

REPORT TO:	Council		
DATE:	09 November 2017		
REPORT AUTHOR:	Monica Bell, Senior Democratic Services Officer		
TITLE OF REPORT:	Motions for debate at Council - 1. Universal Credit Rollout in Hyndburn 2. Occupational Therapy Shortage Impacting on Disabled Adaptations 3. Leaving the European Union 4. Investment in Disabled Facilities Grants 5. Role of Transport for the North		
EXEMPT REPORT:	No	Not applicable	
KEY DECISION:	No	If yes, date of publication:	n/a

Council will be asked to consider the following motions submitted under Council Procedure Rule A9:-

1. Universal Credit Rollout in Hyndburn

“That this Council notes that Universal Credit (UC) is a single monthly payment which replaces six working age benefits (known as legacy benefits). These are Housing Benefit (HB), Income Support (IS), Working Tax Credits (WTC), Child Tax Credit (CTC), Employment and Support Allowance (Income-related) and Job Seekers Allowance (Income-related). It supports residents on low incomes who are both in and out of work.

Universal Credit has been in Hyndburn since 2015 but on a mainly limited scale. However, the numbers of residents moving onto Universal Credit from 2015 have been restricted to new claimants and straightforward cases. The pilot for Hyndburn commences in February 2018 and the roll out of the full service of Universal Credit is a new entirely online-based system and claimants must apply for and manage their claim online. It also brings in a wider range of claimants including more complex cases. It affects claimants when they make a claim for the first time or have a change in circumstances that means their existing claim for one of the legacy benefits has to be cancelled.

Hyndburn is one of the areas subject to the rollout of Universal Credit full service. The delivery of the new service has been an area of particular concern across the country and was subject in the last parliament to an investigation by the Work and Pensions Select Committee.

As a result, and while the DWP and Job Centre Plus are the agency responsible for managing the change, the Council is committed to pro-active and continued work with key stakeholders and partners to ensure that as much support is provided to residents as possible to help achieve a smooth transition to the new service.

However, this Council has a number of concerns about Universal Credit

- The wait times between the date of application and date of assessment. There is a built in waiting period of 6 weeks before Universal Credit is awarded and this creates hardship for residents. Any delay in DWP processing times exacerbates this hardship still further.
- The level of deductions applied to monthly payments to clawback advance payments and sanctions can be high leaving residents with little money to cover basic income needs for their families for the weeks ahead.
- The high number of Universal Credit claimants that have been subject to sanctions in Hyndburn.
- That the provision of housing costs support for short term temporary accommodation for Hyndburns homeless population is not an appropriate fit for Universal Credit and should be returned to and covered by Housing Benefit at the earliest opportunity.

This Council resolves that:

The Chief Executive write to the following to register these issues and request that solutions are explored which would improve the design and delivery of Universal Credit which would mitigate impacts for low- income, working age residents in the borough;

1. The Rt. Hon David Gauke MP Secretary of State for Work and Pensions.
2. Debbie Abrahams MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Work and Pensions and MP for Oldham East and Saddleworth, and Graham Jones, the MP for Hyndburn.
3. The Local Government Association (LGA).”

Proposer: Councillor Tim O’Kane

Seconder: Councillor Jenny Molineux

Submitted on: 30th October 2017

2. Occupational Therapy Shortage Impacting on Disabled Adaptations

“That Council Notes that:

- Occupational therapists provide life-changing support to people managing illness, injuries and a wide range of physical and mental health conditions. Uniquely, they enable people to carry out daily activities (‘occupations’) which are essential to health and happiness. This vital care helps people recover and build new skills to enjoy a full and independent life.
- There are currently 10 advertised occupational health based vacancies on Lancashire County Councils website with only 1 of these being designated for East Lancashire which covers Hyndburn.
- A report released in March 2017 by Health Education England (HEE) and The College of Occupational Therapists (COT) has highlighted national average vacancy rates for occupational therapists was 15.5% for NHS Trusts and 17.5% for Local Authorities. This compares to a national vacancy rate of 2.6% for the economy as a whole and 3%

for the health and social care sector according to the most recent statistics from the ONS.

- The lack of Occupational Therapists employed by Lancashire County Council is having a detrimental effect on Applications for Disabled Adaptations Grants being referred to Hyndburn Borough Council.”

Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG’s) are mandatory grants of up to £30,000 to help less abled people live independently and safely in their own homes. These adaptations can be minor, such as installing walk in showers for residents with mobility issues or involving major building works to install a lift. Shortages of Occupational Therapists are causing delays and lower number of referrals to grant applications and therefore disabled residents from Hyndburn are missing out on being able to take advantage of these life changing grants.

“That Council Resolves to:

Request the Chief Executive to write to the government to address this very serious issue by:-

- Re-adding Occupational Therapy to the priority occupation list.
- Provide assurances that it will protect the rights of qualified Occupational Therapists from elsewhere in the EU who are currently working in the UK and to remain here after the UK leaves the EU and for new applicants to be permitted to fill Occupational Therapist vacancies in the future.

Request the Chief Executive to write to the Leader of Lancashire County Council to request:

- That LCC take a more innovative approach to filling Occupational Therapy Vacancies.
- That LCC Social Services take a more pro-active approach in making referrals to Hyndburn Borough Council for Disabled Adaptation Grants.

Request the Chief Executive to write to all the G.P. Practices in Hyndburn:

- To inform them of Disabled adaptation grants, who qualifies and how to apply for them.
- To request that they refer any patient to Lancashire County Council who they feel will benefit from a disabled adaptation grant.

Proposer: Councillor Gareth Molineux

Seconder: Councillor Jean Battle

Submitted on: 1st November 2017

3. Leaving the European Union

“That this Council recognises that the people of Hyndburn voted overwhelmingly to leave the European Union. Under these circumstances we feel that this council should write to the

Prime Minister wishing the negotiators a successful outcome for the constituents of this Borough.”

Proposer: Councillor Kathleen Pratt
Seconder: Councillor Tony Dobson

Submitted on: 1st November 2017

4. Investment in Disabled Facilities Grants

“That the Leader of the Council writes to the Prime Minister thanking her Government for the £1.5 million of investment in DFG grants between 2016 and 2018 which has resulted in 89 grants being completed in 2016/17 and a further 132 to be completed in 2017/18 and asks all councillor to raise the profile of DFG grants in their wards to alleviate hardship for the disabled.”

Proposer: Councillor Tony Dobson
Seconder: Councillor Judith Addison

Submitted on: 1st November 2017

5. Role of Transport for the North

“That this council resolves to write to the Department of Transport to seek clarification on what the role of Transport for the North will be. Hyndburn Borough Council has made a strong case in lobbying for better infrastructure links in East Lancashire especially East – West Connectivity in the region through a road and rail infrastructure investment programme. This council has been at the forefront of lobbying for the following:

1. M65 linking to Yorkshire (A1 and M62)
2. Re-establishment of Skipton to Colne Rail link

The lack of clarity from central government over the status of TfN is a worrying development and shows that this government is not addressing one of the biggest hindrances to economic growth in our region which is a lack of connectivity and capacity in our transport infrastructure.”

Proposer: Councillor Noordad Aziz
Seconder: Councillor Abdul Khan

Submitted on: 1st November 2017