

Project Assessment Review

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[personal information redacted S40(2)]

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1 Scope of the Review

This is a point-in-time assurance review of DWP's Universal Credit Programme. The review will provide an overall assessment of the delivery confidence, that is, whether the programme is likely to deliver the planned benefits within the agreed timescale, cost and quality parameters, and will focus in particular on:

Affordability and value for money

- Robustness of the latest cost figures
- Suitability of the cost control mechanisms in place
- Understanding of the areas where costs are less certain, what is being done to attain certainty and how the sensitivity of assumptions is being assessed
- Understanding of the primary aims of the policy, and whether it is good value for money.
- Understanding of overarching success measure/ goal of policy

IT Delivery

- How is progress being measured
- Does the department have the right capability and capacity for delivering UC with Agile
- Are the right contractual mechanisms in place
- How robust are the measures to address the risk of cyber fraud
- What contingency plans are in place

Policy and Legislation

- Does the Programme have a clear understanding of what policy decisions need to be taken when
- Are the financial implications of the policy options well understood
- What level of confidence is there in the legislation timeline and what is the impact of further slippage
- How well developed are the plans for migration, including deliverability and affordability of plans

Governance

- Has the SRO role been compromised in any way by taking on the COO role as well
- Are the right programme controls being used, especially given the size and complexity of the programme, to ensure early sight of problems and to provide decision makers with the best possible information on which to base their decisions
- Are the key risks well understood and are they being managed appropriately
- Is the Programme on track against plan, is there a clear critical path and how is any slippage being managed
- Are the key assumptions documented and understood by the team

Real Time Information

- What contingency measures are being put in place should RTI fail to deliver or deliver late

Channel Shift

- Is the channel shift strategy based on realistic assumptions
- Are the implications of a failure in the channel shift approach well understood, including the impact on costs, and what will be done if online take up is lower than expected

Business Change

Fraud and Error

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1 Executive Summary

Delivery Confidence

The Delivery Confidence of the Programme at this point is **AMBER RED**. The shading of that overall rating tends more towards Amber than Red, and there is a positive direction of travel that it will be important for the Programme to maintain and accelerate over the next 4 months. At present, the position is patchy, with some areas well “up to the curve” of what would be expected at this stage of a large Transformational programme, whilst others are clearly “behind the curve”. The capacity of the Programme is increasing – as DWP’s wider corporate headcount reductions work through - and that should enable the visible recent acceleration to build further. The next 4 months will be important, and with that in mind – and at the request of the SRO and Permanent Secretary - this Report provides some fairly detailed comments and recommendations on areas that will require greater focus over that period. It also recommends that a further PAR be carried out in late March-early April 2012.

Areas of Concern

For good practical reasons, over the last year, the Universal Credit (UC) Programme has prioritised work on supporting: -

- Policy and Primary legislation,
- High-level system design and customer research,
- Establishing the IT framework and approach, and completing the initial 2 “Leaps”, and
- Preparing high-level costings, benefits, and timelines.

The Programme’s mobilization and capacity have been affected by the timing and impact of DWP’s wider corporate efficiencies programme (and we found many examples of recent and anticipated staff arrivals). Nevertheless, work has been largely completed on the primary legislation, and the Programme met the 32% target set for Leaps 1 and 2 of the IT build, which supports some increased confidence. There are indications that the programme has been picking up speed over the last few months; and there is also evidence that a number of innovative and good quality initiatives have been started. The overall direction of travel is clearly positive; and steps have been taken to address a number of the areas with which previous meetings of the MPRG have been concerned. In particular, there has been some clear effort – and improvements - in areas such as cost-benefit analysis, supply chain management, fraud and error, critical path analysis, and aspects of programme governance and management. Further work (and capacity) is planned in these areas, but considerably more remains to be done; and it is important that recent improvements are embedded and taken further over the next 4 months in order to secure a firm foundation for delivery.

Universal Credit is a large “Transformational” programme; and there is a clear transformational vision at senior level within the DWP and Programme and strong strategic leadership. However, the Programme overall still feels very focused on IT and “Transactional” risks, and does not yet seem to have embraced fully the transformational nature of the required business change at all levels. UC is also a Programme which impacts on an exceptionally wide range of stakeholders, delivery partners, and dependencies; and it

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is important that these are fully recognised - and methods developed to manage the full range of these as proactively and cost-effectively as possible at all levels in the Programme - in order to minimize future risks and the resulting calls on scarce senior resources.

Faith Boardman

Signed:

Faith Boardman

Review Team Leader

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS BY SRO

I would like to thank the Review Team for this fair and objective report. I was pleased to see the acknowledgement given to the progress that we have already made and to the work we have ongoing. Clearly there are areas where we have more work to do, and it is helpful to know that these coincide with the areas the Programme had identified. We are putting in place an action plan to meet the recommendations set out here, and I am confident that we will be able to demonstrate progress on all of them when the next Programme Assessment Review takes place.

Terry Moran

Signed:

Terry Moran

SRO

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2 Summary of Recommendations

Ref	Recommendation	Section	Criticality
1	The PAR Team recommends that a further PAR be carried out in late March/early April 2012	3	Medium
2	The Programme should prepare a more detailed scope and road plan for the preparation of the secondary legislation by January 2012, which has been tested against the timetables and plans for the systems development, and the lessons from the customer research.	3.1.3	High
3	More detail should be provided to the MPRG on the £25m increase in the projected in year IT spend as part of the commentary on the key changes between the SOBC and the OBC.	3.2.1	Medium
4	The UC Programme and the Cabinet Office should take early action to jointly identify the implications and needs that flow from the UC Programme's vanguard position in the cross-Government identity and authentication initiative.	3.2.2	High
5	The outstanding issues and potential costs of Fraud and Error (and Security) should be outlined clearly in the commentary on the OBC.	3.2.2	Medium
6	The Programme's progress on managing the IT issues identified in Paragraph 3.2.3 should be reviewed by the next PAR.	3.2.3	High
7	The revised DWP approach to Fraud and Error be fully established as a matter of urgency and fed into the planning for Leap 3 of UC and the development of the Operational Model (this should encapsulate the cultural and behavioural issues of the approach in relation to skills and business products).	3.3.3	High
8	The close engagement and approach between DWP and HMRC (considered to be exemplar),	3.3.3	High

