External Stakeholder Reference Group Meeting	
Date of Meeting	Thursday, 18th June 2020
Time	10:00 – 12:00
Location	Virtual
Note	It is Social Security Scotland's policy to anonymise participants except for members of its Executive Team and Executive Advisory Body

Attendees

Present

Miriam Craven (MC)	-	Deputy Director of Strategy & Client Experience, Social Security Scotland
RM	-	Head of Client Experience, Social Security Scotland
DP	-	National Partnership Development Lead, Social Security Scotland
AB	-	Inclusive Communication Specialist Adviser
CE	-	Principal Research Officer, Scottish Government
KS	-	Head of Strategic Communications, Social Security Scotland
HD	-	Accessibility and Inclusive Design Lead, Social Security Directorate, Scottish Government
Ewan Gurr	-	Non-Executive Member
KHK	-	Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists
CR	-	Scottish Commission for Learning Disability
JB	-	Citizens Advice Scotland
DT	-	deafScotland
JR	-	The Alliance
HC	-	Deafblind Scotland
LG	-	Dyslexia Scotland
DS	-	Ochiltree School
RSJ	-	Trust Housing Association
LW	-	BLESMA
JP	-	Scottish Autism

1. Welcome

1.1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. MC thanked members for participating via teleconference and confirmed that alternative platforms for future meetings are being explored.

2. Update on Social Security Scotland Activities

2.1. MC gave an overview of Social Security Scotland's activities during COVID-19. She explained how the organisation has adapted to continue to provide a service for clients. This includes providing a call back service and web chat in place of an inbound telephony service. Social Security Scotland has also introduced a document uploader, allowing clients to upload their own evidence, in support of their application.

2.2. MC stated that, due to Covid-19, the Scottish Government has frozen current recruitment. This includes recruitment by Social Security Scotland. However, we have still started over 200 new colleagues who had been recruited before the freeze came into effect.

2.3. RSJ asked whether there have been any cases where people have faced communication barriers. MC responded that no cases have been highlighted in the weekly information from our early warning system. MC did confirm that stakeholders had commented that our voice mail message was too long and that Social Security Scotland are working to change this.

3. Working Group Updates

3.1. RM thanked everyone for their hard work and participation in these working groups.

3.2. KS provided an update on the activities of the Easy Read standard working group. KS stated that elements of this work were paused due to COVID-19, but sufficient information will be gathered between the initial focus groups with stakeholders and a final survey. This research will determine the Easy Read style Social Security Scotland use in documents to ensure consistency.

3.3. Once a final standard has been agreed, training will commence in Social Security Scotland so that, where appropriate, Easy Read documents can be produced in house.

3.4. KS gave an overview of the work underway for the Social Security Scotland website redevelopment working group. The test website is currently being built and will be shared with members of the working group to provide feedback.

3.5. EG asked for additional information on how sign posting to information on benefits will appear on the website. KS stated that the new website will

hopefully have a menu option detailing the benefits we deliver and will deliver. Links will be provided to the relevant mygov.scot webpage.

3.6. KS outlined plans for the icon development project. She explained that Social Security Scotland will be using the same icons that are used by the NHS to aid recognition. These icons will be used on media materials, our website and appropriate locations where user testing proves that icons aid usability.

3.7. AB provided an overview of the approach to training and outlined the role of the working group, to be a critical friend and make sure people with lived experience are involved in the content of the learning.

3.8. RM announced that a new working group will be set up to help Social Security Scotland as we begin to design our buildings. Inclusive and accessible principles will be reflected in our building designs. RM will circulate an email with additional information. if members are interested in joining this group, they should contact KS or DP to register their interest.

3.9. KS stated that a consultancy group has been hired to create a 'look book' to apply a standard look and feel for our buildings. KHK highlighted that the organisation Ideas for Ears can assist this work to prevent any barriers for people with hearing difficulties. KHK to provide contact details.

AP	KS	To circulate a link to the test corporate website to members of the website working group to provide feedback.
AP	RM	To circulate an email with additional information on the new working group of Social Security Scotland buildings.
AP	KHK	To provide contact details for Ideas for Ears

4. Telephony Overview

4.1. MC stated that this agenda item was postponed. RM provided a general overview of the item that was to come this meeting.

4.2. RM stated that this item will be presented to the group at a future date. Members will have the opportunity to provide feedback and highlight potential issues, if appropriate.

4.3. DT highlighted the importance of telephony for those with hearing difficulties. RM stated that Contact Scotland is being used at the moment but Social Security Scotland recognises that this will be more difficult once the more complex benefits are launched. HD confirmed his team are looking at how this service may operate.

AP	RM	To consider the most effective way to present the telephony user journey to this group and bring the item back to the group at a later date.

5. Any Other Business

5.1. MC thanked everyone for their input and attendance.

5.2. MC stated that the format of the meeting is continuously reviewed to consider how best to host future meetings

Date of next meeting: September 2020