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Section 6 – DCI1 Benefit Inspired Application Process

SS 01 Introduction

Introduction

1. In order for any benefit claim to succeed, the customer and their partner, if they have one, must provide enough information to:
 - confirm their National Insurance numbers (NINOs), or
 - enable a NINO to be traced or allocated to them.
2. The customer/partner will be asked to provide evidence of their identity as part of the benefit entitlement check as well as during the benefit inspired NINO allocation process. In addition the partner will also be asked to provide evidence of their immigration status during the NINO allocation process.
3. Before a NINO application can be considered, the customer's entitlement to benefit must be established. In joint JSA claims the partner's entitlement to benefit must also be established before a NINO application can be considered.
4. The process outlined above must be followed at all times in benefit inspired NINO applications (See Appendix 2). This is the only way a customer/partner can apply for a NINO under benefit inspired rules.

SS 02 Tracing the customer or partner's NINO

Tracing the customer or partner's NINO

Personal details provided, excluding a NINO

5. Upon making a claim to benefit, if the customer/partner provides personal details but not a NINO, these details must be used to try and trace the customer's/partner's NINO on Departmental benefit systems and the Customer Information System (CIS).

Personal details on CIS are different from those provided by the customer

6. If the NINO is traced on CIS and it holds different information for the customer/partner, for example, a different address:
 - Investigate:
 - the reasons for the differences
 - if the differences can be acceptably explained, make appropriate amendments as covered in benefit guidance.
 - take action to verify identity as per instructions in benefit guidance which must be in accordance with the DWP Common Standards for Identity Verification.

More than one NINo on CIS matches the customer's/partner's details

7. Sometimes CIS traces more than one NINo that matches the details input. If this is the case, take verification action as per instructions in benefit guidance to make sure the correct record has been identified for the customer/partner. When it is still not clear after verification action has been completed:
 - complete a CIS 501 and refer to CIS Frontline Services for continued investigation.
8. When a response is received from CIS Frontline Services, take appropriate action as per benefit guidance to continue processing the claim. This may require an eDCI1 referral if NINo action is required.

Two customers using the same NINo

9. If the trace on CIS identifies that **two customers** appear to be using the same NINo:
 - complete a CIS 502 and refer to CIS Frontline Services for continued investigation.
10. When a response is received from CIS Frontline Services, take appropriate action as per benefit guidance to continue processing the claim. This may require an eDCI1 referral if NINo action is required

Possible NINo traced on CIS

11. If a possible NINo for the customer/partner has been traced on CIS, take action to verify identity as per instructions below to ensure it is the correct NINo for the customer/partner:

Step	Action
1	Compare the information and documentary evidence the customer supplied with the details on Departmental computer systems and refer to benefit guidance for information on verifying identity which must be in accordance with the DWP Common Standards for Identity Verification. Additionally, SNAP guidance can provide further information on identity document verification.
2	If you are satisfied that you have traced the correct NINo for the customer/partner, continue with processing action.
3	If you are not satisfied that you have traced the correct NINo for the customer/partner, refer the application for specialist trace action within your benefit area as per benefit guidance.
4	If you discover duplicate accounts, refer the application to CIS Frontline Services.

Possible NINo traced on CIS but verification level has not been verified

12. If a NINo has been traced on CIS, the verification level must be checked by referring to the Account Summary tab (NINo box in top right hand corner). If the verification level displays "Qualified" or "Not Verified" then NINo upgrade action will be required.

13. If the customer/partner is entitled to benefit and the NINo requires upgrading, an eDCI1 must be completed. An eDCI1 must also be completed for missed juveniles (applicants aged under 20). Do not refer these benefit inspired applicants to HMRC.

SS 03 Benefit entitlement not established

Benefit entitlement not established

14. Before a NINo application can be considered, the customer's entitlement to benefit, including identity checks must be established. In joint JSA claims, the partner's identity and entitlement to benefit must also be established before a NINo application can be considered.
15. If the customer or partner in a joint JSA claim is not entitled to benefit, even where they do not have a NINo, **do not** send an eDCI1 form to the NINo Centre (NC).

