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Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payments Discretionary Support Standards of Advice and Assistance Sanctions

Annual Report 2021/22



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**Department for Communities
Assembly Report
2021/22**

Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payments
Discretionary Support
Standards of Advice and Assistance
Sanctions

Laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly by the Department for Communities in
accordance with Article 76 of the Social Security (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 as
amended by Article 125(1)(b) and (c) of the Welfare Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 2015;
Articles 135(6) and 137(4) of the Welfare Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 2015

October 2022

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1. Introduction

1.1. As part of “A Fresh Start, the Stormont Agreement and Implementation Plan” the NI Executive established the Welfare Reform Mitigations Working Group under the leadership of Professor Eileen Evason. This Group was tasked with bringing forward proposals to mitigate the impact of welfare arrangements in Northern Ireland within an agreed financial envelope.

1.2. In January 2016 the NI Executive accepted the recommendations in the Welfare Reform Mitigations Working Group Report¹, and allocated a total of £501 million² to ‘top up’ the United Kingdom welfare arrangements in Northern Ireland until 31 March 2020. In the 2021/22 budget there was an allocation of £40.8 million to continue with the existing welfare mitigation payments, which included an allocation of £4.5m to cover associated administration costs until 31 March 2022, and a £2 million allocation to cover the Universal Credit Contingency Fund. A breakdown of the £34.3m welfare mitigation allocations is set out at [Appendix 1](#).

Independent Advice Services

1.3. In recognition of the complexity of welfare changes, the Department also committed a further £1.82 million of funding for the provision of additional independent advice services, including representation services until 31 March 2022. These additional services, were to help and support people through the transitional period of change to the welfare system.

Welfare Supplementary Payments

1.4. A range of Welfare Supplementary Payment Schemes were developed to support people who may see their benefits reduced or ended following the introduction of:

- The Benefit Cap;
- Time Limiting of Contributory Employment and Support Allowance;
- Personal Independence Payment which may also affect
 - Disability Payments and / or
 - Carer Payments;
- Social Sector Size Criteria; and
- Universal Credit.

¹ <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/ofmdfm/welfare-reform-mitigations-working-group-report.pdf>

² The initial allocation in the Fresh Start Agreement was £585 million. This amount was subsequently reduced as planned changes to Tax Credits were not introduced by the UK Government.

- 1.5. Depending on their circumstances, people may have been eligible for more than one Welfare Supplementary Payment. People were not required to apply for Welfare Supplementary Payments, as the Department for Communities identified all eligible people and made payments to them.
- 1.6. In accordance with the relevant legislation, the statutory provision for Welfare Supplementary Payments ended on 31 March 2020. In the subsequent period to February 2022 the Department continued to deliver administrative Welfare Supplementary Payments on the basis of the policy detailed in the expired legislation, which ceased to have effect on 31 March 2020. All payments were made under the sole authority of the relevant Budget Act, as approved by the Assembly. This process applied to all welfare mitigation payments made in the year 2020/21 and the period April 2021 to February 2022.
- 1.7. On 31 January 2022, the Assembly approved the Welfare Supplementary Payment (Extension) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022. This legislation extended the period for which most Welfare Supplementary Payments could be paid to 31 March 2025 and ensures that eligible people continue to receive appropriate payments. Separate legislation to extend the period for which Welfare Supplementary Payments can be made in respect of the Social Sector Size Criteria was approved by the Assembly on 1 March 2022 but did not come into operation during the period covered by this report.

Reporting requirements

- 1.8. The legislation set out in [Appendix 2](#) places a requirement on the Department for Communities to lay before the Assembly an Annual Report on the operation of the Discretionary Support Scheme, on Standards of Advice and Assistance provided, and on Benefit Sanctions. The Department is also reporting on the administrative Welfare Supplementary Payments made during the financial year.
- 1.9. This is the sixth Annual Report, and it is laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly in accordance with Article 76 of the Social Security (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 as amended by Article 125(1) (b) and (c) of the Welfare Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 2015; Articles 135(6) and 137(4) of the Welfare Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 2015.

Expenditure

- 1.10. The tables at [Appendix 3](#) detail the programme costs for each of the administrative Welfare Supplementary Payment schemes and the Universal Credit Contingency Fund in the 2021/22 financial year.
- 1.11. The figures in this report, unless stated otherwise, are taken from the Department for Communities Annual Report and Accounts for 2021/22 and from Management Information Systems. All figures are rounded to the nearest ten to protect individual records and totals may not sum due to rounding.

2. Benefit Cap

2.1. The Benefit Cap places an upper limit on the total amount of certain benefits a household can receive when a person, or their partner if they have one, is of working age. If a person is affected by the Benefit Cap this will result in a reduction in the amount of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit payable. However, the Benefit Cap will not apply when certain benefits are in payment (for example Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment).

2.2. For the purposes of this section of the report all affected people will have been in receipt of Housing Benefit. As the Benefit Cap is administered through a reduction in Housing Benefit affected people are informed of any reduction in their Housing Benefit by way of a Housing Benefit award notification. This is issued by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. The Department also publishes Benefit Cap Statistics and these are available at <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/articles/benefit-cap-statistics>

Benefit Cap Limits

2.3. With effect from 7 November 2016, the Benefit Cap limits are as follows:

- £384.62 per week (or £20,000 per year) for households made up of either a couple (with or without children) or a lone parent (who has children living with them that they are responsible for); and

- £257.69 per week (or £13,400 per year) for a single person (who has no children living with them).

How Benefit Cap is calculated

2.4. Some of the benefits that are received by the person, their partner (if they have one) and any children who live with them for whom they are responsible are added together to determine whether their total benefit income is above the Benefit Cap. These benefits are listed at [Appendix 4](#). The calculation does not include individuals living in the household for whom the person is not responsible.

Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payments

2.5. The NI Executive allocated a total of £4.96 million to mitigate the impact of the Benefit Cap on families in the period 2021/22.

2.6. Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payments are available for households with children that are affected by the Benefit Cap. Before 10 February 2022 payments were equivalent to the amount of Housing Benefit reduction on the date when the Benefit Cap was first applied. Payments are made, where possible, to the person who receives the Housing Benefit - this could be the person, their landlord, or a letting agent acting on the landlord's behalf.

