



Department
for Work &
Pensions

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Geoff Fimister
Policy Co-Chair,
Disability Benefits Consortium

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Dear Geoff

Severe Disability Premium Gateway

I wanted to take an opportunity to share with you an update on work which has already occurred surrounding the Severe Disability Premium (SDP) Gateway and transitional protection within Universal Credit (UC).

As you will be aware, the SDP Gateway has been in place since 16 January 2019. It was introduced to prevent those people entitled to the SDP as part of their legacy benefit from claiming UC. Then, in response to a High Court judgment in May 2019, DWP agreed to remove the SDP Gateway from 27 January 2021. From this date, anyone who is entitled to SDP and who moves to UC will be considered for SDP transitional protection in the same way as those already on UC.

SDP transitional payments are part of the wider transitional protection framework. The aim is to create fairness between those former SDP recipients who have moved, or who will move to UC via natural migration, and those who will move to UC later under managed migration (referred to as 'Move to UC'), as well as to create a single, consistent system of transitional protection.

Following the removal of the SDP Gateway, when people make a claim to UC DWP will check to see if they were receiving the SDP in their previous legacy benefit award and, where the claimant would still satisfy the qualifying conditions for SDP, they will automatically be considered for a SDP transitional payment.

Following the introduction of necessary legislation in July 2019, *The UC (Managed Migration Pilot and Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2019*, we successfully identified former SDP recipients who had already moved to UC prior to the introduction of the SDP Gateway and where eligible, have provided them with ongoing monthly payments and a lump sum arrears payment covering the period

since they moved to UC. I am pleased to say that, as at September 2020, we had paid over 16,000 people 'transitional protection'.

Since 8 October 2020, we have converted existing SDP transitional payments to a UC transitional element. This means that payments will be made through the UC system rather than manually and be subject to the same rules as other transitional payments. It had always been the intention to convert SDP transitional payments in this way as soon as we had developed the capability to do so safely and effectively.

When the SDP transitional payment is converted to a transitional element, the transitional element will be subject to erosion and cessation in the same way as transitional protection for those people who are moved to UC under managed migration. This will ensure that these claimants have the same rules applied to them as new claimants who move to UC with SDP after the Gateway is removed.

It is important to reflect that not replicating the SDP and other premiums in UC, has allowed us to target additional support to a wider group and create a more streamlined system. Overall, disabled people are some of the biggest beneficiaries of UC, with around 1 million disabled households receiving on average around £100 per month more on UC than they would have received on the legacy benefits.

I hope you have found this update useful.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Neil Couling', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Neil Couling
Universal Credit SRO