

Dear Mr Slater

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2017. You asked for:

*The Department's frequent response to questions about how the Universal Credit Programme ("UCP") is being run is "Agile".*

*RFI1 – Is the Department using a particular Agile framework on UCP (e.g. Scrum, Kanban, Lean etc) and if so which framework?*

*RFI2 – If the Department has a program portfolio (or equivalent) for the UCP please disclose the latest version.*

*(One description of a program portfolio is it is a map that coordinates all the epics for each team in the portfolio. It is a stoplight-coded worksheet shows each epic to be delivered for a release, and it shows the week the epic is intended to be complete).*

*The APM Group International ("APMG") believes that for large transformational programmes, Agile Programme Management ("AgilePgM") requires the production of deliverables such as Business Vision, Business Case, Benefits Realisation Plan and Roadmap. The Department has previously confirmed that it does not have a Roadmap (or equivalent for UCP).*

*RFI3 – Does the Department hold any of the following (or equivalent) for the UCP:*

- (a). Business Vision.*
- (b). Business Case.*
- (c). Benefits Realisation Plan.*

*In AgilePgM the APMG discusses just in time planning. As part of this it describes a Programme Horizon as:*

- Plan in Outline*
- Define potential tranches*
- Potential Capabilities / Benefits*

*It also describes a Tranche Horizon as:*

- Detailed for this tranche*
- Projects and activities*

- *Not detail of projects*

*RF14 - Does the Department hold a Programme Horizon (or equivalent) or a Tranche Horizon (or equivalent) for the UCP?*

*In respect of other products that the APMG defines as being required to implement AgilePgM. Does the Department hold any of the following (or equivalent) products and if so which ones:*

- 1. Programme plan*
- 2. Programme risk log*
- 3. Programme issues log*
- 4. High level projects status*
- 5. Stakeholder engagement strategy*
- 6. Communications plan*
- 7. Governance strategy”*

Before I answer the specific questions you raise, it is important to explain that Universal Credit is a vast Government Programme, which will take around 12 years from design to implementation to complete. It is the biggest welfare reform since the establishment of the Welfare State. At scale, it will affect 7 million households and will involve annual benefit expenditure of £90 billion per annum. A lot of your questions in this freedom of information request would be more appropriate to a smaller Government project. The Universal Credit Programme has a higher order of magnitude, compared to other reforms this department has carried out. It is transforming the entire work of a Government Department, significantly affecting the activity of HMRC and impacting the housing benefit services of 380 local authorities. This is also why the Universal Credit programme does not fit into narrow definitions used by organisations such as APM Group International.

It is also important to be aware that Universal Credit is becoming the main “business” of the Department for Work and Pensions as it replaces legacy benefits. That means a lot of the information you are requesting is contained in publicly available department-wide documents, such as the DWP business plan.

Many of your questions have also been answered in our reply to previous FOIs, as I have set out below.

To answer your questions in turn:

**Is the Department using a particular Agile framework on UCP (e.g. Scrum, Kanban, Lean etc) and if so which framework?**

We have answered this in FOI 1622, namely:

“...the Universal Credit programme uses an Agile approach to planning. This delivery methods track plans and progress through Jira and Confluence content collaboration software. Programme level activity is also charted on the Universal Credit “Mother wall”, the work space where transformation and activities are mapped out. Our IT deliverables are tracked and monitored through the internal TechNow system.”

**RFI2 – If the Department has a program portfolio (or equivalent) for the UCP please disclose the latest version.**

**(One description of a program portfolio is it is a map that coordinates all the epics for each team in the portfolio. It is a stoplight-coded worksheet shows each epic to be delivered for a release, and it shows the week the epic is intended to be complete).**

We have answered this question in reply to your FOI 3317. The product backlog contains the information which best matches your request for the programme portfolio. We provided this information in February 2017.

**RFI3 – Does the Department hold any of the following (or equivalent) for the UCP:**

**(a). Business Vision.**

**(b). Business Case.**

**(c). Benefits Realisation Plan.**

This information is held in the DWP Single Department Plan, which is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dwp-single-departmental-plan-2015-to-2020/dwp-single-departmental-plan-2015-to-2020>

**RFI4 - Does the Department hold a Programme Horizon (or equivalent) or a Tranche Horizon (or equivalent) for the UCP?**

We have given this information in our response to your FOI 1622.