- 2.7. Prior to 10 February 2022 to be eligible for an Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payment a household had to be in receipt of a relevant benefit since the date the lower Benefit Cap limit was applied, i.e. 7 November 2016. If an Administrative Welfare Supplementary payment stopped, for whatever reason, it did not recommence.
- A person had stopped working due to the pandemic and was subsequently affected by Benefit Cap.
 - A child or partner joining a household caused benefits to be re-calculated;
 - Other change of circumstances that lead to the benefit income of the household increasing over the cap threshold.
- 2.8. Any people affected by the Benefit Cap who were not eligible for an Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payment to cover their full loss could apply for a Discretionary Housing Payment to cover the portion of the reduction in their Housing Benefit that had not been covered.
- 2.9. The number of people who received an Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payment in 2021/22 increased by 24% from 2020/21. Some of this increase will be due to a change in eligibility conditions from 10 February 2022 (see paragraphs 2.12 & 2.13). Some of this increase will also be the result of a change in personal circumstances before 10 February 2022 meaning that a household became affected by the Benefit Cap for the first time. Reasons for this change could include households becoming affected by the Benefit Cap if:
- 2.10. Prior to 10 February 2022 if a person had been receiving an Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payment and they ceased to be affected by the Benefit Cap the mitigation payment was stopped. There was no further entitlement if the person was subsequently affected by the Benefit Cap at a later date. While some people may have received an Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payment for the first time in 2021/22, it was only people who were continuously in receipt of a relevant benefit from 7 November 2016 who were eligible to receive an Administrative Welfare Supplementary payment.
- 2.11. Table 1 shows the total expenditure during the 2021/22 financial year on Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payments for people who were affected by the Benefit Cap³. This equates to an average payment of £250 per person.

³ Table 1 accounts for those who were affected by Benefit Cap after moving to Universal Credit as they could have received a payment prior to claiming Universal Credit. Figures of those solely in receipt of Universal Credit Administrative Payments in 2021/22 are contained in Table 8.

Table 1: Expenditure in 2021/22 – Benefit Cap

ADMINISTRATIVE WELFARE SUPPLEMENTARY PAYMENT SCHEME	NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO RECEIVED ADMINISTRATIVE WELFARE SUPPLEMENTARY PAYMENTS	TOTAL AMOUNT PAID
Benefit Cap	2,220	£561,070

Change in Policy

2.12. On 8 February 2022, the Assembly approved the Welfare Supplementary Payment (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022 to ensure that, from 10 February 2022, all families with children who are affected by the Benefit Cap will receive a mitigation payment equivalent to the capped amount. Furthermore, entitlement is no longer restricted based on when a person first had their benefit capped, and mitigation payments can now restart for those who had previously lost entitlement and were subsequently affected by the Benefit Cap again at a later date.

2.13. Pending the approval of further legislation to provide for Welfare Supplementary Payments for people claiming Universal Credit, these policy changes are also being applied to those in receipt of Universal Credit. As a result of this change a total of 1,197 Benefit Cap cases (for both Housing Benefit and Universal Credit) were examined, resulting in a total of 935 customers benefitting. 152 new cases were opened, 392 cases were reopened and there was an increase in payments in 391 cases.

3. Changes to Employment and Support Allowance

3.1. Time limiting of contribution-based Employment and Support Allowance was introduced in NI with effect from 28 November 2016. This change limited the time for which a person can receive Employment and Support Allowance to 365 days. This applies to people who are in the Work-Related Activity Group and receive Employment and Support Allowance based on National Insurance contributions they have paid.

3.2. People who are placed in the Support Group of Employment and Support Allowance are exempt from the limit. Any time spent in the Support Group, or in the assessment phase before moving to the Work-Related Activity Group, will not count towards the 365-day time limit.

3.3. People who were in the Work-Related Activity Group when the changes came into effect and had already been receiving contribution-based Employment and Support Allowance for 365 days or more, were the first to be affected by this change.

Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payments

3.4. The NI Executive allocated a total of £6.06 million to continue with the existing welfare mitigation schemes for Employment and Support Allowance and Personal Independence Payment in 2021/22. This included mitigation of the time limiting of contribution-based Employment and Support Allowance.

3.5. Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payments are paid to people who were in receipt of contribution-based Employment and Support Allowance on the date that time limiting was introduced and who subsequently lost benefit as a result of the change. The amount of the Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payment is equivalent to the actual loss of benefit, and payments are made every four weeks for up to one year.

3.6. The number of people who received an Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payment in 2021/22 decreased by 37% from 2020/21. This is due to the time- limited nature of payments under this scheme.

3.7. Table 2 below shows the total expenditure during the 2021/22 financial year on Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payments for people who were affected by this change⁴. This equates to an average payment of £2,850 per person.

Table 2: Expenditure in 2021/22 – Employment and Support Allowance

ADMINISTRATIVE WELFARE SUPPLEMENTARY PAYMENT SCHEME	NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO RECEIVED ADMINISTRATIVE WELFARE SUPPLEMENTARY PAYMENTS	TOTAL AMOUNT PAID
Employment and Support Allowance	50	£142,370*

*This figure represents the total amount paid for this welfare mitigation scheme during 2021/22.

⁴ Table 2 accounts for those who were affected by Employment and Support Allowance time limiting after moving to Universal Credit as they could have received a payment prior to claiming Universal Credit. Figures of those solely in receipt of Universal Credit Administrative Payments in 2021/22 are contained in Table 8.

4. Personal Independence Payment

4.1. Personal Independence Payment was introduced in NI on 20 June 2016 for new claims. It replaced Disability Living Allowance for people of working age (16-64 years old). Those of working age who were in receipt of Disability Living Allowance were assessed for Personal Independence Payment, this exercise was completed by Autumn 2019. Existing Disability Living Allowance child claims are invited to claim Personal Independence Payment on their 16th birthday and they also qualify for Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payments in line with Disability Living Allowance adult cases.

Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payments

4.2. The NI Executive allocated a total of £6.06 million to continue with the existing welfare mitigation schemes for Personal Independence Payment and Employment and Support Allowance in 2021/22. This included mitigation payments for those people who are worse off following transition from Disability Living Allowance to Personal Independence Payment.

4.3. There are three elements available within this Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payment Scheme. Two relate to people who are not awarded Personal Independence

Payment, and the third is available to people who are awarded Personal Independence Payment but at a reduced rate compared to that which they previously received under Disability Living Allowance.

