Universal Credit

Before the pandemic, around 2.6 million families were on Universal Credit. Since then, the number of families on Universal Credit has doubled to around five million.

Rishi Sunak, in his initial response to the Covid-19 crisis, announced a temporary one-year uplift in entitlements to Universal Credit. The following year, the uplift was extended for a further six months and as due to expire at the end of September, coinciding with the end of the furlough scheme.

While £20-a-week may not seem like much, on average claimants receive £156 per week in Universal Credit, so the removal in the uplift will account for a 12 per cent cut in their benefits.

The cuts to universal credit will not just affect the proverbial “Red Wall” of new Conservative seats. Nationally, both the North West and areas of London have very high percentages of Universal Credit claimants.

Among Conservative seats, many of the worst affected will be some of the Conservative red wall seats. Blackpool South, won by Conservatives from Labour in 2019, has almost a third of its working age population on universal credit. It has, by a substantial margin, the highest proportion of UC claimants of any Conservative seat and the second highest in the country.

// Blackpool

Speaking to Times Radio last week, Therese Coffey said that the £20 cut amounts of “about two hours extra” work a week. While this is theoretically true, it has little relevance to areas like Blackpool where there are almost twice as many unemployed UC claimants as there with jobs.

This is generally true for many areas of the country. Overall just x% of universal credit claimants have jobs.

While the “Red Wall” Conservative seats will be, on balance, more affected by the cuts to UC uplift they are not the only Conservative constituencies that will struggle under the governments planned funding cuts.

Great Yarmouth, on the south-east coast nestled between some of the wealthiest areas of the country, has around a quarter of its working-age constituents on universal credit.

// Great Yarmouth

//Bit on the latest MP UC non-binding vote

// Build on the findings from interview

// Sum up with a sort of “this is bad” type thing

Map

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