

Achieving integration in Benefits Delivery



Introduction

- **What's wrong with current system**
- **What are DWP doing about it**
- **What's the alternative**

Current system problems

- **Fragmented;**
- **Inbuilt duplication;**
- **Local vs National tensions;**
- **Onus on customer to understand and navigate the system**
 - **Multiple claim forms;**
 - **Poor take-up;**
 - **Inconsistency: verification / changes**
- **Limited responsibility**

Comments and views

David Freud:

- *More integrated delivery of benefits and transfers could make a major difference to employment outcomes*

Sir David Varney:

- *It is often the most vulnerable citizens who have to do the most joining up between the public service islands and much of it could be avoided*

Work and Pensions Select Committee

- *The benefits system requires people to behave in a way that appears contradictory to common sense*

Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Delivering benefits, tax credits and employment services - 2008

- **Key areas:**
 - **System complexity**
 - **Lower than anticipated take-up rates**
 - **Poorly developed ICT systems**
 - **Weak co-ordination of services**
 - **Reduced options for face to face**

What are DWP doing?

- **s42 of WRA 2007**
- **Government Connect;**
- **E-Transfer project;**
- **In and Out of Work pilots;**
- **PDCS: phone claims for HB/CTB;**
- **Harmonising verification requirements;**
 - **£920m F&E - £90m (9.8%) is capital related**
 - **£720m F&E - £40m (5.5%) is capital related**
- **Reduction in backdating to 3 months**
- **Benefit Delivery Centres;**
- **Tell Us Once**

The role of Local Authorities: 2002-2008?

The DWP perspective:

- BVPIs
- Performance Measures & Enablers
- Performance related funding
- Targets
- League tables
- Letters to Chief Executives
- Inspections

The outcome?

- DWP micro-management of LAs
- All PIs equal but some more equal than others
- Speedy processing = Good Benefits Service
- Speedier processing = Better Benefits Service
- Benefit Managers become Process Managers
 - refuse to accept incomplete claims
 - close down incomplete claims as quickly as possible
 - argue about date clock starts ticking

Role of local authorities: 2008 - Communities and Local Government

- **Outcomes**

- NI 116 – child poverty
- NI 142 – vulnerable people maintaining independent living
- NI 152 – working age on out of work benefits
- NI 156 – households in temporary accommodation
- NI 187 - tackling fuel poverty

Audit Commission

- **Outcomes**

- Benefits supports LAA outcomes
- Improves the quality of life for users including most vulnerable

DWP: NI 180 and NI 181 ...

The proposal: Older Age Customers

Information held by the local authority allows;

- Assessment of pension credit;
- Provide a single view of benefit entitlement;
- Provide the customer with a single notification of entitlement;
- Provide a bottom line net entitlement figure;
- Removes overpayments;
- Looks like a single benefit;
- One agency to contact.

The proposal: Working Age Customers

LAs (rights)

- Assessment of all claims for
 - Income Support,
 - Jobseekers Allowance,
 - basic ESA entitlement,
 - local benefits;

Jobcentre Plus (responsibilities)

- All work-related activity;
- Assessment and payment of additional allowances under the ESA scheme;
- Payment of additional work related premiums and allowances.

Benefits of the proposal

- ✓ **Improved access arrangements**
- ✓ **Single Claim Process / Single Claim Form**
- ✓ **Improved speed of processing & accuracy**
- ✓ **Single agency responsibility**
- ✓ **Reduces scope for benefit overpayments**
- ✓ **Streamlines reporting of changes**
- ✓ **Generates efficiencies and provides capacity for challenges ahead**
- ✓ **Makes administration of welfare benefits accountable to local communities**

Background Information

	IS	JSA
Claimants in Leeds	24,835	13,475
% also getting HB/CTB	82%	44%
Pension Credit		
Claimants in Leeds	34,410	
% also getting HB/CTB	83%	

Conclusion

- The Pension Credit arguments are being well received but ... ;
- The DWP is unable to see beyond transaction and process and is pushing all its efforts into improving processes that are flawed;
- There is a real danger that we will end up with an underclass of people unable to access benefits;
- Local Authorities need to press the arguments to become the front face of government;
- What are you prepared to do to push for integration?