Element 1 – Payment during Appeal

4.4. Disability Living Allowance recipients who are assessed for Personal Independence Payment and do not qualify, and subsequently appeal the decision, will receive Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payments equal to the weekly rate of their previous Disability Living Allowance payments until the Department is notified of the outcome of their appeal. Additionally, in cases where leave is granted to appeal to the Social Security Commissioners, Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payments will resume and continue until the Department has been notified of the outcome decision or until the scheme ends.

4.5. Table 3 below shows the total expenditure during the 2021/22 financial year on Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payments under Element 1 of the Loss of Disability Living Allowance scheme. This equates to an average payment of £1,120 per person.

- 4.6. The number of people who received an Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payment in 2021/22 decreased by 13% from 2020/21. This decrease is due to individual appeals being finalised and entitlement coming to an end. Also, with the re-assessment of all adult Disability Living Allowance claims now complete new awards of Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payment will normally only be made to young people assessed for Personal Independence Payment after reaching their 16th birthday.

Table 3: Expenditure in 2021/22 – Loss of DLA, Element 1

ADMINISTRATIVE WELFARE SUPPLEMENTARY PAYMENT SCHEME	NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO RECEIVED ADMINISTRATIVE WELFARE SUPPLEMENTARY PAYMENTS	TOTAL AMOUNT PAID
Loss of DLA – Element 1	2,120	£2,372,120

Element 2 – Lower Award

- 4.7. Disability Living Allowance recipients who are assessed for Personal Independence Payment and do qualify, but at a reduced rate, and whose weekly loss is £10 or more, will receive Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payments equal to 75% of their loss of benefit for up to one year.
- 4.8. The number of people who received an Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payment in 2021/22 decreased by 87% from 2020/21. It is assumed that this decrease is due to the time-limited nature of payments under this scheme. Also, with re-assessment of all adult Disability Living Allowance claims now complete the only new people receiving an Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payment will be young people being assessed for Personal Independence Payment after reaching their 16th birthday.
- 4.9. Table 4 shows the total expenditure during the 2021/22 financial year on Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payments under Element 2 of the Loss of Disability Living Allowance scheme. This equates to an average payment of £890 per person.

Table 4: Expenditure in 2021/22 – Loss of DLA, Element 2

ADMINISTRATIVE WELFARE SUPPLEMENTARY PAYMENT SCHEME	NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO RECEIVED ADMINISTRATIVE WELFARE SUPPLEMENTARY PAYMENTS	TOTAL AMOUNT PAID
Loss of DLA – Element 2	270	£241,100*

*This figure represents the total amount paid for this welfare mitigation scheme during 2021/22.

Element 3 – Conflict-related Injury

- 4.10. Disability Living Allowance recipients who are assessed for Personal Independence Payment and do not qualify but have received at least four points in their Personal Independence Payment assessment and can show that their disability or illness is as a result of a NI conflict-related injury may be entitled to Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payments. These payments are equal to the standard rate of the relevant Personal Independence Payment component and are paid for up to one year.
- 4.11. There were no payments made during the 2021/22 financial year on Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payments under Element 3 of the Loss of Disability Living Allowance scheme.

Loss of Disability-Related Payments

- 4.12. People who receive an income-related benefit, or Working Tax Credit, and also received Disability Living Allowance, may have automatically received additions to their benefit. These additions are known as Disability Premiums (or Disability Elements in Tax Credits), and the amount payable depended on the rate of Disability Living Allowance in payment.
- 4.13. People who transitioned from Disability Living Allowance to Personal Independence Payment may have seen a reduction in, or total loss of, the disability additions they received. This may have occurred where a person received no award of Personal Independence Payment or was awarded a rate of Personal Independence Payment that was lower than their previous Disability Living Allowance award.

Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payments

4.14. Disability-related welfare mitigation payments include payments for people who are receiving an income-related benefit and lose any combination of Disability Premium, Enhanced Disability Premium or Severe Disability Premium. They are also available to people claiming Working Tax Credit who lose the Severe Disability Element.

4.15. Payments are equivalent to the rate of the disability-related payments that have been lost and are paid for a maximum period of one year.

4.16. The number of people who received an Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payment in 2021/22 decreased by 98% from 2020/21. It is assumed that this decrease is due to the time-limited nature of payments under this scheme. Also, with re-assessment of all adult Disability Living Allowance claims now complete there should be no new awards of this Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payment.

4.17. Table 5 below shows the total expenditure during the 2021/22 financial year on Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payments for loss of disability-related payments. This equates to an average payment of £1,470 per person.

Table 5: Expenditure in 2021/22 – PIP, Loss of Disability-related Payments

ADMINISTRATIVE WELFARE SUPPLEMENTARY PAYMENT SCHEME	NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO RECEIVED ADMINISTRATIVE WELFARE SUPPLEMENTARY PAYMENTS	TOTAL AMOUNT PAID
PIP - Loss of Disability-related Payments	10	£14,700*

*This figure represents the total amount paid for this welfare mitigation scheme during 2021/22

Loss of Carer Payments

4.18. People who are in receipt of Carer's Allowance or a Carer Premium on an income-related benefit may find that they lose their entitlement because the person they care for was not awarded the qualifying daily living component of Personal Independence Payment on transition from Disability Living Allowance.

Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payments

4.19. The NI Executive allocated a total of £290,000 to mitigate this change in the period 2021/22.

4.20. Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payments are made to people who lose entitlement to Carer’s Allowance and to those who lose entitlement to a Carer Premium received on the following income-related benefits:

- Income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance;
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance;
- Income Support (also awarded on the basis of being a carer); and
- State Pension Credit.

4.21. The number of people who received an Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payment in 2021/22 decreased by 59% from 2020/21. It is assumed that this decrease is due to the time-

limited nature of payments under this scheme. Also, with re-assessment of all adult Disability Living Allowance claims now complete, the only new people receiving an Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payment will be people who were providing care for children who have been assessed for Personal Independence Payment after reaching their 16th birthday.

4.22. Table 6 below shows the total expenditure during the 2021/22 financial year on Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payments for loss of carer payments⁵. This equates to an average payment of £1,370 per person.