SS 04 Benefit entitlement established

Benefit entitlement established

16. If you have established that entitlement to benefit exists (including DDV cases, Tax Credits, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction (CTR) cases) but you cannot trace a record of the customer/partner's NINo on Departmental computer records after:
- further validation;
 - checks of additional personal details, and
 - local specialist trace action has been taken
- complete form eDCI1.
17. An eDCI1 must be completed in all cases when a customer /partner are entitled to benefit and do not have a NINo. Separate eDCI1s must be completed for the customer and the partner. As applicable, for cross-referencing purposes, the customer/partner's details should be provided at the 'Additional Relevant Information' box.
18. If entitlement to Tax Credits (Refugee cases) has been established, annotate the eDCI1 with "TC600 issued to Tax Credits". This should be annotated in the 'Additional Relevant Information' box.
19. Responsibility for making NINo allocation decisions lies with specialist NINo allocation officers only. You should not attempt to make or give a decision on whether the available information and evidence properly allows a NINo to be allocated.
20. Form eDCI1 must also be completed if the customer/partner requires their existing NINo upgrading. Separate eDCI1s must be completed for the customer and the partner. As applicable, for cross-referencing purposes, the customer/partner's details should be provided at the 'Additional Relevant Information' box. An eDCI1 must also be completed for missed juveniles (applicants aged under 20). Do not refer these benefit inspired applicants to HMRC.

Appointee action

21. Ensure you have undertaken all appointee/BF56 action as per benefit instructions. A copy of the BF56 must be scanned and attached to the email referral that is to be sent to the appropriate NC.

SS 05 - Payments of short-term benefit advances and of benefit without a NINo

Payments of short-term benefit advances and of benefit without a NINo

22. Short Term Benefit Advances (STBAs) may be considered for customers with no NINo, or who have applied for a NINo but whose identity has not yet been verified, providing they meet the STBA eligibility criteria, which includes that they must be likely to be entitled to the benefit in respect of which the STBA is applied for.
23. An award of benefit may only be made once the customer has proven their identity in order to allow a NINo to be allocated.

SS 06 Completion of form eDCI1

Completion of form eDCI1

24. The eDCI1 form must be downloaded to a secure shared drive before completion. The form can then be opened for data entry.
25. The originating office (i.e. Benefit/Credit Centre or Pension Centre) must complete the top section of the form in full. This includes the following entries:
 - Contact Name and Full Contact Number including the dialling code and extension number;
 - Full Dedicated Office Email address. This must be the dedicated eDCI1 secure mailbox that will be regularly maintained. If a personal mail address is entered this will be returned to the originator as an error and no NINo decision action will be taken;
 - Benefit Type the customer has applied for by selecting from the drop down menu. If the benefit is not displayed in the drop down menu select 'Other Benefit Type' and provide an explanation and narrative as required in the 'Additional Relevant Information' box.

NINo Applicant details

26. The eDCI1 form is designed for requesting a NINo for a single customer. A separate form must be used for each customer requiring a NINo.
27. Complete all of the mandatory data fields (marked with an asterisk), providing the customer's:
 - Surname;
 - Other Names;
 - Date of Birth;
 - Address (including Post Code);
 - Contact Number of the applicant (obtain mobile number if possible)

- Sex (select whether male or female from drop down menu);
 - Entitled to Benefit (select Yes or No from the drop down menu). **This must be completed in all cases. The NC will not assess benefit entitlement;**
 - Partner of Benefit Claimant (select Yes or No from the drop down menu);
 - Is there an Appointee for the Applicant (select Yes or No from the drop down menu). **Please note if 'Yes' is selected then a message prompt will display to advise the user to complete, scan and attach the BF56 to the email referral.**
28. If the originator attempts to send the eDCI1 form with mandatory questions not completed or answered then an error message will be displayed by the form identifying to the originator the data fields required.
29. 'Additional Relevant Information' box should be used where:
- home visit required (with details of reason for visit);
 - interpreter required;
 - disabled access required;
 - In DDV Concession cases, annotate the 'Additional Relevant information' box with the following words "Destitute Domestic Violence (DDV) Concession". This will ensure the eDCI1 is fast-tracked and handled appropriately upon receipt at the NC.
 - If entitlement to Tax Credits (under Refugee concessions) has been established, annotate the eDCI1 with "TC600 issued to Tax credits" in the Additional Relevant Information box.
 - NINo upgrade required; (with details of NINo to be upgraded);
 - LMS reference number where available;
 - previous names used (i.e. maiden name);
 - Further appointee details if applicable.