“Other aspects of the planning include detailed stage level plans, covering the immediate next 6 to 9 months, readiness assessments for next stage of transition and roll-out and exit criteria for each Universal Credit Full Service development phase.

The Universal Credit planning is broken down into stages with each stage boundary managed through governance to assess and confirm readiness ahead of starting the next programme stage. The periodicity of a stage is defined considering a number of factors including scheduled Policy changes, planned acceleration in Transition and key planning events.

Typically a programme stage lasts between 6 and 9 months.”

**RFI5 Does the Department hold any of the following (or equivalent) products and if so which ones:**

1. Programme plan
2. Programme risk log
3. Programme issues log
4. High level projects status
5. Stakeholder engagement strategy
6. Communications plan
7. Governance strategy

### **Programme Plan**

As we have mentioned in previous FOI responses to you, (FOI 5067 and IR70) the Universal Credit Programme Plan is its rollout schedule. We have made this public in a series of Written Ministerial statements, the most recent being in July 2016, available here.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2016-07-20/HCW596/>

The rollout schedule is available here.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/universal-credit-transition-to-full-service>

## **Programme risk log and programme issues log**

We hold these items. This is a repetitious request, as this has been discussed at length following your FOI request 1619, from 14 April 2012 and its subsequent passage through the Information Commissioner's Office and associated Tribunal cases.

## **The High level project status**

The Universal Credit programme status is set by the IPA, formerly the MPA. Their latest report sets out the programme status. The latest IPA rating for Universal Credit is "Amber", which is defined as:

*"Successful delivery appears probable; however, constant attention will be needed to ensure risks do not materialise into major issues threatening delivery."*

The full report is available here.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/629622/IPA\\_Annual\\_Report\\_2017.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/629622/IPA_Annual_Report_2017.pdf)

## **Stakeholder engagement Strategy and Communications Plan**

As I explained at the beginning of this letter, the scale of the Universal Credit programme prohibits a single programme-wide stakeholder engagement strategy or communications plan. Instead we have plans for specific stakeholder groups such as employers and landlords.

These are available through Universal Credit pages on gov.uk.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/universal-credit-how-it-can-help-your-business#history>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/universal-credit-and-rented-housing--2>

## **Governance Strategy**

The National Audit Office's Progress Update report into Universal Credit sets out the governance strategy. The report is available here.

<https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Universal-Credit-progress-update-summary.pdf>

As you know, the Universal Credit Programme is subject to inspection and public reporting by the National Audit Office, the House of Commons Public Accounts Select Committee, and the House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee, all of which report in public

We have also already answered much of this question in our previous reply to FOI 1622.

"The [Universal Credit Programme] Board also checks progress by review of specific tasks and actions. Status is assessed by balancing the development of building digital features, the readiness of operations and the latest data, underpinned by scrutiny of the Programme from the Infrastructure and Projects Authority. [...]"

All of this is reinforced by the business case process, overseen by the Treasury, which sets the parameters for the Programme in terms of inputs, outputs and the outcomes sought for the reform.

In addition, the Programme Board provides second line assurance to the Senior Responsible Owner, who is accountable for the delivery of the Programme to Parliament under

responsibilities outlined in paragraph 5.6 of the Ministerial Code. The Programme Board draws on a number of sources in order to discharge these second line assurance functions.”

If you have any queries about this letter please contact me quoting the reference number above.

Yours sincerely,

DWP Strategy Fol Team

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**Your right to complain under the Freedom of Information Act**

If you are not happy with this response you may request an internal review by e-mailing [freedom-of-information-request@dpw.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:freedom-of-information-request@dpw.gsi.gov.uk) or by writing to DWP, Central Fol Team, Caxton House, Tothill Street, SW1H 9NA. Any review request should be submitted within two months of the date of this letter.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner’s Office for a decision. Generally the Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted our own complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: The Information Commissioner’s Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow Cheshire SK9 5AF [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)