

I hope the Government is listening to Labour's calls to reduce waiting time for Universal Credit payments – Debbie Abrahams

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MP, Labour's Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary, commenting on reports that the Government is planning to climb-down on the waiting time for Universal Credit payments, said:

"The Government is reportedly planning to reduce the six week wait for Universal Credit payments. I hope they have now listened to Labour's repeated calls to significantly reduce the waiting time, which has driven many into debt, arrears and evictions.

"Much more needs to be done. The Government must confirm that alternative payment arrangements will be offered to all recipients, including fortnightly payments, and bring forward plans to restore the principle that work always pays under the programme.

"A pause to the programme's roll out would ensure that it does not push people into poverty and deprivation until these issues are fixed."

Families face bleak Christmas under threat of eviction due to Universal Credit rollout – Corbyn

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Universal Credit is so likely to lead to rent arrears, a lettings agent has taken the "extraordinary" step of issuing notices of eviction to its tenants, Labour reveals today.

Hundreds of families in North East Lincolnshire are thought to have received

the 'section 21' notices from GAP Property ahead of next month's rollout of Universal Credit (UC) in the area.

Section 21 notices give a tenant two months' notice that they may be evicted and lasts for six months, during which time possession proceedings can be issued without further notice and without fault on the part of the tenant.

It comes after the National Landlords Association found just two in 10 of their members would let to a tenant who receives UC or housing benefit, and a major housing association reporting the arrears rate for those claiming UC is around three times higher than for other tenants.

An investigation by The Observer newspaper recently found half of all council tenants on UC across 105 local authorities are at least one month behind on their rent, compared to less than 10% who remain on housing benefit.

In the letter, GAP Property tells tenants UC is being rolled out in North East Lincolnshire from 13 December and states it "cannot sustain arrears at the potential levels Universal Credit could create (this affects the vast majority of our tenants)".

The letter concludes: "This is an extraordinary event that requires both you and us to take extraordinary measures."

Labour Leader Jeremy Corbyn, who raised the issue with Theresa May at Prime Minister's Questions, said:

"Blanket notices of eviction handed to tenants because of Universal Credit are totally unacceptable, should shock us all and bring shame on this Conservative Government.

"Ministers have been told over and over again that the rollout of their flagship social security policy is causing debt, hardship and homelessness, and this is further proof of the devastating impact it is having. The Tories must immediately pause the rollout and fix these problems that are turning people's lives upside down."

John Healey MP, Shadow Housing Secretary, said:

"This letter shows that the Government's Universal Credit chaos is leading directly to threats of eviction. People on ordinary incomes, both in and out of work, are paying the price for ministers' ideology and incompetence.

"The actions of the letting agent are shocking, but the buck stops with ministers. During seven years of failure on housing, this Government has ignored renters with no protection against poor standards, no control of rising rents and no action on constant insecurity.

"Ministers must pause universal credit and fix the problems, and act on Labour's plans to give renters the consumer rights they deserve."

[Debbie Abrahams response to today's ONS Labour Market Stats](#)

Debbie Abrahams MP, Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary, commenting on the ONS Labour Market Statistics today, said:

"Today's stats are further evidence of Tory economic failure, only a week out from their next Budget.

"Both employment and real wages are falling while the price of household essentials balloons, leaving millions of people worse off than they were in 2010.

"Over seven million people live in poverty in working households.

"Labour will introduce a £10 an hour Real Living Wage, scrap the public sector pay cap and reform the government's failing Universal Credit programme."

[Emily Thornberry response to situation in ZimbabweEmily Thornberry MP, Labour's Shadow Foreign...](#)

Emily Thornberry response to situation in Zimbabwe

Emily Thornberry MP, Labour's Shadow Foreign Secretary, commenting on the situation in Zimbabwe, said:

"The situation in Zimbabwe remains highly volatile, and we urge the UK Government to continue providing every assistance necessary to British nationals currently in the country.

"Amid the uncertainty of these ongoing events, three things are clear: first, a descent into violence, recrimination and reprisals from any direction must be avoided at all costs; second, the continuation of authoritarian rule does not represent a sustainable way forward for Zimbabwe, no matter which faction ends up in control; and third, it must ultimately be for the Zimbabwean

people to determine their own future government through free, peaceful and democratic elections.

"Whatever happens in the next hours, days and weeks, that must remain our collective goal."

The Tories have chosen to put ideological red lines above jobs and the economy – Paul Blomfield

Paul Blomfield MP, Labour's Shadow Brexit Minister, responding to the Government's decision to vote against Labour's amendment to the EU Withdrawal Bill seeking effective transitional arrangements, said:

"The Tories have chosen to put ideological red lines above jobs and the economy.

"The Government's decision to close down the opportunity for sensible transitional arrangements is deeply self-harming. It is not in the national interest and increases the risk that we will crash out of the European Union without an agreement. As the former Conservative Attorney General Dominic Grieve said during the debate, serious questions must now be raised about this Government's competence.

"If Ministers had any sense then they would rethink their decision and work with Labour to rewrite this flawed Bill."