Table 6: Expenditure in 2021/22 – PIP, Loss of Carer Payments

ADMINISTRATIVE WELFARE SUPPLEMENTARY PAYMENT SCHEME	NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO RECEIVED ADMINISTRATIVE WELFARE SUPPLEMENTARY PAYMENTS	TOTAL AMOUNT PAID
PIP – Loss of Carer Payments	200	£273,210

⁵ Table 6 accounts for those who were affected by loss of carer payments after moving to Universal Credit as they could have received a payment prior to claiming Universal Credit. Figures of those solely in receipt of Universal Credit Administrative Payments in 2021/22 are contained in Table 8.

5. Social Sector Size Criteria

5.1. As part of the changes to the welfare system, an amendment to the Housing Benefit Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 introduced size criteria into Housing Benefit for people of working-age in the social rented sector with effect from 20 February 2017. This means that Housing Benefit is now restricted and is based on the number of bedrooms a household requires.

5.2. For those Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Housing Association tenants who are under-occupying their properties, an appropriate percentage reduction will be made to the eligible rent when calculating entitlement to Housing Benefit.

Households not affected by the Social Sector Size Criteria

5.3. People will not be affected by the Social Sector Size Criteria if:

- they, or their partner, have reached state pension age;
- they live in supported accommodation;
- they live in non-mainstream accommodation, for example, houseboats, caravans or mobile homes;
- they live in a shared co-ownership scheme; or
- they live in temporary accommodation.

Rates of Reduction

5.4. Households that are considered to be under-occupying their accommodation will see a reduction in their Housing Benefit of:

- 14% of the total eligible rent for under-occupation by one bedroom; or
- 25% of the total eligible rent for under-occupation by two or more bedrooms.

Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payments

5.5. The NI Executive allocated a total of £23 million to mitigate the impact of Social Sector Size Criteria in the period 2021/22.

5.6. An Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payment is normally available to anyone affected by the Social Sector Size Criteria. Payments are equal to the amount of the deduction.

5.7. The number of people who received an Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payment in 2021/22 increased by 5% from 2020/21.

- 5.8. Table 7 below shows the total expenditure during the 2021/22 financial year on Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payments for people affected by the Social Sector Size Criteria⁶. This equates to an average payment of £420 per person.

Table 7: Expenditure in 2021/22 – Social Sector Size Criteria

WELFARE SUPPLEMENTARY PAYMENT SCHEME	NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO RECEIVED WELFARE SUPPLEMENTARY PAYMENTS	TOTAL AMOUNT PAID
Social Sector Size Criteria	38,060	£16,121,190

- 5.9. Until 9 February 2022 entitlement to a Welfare Supplementary Payment ended if a person moved property and continued to under-occupy by at least the same number of bedrooms. This restriction did not apply where a property was allocated to a person under one of the management transfer scheme categories, commonly referred to as “Management Transfer Status”.

Change in Policy

- 5.10. On 8 February 2022, the Assembly approved the Welfare Supplementary Payment (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022. These Regulations amended the Housing Benefit (Welfare Supplementary Payment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017 to remove the restriction on entitlement for those who move property and continue to under-occupy by at least the same number of bedrooms.

⁶ Table 7 accounts for those who were affected by the Social Sector Size Criteria after moving to Universal Credit as they could have received a payment prior to claiming Universal Credit. Figures of those solely in receipt of Universal Credit Administrative Payments in 2021/22 are contained in Table 8.

5.11. The amendments ensure that, with effect from 10 February 2022, anyone affected by the Social Sector Size Criteria will receive a Welfare Supplementary Payment equivalent to their loss of benefit regardless of whether they have moved home and continue to under-occupy. The changes also allow eligible people who had previously lost their Welfare Supplementary Payment to requalify if they remain impacted by the Social Sector Size Criteria. This change resulted in 156 people having their payments re-instated.

5.12. Pending the approval of further legislation to provide for Welfare Supplementary Payments for people claiming Universal Credit, the Department has continued to make payments under the sole authority of successive Budget Acts since September 2017. The same policy to stop payments where a person moved home and continued to under-occupy was applied to those on Universal Credit until 9 February 2022 however the amended policy set out above is now applied to those in receipt of Universal Credit.

6. Universal Credit

- 6.1 Universal Credit was introduced in NI for new claims with effect from 27 September 2017. It was rolled out on a phased geographical basis to all front-office locations across NI by December 2018.
- 6.2 People in receipt of existing benefits, who have a change of circumstances that would have previously led to a new claim to a different benefit, now make a claim to Universal Credit. Universal Credit replaces the following:
- Jobseeker’s Allowance (Income-based)
 - Employment and Support Allowance (Income-related)
 - Income Support
 - Working Tax Credit
 - Child Tax Credit
 - Housing Benefit (Rental)
- 6.3 The final stage of Universal Credit implementation, known as “Move to UC” involves the managed migration of those customers who remain in receipt of the legacy benefits and tax credits being replaced by Universal Credit. A start date for “Move to UC” in Northern Ireland is not yet decided, but planning is now underway with the intention to complete in line with GB by the end of 2024.

Administrative Welfare Supplementary payments

- 6.4 The Welfare Reform Mitigations Working Group did not recommend mitigation for people who migrate to Universal Credit. This means that any person who experiences a financial loss as a direct result of their move from an existing benefit to Universal Credit will not receive mitigation payments to cover their loss of benefit.
- 6.5 Those people who were already in receipt of Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payments (before migrating to Universal Credit) because they had been affected by other welfare reforms, will continue to receive mitigation payments after they migrate to Universal Credit.
- 6.6 Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payments may also be made to people newly entitled to Universal Credit if they are subsequently affected by the Benefit Cap and/or the Social Sector Size Criteria. These payments are made to eligible people as the mitigation of these welfare changes was recommended by the Working Group.
- 6.7 In each case, people will be advised as to how long they will continue to receive Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payments.

6.8 The Department aims to bring forward legislation to provide for Welfare Supplementary Payments for people receiving Universal Credit. However, pending approval of the necessary legislation and to ensure that mitigation payments are made to people eligible for Universal Credit, the Department has continued to issue administrative payments under the authority of the relevant Budget Act.

6.9 During 2021/22 a total of 14,080 Universal Credit recipients received Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payments. This includes people

who were previously in receipt of Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payments in respect of Social Sector Size Criteria before they moved to Universal Credit and also includes Employment and Support Allowance, Benefit Cap and Carers.

