

Kirstene Hair MP
Member of Parliament for Angus



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA



Dear constituent,

Cancer patients in receipt of Universal Credit

November 2018

Thank you for contacting me about people with cancer who claim Universal Credit (UC). I recognise the sensitive nature of this topic and the strength of feeling of the many constituents who have contacted me around this issue. Cancer is a terrible condition for people to go through, and I believe it is crucial that people who suffer from health conditions like this should receive as much support as possible to help reduce stress and anxiety.

I realise that there are people who may struggle with access to the benefits system, which is why £200 million has been invested in Universal Support. From April 2019 it will be delivered by the independent charity Citizens Advice, to support people with every step of making a new UC claim. All Jobcentres across the UK have free Wi-Fi and there are more than 8,000 computers available to support customers with making their claim online. If someone cannot get online then there is a Freephone UC helpline.

There are safeguards in place to ensure people with a terminal illness can access UC more quickly. Any household that needs it will be able to access a full month's payment as an advance within five days of applying, and the repayment period will be increased to 16 months from 2021. If someone is in immediate need, then their payment would be fast tracked, so that they receive it on the same day. The initial seven-day waiting period has been removed so that entitlement to UC starts on the first day of the application.

There is also the Special Rules for Terminal Illness procedure, which allows people with terminal illnesses to be fast-tracked without the need for a face-to-face assessment.

Once again, I thank you for taking the time to contact me with your concerns on this issue, and I hope the above is able to reassure you of the protections in place for people with cancer and other health conditions, and I will continue to support improvements when necessary.

Kind regards,

Kirstene Hair MP
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