

nawra

national association of
welfare rights advisers

Neil Couling
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15 December 2017

Dear Neil

Thank you for your letter of 29 November 2017. Conveniently it arrived two days before our quarterly conference so I was able to discuss your reply with a wide range of our members from across the UK. I will respond on each of the three points in turn.

ESA claimants moving to universal credit

You state in your reply that a process has been in place since June of this year to ensure that the LCW/LCWRA element is paid in the UC award straight away. I have a number of questions on this point –

1. Many NAWRA members report problems occurring since June 2017. How does the system pick up that the claimant was previously on ESA and which component was in place? If it is the case that it is reliant on staff checking on CIS rather than being an automated process, it is apparent from cases we have seen that this may not be happening in all cases.
2. What happened prior to June 2017 – you say some cases were not managed through the process but ‘this has now been resolved’. Please clarify how you have resolved it?

Waiting days

I appreciate that waiting days will no longer be an issue from February 2018. However, please clarify –

1. What system is currently in place to ensure that claimants who have recently been on legacy benefits do not have waiting days applied to their claim – how is the relevant information collected?
2. Since when has this process been in place and what happened prior to that?

Submitting a DS1500

It is not satisfactory that a proper process is not in place for claimants with a terminal illness. Since my previous letter a number of examples have come to light of people with terminal illness being told they have to have an interview with a work coach; one said he would ring in three months 'to see how they're doing'. This is insensitive in the extreme. Once a DS1500 is submitted (without the claimant's knowledge if necessary) UC should be put into immediate payment including the LCWRA element and there should be no meetings with work coaches.

I look forward to your prompt response on these urgent matters.

Yours sincerely

Daphne Hall
Southwest Committee Member
On behalf of the National Association of Welfare Rights Advisers