6.10 Table 8 below shows the total expenditure during the 2021/22 financial year on Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payments for people receiving Universal Credit. This equates to an average payment of £570 per person.

Table 8: Expenditure in 2021/22 – People in receipt of Universal Credit*

MITIGATION SCHEME	NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO RECEIVED ADMINISTRATIVE PAYMENTS	TOTAL AMOUNT PAID
Benefit Cap	1,660	£1,067,550
Carers	10	£13,080
Employment and Support Allowance Time-Limiting	10	£29,060
Social Sector Size Criteria	12,410	£6,877,170
Total	14,080	£7,986,860

*Persons who received more than one Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payments were counted as a unique recipient against each type of payment they received. All figures are rounded to the nearest ten to protect individual records and totals may not sum due to rounding.

6.11 As explained in Chapters 2 and 5 entitlement to an Administrative Welfare Supplementary Payment in respect of the Social Sector Size Criteria and Benefit Cap changed with effect from 10 February 2022. These changes were applied to people receiving Universal Credit who are affected by either of these policies.

6.12 The Housing Benefit and Universal Credit (Sanctuary Schemes) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2021 introduced an exception to the maximum housing support available to Housing Benefit and Universal Credit customers in the social rented sector whose home has been adapted under a sanctuary scheme. Those who qualify for the exception will not have a deduction applied to their housing support if they are under-occupying their home.

Universal Credit Contingency Fund

6.13 The Welfare Reform Mitigations Working Group recommended that £2 million per year be made available for the provision of a Universal Credit Contingency Fund to ‘make emergency payments where hardship occurs as a result of difficulties which are not due to any fault on the part of the customer’. These emergency payments provide financial support to people new to claiming Universal Credit who continue to experience financial difficulties and are awaiting their first full payment of Universal Credit.

6.14 The Universal Credit Contingency Fund Scheme was introduced with effect from 1 November 2017 and payments are made through the Discretionary Support Scheme in the form of non-repayable grants.

6.15 In order to receive a Universal Credit Contingency Fund payment, a person must be able to demonstrate that they are experiencing financial difficulties. A person is not required to have made a claim for a Universal Credit Advance Payment prior to making their application. A Discretionary Support grant should not have been awarded to the person claiming Universal Credit within the previous 12 months.

6.16 A Universal Credit Contingency Fund payment is a grant and as such does not need to be repaid. The period of the payment is from the date of application to the day before the person’s next income is due, provided that income, or any subsequent income, is deemed sufficiently adequate to meet the person’s needs. This could be the first or second payment of Universal Credit if the person is paid twice monthly or the first payment if the person is paid monthly.

6.17 Table 9 shows the total expenditure during the 2021/22 financial year from the Universal Credit Contingency Fund. This equates to an average payment of £326 per person.

Table 9: Expenditure in 2021/22 – Universal Credit Contingency Fund

UNIVERSAL CREDIT CONTINGENCY FUND	NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO RECEIVED PAYMENTS	TOTAL AMOUNT PAID
	7,662	£2,497,718

7. Discretionary Support

- 7.1. The Department for Communities is committed to ensuring that the most vulnerable in society can access appropriate help and support in times of emergency or crisis. In support of this aim, the Finance Support Service was introduced in NI in November 2016 to provide a fast, responsive and effective quality service that ensures people receive immediate short-term financial support in times of emergency or crisis.
- 7.2. Those on low incomes (working and non-working) may access this form of quick, short-term financial support in the form of a loan or grant by making an application for Discretionary Support when an extreme, exceptional or crisis situation arises which presents a significant risk to the health, safety or well-being of either the person making the claim or of their immediate family.
- 7.3. In direct response to the COVID-19 pandemic the Department introduced a number of emergency measures to provide additional financial assistance to those people who find themselves in a crisis situation as a result of COVID-19. This included the introduction of a new grant specifically for those impacted by COVID-19.
- 7.4. The new non-repayable grants are available to people where they or a member of their immediate family find themselves with no means of meeting short-term living expenses as a result of being diagnosed with COVID-19, or being advised to self-isolate in accordance with guidance published by the Regional Agency for Public Health and Social Well-being.

Statistics

7.5 The figures in table 10 represent Discretionary Support performance and expenditure during the 2021/22 financial year.

Table 10: Performance and Expenditure in 2021/22 – Discretionary Support

DISCRETIONARY SUPPORT	
Total number of claims processed	113,437
Total number of awards made	77,622
Total number of disallowances	35,815
Total amount awarded	£28.131m
Average award	£362
Claims cleared within 4 days	80,707
Total loan recovery	£6.612m
Total review requests	1,994
Total number of awards changed following review	507

7.6. The total amount awarded in 2021/22 breaks down as follows –

- Discretionary Support Loans £7.126 million
- Discretionary Support Grants £21.005 million (of this £21.005 million, £2.498 million relates to Universal Credit Contingency Fund payments and £1.443 million relates to Self-Isolation payments).

7.7. The figures in table 10A represent the Discretionary Support Self-Isolation Grant performance and expenditure during the 2021/22 financial year. These figures are included in Table 10.

**Table 10A: Performance and Expenditure in 2021/22
- Discretionary Support Self-Isolation Grant**

NUMBER OF AWARDS MADE	8,705
TOTAL AMOUNT AWARDED	£1.443 million

Discretionary Support Independent Review

7.8. The Department completed internal reviews of Discretionary Support policy, legislation and operational delivery. To complement this work, Minister Hargey decided that a strategic review of Discretionary Support should be completed by an independent panel. The over-arching purpose of the review was to establish if Discretionary Support is delivering for the people who need it most.

Upon completion of their review the independent panel provided a report containing more than 35 recommendations for changes to Discretionary Support which can be viewed at [Discretionary Support Independent Review | Department for Communities \(communities-ni.gov.uk\)](#). The recommendations from the independent review are currently under consideration.

