



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE **Inter-Ministerial Group on Work and Pensions**

DATE **13 December 2023**

BY **Jane Hutt MS, Minister for Social Justice and Chief Whip**

I represented the Welsh Government at the inaugural meeting of the Inter-Ministerial Group (IMG) on Work and Pensions on 6 November.

A [joint communique](#) was published following the meeting, which contains full details of other attendees. The agenda covered: Introductions; IMG Terms of Reference; Move to Universal Credit; Pension Credit Take-up Campaign, and the Welsh Government's Claim What's Yours Campaign.

As referred to in the communique, the Terms of Reference were formally agreed. I welcomed the establishment of the IMG, which will allow us to discuss areas of mutual interest – notably support for the most disadvantaged people in Wales.

I highlighted the Welsh Government's priority to tackle poverty through supporting people to maximise their household income. I stressed the importance of ensuring that Tax Credit claimants in Wales, who are now part of the Move to Universal Credit process, are supported throughout the transition. I raised my concerns that people should not lose out on any money that they are entitled to because of the managed migration process.

On Pension Credit take-up, I highlighted the work the Welsh Government has been doing to increase take-up. This includes the innovative Claim What's Yours campaign, which is having great results in generating increased adoption of benefits across Wales. Last year the campaign helped more than 7,500 people to claim over £3.6 million worth of additional income. I shared that we are currently preparing to launch our fourth campaign which will include promotional materials to target older people specifically on Pension Credit.

I conveyed my support for the use of pilots, such as the one that DWP are running in Powys which is directly encouraging older people who may be eligible for Pension Credit to submit a claim. However, with an estimated 80,000 pensioners across Wales being entitled to Pension Credit but not currently claiming, there is still much work to be done.

Whilst our projects in Wales are delivering great results, I raised again the suggestion that a strategic UK-wide benefit campaign would be helpful to increase take-up further. The focus of such a campaign, should not only be on awareness raising, but also supporting access to advice and support services, as well as aiding data sharing arrangements.

Finally, I raised my concerns that promotion and awareness raising is only a part of the solution in increasing take-up of benefits, and that some people will require support in making the claim itself. Although the Welsh Government's Single Advice Fund is supporting the voluntary sector to provide such provision in Wales. I called on the UK Government to consider funding a Help to Claim service for Pension Credit, like their service that is helping people to claim Universal Credit.

The next meeting of the IMG on Work and Pensions will be chaired by myself, as the representative of the Welsh Government, and is expected to take place in Spring 2024.