



**healthwatch**  
Somerset

**SSAFA (SOLDIERS, SAILORS, AIRMEN AND FAMILIES ASSOCIATION) ENGAGEMENT**

## SECTION 1: WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

Healthwatch Somerset attended a meeting of representatives from SSAFA (soldiers sailors and airmen Association) to present Healthwatch Somerset and to hear comments issues and concerns.

Several members of the group raised concerns about the way that universal credit is processed and these are detailed in this report. Others noted problems incurred by long waits for OT (Occupational Therapy) assessments.

Universal Credit processing often results in customers being up to 7 weeks in arrears by the time the first payment is received.

We heard concern from case workers that new claims from April 2017 of Universal Credit will be limited to only two children which will leave larger families worse off.

From April 2017 couples consisting of one person of working age and one person who has retired will see changes that could mean the couple will be significantly worse off. This is because a change in procedure means only the younger working age partner will be able to claim which will result in other pension benefits not being received.

Case workers for SSAFA reported that there is a 3 month wait for occupational therapy assessments

### **What did we do with this feedback?**

The concerns detailed in this report have been sent to Somerset County Council and the MP Rebecca Powell and a response is awaited.

The reports will also be shared with Somerset Health and Wellbeing board as well as Healthwatch Somerset Executive Group