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	be used as the basis for improving relationships with other external bodies that are more than just stakeholders (such as Local Authorities, DCLG, focus groups, HMT and CO).		
9	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) We recognise and welcome the increased focus and urgent work that is ongoing within the Programme on planning and risk, and recommend that the practical effectiveness of this is reviewed further by the next PAR. There is an urgent need to improve the programme plan and associated critical path analysis. The products currently in place are not accurate enough to be used by all stakeholders as control documents. 2) Priority should be given to fill the resource gaps in the PMO, enabling the PMO to become a more pro-active function 3) Further clarity is needed on the programme governance. In particular, the design function, clarity on business products governance and the lower level governance boards. 4) Programme management functions are in place but now need to be used to drive the programme outcomes. Consideration should be given to using relevant elements of the P3M3 (portfolio, programme and project maturity model), to bring the PMO up the value chain. 5) The induction process for new joiners should be more clearly embedded within the Programme. 	3.4.3	High
10	<p>The UC Programme should take urgent action to: -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Establish clear ownership and scope for the business transformation agenda and associated products. 2) Prioritise the development of these business products. 3) Secure earlier HR engagement around the future customer experience and insight to enable HR to support the Programme in developing the required cultural vision and skill sets in time to 	3.5.4	High

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	<p>include relevant aspects (such as customer satisfaction and staff engagement levels) in the selection criteria for site selection and appointments.</p> <p>4) Establish clear links between the Programme and the DWP's corporate culture change and communications initiatives.</p>		
11	<p>1) The Programme should include a resource to harness the complaint/customer satisfaction MI from across the DWP/HMRC/Local Authority stakeholders,</p> <p>2) This suite of research should be used to help the development of the culture shift strategy and job roles and skills.</p> <p>3) This research (along with local staff engagement, customer satisfaction and complaints data) should be used to inform the site selection process.</p> <p>4) An outline scope and plan for an alternative operating model should be included within the programme plan and should also be logged on the risk register as a mitigation.</p>	3.6.6	<p>Medium</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>High</p> <p>Medium</p>
12	The Programme should urgently review and strengthen its approach to managing key external stakeholders and Local Authorities, and strengthen the effectiveness of its partnership working with DCLG, LGA and SOLACE.	3.8.4	High
13	<p>1) The presentation of the financial position be strengthened by clear commentary on significant changes from the SOBC to the OBC. The Programme also needs to set out why the profile of overspends in the first two years with significant savings in the last two years of the SR period is credible (not the profile normally associated with Programmes/Projects);</p> <p>2) To assist in building up levels of understanding and confidence from those outside of the Programme,</p>	3.9.6	<p>Medium</p> <p>Medium</p>

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	interaction with key financial players, between formal meetings, should be put in place; and		
	3) A strategy for handling the costs emanating from Local Authorities be put in place and ownership for this be clearly defined with the Programme.		Medium
	4) Separate funding for Fraud and Error be put in place as a matter of urgency to ensure the appropriate intercept where necessary in the design and build in the Programme.		High

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3 Review Team Findings

The PAR Team understands the practical reasons why over the last year, the Universal Credit (UC) Programme has prioritised work on supporting: -

- Policy and Primary legislation,
- High-level system design and customer research,
- Establishing the IT framework and approach, and completing the initial 2 "Leaps", and
- Preparing high-level costings, benefits, and timelines.

The Programme's mobilization and capacity have been affected by the timing and impact of DWP's wider corporate efficiencies programme (and we found many examples of recent and anticipated staff arrivals). Nevertheless, work has been largely completed on the primary legislation, and the Programme met the 32% target set for Leaps 1 and 2 of the IT build, which supports some increased confidence. There are indications that the programme has been picking up speed over the last few months; and there is also evidence that a number of innovative and good quality initiatives have been started. The overall direction of travel is clearly positive; and steps have clearly been taken to address a number of the areas with which previous meetings of the MPRG have been concerned. In particular, there has been some clear effort – and the start of improvements - in some areas such as cost-benefit analysis, fraud and error, critical path analysis, and aspects of programme governance and management.

Further work (and capacity) is planned in these areas, but considerably more remains to be done. Overall, the Programme remains "behind the curve" on a number of important areas compared with what would normally be expected for a Programme of this size and complexity. It has now reached a "tipping point"; and it is important that UC achieves a number of "step-changes" that need to be made over the next 3-4 months in order to (1) further underpin and de-risk the programme and costings, and (2) ensure achievement of the full extent of the qualitative benefits envisaged.

So our overall Delivery Confidence at this point is Amber Red. But with a clearly positive direction of travel, which we would expect to be confirmed by further improvements by March/early April 2012. We recommend that this is tested by a further PAR at that point.

Universal Credit is a large "Transformational" programme; and there is a clear transformational vision at senior level within the DWP and Programme and strong strategic leadership. However, whilst it is understood (and welcomed) that the Programme has prioritised IT delivery and policy/legislation development over the past year, the Programme overall still feels very focussed on IT and "Transactional" risks, and does not yet seem to have embraced fully the transformational nature of the required business change at all levels.

UC is also a Programme which impacts on an exceptionally wide range of stakeholders and dependencies; and it is important that these are fully recognised - and methods developed to manage these as proactively and cost-effectively as possible at all levels in the Programme - in order to minimize future risks and the resulting calls on scarce senior resources.

