Successful DWP campaign leads to closure of historical benefits

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Two benefits designed decades ago will officially close today following the successful delivery of the Move to Universal Credit campaign by the Department for Work and Pensions.

- Over 1.9 million people now better supported to find good, secure jobs as the Government moves customers off outdated benefits and on to Universal Credit
- Two benefits to be closed as part of the Government's successful 'Move to UC' campaign, modernising the welfare system
- Vulnerable customers to be supported in the move to Universal Credit as deadline to close income-related Employment and Support Allowance and Housing Benefit extended

The migration of customers from so-called legacy benefits to the country's main benefit recommenced in May 2022, with the campaign helping to move over 1.9 million people, including 135,000 Income Support and income-related Jobseeker's Allowance claimants.

The success means those two benefits will close with customers now receiving Universal Credit – a benefit that better reflects today's labour market and opens up a range of support to help people move closer to, or into work.

They will have access to help from Jobcentres, including one-to-one, personalised, voluntary support through new Pathways to Work advisers for those with limited capability for work- and work-related activity. More than 65,000 customers have already taken up this offer, exceeding the target set by the Government last year.

And as part of the Department's ongoing commitment to support and safeguard our most vulnerable customers, the closure of Employment and Support Allowance and Housing Benefit will happen by the end of the summer so a limited number of hard to reach customers, or customers with significant barriers to claiming, can continue to be supported to make the move to Universal Credit.

Extra support will be provided to help these Employment and Support Allowance and Housing Benefit claimants make the move, including a dedicated DWP telephone number, the Move to UC Helpline, and tailored help through the Enhanced Support Journey for customers who have not engaged with the DWP, including through home visits.

Minister for Social Security and Disability Sir Stephen Timms, said:

> Our Move to Universal Credit campaign has been successful in moving over 1.9 million people from legacy benefits to the modern Universal Credit system.
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> Vulnerable customers have been at the forefront of this campaign. In their interests, we

> are extending the deadline for income-related Employment Support Allowance claimants to move over.

> This Government is committed to updating the welfare system so that it promotes opportunity, rather than stifling it – as part of our Plan for Change.

> The campaign means the number of people on Universal Credit has increased, particularly the number of people who receive the benefit with no requirement to look for work, as, since June last year, the focus has been on moving vulnerable people from Employment and Support Allowance.

The Move to UC campaign, which since last June has seen the migration of hundreds of thousands of vulnerable people on Employment and Support Allowance and Housing Benefit, has led to an increase in the Universal Credit case load, particularly those with no requirement to look for work.

The Government has committed to investing £3.5billion in employment support by the end of the decade, including via the Connect to Work programme, which is set to help 300,000 people facing complex health barriers into jobs over the next five years.

Gillian, who made the move to Universal Credit from ESA, said:

> The migration to UC was straightforward, and I've been able to access help with skills and volunteering opportunities which I didn't get on my old benefit.

> It is far better than ESA, and I'm able to look at my payments beforehand which is really helpful when budgeting for the month ahead.

> The Jobcentre staff have been amazing too, helping me make the move but also the help they've given me to completed a course that will help me move into work.

As part of closing the Government's Move to UC campaign, DWP delivered support for the hardest to reach Employment and Support Allowance audience, including homeless customers and those requiring appointees.

Reforms coming into force from April will tackle the perverse incentives in the Universal Credit system inherited by this government by introducing a lower health element rate of £217.26 per month for new claimants, compared to a higher standard rate of £429.80, saving nearly £1 billion and tackling welfare dependency.

Additional Information:

- Where customers need additional support to make a claim to Universal Credit, extensions are available to those who have good reason to need more time to claim. Any extension to the original deadline must be requested before the deadline date. There is no limit to the number of times an extension can be requested or applied; however, they can be refused by the Secretary of State.
- Working age Housing Benefit will remain for claimants who are in temporary or supported accommodation.

https://www.gov.uk/government/news/successful-dwp-campaign-leads-to-closure-of-historical-benefits