

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 26 JULY 2018

**Question to Philip Atkins OBE
Leader of the Council**

By Kyle Robinson

Question

A recent National Audit Offices report has highlighted that due to the poor implementation and associated negative impact of the £1.9bn Universal Credit programme, additional costs have been created for other local services such as food banks, advisory and advocacy services. Has Staffordshire County Council attempted to collect any local data from such services to establish the impact of Universal Credit being rolled out on our Staffordshire residents?

Reply

The roll out of Universal Credit in Staffordshire has so far been limited to Lichfield District and Tamworth Borough, with the rest of the county seeing the implementation of Universal Credit later on this year. In view of this, it is too early for us to fully understand the implications of the introduction of Universal Credit and the wider impact that it may have upon local services provided by other public and third sector organisations across Staffordshire or upon Staffordshire's residents.

However, Universal Credit is adapting the welfare system to changing patterns of work and, through the latest technology, intended to create an agile service offering support. The Department of Work and Pensions should therefore listen carefully to claimants, campaigners and frontline workers when they report problems and complaints.

In a county with low unemployment levels it will be of importance for us all to better understand what impact Universal Credit may be having upon residents and services as Universal Credit is rolled out across the county.