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Recommendation 1: The PAR Team recommends that a further PAR be carried out in late March/early April 2012 – by which time, progress on the important Leap 3 and on the Recommendations in this report should be clear. At that point, we would expect (and want) to see greater clarity on a number of aspects, including: -

- The overall Critical Path and supporting planning
- Translating recent improvements (in identifying and documenting risks) into proactive risk “ownership” and management
- The Programme’s overall capacity and “top-to-bottom” focus on Transformation
- Leap 3
- The over-arching “integration” process
- Plans for Leap 5 and other (non- IT) contingencies
- The Model Office and Pathfinder
- The timetable and content of secondary legislation,
- Site Selection, Job Roles, numbers and skills
- Internal staff Communications, and the cultural vision for the new organisation
- Business products and roll-out,
- Proactive Stakeholder management
- Engagement with Local Authorities and DCLG

3.1 Policy, Legislation and Design

3.1.1 Strategic Vision and Leadership

The PAR team found good evidence that DWP Ministers, the Permanent Secretary and the SRO (1) have a clear shared Strategic Vision and (2) provide strong (and respected) senior leadership and engagement (focused on the delivery of significant cultural change to both Benefits recipients and DWP). The Programme sits in the broader change landscape of DWP, and also has big implications for HMRC and local authorities.

Senior leaders consistently described it as Transformational rather than Transactional; and there is an unusually strong focus on the customer experience, and on achieving the qualitative outcomes at the earliest possible stage (whilst recognizing the need to balance that against the practical requirements required to de-risk the initial start-up of the IT system and business changes as far as possible).

The Programme is recognised as in the vanguard of new Government thinking and innovation – for example in the approach it has adopted to: -

- The use of Agile methodology
- The scale of the Welfare changes intended (which many interviewees described as the largest in 50 years)
- The accompanying approach to supply chain management
- The design and embedding of Market Research input into the system and product development process
- Channel Shift
- New approaches and investment in fraud and error and identity management

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- Cross-Departmental collaboration with HMRC – in terms of both the abolition of Tax Credits and the use of Real Time Information (RTI).

3.1.2 Integration of strategic vision into design

The PAR team found that the integration of this Strategic Transformational Vision into the detailed design of the new system is being reinforced in a number of ways. Some of these are (necessarily) innovative – and have the potential to provide exemplars of good practice: -

- Ministers are clearly focused on practical delivery; and reinforce the personal accountability of senior officials. They provide active challenge and support to the programme. The Expert Adviser also pro-actively supports the linkage between the vision and detailed design.
- The use of Agile embeds the practical experience of both customers and front-line staff in the design and testing processes.
- The Programme can draw on original customer research that the PAR team found to be of good quality.
- The policy team and the approach to preparing new secondary legislation are also embedded in the Programme to an unusual extent, and this is intended to ensure that the regulations reflect the design needs emerging from the Agile methodology, rather than being designed up-front in “top-down” isolation.
- The PAR Team saw a willingness to learn lessons from HMRC’s experience of (1) introducing Tax Credits, and (2) combating fraud and error at the point of entry into the system; and HMRC are proactively engaging with the Programme.
- The Permanent Secretary sees the programme as a key part and enabler of the wider “Corporate” business and cultural changes planned for the DWP, and it is intended that it should benefit from wider corporate changes (such as the introduction of Policy Account Managers, Portfolio Management) and the wider corporate initiatives to improve the engagement of staff and managers.

3.1.3 Legislation

Royal Assent for the primary legislation is likely to be delayed by 2 months due to controversy around some other sections. But both Ministers and officials have a good level of confidence that work on the Bill will be completed without significant changes to the UC arrangements, and work on much of the UC secondary legislation (and on firming up Business Case costings) should not need to be delayed on that basis. That is borne out by Hansard.

Considerable work is required for the secondary legislation, and choices will need to be made about which regulations need to be prioritised for completion by late 2012 in time for the Pathfinder to start in April 2013. At present, there is only a high level timetable, built around factors such as the role of the Social Security Advisory Committee. But (because the aim is for the form of the secondary legislation to follow the detailed design work on the system that emerges through Agile), there are direct interdependencies between the planning for (1) the drafting work and (2) the design work in Leaps 3, 4 (and possibly 5). Managing those dependencies should be made easier by the embedding of the Regulations

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team with the Programme; but it will be important that progress on both the Regulations and the detailed design of the system is fully correlated and tracked.

Recommendation 2: The Programme should prepare a more detailed scope and road plan for the preparation of the secondary legislation by January 2012, which has been tested against the timetables and plans for the systems development, and the lessons from the customer research.

3.2 IT Development and Delivery:

3.2.1 Overview

Universal Credit is one of the largest government programmes with a significant IT development element. Following a groundbreaking decision to develop the IT capability using the Agile methodology, the programme has enthusiastically embraced the process. The Agile process has implications not only for the IT development but also the process by which testing is carried out, how further IT changes are managed and most significantly how policy and regulations should be developed.

Agile also has knock on implications for staff as the methodology drives a different way of thinking. The programme recognised this early in the lifecycle and brought in specific training and mentoring to up-skill the team. The capacity and capability of the team has been built up over the past 12 months and now seems to meet the current requirement, operating as a cross functional team out of Warrington. This will need to be kept under review during the (larger) Leaps 3 and 4.

Progress is being measured against 162 business scenarios that have been developed. The scenarios are then aligned and developed through a series of 5 time-constrained blocks of activity called Leaps (each of which is further broken down into shorter iterations that allow for tighter planning and monitoring). Leap 5 has been identified as a "contingency" Leap to ensure changes and functionality that has not been completed can be captured later in the lifecycle. It is also envisaged that any "bow wave" of activity not completed could be swept up later in the process. The programme recently successfully delivered the major milestone of Leap 2 enabling it to declare 32% of the design and build complete.

This is very encouraging for the programme. However, there are a number of risks inherent in this process. The content of Leap 2 was chosen to deliver the less complex scenarios on the basis that the initial platform would be the most complex to establish in IT terms; and could then be built upon more easily at subsequent stages. It is recognised by the programme that many of the complex scenarios will be in Leap 3. It should be easier to judge overall progress once Leap 3 is complete in Spring 2012.

In addition the view on the status of Leap 5 was unclear. Some of those interviewed felt Leap 5 already had significant content whilst others believed it was empty. Finally, the 32% only represents the design and build elements of the IT lifecycle. Considerable work is still required in the testing and integration area, both of which will become more complex and important as the Programme advances. The PAR Team was not able to test the approach to testing and integration at this early stage.

