



DWP Serious Case Panel minutes

Title of meeting: DWP Serious Case Panel

Date: 6 December 2022

Location: Virtual

Attendees: David Bennett, Non-Executive Director (Chair)
Joanna Wallace, Independent Case Examiner
Peter Schofield, Permanent Secretary
Katie Farrington, Director General for Disability, Health and Pensions
Simon McKinnon, Director General for Digital
Neil Couling, Director General for Change and Resilience
Barbara Bradley, Director General for Work & Health Services
Katherine Vaughan, Director General for Finance
Liz Fairburn, Director for Customer Experience
Sheer Khan, Director for Business Strategy
Henry Ripley, Director for Legal
Jill Harvey, Deputy Director Advanced Customer Support
Emily Hobbs, Director for Capability, Learning and Talent
Jeremy Edwards, Deputy Director Digital
Alison Hilton, Area Director for Work and Health Services
Angus Gray, Policy Group Director for UC (Universal Credit), Employment Support, International and Corporate

Presenters: Redacted, Customer Analysis Team
Redacted, Serious Case Panel Team
Jeremy Edwards, Digital Group

Apologies: Debbie Alder, Director General for People, Capability and Place
Kate Davies, Director General for Labour Market Policy and Implementation
Amanda Reynolds, Director General for Service Excellence

1. Welcome and introductions

1.1 David Bennett opened the meeting and introduced the agenda.

2. Actions updates

2.1 Following the October Panel, a discussion was held on the processes in place for considering complex needs before sanctions are imposed. The Panel agreed to continue work to explore opportunities to strengthen this.

2.2 Jeremy Edwards, Digital Group, updated on progress being made with improvements planned in relation to issues previously discussed at the Panel:

2.3 Written customer correspondence - steps are being taken to reduce manual intervention using technology. This will aim to introduce efficiencies with the identification of urgent correspondence, particularly from vulnerable customers, ensuring it is sent to the appropriate team for action at the earliest opportunity.

2.4 Change of address (and other circumstances) - Improvements to systems are being considered which will capture changes to customers' circumstances and transmit this information across benefit lines. Work is ongoing to measure the impact of potential changes. This will improve the customer experience and the accuracy of DWP data.

3. Payment Exception Service (PES) – Customers not accessing their payments

3.1 Redacted, from the Serious Case Panel and Risk Team, flagged that some customers who receive benefit payments via PES vouchers are not cashing those vouchers, which subsequently expire and return to the Department. This may put customers at financial risk and is a possible indicator that additional support is required.

Panel members agreed two actions:

- Reduce the number of customers with PES as a payment method.
- Ensure consistent and effective processes across all benefits for establishing contact with customers when expired vouchers are returned.

4. Emerging Issues

4.1 A summary of issues arising between August and October 2022 was provided by Redacted, from the Customer Analysis Team. The Panel discussed the information shared and agreed to areas of focus between now and the next Panel.

5. Any Other Business and Close

5.1 No any other business raised. David Bennett and members of the Serious Case Panel thanked the presenters and their teams for their work.

Next meeting: 22 March 2023