

Portfolio Sponsor Meeting

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 22 June 2021
Time	15:30 – 16:50
Location	Remotely

Attendees

Present

Stephen Kerr (SK)	Director of Social Security (Portfolio Sponsor) and Chair
David Wallace (DW)	Chief Executive, Social Security Scotland
James Wallace (JW)	Deputy Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Paul Knight (PK)	Chief Officer, Health and Social Care Operations
Janet Richardson (JR)	Deputy Director of Operations
Andy McClintock (AMC)	Chief Digital Officer
Ally MacPhail (AMP)	Head of Corporate Services
Kirsten Sweeney (KS)	Strategic Communications Lead

Secretariat

David Perkins (DP)	Governance and Strategy Team Leader
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Apologies

Miriam Craven (MC)	Deputy Director Strategy, Change, Data & Engagement
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1. Welcome

- 1.1. SK welcomed everyone to the meeting. SK noted apologies from MC and that JR was to provide the Strategy, Change, Data and Engagement division update today.

2. Minutes of previous meeting

- 2.1. SK noted that approved minutes from the previous meeting of 18 May 2021 had been published and confirmed the action point from this meeting had been addressed.

3. Scottish Government update from the Chair

- 3.1. SK gave an update on key activity across Scottish Government, with a focus on recent engagement with Ministers and wider portfolio arrangements.
- 3.2. In the context of wider portfolio communications, the group discussed how best to link and co-ordinate efforts between the executive agency and Scottish Government.

4. Social Security Scotland Updates: Chief Executive and the (Agency) Executive Team

- 4.1. DW provided a brief update on key agency developments including Ministerial approval of the agency's business plan and its equalities strategy. Both documents will be published shortly. DW highlighted the key role of the business plan in the context of this meeting, in supporting SK as Portfolio Sponsor, to hold the agency to account for delivery.
- 4.2. DW updated the Portfolio Sponsor on the launch of the recruitment exercise for new non-Executive members of the Executive Advisory Body, including details of our communication strategy to attract applicants for these roles. [ACTION: a copy of the advert should be sent to SK].
- 4.3. JR set out the latest position in relation to the delivery of Scottish Child Payment, including current performance and processing times.
- 4.4. JR highlighted the preparations for Child Disability Payment including training and consolidation work to provide advisors with the best possible training and support. Local delivery teams had built strong relationships with their local authorities in the pilot areas and were prepared for launch.
- 4.5. JR set out some of the practical steps needed to prepare for launch which would involve some disruption to online services over the weekend preceding go-live. JR provided assurances to the Portfolio Sponsor on the priority attached to supporting clients with Funeral Support Claims over that weekend and preparations for this. KS set out plans for clear communication to clients and to make them aware of any impact to our service.
- 4.6. AMC updated Portfolio Sponsor on key activities within the Chief Digital Office.
- 4.7. PK provided a detailed update on recruitment to the diverse clinical teams necessary to support the Child Disability Payment, including both social workers and health professionals. The first round of recruitment for the pilot exercise had been completed, with some staff already undergoing preparatory training. PK highlighted some of the lessons learned from the recent recruitment exercise and some of the practical ways in which they could improve for the next and much larger, recruitment round in August 2021. SK asked for further information about the recruitment strategy implemented and the way in which health and social care professionals were being targeted.
- 4.8. AMP updated the Portfolio Sponsor on strategic plans for volume recruitment this year as the agency takes on more responsibilities and delivers a greater range of benefits.
- 4.9. AMP highlighted that Social Security Scotland expect to support around 140 colleagues into an office environment over June and July for the purpose of consolidation and training. All of this has been carried out in line with Scottish Government guidance on physical distancing and the hope is to be able to carry out consolidation training from our new Dundee headquarters shortly. As restrictions ease and capacity allows, we have plans to start looking at access to offices for reasons other than consolidation or training, with colleague wellbeing a key consideration. SK highlighted that a more general discussion around returning to the office, might be a useful item for our next Portfolio Sponsor meeting, where we will be joined by DG Paul Johnston. [ACTION update draft agenda for 19 August]

5. Social Security Finance update

- 5.1. JW drew out the key findings from the 2020-21 Fraud and Error report, highlighting that overall error rates remain low. All cases identified of underpayment had been addressed and JW highlighted that recovery of any debt relating to overpayments were currently suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

6. Update on Agency communications

- 6.1. KS provided a brief update on strategic communications, including plans for the national launch of Child Disability Payment and an all-colleague call with our new Cabinet Secretary.

Date of next meeting: 19 August 2021