

# Simon Clarke MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mr Mervyn Stevens  
Complaints Officer  
UK Statistics Authority  
1 Drummond Gate  
London  
SW1V 2QQ

18 December 2017

Dear Mr Stevens,

I am writing to you regarding misuse of statistics by the Labour Party relating to Universal Credit. These statistics are misleading families into thinking there is no help available to them while they transition onto Universal Credit.

In the first instance, on 6 December 2017 at 11:52, an email was sent from the Labour Party stating '40,000 children will wake up in poverty on Christmas Day because the Tories refuse to pause and fix Universal Credit'. This claim has since been repeated on the Labour Party's official Twitter account and by members of the Shadow Cabinet, including the Shadow Secretary of State for Work and Pensions. I have attached the email and snapshots of social media for your reference.<sup>1</sup>

It seems that to get to this figure, the Labour Party has taken the total monthly estimated number of households with children moving onto Universal Credit, and claimed that they will all face poverty. However:

- It is incorrect to say every household that registers for Universal Credit is already in poverty, or close to it;
- It is incorrect to claim that there is no additional financial help available. Interest-free advance payments are available within five days if families find that they are struggling;<sup>2</sup>
- It is incorrect to say that everyone who registers for Universal Credit has no other source of income. Universal Credit is an in-work benefit for 40 per cent of recipients.<sup>3</sup>

In a second instance on 14 December 2017, Labour alleged in a video on social media that 'millions of people are facing poverty, debt and eviction' as a result of Universal Credit, and that people have to wait 'six weeks before receiving their first payment'.<sup>4</sup> However:

<sup>1</sup> The Labour Party, *Twitter*, 9 December 2017, [link](#)

<sup>2</sup> DWP, *Universal Credit advances*, 29 November 2017, [link](#)

<sup>3</sup> DWP, *Universal Credit Statistics*, [link](#)

<sup>4</sup> The Labour Party, *Twitter*, 14 December 2017, [link](#)

- As above, it is incorrect to assume that everyone on Universal Credit is facing 'poverty, debt and eviction'.
- It is incorrect to say that there are 'millions' of people on Universal Credit. Up until November 2017 there were 660 thousand claimants for Universal Credit and 1.6 million claims.<sup>5</sup>
- Claimants will no longer have to wait six weeks before they receive their first payment. This was adjusted to five weeks in the Budget on 22 November 2017.<sup>6</sup>

Misleading, and hence frightening, people into thinking there is no help available to them while they transition onto Universal Credit is a serious dereliction of duty from the Opposition. I hope you ensure that this misuse of statistics is investigated and corrected immediately.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Simon Clady". The signature is written in a cursive style. A long, thin horizontal line extends from the end of the signature towards the right.

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<sup>5</sup> DWP, *Universal Credit Statistics*, [link](#)

<sup>6</sup> HMT, *Autumn Budget 2017*, [link](#)

Gareth, 40,000 children will wake up in poverty on Christmas Day because the Tories refuse to pause and fix Universal Credit.

Despite many working hard throughout the year, thousands of families will not be receiving their Universal Credit payments in time for Christmas, pushing the poorest families further into debt, poverty and at risk of eviction.

That's why yesterday in Parliament, Labour MPs put pressure on the Government to come clean about its management of Universal Credit. If thousands of us also expose the truth about Universal Credit to the country, we can make sure people see the true cost of this policy.

**Expose the reality of life under Universal Credit — share our video.**



Share now

The Tories have no answers and have continuously failed working families. Labour is committed to building an economy that works to protect those in need — reducing child poverty and making work pay.

That's why it's important to make sure people know the truth about Universal Credit. [Share our video today.](#)

The Labour Party







The Labour Party @UKLabour

Following

An extra 40,000 children could be waking up to poverty instead of presents on Christmas morning because of the flaws in the Tories' Universal Credit programme. But it doesn't need to be this way. Demand the Tories #FixUniversalCredit. Sign & share this ↓ bit.ly/uc40t



Debbie Abrahams MP Retweeted

The Labour Party @UKLabour · Dec 9

An extra 40,000 children could be waking up to poverty instead of presents on Christmas morning because of the flaws in the Tories' Universal Credit programme. But it doesn't need to be this way. Demand the Tories #FixUniversalCredit. Sign & share this ↓ bit.ly/uc40t



0:31 52.2K views

**Under the Tories, 40,000 children are facing poverty this Christmas.** There'll be no Christmas cheer for the 40,000 children waiting on Universal Credit this year. And the worst part is, the Tories could fix it today.

65 510 361



Diane Abbott @HackneyAbbott

Following

RT to spread the word ↓



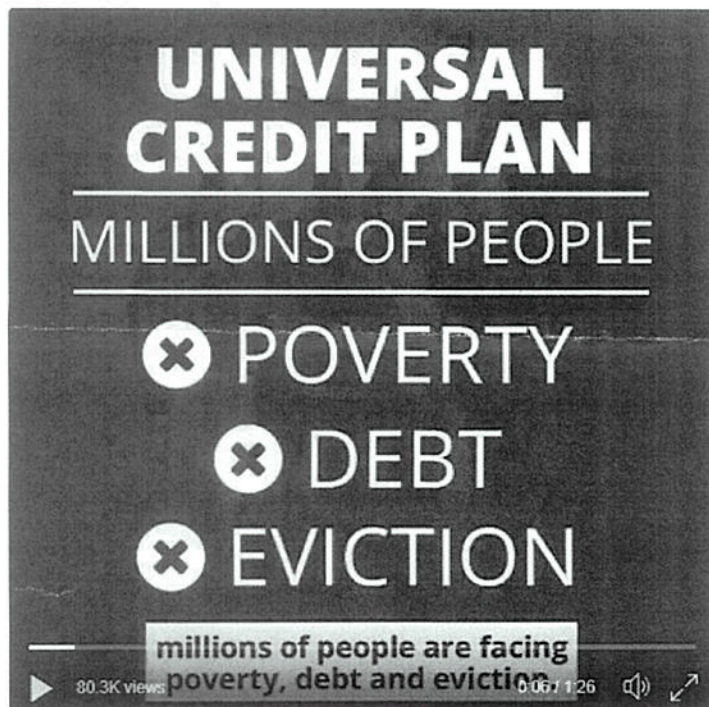
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An extra 40,000 children could be waking up to poverty instead of presents on Christmas morning because of the flaws in the Tories' Universal Credit programme. But it doesn't need to be this way. Demand the Tories #FixUniversalCredit. Sign & share this ↓

7:13 AM - 9 Dec 2017



What is the Tories' Universal Credit scheme and why is it such a failure? Here's everything you need to know. Watch our video – then sign this: [bit.ly/UCE-T](https://bit.ly/UCE-T) #FixUniversalCredit



**We're demanding the Tories fix Universal Credit NOW**

The Tories' Universal Credit programme is pushing people into poverty, debt & homelessness – but what is Universal Credit? And what needs to change? Check out our video with all the facts & hit share.

