

Universal Credit QRM 30th January 2019: Group work feedback

1. How can you apply the learning from Gateshead to your area?

Emergency planning (Gateshead)

Evidence useful to be able to make a case

Consider it alongside other planned changes – no silos

Just campaigning is not enough – not enough to focus on UC alone

Employment isn't enough – stable jobs

Working together, invest in advice services, digital skills and support

Thinking about other things that have happened in addition to UC

It is the implementation that is the issue

Focus on specifically what the problems are – alleviating these first and campaign for this

Glossing over of impacts on some groups

Communication - front line staff and giving people a choice

“looking at it in a different way

Who are we making a case to? – new relationships, speak to those with opposing views, how to change national policies, how to get information further up the chain difficult in different cultures and organisations

Creating a space and culture to change, breaking down barriers

Contributing to evidence

Understanding what is there to feed upwards – sign up e.g. DPHs, MPs, HWBB

Talk about everything else too e.g. holiday hunger

Changing attitudes, policy in councils

Approach to collecting debts – rebuilding trust

Disconnect between local authority and people

Action plans rather than strategy – place-based approach

It is great to have impact documented; it is what we have thought but good to have someone using the research

Other places need evidence to tailor to their localities – use if for justification

Employment – monthly payments don't match jobs that are encouraged. What is this actually preparing people for?

Communication

Separate economy needed to support budgeting around this

What services do we have that already exist – which services are best placed to be adapted? Advice and training

2. How would you link UC to the poverty strategy in your area?

Linking up with wider approaches e.g. Well North or asset based approach to social determinants

Many LAs taking strategic approach to welfare reform and delivery / operational group through financial inclusion network. Acknowledgment there is loss of capacity in face to face support systems

Analysis of:

Demand for services, understand what is the data telling us

Partnerships with Housing Companies / ALMOs who have support teams have adopted changes in approach to Council Tax debt. Stratification of risk by Housing Company. Sustainable tenancy support

Need to build in ways to ensure face to face experiences inform planning

Steering group including residents/service users to inform local plans

Access to PCs, training of staff in libraries on UC / welfare benefits

Mental health deteriorating and anxiety increasing as a result of enhanced conditionality of UC

Impact on lone parents of enhanced conditionality / increased in-work requirements / drive to move from part-time to full-time hours, even when children are young

UC exacerbating gender inequalities

Reliance on parents/grandparents to provide childcare - impact on family relationships

Creating the right skills for the right jobs – mismatch between skills on offer and jobs available

End of precarious employment

Rights based approach- social-human-women's rights- could have greater impact, useful way of holding government to account as they have signed up to international treaties e.g. UNCRC

Gateshead poverty work-building on themes to emerge from conference including child poverty, fuel poverty, to compliment push for Real Living Wage underway.

Community food networks are developing, small scale community food co-operatives, like in Bensham, as well as Trussell Trust provision

Crisis payments for fuel in partnership with Durham Council

In-work poverty is a real issue. LA, NHS trusts and Universities should be paying real living wage and promote this. Importance of public sector modelling good employment practices

Living wage could be built into contracts as minimum requirement for own staff and commissioned services

Some staff may be receiving UC. Employers need to be aware if staff are paid twice in one month (e.g. if paid early at Christmas), this will affect their UC entitlement-corporate responsibility to staff
Discretionary financial support scheme in York- applications and options explored, found need was 8-9 months after UC applications, not just at application stage, indicating need for ongoing support
Using evidence of need (e.g. request for Council Tax support or mounting rent arrears) as important data to inform planning and delivery

Importance of cross sector working e.g. ALMO housing company staff in South Tyneside, attended 'Time In Time Out' group to offer training session to GPs / HC staff

Information for groups GPs / PHC staff - signposting-social prescribing/Citizens Advice working in different settings / approaches, social navigators, need for cooperation and coordination between VCS and LA and NHS

Health coaches with awareness of UC attached to GP practices

Use of food banks, increasing food poverty / rising fuel poverty

Safeguarding issues increased

Impact on child protection/neglect in primary health care (PHC), 'Healthier and Wealthier' project in Durham includes phone support

GPs/HV health visitor capacity massively stretched, impacting on quality of services

Upskilling staff in contact in UC claimants about how to navigate system/ resolve welfare rights issues

LA commissioning implications-early intervention and prevention

In some areas Credit Unions are growing for UC customers; Jam Jar approach to saving

Credit Unions in Doncaster have shrunk so moving to "pop up" delivery, often better repayment terms than DWP offer through advanced payments but can be variable

Transport costs and availability, particularly in rural areas, 10% of gross income to make it DWP / job centre appointments. Job Centres are closing. Accessing local advice services is increasingly difficult.

Children's Centres are also closing – many areas are offering more centralised services

Access to libraries-digital access through libraries decreased availability

Social inclusion policies not working /not fit for 21st century with conditionality requirements integral to Government Employability Programmes and lifelong learning focussing on skills and the labour market having lost its wider moral compass in UK and globally.

In 2019 adult educationalists discussing how adult education should be "reconstructed for the 21st century". They are reviewing the 1919 Ministry of Reconstruction Final Report whose terms of reference after WW1 were to: "Consider the provision for, and possibilities of Adult Education (other than technical or vocational) in Great Britain, and to make recommendations".

3. What gaps in knowledge remain that future research can address?

Keep going back to claimants

Involve DWP in research/questions

Ask for data from partners e.g housing rent arrears indication

Juxtaposition with aggregated DWP data

Add case studies

Impact on staff

Pull data together across regions/organisations

Include VCS staff in research

Model tools

Research people that it is good for; can we find them?

Difference in experience between Tory and Labour led councils

Internet access statistics on local/regional level

Productivity loss in system: advisors waiting on the phone

Touch points

Private landlords experiences of UC

Feelings after renting to UC claimants

Different experiences depending on tenure

Gender/LGBT/black minorities

Changing nature of VCS or organisation -becoming (please delete) NGOs? (please add the following) NGOized meaning that the VCS are no longer non-governmental organisations who are able to identify the collective needs of the community to bring about social change on issues that matter but are now meeting government targets for Universal Credit Claims.

Impact of using language of human rights to challenge

Mental Health Hospital visits due to UC

Researching providers

Employer's perspective

Cost shifted somewhere else

Turnover of staff

Mental health impact on children. Time spent on safeguarding plans

Accommodation employers need to make and people applying for these jobs

Impact on GP time (more demand)

Conflicting messages for claimants
Interaction with job coaches
More complex cases for housing benefits
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