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The appropriate major supplier contracts are in place and the associated supplier management seems to work well. In particular suppliers were generally pleased with the "cabal" approach to supplier management, with suppliers leaving their badges at the door, and the revised arrangements potentially provide additional capacity and contingency options. However, concerns were raised that there was a lack of SME innovation in the supply chain and that this needed to be addressed if the programme was going to deliver products of a higher quality than the traditional suppliers provide, and be capable of keeping up to date with the pace of innovation in channels and applications available to customers. Whilst we recognise the primary need to de-risk the build of the main system as far as possible, we think that there is a risk that the programme is underestimating the degree at which customer expectations change, and the capacity of smaller suppliers to drive on-going innovation over the lifetime of the UC system; and we think that the Programme would benefit from working/consulting more closely with the Cabinet Office on this area.

Somewhat unusually in a multi-supplier programme, the programme has pro-actively accepted that the risk associated with the role of systems/applications integrator is difficult to mitigate and has chosen to address that risk itself. This is both innovative and pragmatic but does potentially add some risk and/or ambiguity to the UC Programme. In the current iteration of the OBC, the projected IT spend in year has increased by £25m. This was described as not a budgetary issue, but rather a profiling issue. Whilst this may well be the case, there is a risk that any smoothing could impact delivery, and **Recommendation 3: - More detail should be provided to the MPRG on the £25m increase in the projected in year IT spend as part of the commentary on the key changes between the SOBC and the OBC.**

3.2.2 Additional IT requirements for Security, Fraud and Error

In addition to the core UC software, IT development is required in a further two key areas; security (including Cyber security) and the operation against fraud and error. The UC Programme has recently appointed additional expertise and capacity in both these areas; and appears to be taking a robust approach to both - which is intended to "mainstream" each of them into the basic IT build and business processes. Cyber Fraud has been identified as the top risk to the programme, and approximately 25% of the overall IT budget is earmarked for expenditure in the security area. The Programme has reached out both across government and within the supplier base to acquire clear experts in the field. This should provide greater clarity about the challenges by end-March 2012.

Given the ambitious channel shift targets, the UC Programme recognizes that there is a balance to be struck between security and the customer experience, and this will remain a challenge that will need to be tested throughout the design and testing processes. The Programme has engaged fully with the Cabinet Office identity and authentication initiative and due to the timing now finds itself in the vanguard of this activity. It is not yet clear whether this will give rise to any unnecessary or significant additional costs or risks for the UC Programme, and **Recommendation 4: - The UC Programme and the Cabinet Office should take early action to jointly identify the implications and needs that flow from the UC Programme's vanguard position in the cross-Government identity and authentication initiative.**

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The PAR Team found good evidence that the UC Programme has accepted the need to fundamentally review DWP's traditional approach to fraud and error and to mainstream a new approach within the basic IT and business processes; and that this is now being driven forward as a joint strategy with HMRC. An agreed joint risk based approach designed to build on the operational experience of both DWP and HMRC operational successes is emerging. However, there are still a number of risks in this area. The costs of the full Fraud & Error project are far from fully funded and are subject to separate business case approval by March 2012. Some aspects of it will require agreement with the Information Commissioner. In addition there is still IT development risk associated with the IBM IRIS product development. There should be greater clarity around all these issues by end- March.

Recommendation 5: - The outstanding issues and potential costs of Fraud and Error (and Security) should be outlined clearly in the commentary on the OBC.

3.2.3 Potential IT Issues identified:

- The use of the Agile process, whilst a pragmatic decision in response to the timeframe challenge and the wish to embed customer experience in the heart of the Programme, has added some potential risk to the Programme which requires strengthened programme management to mitigate.
- With IT currently driving the Programme, and being ahead of the business products, there is a potential risk that Universal Credit could deliver a transactional processing system but it will not achieve the policy intent.
- There is a risk that the initial Leaps have contained the easier elements of the development (rather than a balanced approach) and the more complex functionality in Leap 3 could prove problematic.
- There is a risk that Leap 5 may not prove a sufficient contingency for the overall Programme (although there could be scope for further LEAPs to be put in place provided that sufficient has been delivered by Leap 5 to support the Pathfinder in April 2013).
- The risks associated with applications integration need to be more clearly identified and managed.
- The £25m budget profiling risk needs to be more clearly understood and explained in the commentary on the OBC.
- The focus on mainstreaming the security and fraud and error risk is at an early stage, and needs to be continued and further elaborated.
- Risk associated with the Fraud and Error budget needs more senior ownership within the UC Programme.
- Greater clarity is required around any cost and IT delivery risks for the UC Programme associated with the IRIS product

Recommendation 6: - The Programme's progress on managing the IT issues identified in Paragraph 3.2.3 should be reviewed by the next PAR.

3.3 Real Time Information Project

3.3.1 The HMRC Real Time system and the successful link to allow exchange of data with the Universal Credit system have been recognised as key dependencies for the UC Programme. The Business Case assumes that 90% of changes in earnings will be capable of being processed automatically through the new link between RTI and UC (self employed earners are considered out of scope).

The PAR Team interviewed the HMRC Director General of Benefits and Credits, and the Director General with responsibility for Personal Tax who is also the SRO for the RTI Programme. The PAR team are impressed with the level of commitment to ensure the success of RTI and UC programmes. There is high-level engagement between the Programmes from Ministerial level down. The governance model being deployed by RTI is the same as that for the UC Programme.

The timescales for RTI are challenging, but the SRO considers the programme to be on-track and achievable; the team assembled to deliver the programme is the one which previously brought in on-line services for HMRC. The programme builds on the relationship HMRC already has with payroll software manufacturers and the solution involves the BACS system, but in a manner which has de-risked the use of a complex banking system.

The timescale for RTI is to run a pilot from April 2012 and early adopters will start in November 2012 with go-live from April 2013. This should enable an intercept with the UC Pathfinder that starts at this time, but the details have yet to work through. A full banking solution should be in place by 2016. In terms of contingency, HMRC have a 12-month window after their pilot to solve problems and the low scale ramp up of UC from October 2013 will enable alternative processes such as self-assessment to be put in place.