Partners in benefit claims

30. Where a benefit or tax credit application is received from a couple, and following all appropriate checks, the partner requires either;
- an upgrade to an existing NINo, or
 - a NINo.

An eDCI1 form must always be completed and the:

- partner's details entered in the NINo customer details section;
 - in partner cases, the benefit customer's name, DOB and NINo (if they have one) must be entered in the 'Additional Relevant Information' box, and
 - "Yes" field selected in the box alongside 'Partner of Benefit Claimant', except in joint JSA claims. Separate eDCI1s are required for each person in a JSA Joint Claim.
31. The Male or Female box and most importantly the entitled to Benefit box must be completed before the form is sent to the appropriate NC.

Sending the eDCI1 to the NINo Centre

32. Once completed the form should be despatched from a dedicated full office email address to the appropriate NC designated by your region.

33. The eDCI1 has an automatic send button for use by the Benefit/Credit Centre or Pension Centre. This is located under the 'Additional Relevant Information' box. When this 'E-Mail Form' button is pressed the completed eDCI1 form will be saved into a new email within Microsoft Outlook. This must then be dispatched to the appropriate NC ensuring that Departmental Security standards are adhered to.
34. The subject field will be pre-populated with "Restricted e-DCI1 (Applicant's surname)."
35. A B/F must be set, suggested 14 working days, for a reply from the NC. Where the NINo is required urgently, the Benefit Centre or Pension Centre should contact the NC directly to highlight the priority. (Please see Appendix 2 for an overview of the eDCI1 process).
36. If payment is requested before a NINo is actually allocated, NINo staff should be asked to complete the NINo allocation process urgently and appropriate considerations made regarding STBA payments or payment on account as per benefit processing guidance.

SS 07 NINo Centre (NC) action

NINo Centre (NC) action

37. When the eDCI1 is received at the NC, a further CIS trace will be conducted prior to arranging the evidence of identity interview, the customer and/or partner is required to provide appropriate documents to support their identity and their immigration status, in order for the NINo to be allocated.
38. The NC will also:
 - check that all the required information has been completed/provided on the eDCI1, (**Please Note: Paper copies will not be accepted and an office email address that is not the dedicated eDCI1 mailbox will not be accepted**);
 - undertake their allocation/refusal action;
 - enter the NINo on the eDCI1 where a NINo is traced or allocated;
 - complete the 'NINo Decision' field using the drop down menu. This menu relates to the reason codes located at the bottom of the eDCI1 form. The NINo Reason Code will be automatically populated once the NINo Decision box has been completed:
 - (Code 1) Applicant NINo Allocated;
 - (Code 2) Partner NINo Allocated;
 - (Code 3) Applicant NINo Refused no Recourse to Public Funds;
 - (Code 4) Applicant NINo Refused no RTW;
 - (Code 5) Partner NINo Refused Immigration Status Invalid;
 - (Code 6) Applicant NINo Refused ID not established FTA;
 - (Code 7) Applicant NINo Refused ID not established incomplete evidence;
 - (Code 8) Applicant NINo Refused ID not established potential fraud;
 - (Code 9) Partner NINo Refused ID not established FTA;

