



Summary Minutes

Title of meeting **DWP Local Authority Association (LAA) Steering Group**

Date: 08 October 2014

Location Caxton House Room 6.03

Attendees: DWP: Clare Elliott (Chair), Mont Goldman (Secretariat), Huw Meredith, Manny Ibiayo, Jenita Chelva, Stephanie Gale, Mel Frankham, Darren Baker, Wayne Norfolk, Janet Wilkinson, Andrew Jennings,

Audit Scotland: Ann Cairns

Dial-in: Dawn Singer, Peter Dennis

DCLG: Leona Patterson, Margaret Uhure, Rob Leach, Ian Rose

LAA: Dan McCartney, Pat Durkin, Paul Ellary, Daniel Drillsma-Millgrom,

Dial-in: Peter Meehan, Steve Carey, John Rosenbloom, Lesley Pigott, Matthew Evans

Apologies: Chris Gibbs, Valerie Pearce, Rose Doran, Howard Mason, Colin Wallbank, Andrew Parfitt, Andrew Stevens, John Swinnerton

1. Welcome and Introductions

DWP opened the meeting and introductions were made round the table and for those dialing in.

Matters Arising

Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed

Action Points

Outstanding Action points were cleared.

2. Updates

Real Time Information (RTI) Bulk Data Matching Project

DWP updated the meeting on:

- The live testing in 6 LA sites which commenced on 22 September.
- The national rollout and the number of files issued from the live date of 06 October.
- The regular contact with the Implementation Working Group and the work with LAs regarding the quality of the data.
- The next tranche, which is scheduled for mid October.

The meeting discussed the distribution of additional funding, and once the decision has been finalised, payment should follow.

DCLG

Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) Administration Grant

DCLG outlined the current position regarding the LCTS Administration Grant:

- The allocation will be shared with DWP and then presented to the next Steering Group meeting.

New Burdens

DCLG outlined the current position regarding New Burdens:

- DCLG has received 50 responses to their questionnaire.
- Once collated, the responses will be shared with the Steering Group.

The Steering Group referred to an issue which they had raised previously, around whether primary legislation could be changed to allow overpayments of Council Tax to be recovered from ongoing benefits.

An action point was taken for DCLG to check with colleagues whether primary legislation could be changed to allow overpayments of Council Tax to be recovered from ongoing benefits.

Single Fraud Investigation Service (SFIS)

DWP gave a brief outline of SFIS since going live on 01 October, highlighting:

- The number of LA staff transferred to DWP.
- The process for Criminal Record Bureau checks.

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

DWP outlined the current thinking around the longer term picture through transition and rollout:

2014:

- Expansion of the remaining sites in the North West.
- The opening of the gateway for families.

- Initiation of live testing for the new digital service for all claimant groups.

DWP guided the meeting through current plans for 2015 through to 2017/18, including the transition period which is 2016/17.

The Steering Group asked when LAs will be informed of when they will be going live, and whether a minimum period of notice can be established. DWP explained that once the schedule is finalised, the first tranche will be publicised and discussions with the individual early affected LAs will take place.

Regarding a period of notice, the current aim of the programme is for a minimum period of 6 months where possible.

TWG

A special meeting had been convened on 06 October to update TWG on the recent announcement about programme plans and take them through the detail as described above.

The next regular meeting of TWG (22 October) would be updated on:

- Data sharing.
- Enhanced roles for work coaches.
- Delivery partnerships.
- Housing costs trials.

3. Local Welfare Provision (LWP)

DWP and DCLG updated the meeting.

DCLG

DCLG explained that a consultation on how local welfare provision should be funded in 2015/16 will begin shortly and responses will be considered alongside the DWP review. The consultation will close at the end of November. There are three current options which could be subject to change:

The Steering Group welcomed the consultation and were keen to be involved.

DWP

DWP review:

- The review was promised by Ministers during the passage of the Welfare Reform Act 2012.
- There are two stages to the review:
 - A questionnaire regarding how much of the funding for 2013/14 has been spent, and the spend for 2014/15. There has been an 80% response rate for this questionnaire.

- DWP has been in direct contact with 12 LAs for in - depth discussions. These LAs represent a mix of urban and rural locations with variations in the amounts of funding received.
- The information will be collated in a report to Ministers and then published as soon as possible afterwards, and will form part of the Government's considerations alongside the consultation on the fresh decision for 2015/16 funding.

4. Administration Subsidy 2015/16

DWP updated the meeting on the current position on allocating the 2015/16 Administration Subsidy.

DWP added that once the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme figures are available, further consultation with the Steering Group will take place at November's meeting. DWP confirmed that the amount for SFIS will be deducted once netting and capping has taken place.

The Steering Group asked whether there will be any options for netting and capping. DWP explained that options are possible, dependent on the views of the four associations.

5. Data Sharing with Social Landlords

DWP is currently consulting on draft regulations which will allow DWP to let social landlords know if their tenant is on UC. This is a public consultation open for anyone to respond to. It began on 19th Sept closes on the 19th October.

The consultation document is available at the following website
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/universal-credit-data-sharing-with-social-landlords>.

6. AOB

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs): DWP is currently collating the 6 month DHP returns that will help inform next year's allocations. A more detailed update will be given to the Steering Group once all of the information is known.

Date of Next Meeting The date of the next meeting will be Wednesday 05 November, Room 6.03 Caxton House.

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