Meeting with JP Marks 4/2/20

**WCA referrals**

We talked about the issues of -

* Claimants being referred for WCA when they have come from ESA with WRAG or SG, and also failure to pick up claimants who may have previously had entitlement to contESA but the year expired but they are still eligible for LCW credits
* Claimants not getting referred on to WCA quickly enough - eg on day 1 instead of day 29 when it is clearly long-term condition
* Claimants not getting day 1 referral to WCA when they need WCA to have entitlement eg disabled students, or people working who need work allowance
* Claimants not getting referred on to WCA unless have fitnote

They are currently looking at various options to help with this –

* A number of trials are currently being run to help make the Work Capability Assessment process simpler, quicker and more user-friendly.
* For example a trial currently operating in a selection of Jobcentres in Scotland is focused on Work Coaches supporting people through WCA process from start to finish. Helping to ensure that each person receives the personalised support they need throughout the process.
* Also further developments are planned to help make the completion and submitting of the UC50 quicker and more user friendly.

**Rural claimants**

Currently the majority of people will still need to attend a face to face interview at the Jobcentre at the beginning of their UC claim. This is to collect their Personal Security Number.

However, following this initial face to face interview, alternative attendance arrangements can be agreed and flexibilities are in place that allow people who live in rural areas to continue access support via digital channels and the phone, without the need to frequently attend their local Jobcentre.

**Responses in journal**

I suggested that within the categories listed for journal entries there could be one specifically for MR requests so these didn’t get missed and were picked up promptly called, for example – ‘I disagree with a decision and want to challenge it’. They will consider this.

**New style ESA**

Awareness sessions for staff are being developed to ensure claimants are provided with the correct information in relation to New Style benefits.

**Appointees**

I was told work is happening to make the process simpler and easier to navigate.

**Care leavers**

The current situation is still that only preparation for a claim can be done prior to the leaving care date – the submit button cannot be pressed until that date is reached. Pointed out that given DWP stance is date of claim is when you press submit, then that is not an advance claim.

**HRT and settled status**

A process is being developed that will allow staff in Jobcentres to verify a person settled status at an Initial Evidence Interview.