



Summary Minutes

Title of meeting: DWP Local Authority Associations (LAA) Steering Group
Date: 10 September 2014
Location: Caxton House Room 6.03

Attendees: **DWP:** Bill Hern (Chair), Mont Goldman (Secretariat), Huw Meredith, Chris Wood, Jim Donnelly, Miriam Smith, Adrian Shooter, Mark Cramer, Jackie Blake, Janet Wilkinson, Wayne Norfolk, Sandra Robinson,
Dial-in: Dawn Singer, Peter Dennis

DCLG: Wayne Caffell, Sally Fraser, Margaret Uhure

LAAs: Dan McCartney, Pat Durkin, Colin Wallbank, Matthew Evans, Paul Ellary, Howard Mason, Daniel Drillsma-Millgrom, Valerie Pearce, Rose Doran

Dial-in: Peter Meehan, Steve Carey, Chris Gibbs, John Rosenbloom

Observers: Jackie Larrett, Ronnie Haynes

Apologies: Andrew Parfitt, Clare Elliott, Andrew Stevens, Anne Cairns, Lesley Piggott, John Swinnerton

1. Welcome and Introductions:

DWP opened the meeting and introductions were made round the table and for those dialing in. Daniel Drillsma-Millgrom, representing London Councils was welcomed as a new member.

Matters Arising

Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

The Steering Group asked for formal recording of their concerns over the gap in the budget between DWP funding through Administration Subsidy and the cost to LAs of running their benefit services.

Action Points

Action points July 01, 02, 03 and 04 were cleared.

It was decided to invite Social Justice to attend the next meeting to update the Steering Group on the review of the Local Welfare Provision (LWP).

An action point was taken for WLGA to provide DWP with its list of DWP meetings attended by LA representatives. DWP to consider the list and then pass it to LAAs for comment.

2. Updates:

DCLG

DCLG updated the meeting:

- There have been some issues with the data which has been presented on the Local Council Tax Scheme (LCTS) returns and DCLG has engaged with the LA IT software suppliers.

Steering Group members were concerned that issues around software should not delay the next round of LCTS Administration Subsidy.

Real Time Information (RTI) Bulk Data Matching Project

DWP updated the meeting.

Recent activity within DWP:

- RTI went live in DWP on 18 August.
- 21,000 referrals have been issued and the feedback thus far has been very positive, particularly around the quality of the referrals.
- Reassessments in LAs should have a much higher degree of automation than those carried out in DWP.

Plans for LAs:

- Anonymised data has been issued to software suppliers.
- Referrals will be issued to the 4 LA test sites to allow early testing for the LA IT suppliers to identify any emerging issues.
- National rollout will commence from 6 October.

Distribution of Additional Funding

Discussion followed, mainly focused around options for distribution:

The Steering Group asked whether the modeling had been based on both caseloads and actual numbers of referrals. DWP explained that caseloads had been modeled but there had been no modeling based on the actual number of referrals as these would not be known until final planned referrals were issued in February 2015.

Discussion followed regarding the additional funding for each referral.

The Steering Group asked whether the additional funding amount for each referral could be reviewed once a clearer picture of the actual work involved emerges. The Steering Group asked whether the project could produce details of the indicative

payment distribution based on general caseload before reaching agreement on the distribution.

An action point was taken for the RTI project to produce details of the indicative payment distribution based on general caseload.

Universal Credit (UC) / LA Transition Working Group (LATWG)

DWP highlighted:

- Tranche one (Jobcentres in parts of NW England) has rolled out, bringing the total of live sites to 39 areas across England Scotland and Wales covering 22 LAs
- Claims are from new claims otherwise eligible for JSA, including couples and existing HB claimants
- Local Service Support Framework has undergone a change of title and will now be called Universal Support - delivered locally; 11 trials have been put in place to run over the next year

LA Transition Working Group (LATWG)

- LATWG met on 23 July.
- Work is ongoing to redefine finance issues, following a stocktake meeting on 19 August
- Representatives from LATWG and the LAAs are meeting on 15 September to review risks.

Subsidy

DWP updated the meeting:

- Analysts are working with caseload data with regard to distribution for 2015/16
- DWP is waiting for figures for Wales and Scotland
- DCLG will provide figures for LCTS
- Once the distribution has been agreed, the adjustment for SFIS will be deducted.

3. Assessed Income Period (AIP) Reform Project

DWP outlined what AIPs are and the background to their reform in light of the Pensions Act of 2014.

Work is ongoing an analysis of the consequent impact on LAs in respect of the changes to the award of Pension Credit and eligibility to Housing Benefit (HB). The

Steering Group asked about engagement with LAs. The project has been working with Housing Delivery Division (HDD) and is using the Steering Group as a starting point.

The Steering Group pointed out the need for engagement with LAs, particularly around funding for the cost of the changes

5. Landlord Preparation Strategy

DWP led the meeting through the rationale behind the launch of the strategy in the autumn.

The Steering Group asked whether the regulations for rent rebates would need to be amended.

DWP agree to clarify this.

AOB

No further items were put forward for discussion

Date of Next Meeting The date of the next meeting will be Wednesday 08 October, Room 6.03 Caxton House.

Contact: Mont Goldman
Email: Mont.goldman@dwp.gsi.gov.uk
Direct line: 020 7449 5327