

# NFA CALLS FOR SUPPORT AHEAD OF UNIVERSAL CREDIT ROLLOUT

## Housing Body Launches Best Practice Guides for Landlords

### Press release

**Date: 3 March 2015**

As the government announces the next stage of plans for the national rollout of Universal Credit, the National Federation of ALMOs (arm's length management organisations) has renewed its manifesto call for all parties to make payment direct to landlords a **tenant choice** and allow them to make that decision if it is the best way for them to ensure their rent is paid and their home secured. The NFA is also calling for further support to be provided to landlords and tenants by DWP to ensure problems can be resolved in a timely manner and tenants' and landlords' finances remain stable during the changes.

The NFA outlines its good practice for managing the rollout of Universal Credit in its new briefing 'Ready or Not – Preparing for the National Rollout of Universal Credit', which launches today.

Universal Credit replaces six existing income based benefits with one single payment delivered by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP). The NFA's briefing offers advice to landlords to support tenants with the changes and highlights the demand the introduction may put on services including digital inclusion and financial support.

The NFA call follows consultation with ALMO members and reflects the views of many tenants who, for good budgeting purposes, would prefer to have the housing element of Universal Credit paid directly to their landlord to ensure that the rent is paid and they can manage the rest of their money after that priority payment, NFA members in some pilot areas have also experienced problems with incorrect claims

and communication difficulties with DWP personnel when trying to resolve this issues.

The NFA believes that DWP needs to provide additional resources to help manage the initial change as the programme rolls out to aid the relationship between tenants and landlords and ensure tenants aren't left with large rent arrears and other financial problems due to the switch over.

NFA Chair, Sue Roberts MBE, said: "We are renewing the calls outlined in our manifesto to ask for **tenant choice** for direct payments and extra resources to help support tenants with the changes Universal Credit will bring. As tenants are at the heart of all ALMO activity, it is vital we ensure there are systems in place at all levels to ensure minimum disruption during these changes and to continue to support tenants with finance, housing and welfare advice as we have been doing."

The NFA has 47 member organisations which together manage more than 650,000 council homes across England. Many ALMOs already provide financial advice, digital inclusion work and identifying vulnerable tenants, services which could be stretched under the new Universal Credit changes.

To download a copy of the briefing, please visit the [NFA website](#).

**ENDS**

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The National Federation of ALMOs is the trade body that represents the interests of the 47 arm's length management organisations (ALMOs) across England.