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| Operational Reference Group Meeting | |
| Date of Meeting | Tuesday 17th May 2022 |
| Time | 14:30 – 16:30 |
| Location | Virtual Meeting |

Attendees

**Present**

* Janet Richardson – Chair – Social Security Scotland
* KM – Child Poverty Action Group
* MK – Inclusion Scotland
* LK – Social Work Scotland
* MD – Public Health Scotland
* PC – Action on Asbestos
* CH – Citizens Advice Bureau
* LG – Department For Work and Pensions
* AB – One Parent Families Scotland
* CJ – West Lothian Council
* SM – Skills Development Scotland
* RG – Rights Advice Scotland
* RO - Social Security Scotland
* SS - Social Security Scotland
* AM - Social Security Scotland
* MM – Scottish Government
* AM - Social Security Scotland
* HF - Social Security Scotland
* KC - Social Security Scotland
* JH - Social Security Scotland
* CB – Scottish Government
* CH - Scottish Government
* MN - Scottish Government
* RM - Scottish Government
* AP - Scottish Government
* SR - Scottish Government

**Secretariat**

* RE – Social Security Scotland

1. Welcome and Update
   1. The Chair, Janet Richardson, Deputy Director Client Services, welcomed the group and introduced new members, guest presenters and other attendees.
   2. AM, Interim Deputy Director Strategy, Change, Data and Engagement, joined the meeting. He advised the group that Miriam Craven had temporarily joined the Ukraine Resettlement Programme for the Scottish Government and that he, AM, has been appointed on an interim basis.
   3. The group approved the minutes from the meeting on 8 March 2022.
   4. Janet Richardson reviewed the actions from the previous meeting.
   5. Minister for Social Security and Local Government, Ben MacPherson, visited our Glasgow High Street office and met with a group of colleagues from Client Services Delivery and Health and Social Care Operations. He was able to hear first-hand about their experiences of delivering our disability benefits. This included a run through of the Adult Disability Payment application form. The Social Justice and Social Security Committee and several MPs and MSPs visited Agnes Husband House in Dundee. These visits were an opportunity to talk through, and share our approach, to delivering Adult Disability Payment.
   6. The Case Transfer process will begin next month. This is a complex process and our priority will be to ensure clients continue to receive the benefits they are entitled to during this transfer.
   7. RG, Rights Advice Scotland asked for additional information on the impact at transfer for those in hospital or residential care for more than 28 days. **ACTION:** Janet Richardson will provide a response on the rules for such cases.
   8. Since the launch of Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods, we have paid £82.7 million to clients. The latest Scottish Government [Tackling Child Poverty Plan](https://scot.us19.list-manage.com/track/click?u=11fdff413e50ba7bc51890111&id=9fc46dca8f&e=01ea2ffeb4) announced there would be some changes to Best Start Grant. This includes the introduction of automatic awards for Early Learning and School Age Payments to parents and carers receiving Scottish Child Payment when their children become eligible. The change will be introduced later this year, when Scottish Child Payment is extended to under 16 year olds and increased to £25 per child, per week.
   9. From January 2022, the National Engagement Team, in conjunction with Social Security Policy and Programme colleagues, have delivered a series of 20 online events with over 711 external stakeholder attendees. The feedback from these events provides valuable insight, which feeds into the continuous improvement of our design and delivery.
   10. As of April 2022, eight of the benefits delivered by Social Security Scotland have now increased by 6%. See the full list of payment increases on the Social Security Scotland website: [Social Security Scotland - Increase in social security payments](https://www.socialsecurity.gov.scot/news-events/news/increase-in-social-security-payments)
   11. The Client Satisfaction Survey is now open to clients who have applied for or received a benefit since 1 January 2022. Almost 30,000 clients have been invited to take part by email, post and text as part of our commitment to design and deliver a service in consultation with the people who use it. The survey is open until 22 May 2022.
   12. The consultation on proposals for Scottish Carer’s Assistance, a new Scottish benefit that will replace Carer’s Allowance, will be closing on 23 May 2022. Find out more about the consultation on the Scottish Government website: [Scottish Carer's Assistance: consultation.](https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-carers-assistance-consultation/)
   13. Our volume recruitment is underway and we will recruit, welcome and train 2,000 new colleagues by autumn 2022 to support the delivery of more complex benefits like Adult Disability Payment. Across the project, we have received 20,860 applications and conducted over 5,493 video interviews.
2. Client Services Update
   1. Janet Richardson provided an update on the Adult Disability Payment Pilot.
   2. KC, Head of Client Services Operations, has been working with the GP Quality and Leadership group in Dundee, and the Chief Medical Officer, to ensure that guidance on Special Rules for Terminal Illness is shared widely amongst health professionals. Additionally, the National Engagement team have met with relevant third sector organisations such as Macmillan and Marie Curie. These meetings have been successful in aiding our understanding on how best to communicate information about criteria and eligibility to stakeholders.
   3. PC, Action on Asbestos, asked when the Adult Disability Payment online form would be finalised for use by external stakeholders.
   4. **ACTION:** Janet Richardson will provide further detail on the Adult Disability Payment online form.
3. Data Sharing and Integration
   1. HF, Head of National Stakeholder Engagement, provided an update on Data Sharing and Integration.
   2. The National Engagement team is actively engaging with key stakeholders and programme colleagues to ensure that issues surrounding data sharing are picked up and addressed. **ACTION:** Members were encouraged to email the National Engagement team with any feedback or suggestions.
   3. **ACTION:** A written update on Data Sharing and Integration will be shared with members.
4. Appointee Process
   1. MM, Cross Cutting Policy Manager,Appointees (Adults with Incapacity), gave an overview of the appointee process. The presentation covered information on the guidelines, reviews, disputes, legal acting bodies and case transfers.
   2. **ACTION:** Members should contact MM if they have any questions or feedback on the appointee process.
   3. PC, asked a question about the posthumous appointee process. Guidance is in place for this process. However, our policy team welcome additional feedback. **ACTION:** MM will get in touch with PC with more information on this topic.
5. Adult Disability Payment – User Research
   1. CH, Senior User Research, and their team, facilitated an interactive session on the Adult Disability Payment application process.
   2. **ACTION:** Members were encouraged to contact CH to get involved with user research for Adult Disability Payment application process. Additionally, the group and their client-facing colleagues were asked to provide feedback to the User Research team.
6. Members updates
   1. **ACTION:** Members were asked to provide written updates from their organisation if there were substantial items of interest that had not been covered. The updates will be shared with members.
   2. For future meetings, we agreed to spotlight one of our members to provide an update from their organisation.
   3. **ACTION:** Members were invited to get in touch if they would like to be the spotlight member at the next Operational Reference Group meeting on 12 July 2022.
7. Any other business
   1. No other business was raised.

Date of next meeting: 12 July 2022