- (Code 10) Partner NINo Refused ID not established incomplete evidence;
 - (Code 11) Partner NINo Refused ID not established potential fraud;
 - (Code 12) Partner NINo Allocated but no Recourse (passported entitlement);
 - (Code 13) Applicant NINo Allocated but no Recourse (passported entitlement);
 - (Code 14) Applicant NINo traced;
 - (Code 15) Partner NINo traced;
 - (Code 16) Applicant NINo upgraded;
 - (Code 17) Partner NINo upgraded.
- Add in any comments that relate to the decision made on the comments field.
 - Complete the date on the bottom of the form.
39. The eDCI1 has an automatic send button for use by the NINo Centre. This is located at the bottom of the form under the allocation/refusal comment box. When this button is pressed the completed eDCI1 form will be saved into a new email within Microsoft Outlook. The email address of the originating office (Benefit/Credit Centre or Pension Centre) will be entered automatically. The specified email box must be used to ensure that Departmental Data Security Standards are adhered to. A personal email address must not be used.
40. The subject field will be pre-populated with:
- Restricted e-DCI1
 - Alpha Split (First three letters of the applicant's surname)
 - Benefit Type
41. A copy of the eDCI1 must be retained in the NINo Centre for 3 years as per Benefit Document and Data Retention Policy.
42. If the eDCI1 has been annotated "TC600 issued to Tax Credits", complete and email to the office as detailed at the top of the form and also email the decision to the Tax Credits Fast Track team. Ensuring:
- the email subject line is annotated "RESTRICTED - TC600 case"
 - the applicant's name, date of birth and:
 - NINo, if allocated or
 - reason for refusal if refused is noted in the main body of the email.

SS 08 Awaiting a NINo decision

Awaiting a NINo decision

43. Where the NINo Centre (NC) have made a decision to allocate a NINo to a customer or partner, the outcome will be noted on the eDCI1 and returned to the originating Benefit/Credit Centre or Pension Centre, as soon as possible.
44. Short Term Benefit Advances (STBAs) may be considered for customers with no NINo, or who have applied for a NINo but whose identity has not

yet been verified, providing they meet the STBA eligibility criteria, which includes that they must be likely to be entitled to the benefit in respect of which the STBA is applied for.

45. An award of benefit may only be made once the customer has proven their identity in order to allow a NINo to be allocated.
46. A NINo will not be allocated to a partner in a benefit claim where they **do not** currently have the right to be in the UK. See Appendix 1 Scenario 2 for more detail.
47. The eDCI1 in these cases will be returned to the originator with the refusal reason noted 'immigration status invalid' (Code 5), stating that a NINo has been refused.
48. Although in these cases, the partner will not be allocated a NINo, this should not affect how the claim is processed and all appropriate information must be taken into account as per benefit guidance.
49. See Appendix 1 for more examples of how to treat partners in certain scenarios for NINo allocation purposes.

SS 09 Referring cases for fraud investigation

Referring cases for fraud investigation

50. At the point of the benefit claim, refer a case using the FRF (Fraud Referral Form) if you cannot confirm the customer/partner's identity and:
 - the documents the customer/partner provides appear to be suspicious – see SNAP guidance for further detail, or
 - the customer does not attend NINo evidence of identity interviews, or
 - two notified visits are ineffective.
51. If you suspect fraud about the identity of any person intending to claim, or be included in a claim for benefit, do not alert the customer/partner. xx
xxxxxxxxxx, xxxx xxxx xxx xxx xxxxxxx xxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxx.

SS 10 Appendices

Appendix 1 - How to treat partners in benefit claims for NINo purposes

Scenario 1 – Legally in the UK but “no recourse to public funds” and/or “Right to Work (RTW)”

A claim for Income Support is received from a man (UK Resident). His wife is the partner in the claim to benefit. The wife is legally entitled to be in the UK but she has “no recourse to public funds” and/or “no RTW”. In this case as the wife is a partner in a claim to benefit she can **still be allocated a NINO** and the claim can be progressed. However **no payment** should be made in respect of the wife, due to her immigration status but any income or capital she has will be taken into account.

Scenario 2– Illegally entered the UK

A claim for Income Support is received from a man (UK Resident). His wife is the partner in the claim to benefit. However the wife entered the country

illegally. In this case information would be requested from both the husband and the wife to progress the claim, however as the wife is classed as an illegal immigrant we would **not issue a NINO** and **no payment** should be made in respect of the wife and any income or capital she has will be taken into account.

Scenario 3– Legally entitled to be in the UK

A claim for Income Support is received from a man (UK Resident). His wife is the partner in the claim to benefit. The wife is legally entitled to be in the UK and has an individual entitlement to a NINO. In this case as the wife is a partner in a claim to benefit she **can be allocated a NINO** and the claim can be progressed. **Payment should be made** in respect of the wife and any income or capital she has will be taken into account.

Appendix 2 – eDCI1 Process



