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Universal Credit changes will increase likelihood of sanctions, warns PCS

Union condemns government plans to force thousands of Universal Credit claimants to compulsorily attend Jobcentres ten times over a two-week period

The union fears the Jobcentre Innovation pilot, introduced to 60 Jobcentres today, increases the likelihood of claimants being sanctioned due to missed appointments.

PCS DWP group president Martin Cavanagh said: “Our members will see through this pilot for what it is – a government hellbent on making it more difficult for people to claim benefits and which will increase the risk of poverty for those customers who fall foul of this pilot.

“Asking more customers to travel more often into jobcentres does nothing to help our staff or their workloads and does nothing to help the customers find the work that they need.

“Our members know what is needed to deliver decent jobcentre services; they need more staff to deliver vital frontline services to coach and give the right kind of support to help get claimants back into work.”

The union is also unhappy with a new incentivisation scheme that pays the best-performing staff a £250 bonus.

Martin Cavanagh said: “If the government was serious about incentivising our members, they would meet our demand for a 10% pay rise and give us the extra staff we desperately need to provide help to the most vulnerable.”