3.3.2 Potential RTI Issues Identified: Overall, the risk to the UC programme is now considered as low. Issues that need to be resolved over the next 3 to 4 months include: -:

- HMRC's approach to Fraud and Error has been accepted in outline, and now needs to be fully embedded in the "define, design and develop" cycles of the UC Programme; and
- The lessons from implementing Tax Credits need to be fully assessed (for example to help test out assumptions about volumetrics and potentially different reactions from this substantial customer segment).

3.3.3 We recommend that: -

- **(Recommendation 7) The revised DWP approach to Fraud and Error be fully established as a matter of urgency and fed into the planning for Leap 3 of UC and the development of the Operational Model (this should encapsulate the cultural and behavioural issues of the approach in relation to skills and business products).**
- **(Recommendation 8) The close engagement and approach between DWP and HMRC (considered to be exemplar), be used as the basis for improving relationships with other external bodies that are more than just stakeholders (such as Local Authorities, DCLG, focus groups, HMT and CO).**

(See paragraph 3.8 and Recommendation 12 re engagement with Local Authorities, the DCLG and Third Sector Groups.)

3.4 Governance and Programme Management

3.4.1 Programme Management:

The programme RAG status is currently self-assessed at Amber/Red. The team felt that this was an accurate assessment of the programme, and that (although clearly improving) programme management remains “behind the curve” at this point. The building blocks of programme management seem to be in place and there is an appetite to improve processes, evidenced by the recent engagement with Cranfield in the risk area and Emergn for the Agile process. The expected programme management controls whilst in place appear to be a little immature, in particular the planning function and change control. An improved high level governance structure has been put in place and is being embedded. At the same time, there appear to be a significant number of new people coming onto the Programme. This has led to the effectiveness of governance taking a little longer to bed in than might have been expected, in particular the governance of the Design element (where the structure and authority levels still appear to be unclear).

The combining of the SRO and COO roles appears to work well and has advantages in cutting through some of the layers of management on issues such as staff resources and migration.

3.4.2 Potential Programme Governance and Management Issues Identified: -

The PAR Team took cognisance of a very recent Internal Audit Report, and crosschecked this against other evidence, including: -

- The level 1 programme plan and associated critical path appear to lack depth with some milestones that are ostensibly on the critical path having slipped with no apparent impact.
- A number of the level 1 milestones are reported as being at risk level which would indicate the Programme is a little behind where it needs to be.
- Dependencies do not appear to be being consistently formally managed.
- Management of both the many (and complex) external Stakeholders and of internal staff communications needs to be extended and more systematised.
- The programme management capacity seems to be stretched and in particular the PMO appears to be understaffed for a programme of this size. This leads to the function being reactive, not adding as much value as might reasonably be expected and the ability to act as a challenge and progress-chasing function is limited
- There appears to be a wealth of formal and informal governance sub groups – not all of which have documented Terms of Reference. In particular design and associated

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decision making responsibilities and the role of the Strategic Design Authority was not made clear (or consistently understood by interviewees) to the PAR Team.

- The programme management functions need now to be used - as a living management tool and at all levels in the Programme – to deliver real value and further de-risk the Programme. For example, the use of external Cranfield expertise has already resulted in improved documentation of risks and mitigations, but as yet there is a low level of maturity around the Programme's use of these tools, and they are not yet embedded at all levels of the Programme as a living management tool. The key risks do appear to be understood and when focus is given to these risks good mitigations and plans appear to be in place (eg: RTI) But it is important that these tools are used consistently to allocate clear responsibility ("ownership") to named individuals who are clearly held accountable for their mitigation; and that risks and mitigations are proactively refreshed and tracked (using strengthened Programme Management Office resources).
- There have been a significant number of recent joiners to the Programme. This is likely to continue, and specific provision for the induction of new joiners needs to be made. It is important that all of them receive a common understanding of the Programme's aims and approach.

3.4.3 Recommendation 9: -

1) We recognise and welcome the increased focus and urgent work that is ongoing within the Programme on planning and risk, and recommend that the practical effectiveness of this is reviewed further by the next PAR. There is an urgent need to improve the programme plan and associated critical path analysis. The products currently in place are not accurate enough to be used by all stakeholders as control documents.

2) Priority should be given to fill the resource gaps in the PMO, enabling the PMO to become a more pro-active function

3) Further clarity is needed on the programme governance. In particular, the design function, clarity on business products governance and the lower level governance boards.

4) Programme management functions are in place but now need to be used to drive the programme outcomes. Consideration should be given to using relevant elements of the P3M3 (portfolio, programme and project maturity model), to bring the PMO up the value chain.

5) The Induction process for new joiners should be more clearly embedded within the Programme.

3.5 Business Change/ Transformation

3.5.1 Universal Credit is a large business transformation programme. There is clear transformational vision at senior level within the DWP and Programme. However, the

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Programme still feels very IT focused and does not seem to have embraced fully the transformational nature of the business change at all levels. The recent appointment of the Implementation and Delivery Director is a welcome addition to the team and should enable more focus on the transformation agenda. We were pleased to note that following the recent sign off of the High Level Implementation Strategy the Programme has recognised that the business products need further work with clearer alignment of the IT development approach and any underpinning release planning. But this is an area that is currently “behind the curve”, especially given the scale of change and staff involved.

3.5.2 Whilst it was understood the programme was leaning heavily on hard won experience from the previous DWP and HMRC programmes, for the UC Programme to be truly transformational it may be appropriate to consult wider, including outside Government.

3.5.3 Potential Business Transformation Issues identified: -:

- The business products such as target operating model, concept of operations, cultural vision, etc are not yet in place. There is therefore a risk of divergence of the IT and business developments.
- The ownership of delivery of these products was unclear leading to a risk of misalignment and/or non-delivery.
- More focus is required on the business products with the associated level 1 milestones.
- Whilst there is a high degree of confidence in HR's ability to manage the mechanics of the transformation (such as: numbers, sites, unions TUPE etc), HR involvement in the strategy is not planned to ramp up until March/April. There is a risk that this will lead to the transformational agenda not being fully delivered
- There is a risk of duplication, gaps or inconsistencies between the cultural change aspects of the UC Programme and the DWP's broader focus on corporate culture change and staff engagement.

