

WELFARE—AT A SOCIAL DISTANCE

Non-take-up of benefits at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic

The problem



Hundreds or thousands were eligible for Universal Credit during the start of the COVID-19 pandemic **but did not claim it.**



Many people were **suffering financial strain**, and some were even **skipping meals.**



We analysed a YouGov survey and conducted qualitative interviews to **investigate why.**

Findings

500,000

were eligible for Universal Credit during the start of the COVID-19 pandemic **but did not claim it.**

27%

said even though they were eligible to claim, they **didn't because of benefits stigma.**

1 in 6 (80,000)

had **skipped a meal in the previous two weeks because they could not afford to eat** – compared to one-in-forty members of the general public excluding claimants.

Recommendation: *We need a national take-up strategy to increase claims*



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