

III Health and Disability Stakeholder Reference Group

Meeting 13

Monday 23 July 2018 – Victoria Quay, Edinburgh

Present:

Claire McDermott, Chair, Scottish Government (CM)
Donna Burnett, NHS Public Health Practitioner (DB)
Ed Pybus, Child Poverty Action Group (EP)
Yvette Burgess, Coalition of Care and support Providers Scotland (YB)
Dr Mini Mishra, Scottish Government (MM)
Dean Pemberton, Scottish Government (DP)
Bill Scott, Inclusion Scotland (BS)
Sarah-Jayne Whitson, Mental Health and Money Advice Service (SJW)
Gill Young, Castle Rock Edinvar Housing Association (GY)
Kate Burton, NHS Lothian(KB)
Rob Gowans, Citizens Advice Scotland (RG)
Ronnie Hill, Disabled Children and Young People Advisory Group (RH)
Stephanie Watt, Scottish Government (SW)

In Attendance:

Joshua Mouldey, Scottish Government (JM)
Fiona Campbell, Scottish Government (FC)
Rachael McKechnie, Scottish Government (RM)
Rachael McGruer, Scottish Government (RMcG)
Katherine Ross (note-taker)

Apologies:

Thomas Grant, Scottish Government
Louise Whyte, Scottish Government
Ross Trotter, Scottish Government
Graham Watt, University of Glasgow
Richard Gass, Rights Advice Scotland
Jim Hume, National Rural Mental Health Forum
Jim Carle, Disabled Children and Young People Advisory Group
Annie Gunnar Logan, Coalition of Care and Support Providers Scotland
Emilia Crichton, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde
Ruari Sutherland, Scottish Government

Agenda item 1: Welcome and Introductions

1. The Chair welcomed the group to the meeting.

Agenda item 2: Minutes and SG Update – Previously Circulated

2. Minutes from the previous meeting were agreed. Members had received a written Scottish Government update with the papers. Prior to meeting, comments had been invited, and received from members regarding the proposed Scottish Government measuring benefits uptake research. Members were thanked for their contributions and advised these were forwarded to analytical colleagues with a view to holding a session on benefit uptake and the next meeting.

IHDBSRG/230718/Action 1: DP to invite Scottish Government analytical colleagues to next IHDBSRG meeting in December.

Agenda item 3: Agency Implementation Workshop – Rachael McKechnie (RM)

3. RM provided an update on the current and future activities of the Agency Implementation team. The presentation included updates on the Agency structure, local delivery implementation, staff recruitment, opportunities for learning and development and the need for a consistently empathetic approach to clients. Emphasis was made on client experience, stakeholder engagement, and raising awareness of the Agency and local delivery.
4. Group members raised a number of questions, including the issues of training for staff, communications channels, continuous learning and accountability for advisors and redeterminations.
5. RM confirmed that training for staff was a vital element in the development of the new Agency, along with a continuous feedback loop to encourage and foster ongoing learning to help ensure correct decisions were being made first time. For wave 1 benefits, the Agency was also putting in place a fairly high staff ratio for the number of expected clients to ensure there was capacity to offer coaching support and sufficient time for ongoing professional development.
6. RM confirmed that all re-determinations would be carried out by a different team in a separate part of the Agency, with the original decision going through Agency operations. A re-determination would be a completely new decision not just a review of the previous decision making. Clients would also have the right to introduce new evidence to support their application.
7. It was further highlighted how important it is for the Agency to promote a culture that encouraged clients to claim the benefits they are entitled to. This is reflected in the Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018 which requires Scottish Ministers to promote benefit uptake.
8. RM confirmed that we are committed to increasing benefit uptake and promoting income maximisation. She explained that Agency staff will be expected to work in

partnership with other organisations to provide wider advice, for example, signposting to local authorities for advice on council tax reduction. .

9. The presentation ended with a group exercise. Members were split into smaller groups and asked to consider the following question ; *What do you think dignity, fairness and respect should look like in practice for the Agency?*

The groups were asked to consider the question above in light of the following categories accessibility of services, staff awareness and understanding, interactions between people and signposting

10. A number of recurring themes were raised during feedback. These included: the need for inclusive communications; culture; the importance of staff treatment/morale and retention; the importance of transparency throughout the claiming process; and establishing rapport and building trust incrementally. DP agreed to collate groups responses and will issue as a separate note once completed.