3.5.4 Recommendation 10: - The UC Programme should take urgent action to: -

- 1) Establish clear ownership and scope for the business transformation agenda and associated products.**
- 2) Prioritise the development of these business products.**
- 3) Secure earlier HR engagement around the future customer experience and insight to enable HR to support the Programme in developing the required cultural vision and skill sets in time to include relevant aspects (such as customer satisfaction and staff engagement levels) in the selection criteria for site selection and appointments.**

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4) Establish clear links between the Programme and the DWP's corporate culture change and communications initiatives.

3.6 Channel Shift

3.6.1 The work to support the Channel Shift element of the UC Programme is vital from several perspectives: -

- The financial model, and Business Case, is predicated upon the Channel Shift analysis.
- The Business Transformation aims depend on the Channel Shift strategy.
- The Channel Shift strategy is central to the Customer Experience.

3.6.2 The efficacy and credibility of the Channel Shift strategy depends on how it is informed. The Customer Experience team are a key element in making sure that this strategy delivers, and have been responsible for setting up the research programme that will help to inform decisions central to the strategy's success. The research programme has been split into two key elements:

- Quantitative Research – aimed at understanding the effects of the various profiled segments on the UC delivery model, and feeding in key data to inform the analytical modelling that drives the financial and operational aspects of the programme.
- Qualitative Research – which is aimed at ensuring the optimal customer and staff experience in the design of the services and products to be used.

The Programme has ensured the right level of investment into this research programme and the quality of it supports a relatively robust confidence level in the decisions and assumptions resulting from it.

3.6.3 The methodology and processes adopted are industry best practice and innovative in that they link in very effectively with the design aspects of the Agile methodology – ensuring the design process maintains relevance and value. The participation of customers, operational staff, staff users, designers and policy experts enables robust design and decision-making. Profiling and segmentation methodology is solid and based upon circumstantial and attitudinal aspects of the client base. In addition, the data sets for the quantitative research has been provided from DWP, HMRC and Local Authority sources, and are relatively recent thus ensuring relevance.

3.6.4 The lessons learnt from the JSA channel shift experience are being closely analysed to understand behavioural issues and opportunities to improve on line take up rates. The data from the research has enabled good quality sensitivity analysis to be conducted for the financial model and the business case. Overall, this area is well “up to the curve” for this stage of the programme.

3.6.5 Potential Channel Shift Issues identified: -

- The 50% Channel Shift target at launch is relatively tough but considered achievable given the amount and quality of analysis being carried out and the importance being placed upon it in the Programme. The ultimate target of 80% is considered to be very ambitious though not impossible and it is recommended that this target is re-assessed at the end of March 2012 to evaluate how realistic it is.
- One of the key datasets that could be used to inform this process even more is the effective use and analysis of customer complaints across the services. Currently this has not been addressed, albeit the Programme has stated its intent to focus on this opportunity.
- The use of the complaint MI, customer satisfaction MI and also staff engagement research should all be used to inform the site selection (see Recommendation 10).
- All of the research data sets above should be used to inform the culture shift strand of this programme and the HR strategy. It is not apparent that this will be done. (See Recommendation 10)
- The PAR Team found no substantial evidence of alternative options for an operating model should the Channel Shift strategy not achieve its aims. An outline contingency plan should be scoped and tested as part of the programme plan.

3.6.6 Recommendation 11: -

- **The Programme should include a resource to harness the complaint/customer satisfaction MI from across the DWP/HMRC/Local Authority stakeholders,**
- **This suite of research should be used to help the development of the culture shift strategy and job roles and skills.**
- **This research (along with local staff engagement, customer satisfaction and complaints data) should be used to inform the site selection process.**
- **An outline scope and plan for an alternative operating model should be included within the programme plan and should also be logged on the risk register as a mitigation.**

3.7 Communications and Stakeholder Management

3.7.1 This policy has far reaching consequences across a wide range of stakeholders. It is very high profile in nature and will have a high impact on the population of the UK in terms of cultural behaviour, economics, service delivery and fiscal structures.

Communication needs to play a strategic role in the heart of the programme, and needs to be addressed as an urgent requirement for the next phase of delivery. But, overall, these aspects of the Programme remain "behind the curve" at present.

The UC Programme has recognised the importance of communication and stakeholder management and has started a process of communication resource identification and allocation, stakeholder mapping and communication, internal communication, and has identified the need to appoint external communication resource. It is understood that a

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corporate DWP Director of Communications has been appointed, and the programme will also be appointing a communication manager inside the Programme. These appointments are considered to be vital.

3.7.2 Potential Communications Issues Identified: -

There are three aspects of communication that must be addressed by the programme on an urgent basis:

1. **Internal Communication** – The PAR Team believes that the Programme (and DWP) have a great opportunity to position the UC Programme very positively in the minds of the staff. Engagement and motivation levels across the Department are an issue and the Programme provides an opportunity to use the Programme's internal successes, profile, and industry best practice and groundbreaking methodologies to engage staff positively. No structured programme of internal communication exists yet and interviewees felt there was little to be said to staff while the Programme was in its early stages. This potentially allows misconceptions and negative views to fill the void.
2. **Stakeholder Engagement** – A high level map exists of stakeholders, their issues and the messaging approach for each stakeholder community or person. This is currently at a low level of maturity as a result of a lack of resource being appointed to the task. This resource issue is being addressed – but the scale of the task is not fully appreciated at the moment. Some major communities need to be engaged with urgency to make sure the Programme does not suffer from lack of support, or, at worst negative activity. Local Authorities, in particular need to be addressed more effectively (see below). Senior staff have recognised the need to "man mark" their senior stakeholders but this activity is currently not well coordinated and needs more sophistication in terms of messaging, agenda management and processes and systems (such as a customer relationship management system) to support it and reduce the impact of concerns on scarce senior resources. Some stakeholders expressed frustration over the depth of engagement and also the timing, in that papers for decision weren't necessarily reaching them in time, and this led them to feel less engaged in the debate and decision making process, and consequently less confident in the Programme's robustness.
3. **External Communication** – A DWP Director of Communication is due to arrive by the end of November. Press activity is already busy in this area and, to an extent the Programme is going to have to play catch up in order to address the media's current attitude towards this policy and its potential effects. In addition, the warm up campaign for the market has not been designed as yet and will need to commence earlier than the planned date for the end of summer 2012 – probably more through effective PR than any other communication channel.

