

Welfare Reform Forums

East, West & North Events

October/November 2020

Tony Donohoe, SHN

Topics for Today

1. SHN Updates (SHN)
2. Universal Credit Update (DWP)
3. Welfare Reform & Social Security in Scotland (Scottish Government)
4. SFHA Welfare Reform Updates (SFHA)
5. Open Forum Discussion

SHN Updates

- Digital Forum arrangements
 - SHN survey of participants
- Universal Credit Scottish Choices Research
- DWP representation at forums & Scottish Landlord Group

Universal Credit Context

<https://dwp-stats.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=f90fb305d8da4eb3970812b3199cf489>

- In Great Britain 5.688m **people** on UC as at 10 Sept 2020
- Central & West Scotland UC = 238,344 people
- East & North Scotland UC = 238,822 people
- Jobcentre breakdown available
- 364,000 or circa 15% of households in Scotland (May 2020):
 - 53,000 (Glasgow)
 - 26,000 (City of Edinburgh)
 - 16,000 (Highland)
 - 7,500 (East Lothian)
 - 4,800 (Argyll & Bute)

UC – Current Debates

- Focus on extension of uplifted UC allowance (£20/week) after 31/03/21
- UK Parliamentary Inquiry into 5 week wait
 - People on UC more likely to be in rent arrears (than legacy benefit) and rise sharply after UC claim
 - DWP should commission research on impact of UC on food bank use, rent arrears and psychological distress
 - No reason for not implementing seamless transition to UC where no circumstances change

UC – Current Debates

- UK Parliamentary Inquiry into 5 week wait
 - New claimants should be offered starter payment of 3 weeks UC allowance
 - UC allowance uplift (£20) should be made permanent
 - Advances should be renamed “new claim loans”
 - Invest in ‘Help to Claim’ to provide ongoing support
 - Improve APA (ie frequent payment) process

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5801/cmselect/cmworpen/204/20402.htm> (published on 19/10/20)

Open Forum - Discussion Points

- Current situation & impacts
 - Current UC tenant numbers
 - Communication and support for tenants
 - Communication channels with DWP
 - DWP aligned payments roll-out – impact on landlords

Next Forum Dates

Location	Feb 2021
East (Edinburgh)	Tues 16/02/21
West (Glasgow)	Thurs 18/02/21
North (Inverness)	Thurs 25/02/21