

30th November 2016

Dear Constituents,

Thank you for contacting me about Universal Credit.

Universal Credit is a major reform that will transform the welfare state in Britain. At the heart of Universal Credit is a belief that work should always pay. Under the new system, benefit will be withdrawn gradually as claimants start work or increase their earnings, meaning their total income always goes up.

Rightly for a programme of this scale, the Government's priority continues to be its safe and secure delivery. The controlled expansion of Universal Credit started in April 2013 and I am pleased that significant progress has been made to date. Universal Credit is now available for single claimants in every jobcentre in the country.

Figures have shown that people claiming Universal Credit are 13 per cent more likely to be in work than people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance, earning more money and more willing to take a job.

The Government is also helping people to progress in work by reducing the taper rate in Universal Credit from April 2017. I welcome the Government's decision to make this change, which will mean people will keep more of what they earn and will be better rewarded for increasing their hours or pay.

Under Universal Credit, support worth up to 85 per cent of childcare costs is now available regardless of hours worked, significantly higher than the support that was available under tax credits. This will give parents more flexibility to work and earn more money.

I hope this explains why I strongly support this important reform. Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Alok Sharma MP