8. Standards of Advice and Assistance

- 8.1. The Welfare Reform Mitigations Working Group Report recommended that additional independent advice services should be put in place to help and support people through the transitional period of changes to the welfare system. The NI Executive made a commitment to provide a total of £8 million of funding over four years, from 2016 until 31 March 2020 for these additional services. A further £2.7m was provided (to cover the same four year period) to target food poverty and to equip citizens with financial capability skills.
- 8.2. The Welfare Reform Support Project which provides the free Independent Welfare Changes Helpline (0800 915 4604), additional face-to-face front-line services and legal adviser services in the Law Centre NI went live from 1 November 2016. This is now the AdviceNI Helpline.
- 8.3. A 12-month review carried out in February 2018 clearly showed, both from the customer survey and from feedback supplied by the Advice Sector (via Management Information statistics), that the Project had met its objectives. The Department was therefore provided with the assurance and justification to continue the delivery model for the additional face to face advice service and telephony helpline until 2020. Key information from the review demonstrated that 17% of people availed of the free Independent Welfare Changes Helpline and 83% visited their local advice office with 95% of participants satisfied with service delivery.
- 8.4. Contracts to continue delivery of the additional independent advice service were in place until 31 March 2022. During the COVID-19 pandemic, government guidance resulted in the temporary closure of the frontline community advice offices. The Independent Welfare Changes Helpline was also used as the contact number for the COVID-19 Community Helpline for Northern Ireland during this time. These factors impacted on the data that was collected throughout the year for the Welfare Reform related callers and therefore the Department is exploring with the sector how to capture this information.

Standards of Advice

8.5. The Department in collaboration with its co-funders the 11 NI Councils as well as the regional advice support organisation, Advice NI, are continuing to work to ensure that all front line advice providers will eventually achieve accreditation of the NI Advice Quality Standard (NIAQS). Councils and the Department are in agreement that this accreditation will ultimately become a condition of funding for any front line provider bidding for funding from councils for generalist advice provision. Attainment of NIAQS will provide assurances that providers are operating at a level which meets industry quality standards in relation to the advice provided and following the Quality of Advice assurance procedure set out. For those providers who have already attained the standard, this will be verified by the completion of an independent audit.

8.6. Furthermore, regional organisations have individual quality standards and processes in place as follows:

- **Advice NI** - has achieved Investors in People gold accreditation, which lasts for three years and is reviewed every 18 months. It has also received the Advice NI Money and Debt Advice Standard, which is accredited by the Money Advice Service Quality Framework.
- **Law Centre NI** – is required to meet Lexcel, which is the Law Society’s legal practice quality mark for excellence in client care. This is audited annually.

8.7. In addition to the above, each organisation has internal processes in place to check the standards of advice being provided, which includes daily case-checking by senior supervisors and case-file reviews. Despite these actions having been paused due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the NIAQS assessment will be resumed from 2022/23.

Community Sector Support Project – Future Infrastructure Support for 2024

8.8. Refresh of the current policy and funding framework for regional and sub-regional level infrastructure support to Advice organisations, including additional funding to mitigate the impact of ongoing changes to social security.

8.9. A consultation on “proposals for provision of strategic support to the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) 2017-2021” was held in late 2016. The proposals as set out in the public consultation were not implemented due to the suspension of the Assembly in 2017 and the absence of a Minister to approve the consultation response and sign off on new programme proposals. The current programme’s high level strategic objectives and underpinning values are still considered relevant for the provision of regional infrastructure support to the sector but the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way services are delivered and there is a recognition that any new Regional Infrastructure Support Programme

(RISP) arrangements will need to reflect that new situation as well as policy changes since 2016. Seeking to restructure our support for the sector in the midst of a pandemic was not considered feasible or advisable, as we redirected resource to our Voluntary and Community Sector Emergency Support Programme. To carve out the time to meaningfully review the support needs of the Sector, funding including additional funding for advice to mitigate the ongoing changes to social security benefits was extended for a further two years for the period 2022 – 2024.

- 8.10. The Department will now review the policy and funding framework for Independent Advice services, with a focus on achieving the right balance between supporting regional infrastructures and the delivery of front line community based advice. The work will review the nature and scope of advice services to ensure access to Independent Advice provision across all council areas incorporating the Community Support Programme element of advice funding to ensure we fund effective advice delivery models, whilst considering urban and rural needs. The proposed two year business planning period cycle, will be used to develop updated strategic objectives and a revised framework of outcomes which will be co-designed with the sector and which will form the basis for future delivery and fresh commissioning approaches.

- 8.11. In particular the review will engage with the advice sector and others to develop an evidence base and insight into the specific needs of support; develop and make recommendations as regards the shape and form of arrangements for supporting the advice sector, while considering and making recommendations as regards commissioning and fair funding arrangements.

Tackling Food Poverty – Social Supermarket Pilot Programme

- 8.12. The Welfare Reform Mitigations Working Group recommended improving access to affordable food through a network of community food shops and social stores / supermarkets.
- 8.13. A Social Supermarket pilot programme commenced on 1 October 2017 at five sites across NI. Access to this support requires payment of a small membership fee which provides access to food on the condition of the uptake of a wraparound of bespoke support such as advice, money management, training etc. based on a client's needs.
- 8.14. An evaluation of activity up to 31 March 2020 when the pilot period formally concluded shows positive impacts with 1,119 individuals accessing the service and suggests that the model of combining access to affordable food with wraparound support is helping to positively change the life circumstances of members and their families.

At a minimum, it has given members the confidence to embark on a path to transition out of food poverty and improve their circumstances, as reflected by the 'distance travelled' by members in terms of resilience and self-efficacy. Many others have progressed further to actually improve their circumstances (e.g. secure employment, improve family finances / reduce debt). In addition the pilot resulted in excess of 148 tonnes of surplus food being redistributed.

8.15. On the basis of the positive evaluation it was the intention to roll the model out across NI during 2020/21. However due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic this work did not progress as anticipated. In 2021/22 a co-design process began with councils and local stakeholders to develop tailored Social Supermarket models for each council area. The co-design process continues into 2022/23 with implementation of the first new models expected by end of March 2023. In addition, funding for the existing five pilots has been extended.

