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Partnership Agreement for Benefit Administration, Security and Fraud between Jobcentre Plus and Local Authorities

I am writing to let you know about a new, three year, Partnership Agreement between Jobcentre Plus and Local Authorities which sets out the principles for effective partnership working between the two organisations at a local level. The Agreement has been developed with input from Jobcentre Plus and Local Authority operational colleagues and agreed by ourselves and the Local Authority Association's Steering Group.

The key aim of the Agreement, which I attach as a separate document, is to provide a framework that supports effective joint working in respect of Benefit Administration, Security and Fraud. As you will be aware, recent announcements in the budget regarding the Housing Benefit agenda and also the In and Out of Work pilots, support an increasing need for closer working and understanding between our organisations.

I would be grateful if you could arrange for the Agreement to be cascaded to your operational managers. To support further the launch of the Agreement, announcements will be placed on the Partnerships Division, Benefit and Fraud Directorate, DWP and my Directorate intranet pages. Short articles will also be placed in both Jobcentre Plus Managers Update and the Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit General Information Bulletin (aimed at LA colleagues). This replaces the previous separate agreements for joint working in Benefit Administration and Fraud.

We are not asking for copies of signed agreements to be submitted to Jobcentre Plus centrally, which has happened in the past; nor do we intend to "police" local arrangements in any way. Our assumption is that Joint Boards will simply adopt the new Agreement and I am confident that it will make a real contribution to ensuring that both organisations continue to work effectively together and deliver a quality service to our shared customers.

If you or your operational colleagues would like to discuss or clarify any issues contained in the Agreement please contact either Ian Gibbins or Chris Bullen in the Governmental Business Partnerships Team. They can be contacted at: ian.gibbins@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk (tel: 0114 294 3043) and chris.bullen@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk (tel: 0114 294 3034).

Matthew Nicholas