

11 January 2015

The Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith MP
Secretary of State for Work and Pensions
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Dear Mr Duncan Smith

Civic Scotland Call to Suspend the Roll-Out of Universal Credit in Scotland

We – the undersigned – are writing with a united voice from across Civic Scotland to call on the UK Government to immediately suspend the further implementation of Universal Credit in Scotland until the process of legislating for new powers for the Scottish Parliament is complete.

We know from the Smith Agreement that the bill for further powers that is currently being drafted will include significant new welfare powers. The detail of how these powers will interact with the Universal Credit system will be complex and require careful consideration and planning. The legislation around welfare is complex and is regularly being adapted: since the enactment of the Welfare Reform Act 2012, there have already been over 40 Statutory Instruments passed by Westminster to bring into force many of its provisions.

Any system of welfare has to be safe and secure. Driving through Universal Credit in Scotland at this stage will create unnecessary administrative complication in an already complex process.

The sensible way to roll-out Universal Credit in Scotland is to do it once, when the Scotland-specific elements have been carefully planned and incorporated into it. This would avoid wasting precious time and scarce resources, and would protect vulnerable people in our society from bureaucratic change that could wreak havoc.

A key recommendation of the Smith Commission was to significantly improve intergovernmental working between Westminster and Holyrood, this is a golden opportunity to do just that.

So we ask you to act immediately to suspend the next phase of the roll-out of Universal Credit in Scotland, before it is scheduled to start in February.

Our diverse, united voices demonstrate that our call is not about politics. It is about protecting the most vulnerable people in our society and creating an effective, robust new system for delivering welfare. Our call is about responsible, effective governance.

We would welcome the opportunity for dialogue with you on this important matter.

Yours sincerely,



Mary Taylor, Chief Executive, SFHA on behalf of my 56 co-signatories listed below:

Age Scotland - Brian Sloan, CEO
Business for Scotland - Brandon Malone, Interim Chair
Church of Scotland - Rt Rev John Chalmers, Moderator of the General Assembly
Coalition of Care Support Providers in Scotland - Annie Gunner Logan, Director,
Common Weal - The Board

Continued overleaf

Constitutional Commission - John Drummond, Chairman
Council of Mortgage Lenders - Kennedy Foster, Policy Consultant, Scotland
Cyrenians - Ewan Aitken, CEO
Development Trusts Association - Ian Cooke, Director
East Lothian Tenants and Residents Panel - Mark Ormiston, Chair Person
Edinburgh Tenants Federation - Betty Stevenson, Convenor
Engender - Emma Ritch, Executive Director
Food Train - Michelle McCrindle, CEO
Glasgow & West of Scotland Forum of Housing Associations - David Bookbinder, Director
Health & Social Care Alliance Scotland - Ian Welsh, CEO
Inclusion Scotland - Bill Scott, Director of Policy
Money Advice Scotland - Yvonne MacDermid OBE, CEO
Quarriers - Alice Drife, CEO
Scottish Association of Social Work - Trisha Hall, Country Manager
Scottish Children's Services Coalition - Sophie Pilgrim, Member
Scottish Community Alliance - Angus Hardie, Director
Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations - Martin Sime, CEO
Scottish Out of School Care Network - Irene Audain MBE, CEO
Scottish Trade Unions Council - David Moxham, Deputy General Secretary
Scottish Women's Aid - Lily Greenan, CEO
Sense Scotland - Andy Kerr, CEO
Social Enterprise Scotland - Fraser Kelly, CEO
Social Firms Scotland - Pauline Graham, CEO
St Martins Parish Pastoral Council, Tranent - Fr James Smith. Parish Priest
The Equality Network - Tim Hopkins, Director
The Jimmy Reid Foundation - Bob Thomson, Convener
The Poverty Alliance Peter Kelly, Director
The Wise Group - Laurie Russell, CEO
The Trussell Trust - David McAuley, CEO
Turning Point Scotland - Martin Cawley, CEO
Who Cares? Scotland - Duncan Dunlop, CEO
Voluntary Action Scotland - Calum Irving, CEO
Voluntary Health Scotland - Claire Stevens, CEO
YouthLink Scotland - Jim Sweeney, CEO
Zero Tolerance - Laura Tomson, Co-director

Signatories from Housing Associations in Scotland that are due to be part of the next stage of the Universal Credit roll-out:

ARK Housing Association - Jane Gray, CEO
Barony Housing Association - Rebecca Wilson, CEO
Bield Housing & Care - Brian Logan, CEO
Blackwood - Fanchea Kelly, CEO
Cairn Housing Association - Jason MacGilp, CEO
Castle Rock Edinvar Housing Association - Alister Steele, Managing Director
Dunedin Canmore Group - Ewan Fraser, CEO
Hanover (Scotland) Housing Association – Helen Murdoch, CEO
Knowes Housing Association - Pierre De Fence, Director
Lister Housing Co-operative - Alistair Cant, Director
Manor Estates Housing Association - Lynn McDonald, Director
Melville Housing Association - Andrew Noble, CEO
Prospect Community Housing - Brendan Fowler, Director
Trafalgar Housing Association - *Paul McShane*, Director
Trust Housing Association - Bob McDougall, CEO
West Granton Housing Co-operative - Gerry Gillies, CEO