9. Sanctions

- 9.1. A sanction is a penalty imposed by a decision-maker where a person fails, without good reason, to fulfil all of their responsibilities in order to continue to receive their benefit.
- 9.2. Given the potential to cause hardship, the Department for Communities believes that any decision to reduce or stop a person's benefit should be an option of last resort. The Department is therefore committed to a preventative approach which is rooted in a desire to avoid hardship whilst promoting work and well-being.
- 9.3. The Welfare Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 2015 ("the 2015 Order") provided for the introduction of new benefit sanction legislation in NI with effect from 27 September 2017.
- 9.4. In advance of implementing the sanction elements of the 2015 Order, the Department undertook a review of existing processes and communications. Additional steps were introduced with the aim of reducing the risk of people facing sanctions.
- 9.5. This approach, which includes additional personal touch points, was implemented with effect from 29 January 2018 in respect of Jobseeker's Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance and Income Support. This was implemented for Universal Credit from the date it was introduced in NI, 27 September 2017.
- 9.6. From 27th November 2019, the Jobseeker's Allowance and Universal Credit (Higher-level Sanctions) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019 amended the Jobseeker's Allowance Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996, the Universal Credit Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 and the Jobseeker's Allowance Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 to reduce the duration for the maximum length of a higher-level sanction from 546 days or 78 weeks to 182 days or 26 weeks.
- 9.7. Higher-level sanctions are imposed for the most serious failures such as not taking up an offer of paid work, or losing or ceasing paid work voluntarily and for no good reason, or through misconduct. If sanctioned for eighteen months, it was felt that there was a risk that people may decide to disengage entirely from the employment support on offer. This increases the likelihood of financial hardship for these people, for the duration of the sanction and afterwards.

9.8. Article 125 of the 2015 Order amended Article 76(1) of the Social Security (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 to require the Department to report on sanctions either annually or at such times or intervals as may be prescribed. This legislation defines a sanction as the loss of, or reduction in the amount of, any sanctionable benefit under the Social Security Fraud Act (Northern Ireland) 2001. The Department is required to report on the following:

- a) the number of people affected by sanctions;
- b) the periods for which such people are affected;
- c) the reasons for which sanctions are imposed; and
- d) the benefits or allowances which are reduced or lost.

9.9. As part of the wider publication on Universal Credit the Department publishes data on Universal Credit sanctions and these are available at <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/articles/universal-credit-statistics>. Data on Jobseeker's Allowance, Employment Support Allowance and Income Support sanctions are published in this report.

9.10. References to "ongoing sanctions" refer to a sanction that has been imposed throughout 2021/22 for an open ended duration and the person has yet to fulfil their conditionality responsibilities to have the sanction closed.

9.11. Please note that all sanctions figures in this report are rounded to the nearest ten and therefore may not sum due to rounding.

COVID-19 Impact

9.12. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic the Department amended legislation to provide that work search and work availability requirements must not be imposed on people receiving Universal Credit or contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance and treating those in receipt of income-based Jobseeker's Allowance as being available for work and actively seeking work. This amendment applied for a period of three months and expired on 30 June 2020. As a result, from 30 March 2020, new claims did not agree a claimant commitment.

9.13. The Department saw the resumption of claimant commitments, on a phased basis from 8 July 2020, as a welcome opportunity to engage with newly unemployed individuals to offer support in a labour market environment that continues to be challenging. However, due to operational challenges the approach that was taken was measured. In addition, the content of claimant commitments and subsequent follow up contact was also tailored to suit individual circumstances. Work search activities were agreed in partnership and reflected any continuing COVID-19 constraints.

9.14. The measures introduced by the Department to support people during the pandemic has impacted on the number of sanctions imposed.

Jobseeker’s Allowance

9.15. During the 2021/22 financial year there were no sanctions imposed.

Income Support

9.16. During the 2021/22 financial year there were no sanctions imposed.

Employment and Support Allowance

9.17. During the 2021/22 financial year, fewer than 10 sanctions were imposed.

Period of Employment and Support Allowance sanctions 2021/22

9.18. The table below details the period of sanctions imposed in Employment and Support Allowance during 2021/22

1-5 WEEKS	6-10 WEEKS	11-15 WEEKS	ONGOING
<10	0	0	0

Reason for Employment and Support Allowance sanctions during 2021/22

9.19. No Employment and Support Allowance sanctions were applied due to failure to attend Work-focused Interviews, none were applied for failure to participate in Steps 2 Success and fewer than 10 one strike fraud penalties were imposed.

Universal Credit

9.20. During the 2021/2022 financial year, a total of 250 sanctions were imposed on 240 recipients of Universal Credit.

Period of Universal Credit sanctions 2021/22

9.21. The table below details the period of sanctions imposed in Universal Credit during 2021/2022.

1-5 WEEKS	6-10 WEEKS	11-15 WEEKS	16-20 WEEKS	21-25 WEEKS	OVER 25 WEEKS	ONGOING
60	10	10	*	*	*	160

Total figures may not sum as figures have been rounded to the nearest ten. Figures under 5 have been suppressed and represented by *.

Reason for Universal Credit sanctions during 2021/22

9.22. The reason for Universal Credit sanctions being imposed during 2021/22 is detailed in the table below.

REASONS FOR APPLYING SANCTIONS	NUMBER OF SANCTIONS IMPOSED
Failure to comply with work focused interview requirements	240
Failure to comply with availability for work	10
Failure to comply with employment programmes	*
Failure to comply with previous employment	*

Total figures may not sum as figures have been rounded to the nearest ten.
Figures under 5 have been suppressed and represented by*.

9.23. No new sanctions were imposed on Universal Credit claims during the period April 2021 to March 2022. However, some claims continued to have open-ended sanctions in place as the person claiming Universal Credit did not engage with the Department

to enable the sanction to be ended. Many attempts have been and continue to be made to encourage the person claiming Universal Credit to get in touch with the Department so that the sanction can be ended.

