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| Operational Reference Group Meeting | |
| Date of Meeting | Tuesday 8th March 2022 |
| Time | 14:30 – 16:00 |
| Location | Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams |

Attendees

**Present**

* Miriam Craven – Chair – Social Security Scotland
* Janet Richardson – Social Security Scotland
* HF – Social Security Scotland
* SS – Social Security Scotland
* JH – Social Security Scotland
* FC – Social Security Scotland
* CE – Social Security Scotland
* MD – Public Health Scotland
* PC – Action on Asbestos
* KM – Child Poverty Action Group
* LG – Department for Work and Pensions
* LK – Social Work Scotland
* RG – Rights Advice Scotland
* NM – Department for Work and Pensions

**Secretariat**

* RE – Social Security Scotland

1. Welcome and Update
   1. Miriam, the Chair welcomed the group to the first Operational Reference Group meeting of the year and gave an update.
   2. Members were reminded of the purpose of the group and encouraged to think of other stakeholders who would bring value to discussions and future meetings.
   3. The group were updated on recent publications including the Child Disability Payment Decision Making Guidance, and high level statistics for Job Start Payment, Funeral Support Payment and Young Carers Grant. All of which can be found on the Social Security Scotland website.
   4. The Adult Disability Payment pilot is due to launch in three areas, Dundee, Perth and Kinross, and the Western Isles, starting on 21 March 2022.
   5. We have finished a series of events for stakeholders in the Adult Disability Payment pilot areas. This included information tailored for the public sector and third sector on general policy, debt, applications, and special rules for terminal illness. The engagement events have been very well received with positive feedback from stakeholders who attended.
   6. The All Client Survey is open from 7 February to the 20 March 2022. The survey will measure how well we are delivering against [our Charter](https://www.socialsecurity.gov.scot/about/our-charter) and providing a social security system that treats people with dignity, fairness and respect. This is the fourth time the survey has run. It has been updated to reflect the growth in services and benefits we deliver and improve how we gather client feedback. We have made our survey more accessible for clients by providing the options of completing the survey on paper, online or over the phone. Clients have been invited to complete the survey via email, text message, and post.
   7. Social Security Scotland’s new Independent Advocacy Service launched 31 January 2022. The Scottish Government has committed up to £20.4 million over the next four years for the provision of a new Independent Advocacy Service. The service will be delivered by VoiceAbility and will provide advocacy support for disabled people applying for Scottish Social Security benefits.
2. Clients Services Update
   1. Janet Richardson, Deputy Director Client Services, provided an operational update on Child Disability Payment and Adult Disability Payment.
   2. The learning from pilot areas led to improvements being made prior to the full launch of Child Disability Payment on 22 November 2021. Case managers are working closely with Health and Social Care practitioners to fully understand health conditions and the impact they can have on an individual.
   3. The case transfer process has begun. Clients are currently being transferred from the Department for Work and Pensions, where they have been receiving Personal Independence Payment, to Social Security Scotland, where they will receive Child Disability Payment.
   4. Janet Richardson advised that training was well underway for the launch of Adult Disability Payment. The programme of training is intensive and includes a substantial consolidation period to help ensure that we get the decision right the first time.
3. Charter Measurement Framework Partner Organisation Survey
   1. CE, Principal Social Researcher, shared details on the Charter Measurement Framework partner organisation survey including how members can take part.
   2. Fieldwork is now underway for the 2021-22 Charter Measurement Framework. We have started conducting interviews with Client Panel members, and there is a survey currently open for staff and partners. The survey will be followed by interviews so we can understand their experiences in more depth.
   3. **ACTION:** Members were encouraged to take part in the partner survey and to share with colleagues.
4. Open Discussion
   1. Members of the group were given the opportunity to have an open discussion to provide updates, highlight any issues that have arisen and share insight.
   2. RG shared observations about the Child Disability Payment paper forms, and Data Sharing Platforms. **ACTION:** HF agreed to keep Richard updated on this matter
   3. LK mentioned there hasn’t been any issues detected by colleagues regarding Child Disability Payment. **ACTION:** LK will ask for feedback from the Children and Families Standing Committee at Social Work Scotland and relay to the group. The same will be done at the Adult Standing Committee once the Adult Disability Payment pilot begins.
5. Hybrid Working
   1. Members of the group discussed future ways of working.
   2. The hybrid model was proposed by some for future meetings with virtual meetings continuing alongside an opportunity to meet twice a year in-person
   3. **ACTION:** Members were asked to complete a short survey to help the team at Social Security Scotland understand how members want to engage with Social Security Scotland in future.
6. Any Other Business
   1. No other business was raised.

Date of next meeting: 17 May 2022