

Employers sought for new research project on Universal Credit and employment support

A new research project wants to hear from employers in Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire to find out their views on Universal Credit and how it affects their business.

Most research into out-of-work benefits focuses on how the system affects jobseekers. But this innovative new approach, led by Dr Katy Jones in Manchester Metropolitan University's Centre for Decent Work and Productivity and supported by the Economic and Social Research Council (part of UK Research and Innovation), will explore what impacts Universal Credit has had on job creators.

Introduced in 2013, Universal Credit is paid to those who are out of work or on a low income (UC replaces Jobseekers Allowance and Working Tax Credits). Payment is dependent on claimants meeting a number of conditions, which for many includes requirements to spend 35 hours a week looking for and applying for jobs. More than six million people in the UK now claim Universal Credit.

Policy is typically aimed at getting people off benefits and back into work quickly, often by encouraging claimants to apply for as many jobs as possible. There is little or no emphasis on whether the applicant is a good fit for the role they are applying for or how long they are likely to stay in the job if they are successful.

We want to hear directly from employers about their experience of the Universal Credit and understand what works well and what doesn't. What changes can be made to create a Universal Credit system that helps employers find the right candidate and helps jobseekers earn fulfilling long term employment? What issues are you currently facing in relation to these issues, for example around recruitment, job fit, or asking employees to increase their working hours?

If you know of any construction employers (owner-managers/HR managers) who might like to take part in the research, please contact Dr Katy Jones at katy.jones@mmu.ac.uk or Dr Calum Carson at c.carson@mmu.ac.uk, or follow the project on Twitter @UC_Employers for updates. Similarly, if you know of any other employers who may be interested in taking part (particularly in the social care, retail and hospitality sectors), we would greatly appreciate it if you could pass on the invitation to them/their details to us.

Thank you in advance for your support!