

**Rebecca Evans AC/AM**  
**Y Gweinidog Tai ac Adfywio**  
**Minister for Housing and Regeneration**



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Our ref/ RE/00091/18

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15 February 2018

Dear Annwen,

Thank you for your letter to Carwyn Jones, First Minister of Wales, regarding the impact of Universal Credit on families and individuals, and in particular the increase in rent arrears that leads to homelessness. I am responding as my portfolio includes responsibility for matters relating to Welsh Government's response to welfare reform.

I am still extremely concerned about the serious problems relating to Universal Credit, e.g. the impact of the changes in housing support on rent arrears. I have strongly expressed the concerns of Welsh Government, many times, to the UK Government, calling for it to prevent the process of introducing Universal Credit until the numerous and significant matters are dealt with.

Welsh Government is not in favour of devolving welfare programmes to Wales. As a matter of principle, each of us should have an equal right to our welfare state, wherever we live in the UK. The steps taken to devolve welfare benefits to Scottish Government has transferred the financial risk associated with the fact that the demand for welfare benefits is growing faster per head in Scotland than in England since devolving the powers. In Wales, this would create a significant financial risk.

It is the UK's Work and Pensions Department that administrates the Universal Credit payments in Scotland. I am eager to see everyone who claims Universal Credit being asked how they intend their housing costs to be paid to their landlord, and how often would they wish to receive funding through alternative payment arrangements. These alternative payment arrangements are available to anyone who makes an application for Universal Credit and these flexible payment options do not mean that the welfare benefits' administrative work has to be devolved. I am still in discussions on this matter with the UK Government.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Welsh Government is still taking steps to help people manage the impacts of changes to welfare benefits payments, such as the £6 million grant this year to advise on social welfare matters, and the additional £20 million to prevent homelessness over the next two years.

Yours sincerely,



**Rebecca Evans AC/AM**

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