3.8 Local Authorities, the DCLG and Third Sector Groups

3.8.1 The issues around the need for effective engagement with Local Authorities and other organisations (such as the Citizens Advice Bureau) that are potentially important to successful delivery of the changes became very clear during the PAR. The process of engagement with these bodies has commenced but the efficacy and depth of that

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engagement is questionable and much more will need to be done before these key stakeholders feel engaged and the Programme benefits from that engagement. This is an area that is currently “behind the curve”.

3.8.2 It is recognised that the individual representatives from these areas are formally involved in the Programme’s governance structures. But little work, if any, has been completed to understand the level of impact on Third Sector bodies, and no strategy exists yet in terms of how to deal positively with them other than a “one way” high level communication process. This situation is further impacted by the lack of a coordinated strategy by the (numerous) stakeholders themselves; and the DCLG, LGA and SOLACE, in particular, could be encouraged to play a more active role in this. It was also clear that direct only about one-sixth of Local Authorities had been engaged with, and then only about the mechanics of “taking over” work. The PAR Team recognises the other calls on the UC Programme’s resources; but consider that the potential reputational and practical risks to the Programme are being underestimated, and could result in the Programme suffering from delayed or disrupted roll out, or in extreme cases active blocking of its intentions. In the case of Local Authorities, local councillors - using local media - could lead this concern (who are already focused on finding savings of over 25% across a complexity of multiple services).

The Programme has a robust view on how to segment these stakeholder sectors, but there is no solid plan of engagement in place. Internal and external communication planning should be addressed earlier in the programme schedule. The Programme needs to be more proactive and in control of the external engagement agenda

3.8.3 Potential Issues Identified: - The Programme would benefit from: -

- Urgent appointments to the communication roles and increasing the seniority and profile of the Local Authority engagement team.
- A more detailed stakeholder mapping process (which should include decision making units (DMUs) and key influencers), along with investment in an SRE “man marking” structure and supporting customer relationship management system (to underpin and support the process).
- More effective engagement with stakeholders in the decision-making and briefings process.
- Carrying out a Local Authority impact analysis, and constructing a strategy specific to this area for discussion and engagement in partnership with DCLG.
- Internal and external communication planning should be addressed earlier in the programme schedule.

3.8.4 Recommendation 12: - The Programme should urgently review and strengthen its approach to managing key external stakeholders and Local Authorities, and strengthen the effectiveness of its partnership working with DCLG, LGA and SOLACE.

3.9 Affordability and Value for Money

3.9.1 Internal stakeholders, HM Treasury, and the Major Projects Authority examined the Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) in detail. The SOBC figures were based on

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planning assumptions known at the time. The overall position indicated that the Programme was over budget by £1bn in SR10, with significant post SR10 costs.

There has been **significant progress in closing the affordability gap** since the SOBC was published. HMT has made £2bn available during the SR10 period and current forecast shown in the Outline Business Case (OBC), dated 21 October 2011, is a net funding requirement of £1.9bn.

3.9.2 A Finance Business partner has recently been appointed to work with the UC Programme, but he has only been in place for a few weeks. In producing the OBC, the Programme has been able to refine the **planning assumptions and sensitivity analysis** to provide more robust and refined forecasts. The confidence levels in the OBC around SR10 have also been increased by the inclusion of greater sensitivity analyses around the range of likely outcomes. For example, the OBC takes a 50% “middle-range” assumption for Channel Shift rather than the 80% overall target (which is deemed to be achievable by many of the commentators and supported from the Market Research data). It also compares a worst case of 20% on-line take up and automisation rising to 50%, to a best case of 60% on-line take up and automisation rising to 80%. The impact is to add £78m to SR10 costs in the worst case and to reduce costs by £26m in the best case.

3.9.2 The **AME** costs have been remodelled to reflect the latest policy position and settlement and this has resulted in a revised forecast of £187m in SR10 (£774m in the SOBC). Reforms to the Council Tax Benefit have been agreed as out of scope for Universal Credit and so £300m costs of administration have been removed from the baseline and operating cost.

3.9.3 The changes to **investment** costs have been set out in the OBC. The cost of estates has reduced by one-third - £100m; whereas IT costs have increase by £104m from the previous position. Overall DEL costs have also decreased from £1,997m in the SOBC to £1,497m in the OBC.

3.9.4 The Programme’s **Outline Benefit Realisation Plan** sits alongside the OBC. This plan provides the benefits position of the UC Programme as at October 2011. Benefits over the life of the programme of £1,331m in reduced Administration Costs/savings (DEL) and AME savings of £15,481m are based on assumptions and modelling based on the latest information. In the time available, the PAR Team was not able to review this.

3.9.5 The PAR team acknowledge and support the increased confidence in the financial position for **SR10** detailed in the OBC. We understand costs projected for **SR14** are planning assumptions. However there are some improvements that the team consider can be made in the detail and presentation of the OBC and these are as follows:

- The costs in relation to the Local Authorities should be assessed in a manner that takes into account their large numbers, fragmented and diverse nature;
- Commentary on the policy impacts for DCLG and their impact on Local Authority costs;
- Commentary on contingency issues needs to be included to cover all risks (such as the non-availability of the RTI Programme).

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- Commentary on the amount of rework from a move to an on-line service (which we understand has been fully impacted) and the volumetrics to underpin key assumptions;
- Fuller analysis and commentary on the (separate) funding required for the Fraud and Error Strategy of £275m and its intercept with and impact on Universal Credit (which has to be dealt with as a matter of urgency); and
- Setting out how the use of mainly existing suppliers will enable UC Programme to fully utilise savings that could be achieved through innovation in technology.

