**Universal Credit Cases**

**We have listed some specifics cases that we have had regarding Universal Credit claimant’s problems below - a summary of the issues are**

1. The benefit is claimed online, there is a lack of support for claimants who are unable to do this due to literacy, language, disability and/or computer skills. Support to deal with claiming then ongoing support (long term) to regularly check and manage their on line journal and carry out requirements is not being offered
2. Long waits and problems with claims being processed correctly. Claimants are waiting weeks (sometimes months) for their benefits (no income), getting into debt/rent arrears and often having incorrect/inconsistent payments.
3. Lack of responses and inactivity from DWP regarding complaints/problems
4. DWP ‘work coaches’ not taking into account claimants health (and other personal commitments), on making new claims claimant commitments should take into account clients limitations – this is not always done and onerous work seeking requirements are leading to sanctions
5. We also object to the cuts to the work allowance and the two child policy which will increase poverty and financial hardship

**Recommendations**

1. A claims system where (vulnerable) clients identified as not being able to go through the process of using the portal get support and assistance with making and manage their claims
2. Despite increasing concerns over the roll out of UC, it is continuing and at faster rate, Citizens Advice and CPAG have recommended that a ‘pause’ be put on the roll out until these problems and issues have been resolved
3. Complaints section/department/process is ineffective, there are no designated lines or contacts for support workers, advisors, housing benefit section, social housing landlords. This is a new benefit and DWP should be listening to concerns and improving the UC claims system, at present (most) complaints are not being dealt with and the concerns that have been raised are ignored.

**Case Examples**

1. SB Claimant with both mental and physical health problems, poor literacy and no IT skills, attended Dod Street JC+ office on 3 occasions stating needs help to claim. Refused and family member did claim
2. JW Physically disabled claimant attended and was given use of computer, received some assistance, found it daunting, kept getting asked for information repeatedly, awaiting payments
3. EH Physical and mental health problems, poor literacy, no access to use computer, learning disability. Attended office to request support, none given, relative did on line claim, awaiting payment
4. DL Referred for help by Carers Centre, no assistance given, returned to Carers Centre who did claim for him (will require long term support to manage his claim)
5. MR no access to computer, given use of computer in DWP office, found it difficult, received some assistance
6. SB Poor literacy, no computer. 3 separate visits and lack of support and help
7. AB Poor literacy, helped to claim by advisor. Sent to Tenter Street refused help
8. SB Physical and mental health refused help in Dod St, difficulty in claim, delay in payments
9. JE Working client, payments varied and wrong for 3 months before corrected
10. AS Claimant on ESA and appealing being told will get money if apply for UC (although were entitled to receive ESA whilst appealing and without having to claim UC)
11. MB As above
12. PR Claimant with mental health problems not being taken into account by work coach
13. TA No computer, poor literacy went to Dod St and tried to do, did claim but did it wrong no one would help but was then booked for an appointment to do
14. MK As above
15. NI Client claim closed, wife had not completed her bits of claim correctly, was advised to make a new claim but needed his passport to do so, he hasn’t got a passport, was sent away
16. AL Client has limited computer skills, mental and cognitive disabilities, says ‘someone’ in benefit office did application, has no idea what his password is or how to access journal, didn’t know needed to check journal to manage his claim. No benefits for months
17. DM Claimant with mental health problems, risk of eviction and self-harm, complaints sent to UC about delays not responded to for weeks, client was evicted from home and now living in his car