

# Tower Hamlets Homes

## Universal Credit

Housing Scrutiny Sub  
Committee (HSSC)  
February 2019

---

## Tower Hamlets Homes

---

- ❖ National picture
  - Managed Migration complete - 2023
  - One in six new universal credit claimants are not being paid on time
  - Many people are worse off, putting them at risk of hunger and multiple debt, including rent arrears

- ❖ Local Picture
  - Universal Credit Full Service roll out for THH – October 2018
  - Current number of claimants:

Cases	Count
UC	984

- Expected number of UC claimants by 2023 is 6000
- Estimated overall value of housing payments at risk (current HB) £39m
- YTD Collection rates are 99.5%

## **THH support Offer for residents**



**THH Financial Inclusion Officers**  
**Job Centre Plus**  
**Independent Help and Advice**  
**Employment services**  
**Food bank**



❖ How we are responding to UC:

- Dedicated team offering personal contact, practical help and support
- Working with partners
- Communication – Live radio, letter inserts, resident newsletter 'Open Door' articles, organisation focus on financial vulnerability and "Ask Ian" campaign
- Planning for the future – supporting more claimants transitioning to monthly UC payments, verification and processing payments
- Extended payment options – Any day, any frequency direct debits

---



## Tower Hamlets Homes

---

### Impact

Increase in the number of UC claimants

Some residents struggling to manage their budget

Payment delays

Increasing number of rent verifications

Demand on FIO resource

UC Arrears £1,232442

### Mitigating Impact

- ✓ 2 Week HB paid in addition to UC housing element April 2018
- ✓ Option available for claimants to access advance payments
- ✓ Changes to IT system and collection processes
- ✓ Applications for Alternative Payment Arrangements (APA's)
- ✓ Automated process being established to post Direct payments on accounts (live March 2018)
- ✓ Increased referrals to Account3, Financial Health Centre and Go Train
- ✓ Move from fortnightly to weekly escalation
- ✓ FIO's taking more time to assist residents to maximise income & access additional help



**Learning**

**Early intervention, rent first culture (internal and external), additional support, requesting APA's and Third Party payments**

**Developing positive partnership relationships**

**Review and align resources to adapt to UC changes & meet residents' expectations**

**Completing financial assessments & agreeing affordable payment arrangements**

**Range of payment options, e.g. 'Any Day, Any Frequency Direct Debits.**

---

**Tower  
Hamlets  
Homes**

---

**Questions?**