

<p>How many energy efficiency officers do we have to monitor CO2 emissions, since the departure of John Brown. Who is doing this work now and what expertise do we have?</p>	<p>The Council has never employed an energy efficiency officer. The reporting of CO2 emissions will be coordinated by the Programmes, Projects and Performance Team and the data is provided by various service specialists across the Council.</p>
<p>Can you explain the affordable homes figures – does the figure of 93 homes under construction include 30 declared as well as the 35 completed but not yet occupied?</p>	<p>The 93 homes under construction are in addition to the current figure of 35. These are on sites in Malton, Micklehill, Helmsley, Wood Street, Platform for life. We would expect some of these to be completed this year and over the next two financial years.</p> <p>The indicator that is shown on covalent is a quarterly return, at the time of reporting this was 30 homes however the number of completions to date has increased to 35, an increase since the end of the quarter. The expected total for 16/17 should be circa 45 affordable homes.</p>
<p>What is the impact of Universal Credit on RDC benefits processing times and why? How many people are affected and what is the impact?</p>	<p>Briefing paper attached from RDC and CAB perspective.</p>
<p>What work is the Council involved with to help reduce levels of fuel poverty</p>	<p>To follow</p>

### **RDC Response from Housing and Benefits (People) Services**

We currently have 366 claims with entitlement to Universal Credit (UC). The majority of these also claim Council Tax Reduction (CTR) as only a handful, such as those living in specified accommodation, are able to claim Housing Benefit whilst in receipt of UC.

The affect on processing times is that customers don't receive their first UC award for approximately 6 to 7 weeks, so by the time they provide RDC with the information there is potentially already 40 days on the clock for the CTR claim. In addition to the delay in RDC receiving the initial award details UC awards are updated monthly for the majority of their claims and as a result every change is notified to us, which in turn requires a reassessment of the claims.

The information that is provided to us is in relation to UC claims from the DWP is not reliable and therefore cannot be automated into our processing system, as we do with ATLAS files which are an automatic transfer of data from DWP. There is no detail of when Northgate would have the required automation for UC available to upgrade the RDC system. This automation would speed up the processing of new claims and changes of circumstances for CTR but at the moment it is a manual processes of downloading the files and inputting the data which takes considerable time, particularly with some of the larger files. Some days files can contain 40 claims details. This issue has been fed back to the DWP not only by RDC but also many other Local Authorities which have gone live with UC.

The following information was shared at the recent member Briefing on Housing Policy Developments:

## Welfare Reform

RYEDALE  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL



- Universal Credit
  - Full service- 29 June 2016
  - Job Centre Based
  - York Full Service July 2017
- Changes 1 April 2017, Families with more than 2 children, HB claim and not Universal Credit
- Benefit Cap- Nov 2016, 25-30 families affected
- Reduction in Social Housing rents 1% for 4 years
- 18-21 years olds not eligible for Housing element of UC. 1 April 2017
- £14K extra Discretionary Housing Payments for 17/18
- Social Housing, introduction of LHA levels, April 2018

### Response from CAB Regarding Universal Credit

As of 20 March 2017.

Since the introduction of full roll out of UC in Ryedale, some 130 clients have been logged on the AIC codes as seeking advice on UC, and as at 20 March 2017, Ryedale CA has advised 47 clients individually and more extensively in relation to their UC application and its processing. Bureau Evidence Forms (BEFs) have been submitted in each case to add to the national bank of evidence and a report is sent regularly to the national co-ordinator. A questionnaire was sent to 34 clients in January asking if they might help us with recording their own assessment of their experience. Following their response two small seminars were held with those clients willing to come to the Bureau to discuss their experiences, which highlighted the general recorded experience on the submitted BEFs.

Impact on clients.

- a. A significant number have not had their UC claim concluded within six weeks.
- b. Many of the most complex cases involve those with health issues or with special needs or communication skills, or whose circumstances change during the process, and for whom the process is very likely to be lengthy. Their distress and hardship is evident.
- c. The systems used and sometimes the staff of the DWP are hard to understand or are unsympathetic.
- d. It would be possible, very roughly, to estimate the staff and volunteer time devoted so far to each client. It would be considerable.
- e. A suitably anonymised illustrative case book could be prepared to illustrate the range of challenges to clients and CA staff and volunteers that this mode of implementation involves.

Two press features have been published on how the results of the transitional arrangements are having an impact on the number of clients, including being referred to food banks. Ryedale Citizens Advice is referring more clients to food banks and we are the principal referral agency in the area. In consultation with Ryedale Foodbank, the main change brought

about by UC is that clients need more than 3 vouchers because of the delays in settling their new benefit package, often 8 or 9, so additional pressures are being felt by the foodbanks.

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20 March 2017