to report back to plenary**

**Diolch.  
Thanks.**

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