



Summary Minutes

Title of meeting:	DWP / LA POG
Date/timings:	20 February 2020 - 10:30 – 14:00
Location:	Room 5.22, Caxton House, London
Attendees:	<p>DWP: Kay Bendell (Chair), Carolyn Pollard (Secretariat), Sheena Parker, Amanda Sowerby, Paul Selby, Adrian Shooter, Cheryl Weaver, Melanie Bowden, Shannon Doughty, John Goldsmith (observer), Tracy Williams (observer)</p> <p>LAs: Gwyn Thomas (Westminster), June Deans (Glasgow), Adrian Mills (Anglia Revenues ptrn), James Kehoe (EK serv)</p> <p>Dial in: Lisa Fuller (RS), David Kinnair (Bham), Patrick Togher (DWP), Fiona Mcleish (DWP), Alan Brown (DWP), Sarah Smith (DWP), Hamish Robertson (DWP), Matthew Evans (Wrexham), Pamela Richardson (Gateshead), Paula Doherty (Dumfries & Galloway)</p>
Apologies	Darren Baker (DWP), Joanne Hawkins (DWP), Jonathan Bottomer (DWP), Julie Skelton (DWP), Paul Ellary (RBK&C), Chris Boylett (Newham), Mandy Fathers (West Oxford), Helen Paine (Gateshead), Mark Gillmore (EK Serv),

1. Welcome and Introductions:

Kay Bendell opened the meeting. Introductions were made round the table and for those dialing in.

2. Matters Arising (POG Action Points, previous LAWSG Minutes)

The previous LA Welfare Steering Groups minutes were agreed, the last Practitioners' Operational Group took place by telekit on 14 November 2019, no minutes were produced due to Purdah.

Action points were discussed.

3. LA Welfare highlight report:

Amanda Sowerby provided an update via the highlight report which consists of a one-page slide showing issues to be discussed, issues for closure and issues under investigation.

4. Payment Deduction Programme Review Update

Update provided on the Payment Deduction Programme (PDP).

5. Changes to deductions from Universal Credit / analysis update

Management Information and findings on Universal Credit deductions was presented.

6. Check Employer Information

Update was provided and the benefit of Check Employer Information was discussed.

7. Verify Earnings and Pensions 2a

Update was provided on Verify Earnings and Pensions 2a.

Change of supplier for the Secure Network Boundary Service

On 27 November 2019, The Department for Work and Pensions informed local authorities there would be a change of supplier for the Secure Network Boundary Service.

She thanked all those LAs who carried out the essential activity prior to the changeover.

8. Administrative Penalties consultation

Background and current position discussed.

9. Update and consultation about data sharing, data matching and automation Projects

The paper issued prior to the meeting was discussed.

10. ESA Reassessment Exercise

Update provided.

11. AOB

Housing Benefit Award Accuracy Indicator

Update and examples shared.

Help to Claim

Help to claim contract extension with Citizens Advice Bureau is considered, this has already been discussed in Parliament.

VEP funding

Adrian Shooter confirmed that VEP funding allocations totalling £12.8m will be issued shortly. Since the meeting VEP funding letters have been issued to all LAs on 3 March 2020.

Mixed Age Couples changes

All IT software suppliers will have completed this work by the end of March 2020.

Meeting closed

Date, time and location of next LAWSG	The next Practitioners Operational Group is scheduled to take place on 30 April 2020, 10:30 – 14:00. Room 5.21/5.22, Caxton House.
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