

Joint Ministerial Working Group on Welfare, 14th Meeting

Dover House, London and Victoria Quay, Edinburgh (Meeting held over Video Conference)

Monday 11 November 2019

Attendees

Chair: Secretary of State for Scotland (SoSS)

Attending: Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (SoS DWP)

Cabinet Secretary for Social Security and Older People (CSSSOP)

Officials from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland (OSSS) and Scottish Government (SG)

Apologies: Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills (MfBFWS)

Items 1 and 2: Welcome and Introductions, and Minutes and Actions from the previous meeting

SoSS welcomed all attendees to the meeting.

SoSS reminded attendees that it is customary for UK Government Ministers to observe discretion in initiating any action of a continuing or long-term character during the pre-general election period.

All present noted the minutes of the previous meeting had been agreed and published and noted the agreed publication date for the minutes from this meeting.

CSSSOP expressed that SG were committed to supporting UKG in agreeing and publishing the minutes within a shortened timetable.

Item 3 a): Social Security: Current delivery activity

SoS DWP introduced the item on Wave 1 of the delivery of the devolved benefits; noting the good progress made on the delivery of the Wave 1 benefits to date and most recently the launch of Young Carers Grant. She stated there has been successful joint working between UK and SG Governments, including the sharing of data to enable SG to make payments.

CSSSOP welcomed SoSS and SoS DWP to their first JMWGW. She acknowledged the effective joint working between Scottish Government and UK Government to deliver the Wave 1 benefits, highlighting Best Start Grant and Young Carers Grant as good examples. She also noted that the lessons learnt approach by officials has worked well and stands SG and UKG in a good position for the more complex delivery of benefits under Wave 2.

CSSSOP thanked UKG for bringing forward the laying date of the Section 63 Job Start Payment Order ahead of the pre-election period; assisting SG to continue to move forward with Job Start Payment and launch in Spring 2020.

DWP officials agreed with CSSSOP's assessment and noted that the data access and systems needed to support the launch of Job Start Payment are on track.

Item 3 b): Social Security: Future design, planning and legislation

CSSSOP introduced the item and emphasised the importance of longer term collaborative working between SG and UKG. She highlighted the close link between SG and DWP in regards to sharing milestones and risks and the importance of continuing with the lessons learned approach.

CSSSOP emphasised that the delivery of benefits under Wave 2 will be complex and more challenging as this will be the first time both governments will be sharing clients and joint working will be even more important to ensure a safe and smooth transition.

SoSS emphasised the need for clear timetabling of Scotland Act Orders going forward and asked when SG would be able to share their prioritisation plan of Social Security Scotland Act Orders. CSSSOP responded that some of the detail would be covered in the presentation led by officials and suggested officials also follow up with this after the meeting.

SG and DWP officials led a joint presentation on Wave 2, focused on the key milestones and dependencies for the joint delivery roadmap. SG officials highlighted that Agency Arrangements are being developed for introduction in April 2020 to ensure continuity of payment and services alongside the transfer of Executive Competency. DWP officials emphasised the need for continued inter-governmental working at both a technical and strategic level; developing an approach that de-risks and is sustainable going forward. SG officials noted that this work puts SG and UKG in a good position for the delivery of devolved benefits going forward.

CSSSOP thanked officials for their contributions and noted that the presentation highlighted the joint risks, issues and complexities of Wave 2 delivery of benefits. She encouraged further collaboration between SG and UKG officials, including the sharing of information as early as possible, and recognised the importance of SG keeping UKG well sighted on policy and delivery plans. DWP officials emphasised that they are committed to joint working with the SG.

CSSSOP referred to recent correspondence between herself and SoS DWP. She advised that any delay to the go-live date of Scottish Child Payment could have implications for the delivery of Disability Assistance. She emphasised that SG officials are keen to work with OSSS officials to expedite the Order needed to underpin the delivery of the necessary Scotland Act Orders in respect of the Scottish Child Payment to avoid this.

OSSS officials noted that SG have shared the policy summary for the Scottish Child Payment Order with HMG and they are awaiting an agreement between SG and HMG officials. Officials advised that a Scotland Act Order typically takes 12 months from

policy agreement to being in-force, especially when an Order is affirmative. OSSS will continue to do everything that they can to expedite the Scottish Child Payment Order. However, there are pre-determined milestones, such as Privy Council approval, which are fixed and beyond UKG's control. CSSSOP acknowledged OSSS' continued efforts and encouraged continued joint working between UKG and SG.

Item 4) Child Payment

CSSOP introduced this item and provided an update on Scottish Child Payment confirming that work has progressed at pace and an updated [position paper](#) setting out the latest policy developments was published on the 4th October. She advised that the Scottish Child Payment will be paid four weekly. Those in receipt of the benefit will only be required to provide information once to have access to other benefits, such as the Best Start Grant. The draft regulations for Scottish Child Payment have been shared with the Scottish Commission on Social Security, who will scrutinise and then provide a report and recommendations to the SG in the new year. Thereafter, the regulations will be laid in the Scottish Parliament in early 2020.

CSSOP expressed that she would be grateful for early understanding from DWP on the timescales for receiving data for 6 – 16 years olds for the Scottish Child Payment, noting that the SG need this by the end of 2021.

SoS DWP noted that UKG already provides the data relating to under 6 year olds as part of Best Start Grant. However, the data sharing for 6-16 year olds is more complex and will require detailed consideration. She also acknowledged the joint work ongoing between SG and DWP officials to agree the approach to data sharing for 6 -16 year olds.

SoSS closed the meeting.

ENDS