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**19/08/09**

**For the attention of the Section 151 officer**

Re: Improving access security to the DWP Customer Information System (CIS)

Dear Sir/Madam,

Over the past few years DWP and local authorities have worked successfully together in a concerted effort to vastly improve our data security. One of the most sensitive shared areas of data use is local authority access to the DWP's Customer Information System (CIS). The recent improvements to local authority systems supported by the Gov Connect team moving from internet access to access via GCSx has hardened the routes by which that information is accessed to best practice standards and we are keen to build on that by strengthening the entry routes to that information to government best practice standards also. To this end we will be looking to implement all CIS users onto the government 2-factor authentication system 'Employee Authentication System' or 'EAS'. This will significantly tighten the controls around who has access to this database and allow both central and local government to have confidence in the security of the personal data it stores on citizens. We will be looking to do this over the course of next year with a major pilot occurring towards the end of this year.

**What is EAS?**

EAS is a pan-government authentication service that is designed to provide each user with a reusable token that can allow access to a number of central government databases. What makes it far more secure than the current approach is that it involves both a more secure user authentication process and access via a two-factor token as opposed to a standard password. You may already have heard of EAS and your local authority may already be implementing it independently in order to access ContactPoint or one of the other services available through EAS. If not, however, DWP is establishing a link into the EAS system for other local authorities to use and they will fully support LAs onto the system.

**What does this mean for your Local authority?**

I have written today to your Revenues & Benefits manager (letter attached) to cover in more detail:

- the proposed rollout of EAS
- what implications it will have for your organisation, and

## Policy Protect

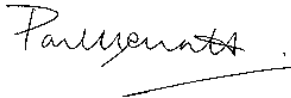
- what actions it will require to fully implement.

This will mean training a local authority agent to be able to conduct the appropriate level of identity verification on LA CIS users and all LA CIS users providing proof of identity to the proposed level before receiving their pass token. DWP will provide any necessary support, equipment and training to make this process as smooth as possible and at all stages we will continue to consult with the local authority association's via the Practitioners Operations Group (POG).

There are a number of 'next steps' which we have asked your Revenues & Benefits manager to perform over the coming months and we would be grateful for your support in ensuring these happen. Information on EAS will be available at [www.dwp.gov.uk/eas](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/eas) which will be updated periodically as the project develops.

In the meantime please do not hesitate to get in contact by emailing [eas.info@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:eas.info@dwp.gsi.gov.uk) if you have any questions or further queries.

Yours faithfully,



**Paul Howarth**

Housing Benefit Strategy Division (Divisional Manager)