How does the Income Recovery Team manage the rent arrears of tenants newly transferring to Universal Credit?

March 2018

Recommendations – Action Plan

Recommendation	Management Response	Proposed Actions	Timescale	Responsibility
1. The IRO should contact all new claimants within 7 days of them making a claim to arrange an interview	Staff should be proactively contacting all customers who move onto Universal Credit within 7 days	Income Recovery Managers to discuss new UC cases in staff 1:1s and sample check completion of initial interview	April 2018	Income Recovery Managers (There are 5 IRMs, 1 per hub)
2. The rent arrears letters to UC claimants within the first five weeks of a claim should be reworded in recognition of the fact that they are UC claimants	There is a standard letter to send out to UC claimants once UCII has taken place. We will review the arrears letters to UC claimants however IT work would be required to change escalation path for UC tenancies so it will need to be planned in and will take a little time	Review letters for this time period. Could link up with Customer Insight/Comms work which is currently ongoing	June 2018	Senior Manager Income Advice and Collection
3. A series of YHN paper advice leaflets for UC claimants should be developed, including one on how to use their Journal. The advice leaflets should be on display in the Housing Hubs and should also be offered at the claimants first interview	We do have a selection of advice letters and recent check to hubs indicated they still had a stock of them	Review advice leaflets available and amend if necessary and issue to hubs with a reminder to staff that they are available	April 2018	Universal Credit Implementation Manager

Recommendation	Management Response	Proposed Actions	Timescale	Responsibility
4. More up to date computers should be provided in the Housing Hubs for claimants	We work jointly with NCC in Hubs and the current service offering is being reviewed	Review current provision in conjunction with NCC and improve as appropriate	June 2018	Assistant Director Housing Services
5. The computers the IROs use should be fit for purpose and have relevant software	The robustness and speed of the IT systems. – there have been a number of server failures and systems can run slow	Due to undertake a full procurement exercise next year and UC will be a prime consideration	April 2019	Universal Credit Implementation Manager
6. Phone chargers should be available in the Housing Hubs for claimants' use	As there is a wide range of chargers this would be difficult as would ensuring the security of the property	Investigate whether it is possible for tenants to use their own chargers in Hubs or if this would create health and safety issues due to PAT testing regulations (Portable Appliance Testing)	April 2018	Income Manager
7. YHN should not take a rent payment from a claimant's account before the due date. If the claimant is charged bank charges YHN should refund the tenant the charge amount	YHN use Allpay to collect DDs and currently have 9500 tenants who pay their rent by DD. When a DD is set up the payment date for monthly or day of the week for weekly payments is agreed with the tenant. A confirmation letter is then sent to the tenant confirming the date of the first payment and when subsequent payments will be made. If the scheduled payment day falls on a non working day the payment automatically defaults to the next working day and payments would never be scheduled to be taken early. I am confident that this the case as we collect over 225,000 direct debit payments per annum and this issue has never been raised by tenants previously.			

Recommendation	Management Response	Proposed Actions	Timescale	Responsibility
8. The YHN Website pages on UC needs to be updated more regularly	Agreed	A monthly check will be put in place	April 2018	Universal Credit Implementation Manager
9. DHP and APA need to be mentioned on YHN's Website	Agreed	Website content will be updated	April 2018	Universal Credit Implementation Manager
10. A performance target for the number of new claimants ICOs interview should be adopted	See response to Rec 1			
11. YHN should ask the DWP for a monthly list of new claimants	Notifications have improved significantly since the introduction of the Landlord Portal. DWP have confirmed that they are unwilling to produce any additional or bespoke data for landlords as this is too onerous for them in view of the number of claimants and landlords that they deal with nationally	None		