



Summary minutes

Title of meeting:	DWP / LA POG
Date/timings:	14 March 2019 - 10:30 – 14:00
Location:	Room 5.21 / 5.22, Caxton House, London
Attendees:	<p>DWP: Darren Baker (Chair), Kay Bendell, Carolyn Pollard (Secretariat), Paul Selby, Nic Vaughan, Richard Ward, Joanne Hawkins, Neil Giblin (observer), Alex Courage (observer), Julie Skelton (observer)</p> <p>LAs: Paul Ellary (K&C), Gwyn Thomas (Westminster), David Kinnair (Bham) June Deans (Glasgow), Adrian Mills (Anglia Revenues), Mark Gillmore</p> <p>Dial in: Sheena Parker (DWP), Beverley Winnemore (DWP) Lisa Fuller (Renfrewshire), Matthew Evans (Wrexham), Pamela Richardson (Gateshead), Lisa Hayward (WLGA), Paula Doherty (Dumfries & Galloway)</p>
Apologies	Marion Joass (DWP), Jonathan Bottomer (DWP), Adrian Shooter (DWP), Alan Brown (DWP), Mandy Fathers (West Oxford), Chris Boylett (LB Newham)

1. Welcome and Introductions:

Darren Baker opened the meeting. Introductions were made round the table and for those dialing in.

2. New LA Welfare Issues Log:

Amanda Sowerby provided an overview of the new process for issues raised by LA Welfare Steering Group/POG.

The bringing together of the UC LA engagement functions with HDD activities presents an opportunity to look afresh at the different processes and tools in place for tracking and resolving problems/questions/ issues raised by LAs.

All areas of HDD pick up issues through engagement with LAs for example through the Performance Relationship Manager calls, PDT Consultancy engagements, attendance at events and our Governance groups.

The new tool and new processes were discussed and the impacts of the change were outlined.

The ultimate aim is to use the information for communicating to LAs what's happening across DWP, HDD and the UC Programme.

It was agreed a high level progress report replaced the existing log.

3. Matters Arising (Previous Minutes/Action Points, previous LAWSG Minutes)

The previous minutes were agreed and action points discussed/updated.

4. Issues Resolution log

Kay confirmed this would be the last run through of the existing issues resolution log at POG. As agreed earlier in this meeting a new highlight report will now replace the issues resolution log.

5. Improving Communications – paper for LA single inbox

Kay Bendell summarised the proposal outlining the benefits of introducing a single email inbox for each local authority intending to improve communications between DWP and LAs.

DWP is undergoing a major change in removing GSI from its email addresses and LAs are removing GCSX, so DWP feel it is timely to propose a new way of working that should improve our communication.

All POG members thought the proposal could work but time would need to be allowed for LAs to set up the inboxes and look at associated costs.

6. VEP 2019-20 Funding Proposal

A walkthrough through the high level design principles, lessons learned was provided.

She clarified the considerations of how best to allocate funding for VEP Alerts, to drive better performance and support LAs with more HB F&E.

7. SHBE update

An update on the 2019 LA IT changes regarding supported housing was provided.

8. Migration/Move to UC update

Harrogate Job Centre will be the first to undertake the migration of customers from legacy benefits onto Universal Credit from July.

The pilot, which will last for at least a year and involve up to 10,000 people, will test this new phase of Universal Credit implementation to better understand the processes and support customers need to make the move as smooth as possible.

The Vulnerable Customers workshop took place on 1 April 2019 and 5 user need themes, identified for discussion at the meeting, which were:

- Access - in particular to IT, internet and on-line skills
- Daily life – relating to personal circumstances and demand on time
- Communications – for example, people’s ability to communicate effectively
- Connections – for example the support structures in place to help people move to UC
- Availability and access to suitable bank account for move to UC

The next national workshop will look at Delivery Approach on 11th April.

9) Stat-Xplore

A brief overview of Stat-Xplore was discussed.

Stat-Xplore provides a guided way to explore DWP benefit statistics, currently holding data to such things as Housing Benefit claimants, Universal Credit and another 18 benefits/systems.

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Date, time and location of next LAWSG	The next Practitioners Operational Group is scheduled to take place on 8 May 2019, 10:30 – 14:00. Room 5.21/22, Caxton House.
Secretariat:	Carolyn Pollard
Email:	carolyn.pollard@dwp.gsi.gov.uk
Direct line:	01253 689848