

Security Operation Group (SOG)
Minutes of the SOG meeting held on Thursday, 10 September 2009 at CIPFA,
London

Attendees:

John Viggers	DWP FESD (chair)
Elaine Turner	Carlisle
Tim Fisher	Haringey & London Councils
Diane Baker	Peterborough
Jackie Dye	Camden
Tracey Banfield	Bradford
John Rosenbloom	Manchester
Ian Davenport	Bury
Steven Carey	Leeds
Liz Cooper	Audit Commission
Jatinder Bedi	PAU
Jane Perfect	LAPD
Jacqui Gaynor	IFD
Sue Godfrey	IFD
Saboor Din	OPD
Helen Cockshott	OPD
Nick Herbert	FEM
Colin Ormes	IFD
Helen Steadman	DWP Comm
James Ablewhite	FESD
Wendy Fisher	FESD (Minutes)

Apologies:

David Barr	FESD
Fiona Dunn	FESD
Paul Cusworth	HBIFD
Jean Cheeseman	South Bucks
Terence Richings	Wandsworth
Karen McNeil	East Ayrshire
Michelle Charles	Debt Management
Chris Bullen	JCP Partnerships

1. Welcome and Introductions

John Viggers welcomed all to the meeting.

2. Minutes of the last Meeting/Matters arising/Action Points

The minutes from the May meeting were agreed.

Comments made on the action points were as follows:

May 1 – This action point requires that a SLA is referred back to SOG for discussion. It was felt that areas concerning SOL PD would be better met by receiving regular updates.

Action point 1 - SOL PD to be invited to attend next meeting and to consider fielding a representative at future meetings or provide written updates on a regular basis – say every quarter.

May 3 – Cleared. Written update provided.

Members asked that the lead for One Strike attend the next meeting and should be prepared to address the issue of conditional cautions. Request made that data be made available on the number of 2 strike sanctions administered to date.

Action point 2 – Lead to be invited to attend next meeting to address points raised.

3. Review of Fraud & Error programme

Risk based verification

VRA is due for completion in December and evaluation will take place in the New Year.

Evaluation is due shortly on the In-Claim RTV project. Although provided by Sungard it has been quality assured by pilot LAs and DWP. The same route will also be followed for the New Claims pilot. Evaluations will include comments on savings and efficiencies.

As projects end DWP will consider the impact of the results across all benefits and discuss these with key stakeholders.

LAs commented that as RBV is a high profile area LAs would be looking for a definite steer from DWP as to the benefits of the various products. It was commented that the in-claims product was felt to be another tool LAs can use to assist with activity already taking place. In areas where there may be a greater influence on operations such as New Claims, discussions on the effects will be taking place with Audit Commission.

Data matching with CRA

Presentation provided on the initial findings of the project. It highlighted that the main area of success was on living together situations, and provided some analysis on resulting investigations, sanctions and overpayments.

The business case for national rollout is being developed. Continued SOG input will be invaluable.

Data matching with a CRA is already taking place within DWP and it was felt that identification of particular risk categories would reduce over time. It would be useful if data is obtained to ascertain the medium/long term impact.

Action point 3 -Obtain details of current performance in FIS in order to gain view on medium/long term impact of CRA on business.

4. Joint Reviews

Nick Herbert (IFD) provided a presentation on the effect of joint reviews on the HB process .

It was noted that the methodology would change from 2010 once new regulations on the way overpayments are treated on a change of address are implemented.

LAAAs asked what would be the trigger for reviewing joint claims as this will increase the referrals under HB and potentially affect the HBR figures.

Action point 4 - To check whether the increase proportion of passported cases in the new single sample will mean that the higher levels of fraud and error in DWP benefits will be passed on to HB.

LAAAs commented that when the sample identifies a case that has been moved out of the Primary Sampling Unit, the reviewing officer will request that benefit is suspended. SOG would like the suspension letter to be written in such a way that ensures the customer has to report to the fraud team to explain why they had not been contactable. This will counteract the risk that benefit is reinstated without challenge.

Action point 5 – Proposal to amend suspension letter to be discussed with Performance Measurement.

It was also commented that overpayments could be perpetuated as changes could not be made to cases once identified and would therefore be counted as an official error.

Action point 6 – DWP to check subsidy rules for definition of fraud.

5. Training

Helen Cockshott and Saboor Din (OPD) provided a presentation to address some of the queries around the delivery of training products, and to invite members to consider learning requirements for 2010/11 – see Appendix 1.

LAAAs welcomed the feedback referred to in the presentation, but felt that it was limited and did not reflect the situation at operational level. Points raised were as follows:

- Course dates to be advertised in HB Direct
- There are some inconsistencies between demand and learning available. Open learning not suitable for those who require a refresher course. If material is adapted it can also be used to fill some course space.
- Feedback required on areas such as waiting periods for classroom events, open learning material and mentors.
- OPD would welcome being informed of staff that were willing to travel to courses outside of their immediate area.
- OPD welcomed opportunity to attend future SOG meetings on a half yearly basis as minimum.
- To assist with determining their priorities for 2010/11 OPD were advised to canvass staff via an F Circular.

Action point 7 – SOG/LAAs to consider business priorities for 2010-2011 and provide feedback on how OPD resource can be best utilised by next SOG.

Action point 8 - OPD to canvass views of fraud officers by way of the F circular

Action point 9 - OPD to be notified of dates for future SOG meetings.

6. Customer Centric

Colin Ormes gave a presentation on the status of the Customer Centric project, the main drivers for future development and the steps required to support these –

Access to Customer Centric will be given to current GMS/HBMS users. View back will not be available until June 2010 assuming it remains in scope and will provide all government data held on customers in one search, as opposed to partial information available through the Customer Information System.

Migration of architecture will take place over two phases to be completed by December 2010. A third phase of development may be considered subject to costs and business priorities.

Action point 10 - CO project to keep SOG informed of progress, in particularly towards critical dates identified – June 2010, December 2010.

7. Update on Communications

Helen Steadman provided an update on current communication initiatives

Customer error campaign.

The results of pilot were felt to be successful. Discussions are still taking place as to whether to run further pilots and LAs will be invited to volunteer to take part should they go ahead.

LAA's commented that more activity should take place to encourage customers to report changes of circumstance as this will help to reduce interventions as well as help customers. LAs asked that it be noted that they would welcome further pilots in this area.

Targeting Benefit Thieves

A new campaign is being devised focusing on the likelihood of fraudulent activity being discovered. The campaign will run in November and will be supported by a toolkit for use by LAs. Members will be invited to provide feedback on its content.

Members discussed the merits of tracking research, particularly around attitudinal changes to ensure campaign materials were effective.

LAA's commented that LAs were more proactive in publicising results of prosecutions and felt that DWP prosecution cases were not widely publicised at local level, even in cases of joint prosecutions.

Action point 11 – Comms to contact Head of Regional Press Office to determine what activity is taking place and what can be done to facilitate increased activity in this area.

8. AOB

A project is taking place looking at the use of digital technology for interviews under caution. LAA's were asked if they were using digital solutions or analogue cassettes. LAA responded that both methods were in use to varying degrees across LAs.

Concerns were raised that DWP documents are archived *within* the 14-month period. There is an inconsistency between LAs needs to obtain DWP documentation (up to 6 years) and DWP's document retention policy.

Action point 12 – Details of DWP document retention policy and rationale for policy to be obtained and circulated to members.

LAA's were recently asked to comment on a review of the HB Fraud & Recoveries form. LAA's provided a summary of the feedback they would be submitting.