

Jonathan Biggs

In consideration of question 6 (only):

As part of your affordability review, please could you consider proposing to the Department for Work & Pensions an update to the Universal Credit (UC) application process to assess those people who are eligible for support through schemes such as WaterSure and social tariffs? The UC application process could easily be updated in this way.

People who are on UC already have the ability to pay bills directly from their UC, including water bills, in a system known as 'third party deductions' (<https://www.gov.uk/bills-benefits>). This means that the UC system already has direct links to the corresponding water companies in each area.

The UC application process could also assess eligibility for schemes run by energy providers along the same lines. Please could the review consider how such join up could be made across these utilities?

I believe that updating the UC application process and training job centres staff to assess and sign people up to the available schemes could go a long way to ending water (and fuel) poverty.