

## **BRIEFING NOTE**

### **MOTION: 53 Mondays**

This Council notes that

Universal Credit suffers from a perennial administrative problem that creates unfairness for housing tenants who pay rent weekly.

Universal Credit is calculated monthly on the basis of a 52-week year (364 charging days) and in a year with 53 Mondays, does not allow for the additional week's rent levied by councils and housing associations. This occurs every five to six years and will impact residents in Lancaster District from 1st April 2024 affecting an estimated 1,470 council housing tenants who will have to find an extra week's rent with no benefit payment to cover the cost. Residents in receipt of housing benefit are not affected because housing benefit is paid weekly, not monthly.

This council believes that regardless of the type of benefit received, the benefits system should be administered fairly to meet the needs of residents and councils.

This council also notes that the pressures caused by the cost-of-living crisis and in addition, an extra week's rent, will impact on some of the most vulnerable residents in the district who live on the lowest incomes. The potential impact on rent arrears to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) may be significant and will require considerable administrative time from officers to manage.

This Council therefore resolves to write to the Secretary of State for the Department for Work and Pensions to request that the Universal Credit system be altered in 2024 by way of a payment adjustment and that a change is made so that this does not arise again in subsequent 53-week years.

### **PROPOSERS:**

Proposed by Councillor Caroline Jackon, Seconded by Councillor Phillip Black.

### **OFFICER BRIEFING NOTE**

The Council Housing Team are ensuring residents in our properties who are affected are communicated with and supported.

For all residents the Council is supportive of measures which can be undertaken to support residents struggling financially.

The motion proposed creates no additional burden on the Council.

#### **SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no comments.

#### **MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no comments.