

DWP Serious Case Panel minutes 25 March 2021

Date

25 March 2021, 09:30 to 11:30

Location

Virtual

Attendees

David Bennett, Non-Executive Director (Chair)

Joanna Wallace, Independent Case Examiner

Peter Schofield, Permanent Secretary

Amanda Reynolds, Director General for Service Excellence

John-Paul Marks, Director General for Work and Health Services

Aaron Jaffery, Digital Delivery Director (on behalf of Simon McKinnon)

Jonathan Mills, Director General for Policy

Debbie Alder, Director General for People, Capability and Place

Neil Couling, Director General for Change and Resilience

Nick Joicey, Director General for Finance

Katie Farrington, Director General for Disability, Health and Pensions

Frances Nash, Legal Director (on behalf of Susanna McGibbon)

Sheer Khan, Director for Business Strategy

Presenters

Fiona Jones, Customer Experience Director

Victoria Hughes, Customer Experience and Learning Deputy Director

David Foley, Working Age Deputy Director

Redacted, Serious Case Panel Team

Redacted, Lead Analyst

Secretariat and observers

Redacted, Redacted, Redacted, Redacted (Secretariat)

Redacted, Redacted, Redacted, Government Internal Audit Agency (Observers)

Apologies

Simon McKinnon, Director General for Digital

Susanna McGibbon, Director General for Legal.

1. Welcome and introductions

1.1 David Bennett opened the meeting and welcomed all members, and three observers, including the Government Internal Audit Agency, to the fifth meeting of the DWP Serious Case Panel.

1.2 David Bennett introduced himself to members as the new chair of the panel and also introduced Amanda Reynolds and Katie Farrington as new members to the panel.

1.3. Amanda Reynolds highlighted the continued importance of the panel, by learning from serious case themes and making recommendations to prevent such cases in future and explained the importance of the theme to be discussed at this meeting.

2. Secretariat update

2.1 Secretariat provided a progress update to the recommendations made from the previous four meetings of the panel, and highlighted that a structured feedback exercise would be undertaken with all members, as part of the Terms of Reference annual review process.

2.2 Members thanked secretariat for the progress update, noted closure of one outstanding action and requested that evaluation of customer experience improvements made as a result of the panel be provided at future meetings when available, to ensure the Panel can monitor the effectiveness of these changes.

Action Point – Provide evaluation against previous recommendations to the panel for consideration when customer experience improvement work is completed.

Action Point – Undertake a structured feedback exercise with all members.

3. Themed discussion

3.1 David Bennett invited Fiona Jones to open the themed discussion: the service provided by the department at the point where a customer tells us something is going wrong.

3.2 Fiona Jones, Victoria Hughes and Redacted presented the work undertaken by Customer Experience Directorate to explore this theme and highlighted the enablers and challenges to complex issue resolution and further exploration undertaken into related culture factors as requested at the last panel.

3.4 David Foley described the work undertaken within Working Age Directorate to improve customer experience and highlighted further planned activity.

3.5 David Bennett invited members to discuss the theme and the proposed recommendations.

3.6 Members discussed and agreed in principle to the short-term recommended next steps, requesting more detail on specific actions for each panel member to take, and agreed that the customer experience discussed should form a key part of the evidence supporting longer-term transformation decision-making. Members also welcomed further focused exploration activities into this same theme at the Serious Case Panel over the course of 2021 to ensure there is a full understanding of the theme. The panel agreed to focus the next three meetings on the following dimensions of the theme, keeping serious cases and customer experience at the heart of all learning:

- June 2021: how we best organise ourselves to respond to customers with complex issues that need urgent resolution;
- September 2021: how we can incentivise optimum customer service around these cases through management;
- December 2021: the skills, capability and experience required to support customers with complex issues through to effective resolution.

Action Point – Customer Experience Directorate to put forward suggested individual actions for panel members in accordance with the steers provided by the panel.

4. Any other business and close

4.1 David Bennett and members of the Serious Case Panel thanked the presenters and their teams for their work.

Next meeting

24 June 2021, 09:30 to 11:30.