10. Forward Look

- 10.1. The welfare mitigation schemes, administered by the Department for Communities are specific to NI and the Department has sole responsibility for the development and implementation of the policy and operational delivery.
- 10.2. The “New Decade, New Approach” deal committed to a priority review of the welfare reform mitigation measures. To take forward this work an Independent advisory Panel (“the panel”) was appointed on 16 November 2021 to:
- review the welfare mitigation measures;
 - examine the effectiveness of the existing welfare mitigation schemes;
 - consider if there is continuing need for those schemes; and
 - to identify the need for a future mitigation package to be considered by the NI Executive.
- The panel was also tasked to produce a report detailing their recommendations for consideration by the NI Executive.
- 10.3. The independent panel presented its report to the Department on 4 March 2022. The report, which includes a number of recommendations for additional financial support that would be targeted at carers, children and young people will be published at the earliest opportunity.
- 10.4. The implementation of any new payment schemes will require NI Executive agreement on the allocation of necessary funding.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Mitigation Scheme Funding 2021/22

WELFARE SUPPLEMENTARY PAYMENT SCHEME	ALLOCATION £'000S
Benefit Cap	4,960
Social Sector Size Criteria	23,000
Employment and Support Allowance and Personal Independence Payment including:	
• Employment and Support Allowance Time-Limiting	6,060
• Personal Independence Payment Disallowed	
• Personal Independence Payment Reduction	
Adult Disability Premium	0
Carers	290
Total	34,310*

*The 2021/22 allocation was £40.8m which included £2m to cover the costs of the Universal Credit Contingency Fund and £4.5m to cover associated administrative costs of the Welfare Supplementary Payment schemes.

Appendix 2

REPORTS REQUIRED UNDER THE SOCIAL SECURITY (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 1998	
ARTICLE 76 (AS AMENDED BY ARTICLE 125 OF THE WELFARE REFORM (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 2015)	SCHEME COVERED
<p>(1) The Department shall prepare, either annually or at such times or intervals as may be prescribed, a report on -</p> <p>(b) the standards of advice and assistance provided under Article 138 of the Welfare Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 2015;</p>	Standard of advice and assistance for people making a claim under the Order in connection with that claim.
<p>(c) The operation of sanctions.</p> <p>(1A) For the purposes of paragraph (1)(c) a sanction is—</p> <p>(a) the reduction in the amount of an award of universal credit, a jobseeker’s allowance, income support or an employment and support allowance on account of a failure by a person to comply with any requirement or any other conduct of a person;</p> <p>(b) The loss of, or reduction in the amount of, any sanctionable benefit under the Social Security Fraud Act (Northern Ireland) 2001.</p> <p>(1B) A report under paragraph (1)(c) must contain details of—</p> <p>(a) the number of people affected by sanctions;</p> <p>(b) the periods for which such people are affected;</p> <p>(c) the reasons for which sanctions are imposed;</p> <p>(d) the benefits or allowances which are reduced or lost.</p>	Operation of sanctions

REPORTS REQUIRED UNDER THE WELFARE REFORM (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 2015	
ARTICLE 135	SCHEME COVERED
(6) The Department shall, in respect of each financial year, prepare and lay before the Assembly a report on the operation of regulations made under this Article.	Discretionary Support – operation of regulations
ARTICLE 137	SCHEME COVERED
(4) The Department shall, in respect of each financial year in which payments are made, prepare and lay before the Assembly a report on the payments made in that year.	Welfare Supplementary Payment Schemes – payments made

Appendix 3

Programme costs for each Welfare Supplementary Payment Scheme in the 2021/22 financial year⁷.

WELFARE SUPPLEMENTARY PAYMENT SCHEME	NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO RECEIVED WELFARE SUPPLEMENTARY PAYMENTS	UC RELATED PAYMENTS	NON UC RELATED PAYMENTS	TOTAL AMOUNT PAID
Benefit Cap	2,220	£1,067,550	£561,070	£1,628,620
Contributory Employment and Support Allowance	50	£29,060	-£1,030*	£28,030
Personal Independence Payment	2,380	Nil	£2,349,810**	£2,349,810
Loss of Disability-Related Payments	10	Nil	-£181,340***	-£181,340
Loss of Carer Payments	200	£13,080	£273,210	£286,290
Social Sector Size Criteria	38,060	£6,877,170	£16,121,190	£22,998,360
TOTAL	42,920	£7,986,860	£19,122,910	£27,109,770

*There was also £143.4k of new debt raised during 2021/22, which results in a year-end position of -£1,030.

**There was also £263.4k of new debt raised during 2021/22 which results in a year-end position of -£22,310. Adding this figure to Table 3 figure results in year-end position of £2,349,810.

***There was also £196k of new debt raised during 2021/22, which results in a year-end position of -£181,340.

⁷ Figures are rounded to the nearest ten to protect individual records and totals may not sum due to rounding.

Universal Credit Contingency Fund costs in the 2021/22 financial year

UNIVERSAL CREDIT CONTINGENCY FUND	NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO RECEIVED PAYMENTS	TOTAL AMOUNT PAID
	7,662	£2,497,718

Appendix 4

Benefits included in the Benefit Cap calculation

The Benefit Cap will apply to the combined income from the following benefits:

- Bereavement Allowance (BALlce) / Widowed Parent's Allowance (WPA);
- Child Benefit (ChB);
- Child Tax Credit (CTC);
- Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) (contribution-based and income-related) except where the Support Component has been awarded;
- Housing Benefit (HB);
- Incapacity Benefit (IB);
- Income Support (IS);
- Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) (contribution-based and income-based)
- Maternity Allowance (MA);
- Severe Disablement Allowance (SDA);
- Universal Credit (UC);
- Widowed Mother's Allowance (WMA);
- Widow's Pension (WP); and
- Widow's Pension (age-related).

Households not affected by the Benefit Cap

The Benefit Cap does not apply in the following circumstances:

- households living in Supported Exempt Accommodation;
- Universal Credit claims where household earnings are equal to or greater than the equivalent earnings of someone working for 16 hours at

the hourly rate set out in the National Minimum Wage Regulations;

- Universal Credit claims where limited capability for work and work-related activity has been awarded;
- Universal Credit claims where the carer element has been awarded;
- if the person or their partner qualify for Working Tax Credit;
- if the person, partner or any children they are responsible for, and who live with them, receive one of the following benefits:
 - Attendance Allowance;
 - Carer's Allowance;
 - Disability Living Allowance;
 - Personal Independence Payment;
 - Employment and Support Allowance (where the Support component has been awarded);
 - Guardian's Allowance;
 - Industrial Injuries Benefit;
 - Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (Guaranteed Income Payments);
 - Armed Forces Independence Payment; and
 - War Pensions (this includes the War Widow's/Widower's pension and War Disablement Pension).

Payments including Bereavement Support payments, Cold Weather Winter Fuel payments and Discretionary Support Scheme payments are not included the calculation.

This list is not exhaustive.

Available in alternative formats.

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