

nawra

national association of
welfare rights advisers

Neil Couling
Director General,
Universal Credit Programme,
6th Floor,
Caxton House,
Tothill Street,
London SW1A 9NA

30 January 2018

Dear Neil

Thank you for your letter of 29 January 2019. I appreciate this has been a very busy time for you but unfortunately you have only referred to one of the three points in my letter. I will deal with that one first.

Terminally ill

I am aware of the definition of terminal illness. However, there does not seem to be a clear process for dealing with claimants once a DS1500 is issued. The only guidance I am aware of is that placed by Lord Freud in the House of Commons deposited papers archive -

http://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2017-0556/134_Terminal_illness_v7.0.pdf. Unfortunately this does not clarify the process for dealing with terminally ill claimants.

Please could you therefore, as a matter of urgency, provide a copy of all guidance available to staff relating to the process of dealing with claims which include a DS1500.

ESA claimants moving to universal credit

I reiterate the points raised in my previous letter which you have not addressed. You state in your previous reply that a process has been in place since June of 2017 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

Again I reiterate the points raised in my previous letter. 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?

Again, I ask for your prompt response on these urgent matters.

Yours sincerely

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