



9 September 2013

Response from the DWP to the SSAC report: Communications in the benefits system

We welcome this report on claimant communications and the Committee's recognition that the Communications Directorate is 'a strong performer' across Whitehall and has delivered many examples of good practice. The report calls key communications activity 'innovative', 'engaging' and 'valuable'.

We agree that disparate responsibility for creating claimant communications – across the Department's programme, policy, operational and legal teams – can raise issues of consistency that need to be addressed. We therefore welcome the Committee's support for the new Claimant Communications Unit to improve standards across the wider Department and provide stronger central oversight.

The Department accepts the bulk of the recommendations and is already addressing many of them. For example, we have a comprehensive plan to increase awareness of Universal Credit, coordinated with the gradual roll-out so claimants get information at the appropriate time. The evidence from the Universal Credit pathfinder underlines that this is the right approach.

We are grateful to the Committee for looking at the issue and we look forward to continuing to work constructively together.