



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Minutes of the Serious Case Panel 2 July 2020

This meeting was held virtually over Skype.

Chair

- Hayley Tatum, Non-Executive Director

Members

- Peter Schofield, Permanent Secretary
- Emma Haddad, Director General for Service Excellence
- Debbie Alder, Director General for People and Capability
- Neil Couling, Director General for Change
- John-Paul Marks, Director General for Work and Health Services
- Simon McKinnon, Director General for Digital
- Susanna McGibbon, Director General for Legal
- Mary Pattison, Director of State Pensions, Child Maintenance and Devolution (on behalf of Jonathan Mills)
- Laura Squire, Director of Business Strategy (on behalf of Nick Joicey)
- Joanna Wallace, Independent Case Examiner

Presenters

- Fiona Jones – Customer Experience Director
- Victoria Hughes – Customer Experience & Organisational Learning Deputy Director

Additional attendees

- Clare Talbot – Customer Insight Deputy Director
- Karen Gamester – Dispute Resolution Deputy Director
- Nicola McDonnell – Disputes Modernisation Programme Manager

Secretariat

Redacted

Apologies

- Jonathan Mills, Director General for Policy
- Nick Joicey, Director General for Finance

1. Welcome and introductions

The Chair welcomed the group and acknowledged that this was her first meeting as Chair, as Sara Weller had kindly stepped into the Chair at the previous meeting. The Chair set out expectations to manage the meeting in a virtual format and reiterated the objectives of the Panel.

2. Update on actions and decisions

Secretariat drew the Panel's attention to key points in *Paper 1: Actions Update*, highlighting progress being made in baselining guidance and policy around safeguarding and support for vulnerable customers. There was a short discussion around this to clarify expectations and timescales for delivery.

Secretariat drew the Panel's attention to some minor revisions to the Terms of Reference and gave the Panel an opportunity to reflect on these changes.

Decision 1

The Panel agreed the latest version of the terms of reference.

3. Group Discussion – Themes

Fiona Jones and Victoria Hughes presented the paper on the serious case theme – *Paper 2: Customer Dissatisfaction*.

Fiona shared the work Customer Experience Directorate has undertaken to better understand the experience of expressing dissatisfaction with the Department's decisions or the service received. In a number of serious cases, the customer journey in expressing dissatisfaction and resolving issues has been lengthy and difficult. Fiona explored difficult points in the customer journey and the internal challenges. Victoria described work underway in Customer Experience Directorate to understand what drives customer experience, introducing tactical improvements in both the Complaints and Disputes journeys for our customers and the Panel noted the impact of Covid-19 easements on this improvement work. During the discussion the Panel made a number of decisions and commissioned further work as detailed below:

Decision 2

the Panel supported the tactical reform currently underway within Complaints and Disputes and recognised the limitations of this approach in addressing all areas of customer experience concern.

Decision 3

The Panel agreed with the recommendation to explore transformation opportunities to further improve customer experience, particularly around expressing dissatisfaction and resolving issues earlier, and recognised that the scope of this could be long term. The Panel asked that this work be aligned with the Target Operating Model and a plan produced to show the short, medium and long-term improvement options. Progress will be reported at the next meeting of the Panel.

Decision 4

The Panel asked that in addition to Decision 3, Customer Experience Directorate identify and take forward work as quickly as possible to drive immediate

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improvements in processes and customer experience to address the points in the customer journey discussed as part of this theme.

4. AOB and close

The Chair and members of the Panel thanked Fiona Jones, Victoria Hughes and their teams for their work.