

Security Operation Group (SOG) Terms of Reference

1.0 Security Operation Group

1.1 The Security Operation Group (SOG) operates under the umbrella of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)/Local Authority Associations Steering Group (LAASG). It provides a sounding board and interchange forum for officials and LAA nominated local authority practitioners to discuss issues and explore strategy proposals in development with specific emphasis on fraud and error and compliance issues.

2.0 Remit

- 2.1 SOG remit includes discussion of, and operational input into, policy development as well as consideration of operational issues referred to SOG by the Steering Group. It also deals with the operational interaction between the LAAs and DWP in respect of the Fraud Partnership Agreement (FPA), reviews and joint/closer working issues between LAs and Jobcentre Plus FIS and Compliance Teams.
- 2.2 The group reports back to the Steering Group on its work and outcomes. Where relevant, SOG will be a decision making body, only referring matters to the Steering Group where a higher level strategic steer is required, where issues relate to matters of funding and subsidy or where issues have significant resource implications.

3.0 Terms of reference

- 3.1 The group will be responsible for:
- providing operational insight into all matters impacting on fraud and error, compliance and sanctions-related issues;
 - considering and developing solutions and opportunities for improved joint-working arrangements between FIS and LAs;
 - where appropriate, providing a forum for discussion of Joint Board issues and matters that affect joint-working between FIS and LAs;

 - exploration of, and input into, strategies and performance measures designed to support the achievement of fraud and error-related PSA targets;
 - encouraging the development and sharing of good practice in relation to counter-fraud and error activity;
 - reviewing and signing off draft FPA documents at times set out in the FPA key milestone delivery timetable;
 - providing quality assurance and clearance of appropriate HB/CTB circulars (also to be copied to POG) as detailed in methods of working and in discussion where appropriate with colleagues on the Practitioners Operational Group;
 - communicating the outcomes from SOG discussions through the formally agreed DWP and LAA communication channels;
 - proposing development of initiatives in support of the above.

4.0 Membership

- Chair – Housing Benefit Strategy Division (HBSD)
- LAAs – nominated representatives from the LAAs (Local Government Association/Welsh Local Government Association: 8, London Councils: 4, Convention of Scottish Local Authorities: 3)
- DWP – as required representatives from HBSD, FESD, The Pension Service, Jobcentre Plus, The Appeals Service, The Rent Service, Debt Management and HMRC.
- Other interested stakeholders will be invited to contribute on specific topics as necessary.

5.0 Methods of working

5.1 The Group will:

- hold meetings at a six weekly frequency. A programme of meeting dates will be set in advance for each calendar year;
- provide expert views on technical guidance within agreed time spans through:
 - written clearance of non-contentious items as and when required;
 - quality assurance and written clearance of appropriate HB/CTB Circulars.
- commission one-off workshops charged with developing particular ideas or resolving specific issues or where specific technical expertise is required.
- commission special sub-groups to take forward major developments reporting back to SOG.

6.0 Secretariat support

6.1 Provided by Housing Benefit Strategy Division (HBSD).