



# Summary Minutes

<b>Title of meeting:</b>	Practitioners Operations Group (POG)
<b>Date:</b>	25 June 2014
<b>Location:</b>	Caxton House Room 6.03
<b>Attendees:</b>	<p><b>DWP:</b> Geoff Scammell (Chair), Hakim Hassan (Secretariat), David Gaskell, Barry Dennett</p> <p>Dial in: David Spence</p> <p><b>LAAs:</b> Paul Ellery, Mark Gilmore, Gwyn Thomas, Pamela Richardson, Frankie Cartwright, Julian Stanbury</p> <p>Dial-in: June Deans, Matthew Evans, Martin O'Neill</p>
<b>Apologies:</b>	Janet Wilkinson, David Hanshaw, Alan Sinclair, Mark Underwood, Colin Wallbank, Alison McGrory, Karl Thomas, Mont Goldman
<b>1. Welcome and Introductions:</b>	<p>DWP opened the meeting and introductions were made round the table and for those dialing in.</p>
<b>2. Matters Arising</b>	<p>Minutes</p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.</p> <p>Real Time Information Bulk Data Matching Project (RTI)</p> <p>With regard to RTI, POG members asked for their concerns around testing and the timescales to be formally noted.</p> <p>Effective dates;</p> <p>With regard to correspondence from DWP in respect of the Four Week Grace Period; POG members asked about notifications of changes of circumstances and the four week grace period and how this would impact on LA Error classification, in light of bulk transfers. They were particularly concerned with when the classification changes from Claimant to LA Error</p> <p>DWP confirmed that the grace period of 4 weeks commences once the RTI is received.</p>

Regarding the action point about HMRC working tax credit; POG pointed out that new guidance had been issued on what is genuine and effective work. POG wanted to know if HMRC is also covered by this guidance when they determine Working Tax Credit.

### **3. RTI Update**

DWP updated the meeting on developments for the RTI Bulk Data Matching Exercise, Letters to Chief Executives and Benefits Managers have been drafted and following internal DWP QA, will be sent out to LA Steering Group members. Once a response is received from the Steering Group, letters will then be sent out to LAs.

DWP highlighted the volume involved which is 223,000 split into 5 or 6 tranches.

The analyst team is working on models and are hoping to provide more information for POG shortly.

DWP explained that there are issues with Management Information, concerns for the LA and IT providers, i.e. the way overpayments are calculated.

### **4. Single Fraud Investigation Service (SFIS) Update**

DWP gave an overview of the current update for SFIS and highlighted the following:

- Phase 1 implementation will commence with a small number of sites on 01 July 2014.
- A break will then take place to evaluate the success and learn any lessons prior to full national implementation.
- Phase 2 implementation will re-commence in October 2014 and run for a further 18 months to March 2016.
- The summary plan was announced in September.
- SFIS will evaluate what went well

DWP stated that Phase 2 will start in October; LAs will transfer staff and DWP are contacting HR and trade unions.

#### **Implementation – Phase 2**

- Phase 2 roll out schedule was communicated to all LA Chief Executive Officers (CEOs).
- Approx 20-30 LAs will go live in any month with a break, each year, over the Christmas and New Year period.
- Engagement has commenced for the first 3 tranches – October, November & December
- HR workshops are underway

- The project is also meeting with all LA operational leads

#### Staff transfer

- After careful consideration, DWP has concluded that Transfer of Undertaking (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE) will not apply.
- However, in line with The Cabinet Office Statement regarding Practice for Staff Transfers in the Public Sector (COSoP) guidelines, DWP will use a legal platform to enable the transfer of staff.
- This will be by way of a Legislative Transfer Scheme as provided for by Section 38 of the Employment Relations Act 1999.

### 5. SFIS National Framework Agreement

There is a need to understand how SFIS will receive the information from LAs in order to allow investigators to conduct the necessary investigation.

Once the project rolls out, staff will migrate to the department. SFIS has drafted the Service Level Agreement (SLA) which is intended to pin down the agreement with LAs and SFIS.

SFIS has received comments from stakeholders and there are common themes and concerns about the time scale. SFIS has developed the time scale for the provision of information in consultation with various stakeholders. The department understands that the timescale may be an issue for LAs in terms of providing information. Also another common theme is LA staff retention.

HB admin team will provide information when investigators from the department contact them. Investigators will need to be specific about the requests.

POG raised an issue about exchange of documents, particularly when going to tribunal with documents which are photocopied. They suggested that the easiest way might be to use email; issues with security notwithstanding. POG asked whether DWP has been looking at solutions.

DWP explained that negotiations and discussions are ongoing, and that LAs should not face any new burdens.

### 6. AOB

- 1) POG referred to a letter from the DLO team that had been sent to a number of LAs asking for a contact person to set up procedures for exchange of information when non residency is confirmed. POG asked if the head of the group could attend POG and explain what their expectations are.

#### Date of Next Meeting

The next POG will take place on 30 July Caxton House Room 6.03. 10.30 – 12.30 *Note; subsequently this meeting did not take place.*

#### Contact:

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