



EVALUATION OF
HEALTH IMPACTS OF
UNIVERSAL CREDIT

How does Universal Credit affect the mental health of claimants in North-East England and Scotland?

Early insights from a
qualitative study

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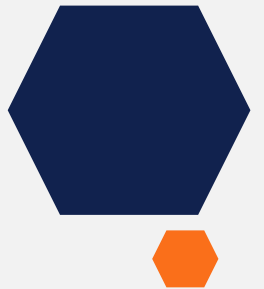
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Background

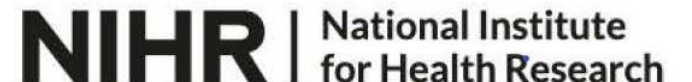


- Biggest reform to UK social security in decades; 6 benefits combined into one
- Aims to simplify benefit system, ‘make work pay’ and reduce fraud and error
- Many problems with implementation; delayed by 7 years, target now = 2024
- Built on embedded research in community setting in NE England
- Digital by default, online journal, work coaches, enhanced conditionality, sanctions
- Work capability assessments for people with health conditions
- No comprehensive formal evaluation by DWP has taken place

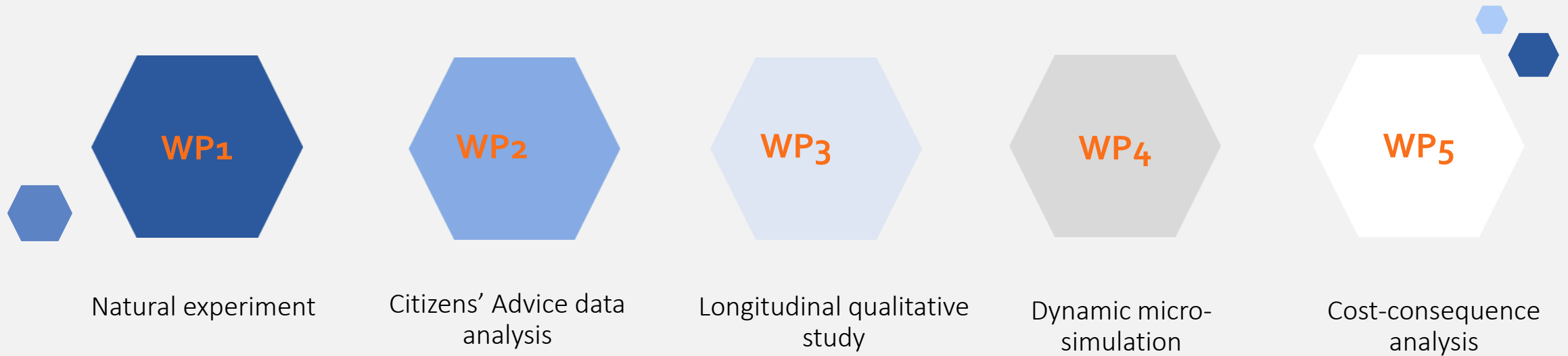
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Evaluation of the mental health impacts of Universal Credit



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Work package 3 – Qualitative Longitudinal Research (QLR) study



Objective

- To understand lived experience, how health is affected by claiming and living on UC, and how this changes over time

Methodology

- QLR: a powerful methodology for understanding the impact of policy change and linked causal processes as they unfold over time
- Helps to identify trajectories & impacts

Methods

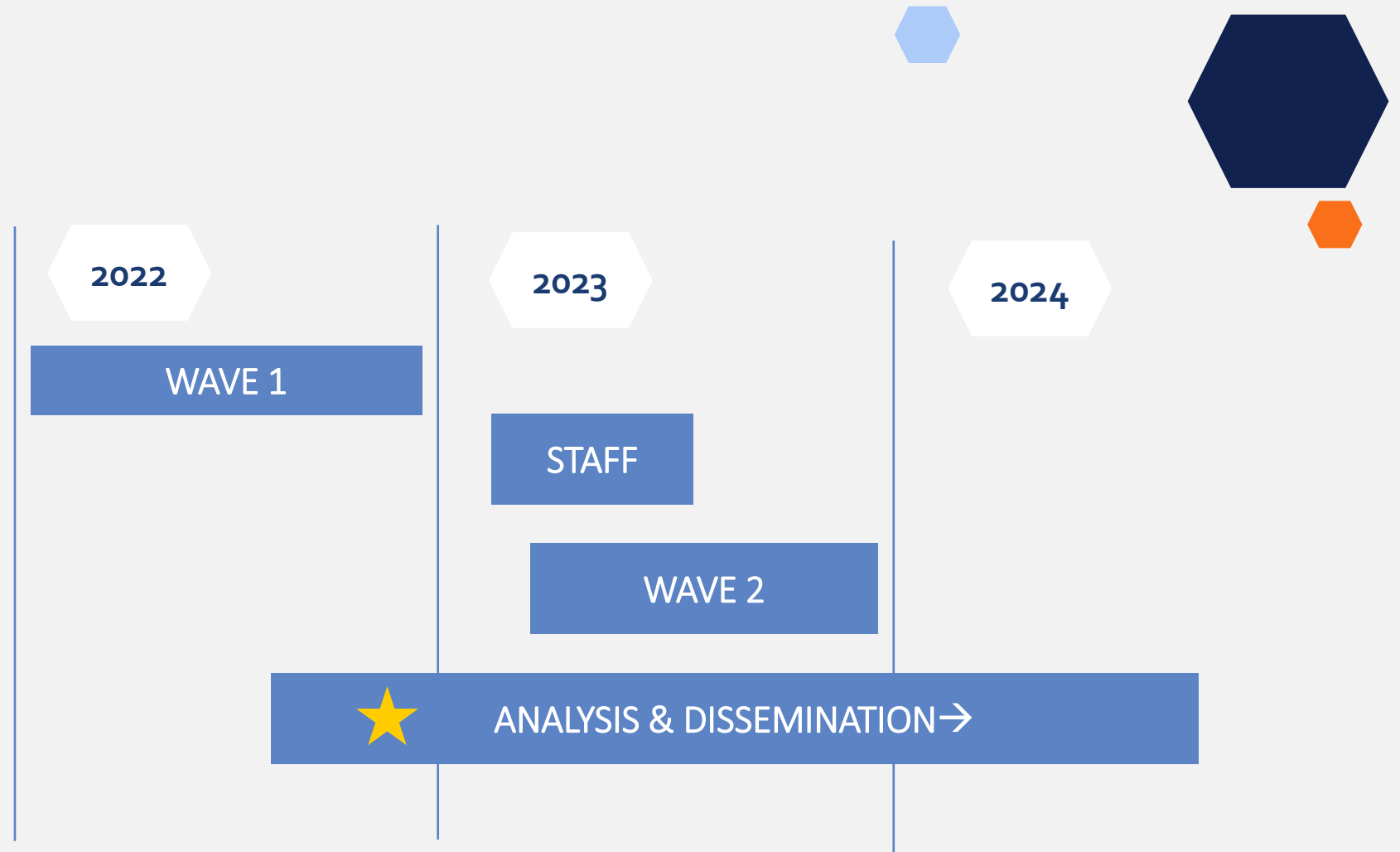
- In-depth interviews (30-120 mins) with people claiming UC
- 2 Waves across 2 sites: Glasgow and Tyne & Wear
- To date: completed 60 interviews. Aiming for ~80 across 2 sites