3.9.6 Recommendation 13: -

- 1) The presentation of the financial position be strengthened by clear commentary on significant changes from the SOBC to the OBC. The Programme also needs to set out why the profile of overspends in the first two years with significant savings in the last two years of the SR period is credible (not the profile normally associated with Programmes/Projects);
- 2) To assist in building up levels of understanding and confidence from those outside of the Programme, interaction with key financial players, between formal meetings, should be put in place;
- 3) A strategy for handling the costs emanating from Local Authorities be put in place and ownership for this is clearly defined with the Programme, and
- 4) Separate funding for Fraud and Error is put in place as a matter of urgency to ensure the appropriate intercept where necessary in the design and build in the Programme.

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4) Annex A – Background of the Programme

4.1 Summary of programme

4.1.1 Universal Credit will replace a number of working age benefits and tax credits with an integrated working age credit that will provide a basic allowance with additional elements for children, disability, housing and caring. It will be available for people both in and out of work and will replace Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, Housing Benefit, Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance and income-related Employment and Support Allowances.

4.1.2 The Department for Work and Pension has been given the lead on organising the delivery and administration of Universal Credit. The identification of the capabilities that a Universal Credit organisation would need to be able to deliver, and the assessment of delivery model options, organisational structures and potential optimal transition from the predecessor organisations (DWP, HMRC and Local Authorities) is being progressed. The Universal Credit system will be built upon technological enablers already being delivered by the Department of Work and Pensions, and link to the Real Time Information system being delivered by HM Revenue and Customs. Programme delivery is being driven using Agile development techniques.

4.1.3 Universal Credit will be implemented from October 2013 with transition in managed stages between October 2013 and October 2017.

4.2 Programme Aims

The objectives of Universal Credit are to tackle the problems of poor work incentives and complexity within the current system of benefits and tax credits. It aims to:

- Encourage more people into work and to make even small amounts of work pay and be seen to pay;
- Smooth the transition into work by offering a single cash transfer payment that adjust automatically as people's earning change and they move in and out of work;
- Offer a simpler support, with one system replacing multiple systems, therefore reducing administration costs and the propensity for error; and
- Tackle poverty both through increased take-up since the system will be simpler and from increased reward from employment for the customer.

4.3 Major Benefits

The overall (NPV) Benefits over 10 years are forecast as: -

- £5,000m Employment Gains
- £15,481m AME Savings (Net reduction in Fraud, Error and Overpayments)
- £20,297m Societal Benefits (Better off Families and Pensioners)

Totalling: £40,778m

4.4 Overall Costs

The latest overall Costs estimates (as at 13 October) total £1,897m for SR10 and £9,935m for SR14

The estimates provided to MPRG on 6 July were £3,049m for SR10 and £11,946m for SR14.

4.5 Key Milestones

- The main UC IT build is divided into 5 Leaps up to April 2013, (of which the first 2 have been completed, and Leap 3 should be complete by end-March 2012). Royal Assent is now anticipated for Feb-March,
- Draft secondary legislation is due for consultation (e.g. with SSAC) from July 2012, and to be completed by December 2012.
- There is a key milestone for Site selection at end March 2012, and by then, work on the Business Products should be well advanced.
- HMRC's supporting Real Time Information project will move to its pilot stage in the first half of 2012, take on "Early Adopters" in the second half, and move to full take-on from April 2013 with the target of all employers by October 2013.
- The UC operating model, customer experience and IT will all be tested in a Pathfinder between April 2013 and October 2013.
- The current migration strategy is initially on changes of circumstances (to minimise the take on risks), moves to targeting maximising qualitative/societal benefits in 2014-15, and then the bulk of recipients (by 2017).

4.6 Details of Delivery Partner Organisations

HMRC (RTI, site selection, fraud and error, potential delivery/claimant support and communications)

Cabinet Office (Fraud. IT (1) innovation and (2) potential SME capacity)

Local Authorities (Housing Benefit claimants and some potential delivery/claimant support and communications, fraud and error)

Third Sector (budgeting advice, claimant support and communications)

5) Annex B – Previous Recommendations

Recommendation	Progress

6) Annex C - Conduct of the Review

This Review was carried out from 07 – 11 November 2011 at DWP's office in Caxton House. The Team members are listed on the front cover. The people interviewed are listed in Appendix D.

We are grateful to the SRO and the Universal Credit Team, and to all those interviewed for their support and openness throughout the process. The review process benefited significantly from the willingness of the UC SRO and Team to engage throughout the Review in an iterative feedback process and to enable the Review Team to access additional written and interview evidence as required.

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7) Annex D – List of Interviewees

Lord Freud	Minister for Welfare Reform (Lords)
Jeremy Groombridge	UC Implementation and Delivery Director
Richard West	UC Claimant Migration
Esther Stewart	UC PMO
Mark Lyons	Accenture
Malcolm Whitehouse	UC Programme Director
Terry Moran	UC SRO and Chief Operating Officer
Tim Brown	Universal Credit Finance
Steve Dover	UC Development and Technology Director
Iain Duncan Smith	Secretary of State for Work and Pensions
Paul Martin	SOLACE (CEO Wandsworth Council)
Ruth Owen	Jobcentre Plus and COO
Fiona Gough	Dep Director for Welfare Reform, DCLG
Stephen Banyard	Director General Personal Tax, HMRC
Neil Coulling	Director, Benefit Strategy Directorate
Steve Lamey	Director General, Benefits & Credits HMRC
Ian Watmore	Cabinet Office
Indra Morris	Director Personal tax, Welfare and Pensions Group, HMTreasury
Steve Riley	(Dep) Chief Information Officer, DWP
Bob Lovett	UC – Cyber Fraud
Robert Devereux	Permanent Secretary, DWP
Stefanc Czerniawski	UC Service Design Director
Paul Raynes	Local Government Association
Mike Bracken	Cabinet Office
Howard Hughes	Hewlett Packard
Lyn McDonald	Fraud and Error (IRIS) DWP
Lesley Hume	Cabinet Office
Stephen Brien	Expert Adviser, DWP
Ann Harris	Ann Harris (Portfolio Management) DWP
Andy Barnes	BT
Chris Last	DWP HR

[personal information redacted S40(2)]

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