



JIM BOYD
HB/CTB LIAISON

3 Atlantic Quay
20 York Street
GLASGOW G2 8LW

Tel: 0141 245 6945
Fax: 0141 245 6927

Email: James.Boyd@thepensionservice.gsi.gov.uk

Website: www.thepensionservice.gov.uk

To: Housing Benefit Managers

Date: 11/05/2006

Service Level Agreements between
The Pension Service and Local Authorities (HB/CTB)

As you will be aware, The Pension Service has an obligation with DWP to review the above Service Level Agreements at the end of each financial year. This year, in view of The Pension Service Transformation plans, particularly those involving migration of work and the movement of Local Authority (LA) caseloads, a more substantial review, which has involved various levels of Pension Service and LA staff, has taken place.

The main problem that has been created for Local Authorities concerns the movement of LA caseloads. This churn period of the business will mean some Local Authorities moving 3-4 times between Pension Centres with a requirement to re-sign Service Level Agreements on each occasion. Clearly this would be unacceptable.

The Working Group that examined the SLA position has therefore come up with an approach that I believe meets the needs of both businesses in the short term whilst providing stable business based liaison arrangements from steady state.

The Working Group were firmly of the view that liaison arrangements between The Pension Service and Local Authorities in relation to HB/CTB issues should be at an Operational level i.e. between Pension Centre Managers and Local Authority HB/CTB Managers. The steady state SLA should be more customer focused, should provide a means of examining the end-to-end process between The Pension Service and the Local Authority and should provide a facility for identifying process improvement that would lead to an enhanced customer experience.

The steady state SLAs from 2008 would be for a 3-year duration, with a major review of their effectiveness taking place in 2010. The removal of the need for annual sign up will be replaced by a more formal and accountable 6-monthly and annual review process. This annual review process will become uniform with a common form being used across the businesses.

For the period 2006-2007 the movement of business requires a different approach. For these years Pension Centre Managers and Local Authority Managers will be asked to sign up to a set of Liaison Principles with The Pension Service HB/CTB Liaison Manager. For

**The Pension Service is part of the
Department for Work and Pensions**



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

Local Authorities these principles will be transferable between Pension Centres and all that will change will be an annex detailing the programme of Liaison meetings and the contact arrangements.

In order to make SLAs and Liaison Principles more meaningful working documents, a number of sections from the current SLA and other additional materials will be placed in a Guidance/Good Practice Guide that will complement both documents and will be updated as required.

The Guidance/Good Practice Guide is being issued in draft form at this stage. Hard copy versions which will include guidance for examining the end to end process will be issued at the beginning of July 06.

I believe that the above arrangements will allow The Pension Service and Local Authorities to build on the successful practices that have been in place and that have seen us through the introduction of Pension Credit and the new HB/CTB Take Up Process. I look forward to seeing both parties embracing these arrangements for the future.

Yours sincerely

Jim Boyd
The Pension Service
HB/CTB Liaison