



Inclusive Communication Stakeholder Reference Group Meeting

Date of Meeting	Wednesday 16 th September 2020
Time	14:00 – 16:00
Location	Virtual
Note	Participants have been anonymised with the exception of those who are most senior.

Attendees

Present	
Miriam Craven (The Chair) -	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
HD	- Accessibility and Inclusive Design Lead, Social Security Directorate
MH	- User Researcher, Social Security Programme
JK	- Service Design Lead - Public Protection, Social Security Programme
FC	- Service Design, Social Security Programme
EG	- Non-Executive Member, Social Security Scotland
KHK	- Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists
CR	- Scottish Commission for Learning Disability
DT	- DeafScotland
JR	- The Alliance
HC	- Deafblind Scotland
LG	- Dyslexia Scotland
DS	- Ochiltree School
RSJ	- Trust Housing Association
LW	- BLESMA

JP	-	Scottish Autism
AH	-	Indsol
MS	-	Glasgow Disability Alliance
HF	-	Inclusion Scotland
Apologies		
HS	-	Age Scotland
JB	-	Citizens Advice Scotland

1. Welcome from the Chair

- 1.1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. MC thanked members for participating via Microsoft Teams.

2. Unacceptable Actions

- 2.1. MH gave an overview of what was meant by the term ‘unacceptable actions’ and the proposed policy, an explanation of which was provided to group members in the meeting papers, circulated prior to the meeting. The policy aims to recognise that people who communicate differently may be incorrectly labelled as difficult or challenging.
- 2.2. JK explained the framework being developed is based upon four key elements; recognise, report, refer and record
- 2.3. Members of the group made the following comments:
- DT asked how accessible is the research process going to be? MH stated the research has been primarily over the phone and internet. He is aware this causes problems for including some groups in the research, but hopes once the COVID restrictions ease these groups can be included. MH welcomed any suggestions to help get wider involvement from these groups. MS offered to host a research session.
 - RSJ emphasised the importance of understanding people with learning disabilities natural behaviour. We all behave differently, depending on the levels of stress and distress we are facing. She also explained that we need to be aware there may be differences in communication due to cultural norms.
 - JP suggested that it might be better to refer to “stress and distress”, rather than “aggressive behaviour”. She also suggested that the policy

should set out how control of the conversation can be returned to the client as restricting communication routes to letter only should not be a permanent action. What will the mediation process look like and how will Social Security Scotland work together with the client to find a positive communication strategy.

- KHK suggested offering clients the opportunity to profile their communication preferences for client advisors to access and clients should be able to change their profile as their circumstances change. HF added clients should be able to edit these profiles as and when changes to conditions occur.
- DT highlighted that 'aggressive' behaviour is very subjective so steps should be taken to try and ensure the consistent application of this policy.
- EG asked whether there was scope to include an additional step to the process to encourage reflection and to promote good practice. MH said he would consider this.
- LW recommended including checks for safeguarding vulnerable adults. She highlighted that removing one form of communication could involve removing the only available form of communication to the client.

Action Point	MH	To follow up with MS about Glasgow Disability Alliance hosting a research session.
Action Point	MH	To provide feedback to the group on the actions taken as a result of members comments
Action Point	RM	To follow up with MS about Glasgow Disability Alliance assisting with our inclusive training.

3. Organisational Update

3.1. The Chair updated the group on three key activities:

- the announcement of Social Security Scotland's new headquarters in Dundee. She also emphasised our commitment to make sure all our buildings are inclusive.
- Job Start Payment, which a new benefit launched in August to support young people get back into work after a period of unemployment.
- Social Security Scotland's Satisfaction survey, inviting around 165,000 clients to provide feedback on their experience with Social Security Scotland. DT commented that the scope of the survey was good. Regarding Social Security Scotland buildings, he suggested we might consider asking Euan's Guide to do a review of the building at an early stage.

Action Point	LB	To circulate a video to the group of what our headquarters looks like once it has been fully furnished.
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4. Any other business

4.1. The Chair thanked everyone for attending and for all their great feedback.

Date of next meeting: 10th December 2020