IHDBSRG/230718/Action 2: DP to collate feedback from groups and circulate paper to members for information and comment

Agenda item 4: PIP Discovery Update – Rachael McGruer (RMcG), Disability Benefits Service Delivery Manager

11. RMcG provided an update on the recent Personal Independence Payment (PIP) Discovery phase. She highlighted that this phase of service design is heavily grounded in obtaining and understanding user experience. The phase seeks to understand who the service users are, potential delivery challenges and the target architecture needed to implement the service going forward.

12. RMcG explained that user research had highlighted a number of issues that clients face when making a claim to PIP under the current DWP system. These findings will be used to inform ongoing service design for the Scottish service using an understanding of the problems clients face to improve their experience in the new system.

13. The group provided feedback and comments, including on the gathering of evidence. Members stressed that during the evidence-gathering process, the importance of the individual and carer's wellbeing should be prominent and the use of an exclusively medical model should be avoided. RMcG confirmed that, unlike the current system, the Agency will take responsibility for gathering relevant, necessary supporting information.

14. The view was stated that it was necessary to consider supporting information; gathering easily available, relevant information that is less burdensome to the individual. It was highlighted that the Agency will look for information to help make decisions on benefit entitlement from a wide variety of sources, including from the social care sector. The use of appropriate language in terms of information was also highlighted by group members.

15. CM invited further comments on the session following the meeting and feedback would be circulated at a later date.

IHDBSRG/230718/Action 3: Group members to provide further comments should they wish.

Agenda item 5: The Social Security (Scotland) Act – The Journey so far – Fiona Campbell (FC)

16. FC provided an update to the group, outlining the next steps now that the Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018 has received Royal Assent. She stated that the Act is a framework with the majority of provision to be provided in secondary legislation.

17. FC also explained that, as part of her role, she would be helping establish the Scottish Commission of Social Security (SCoSS). Recruitment for the Commission has begun with a view to commencing the scrutiny body in January. FC confirmed that the Act does not set a timeframe by which regulations must be scrutinised by SCoSS.

18. FC confirmed that the process of laying regulations will likely take a year, allowing time to consult, scrutiny by the Commission and Parliamentary process.

19. MM asked whether an unexpected situation/circumstance would result in delays. FC reassured members that the scrutiny body will be informed regarding what will be coming up in the legislative landscape.

20. FC asked that the group consider how the Scottish Government and the Agency might use their regulatory powers and standards during investigations into fraudulent activity and the investigation of offences, whilst maintaining an approach of dignity and respect? Members were invited to provide feedback following the meeting.

IHDBSRG/230718/Action 4: Members to provide input on FC's above question.

Agenda item 6: Child DLA Discovery Update – Joshua Mouldey (JM), Child DLA Product Owner

21. JM provided an update to the group regards the recent Child DLA Discovery phase, which ran between March 2018 and May 2018 and gathered information from 100 participants, including engagement with the Child DLA Centre in Birmingham.

22. JM explained that there were many similarities between Child DLA Discovery outcomes and those which were highlighted as part of the recently completed PIP Discovery. Complexity in claiming benefits, societal stigma associated with benefits generally, the deficit framed manner in which claiming benefits is currently operated were all recurring themes across both Discoveries.

23. JM highlighted that the Child DLA Discovery had highlighted that there exists a deep apprehension among parents when their child is due to transition to adult services and stressed the need for the system to be designed in a more unified way.

24. MM asked what consideration has been given regards Child DLA and award duration for children with recognised lifelong conditions. CM confirmed that there will be work with experience panels in designing surveys to gather feedback.

25. EP asked whether or not there is any work ongoing regarding lowering the age levels for entitlement to Child DLA. CM confirmed that the Scottish Government is not actively considering this issue as a policy change but would welcome any thoughts that group members may have and would provide relevant feedback.

IHDBSRG/230718/Action 5: Members to provide input on lower the age levels for DLA entitlement should they wish. CM to provide feedback on any issues raised.

Agenda item 7: AOB and agenda for next meeting

26. BS raised his concerns regarding future funding at the point of benefit transition to Scotland. BS asked, in light of the recent judicial review, which has resulted in UKG and DWP having to revisit and potentially reassess 1.6 million cases in the UK, what impact this may have on the level of budget transferred to Scottish Ministers as part of the fiscal framework. He highlighted that there may be other rulings in future which may affect UKG benefit spend and what thought had Scottish Government given to this.

27. CM advised that this is covered in 'The agreement between the Scottish Government and the United Kingdom Government on the Scottish Government's fiscal framework', block grant readjustments will be reflective of such increases in spend.

28. CM thanked members for attending. The next meeting is scheduled for **Thursday 13th December, 12pm – 15:00pm, at Atlantic Quay, Glasgow.**