Data Analysis

- Familiarisation: systematic reading
- Summarising: Producing case summaries of each participant
- Describing: Deductive and inductive coding using NVivo software

Timelines

- Jan-Dec 2022:
Wave 1 = ~80 claimant interviews
- Feb-May 2023:
~30 staff interviews across 2 sites
- March-Dec 2023:
Wave 2 = ~40 follow-up interviews using photo-elicitation



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Sampling and Recruitment

UC EVALUATION HEALTH IMPACTS UNIVERSAL CREDIT

ARE YOU IN PAID WORK & CLAIMING UNIVERSAL CREDIT?

SCAN ME

We want to hear your experiences!
Take part in our research about the impacts of Universal Credit on the lives of people in Tyne and Wear.

- We are a team of local researchers
- We don't work for Universal Credit or DWP
- We will share the research findings with decision makers who might change the way Universal Credit works

- Talk to us confidentially for about an hour on the phone, online or in-person
- Share your experiences of:
 - What it's like getting started on Universal Credit
 - What it's like claiming Universal Credit and working
 - What effects Universal Credit has on your life

Get in touch to find out more:

- **Webpage:** Scan the QR code above
- **Email:** steph.morris@newcastle.ac.uk
- **Call/text:** 07518 299818

Receive a £20 gift voucher for taking part.
*This won't affect your UC

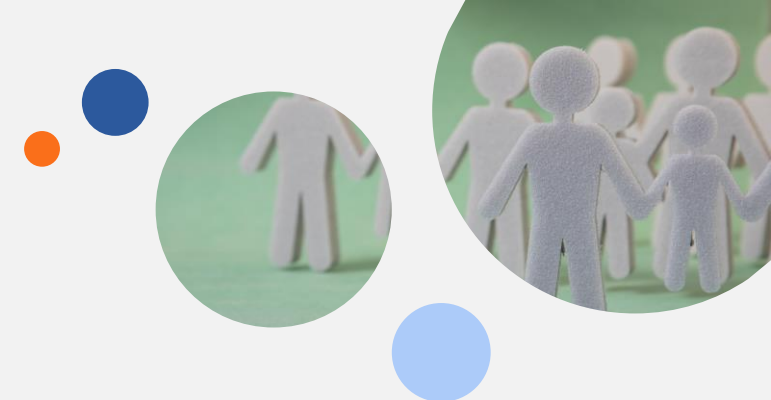
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NIHR National Institute for Health Research

- Public Involvement and Engagement (PIE); input into funding application, recruitment materials, interview design and advertising opportunity
- Sample aims to reflect diversity of caseload
- Recruitment via various organisations
- Monitoring characteristics as we progress; now using purposive sampling to ensure important characteristics are represented

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Sample to date



	Characteristics	Total (n=60)
Gender	Male	25
	Female	33
	Non-binary	2
Age	18-29	10
	30-39	20
	40-49	20
	50-59	6
	60+	4
Employment status	Not working	45
	Employed part time	13
	Self-employed part time	5
Household Type	Single	29
	Partner/adult family	7
	Partner and child/children	11
	Single parent household	13

	Characteristics	Total (n=60)
Physical/mental health condition or disability	Yes	38
	No	22
First language English	Yes	51
	No	9
Ethnicity	White British	40
	Black British	2
	Asian British	2
	Middle Eastern/North African	7
	White Polish	2
	Other/mixed	2

Summary & Next steps

- Multiple mechanisms within UC system are causing harm and contributing to poor mental health
- Continuing with analysis: Involving PIE contributors in interpretation of findings, and dissemination
- Just starting an additional PIE coproduced creative project - poetry and photography workshops and an exhibition next May
- Continuing to feed in early insights to inform Move to UC

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