



Minutes

Title of meeting:	Universal Credit Programme Board
Date:	23 February 2017, 15:00 to 17:00
Location:	London Caxton House, Room 6.24
Attendees:	Sir Robert Walmsley (Chair), Neil Couling (Director General UC), Ian Wright (Programme Director UC), Mayank Prakash (Director General Digital), Debbie Alder (Director General Human Resources), Peter Schofield (Director General Finance), Pete Searle (Strategy Director Working Age), Jonathan Shebioba (Cabinet Office Operations Lead), Beth Russell (Director HM Treasury), John-Paul Marks (Director Operations), Ami Chandarana (HM Treasury, Observer)
Presenters:	Craig Eblett, Nic Harrison, [REDACTED]
Apologies:	Tommy O'Reilly (Chief Executive DSD Northern Ireland), Andrew Rhodes (Director General Operations), Shelagh Brown (UC Programme Manager HMRC), Lesley Seary (Chief Executive LB Islington)

1. Welcome and Introductions

Sir Robert Walmsley welcomed members and invited them to approve the UC Programme Board minutes of 19th January. The minutes were approved with a slight amendment on page 2 that had been proposed by the HM Treasury representative and agreed by the Chair as he felt it made the relevant point clearer.

The Chair also drew the attention of board members to the below the line paper (4) which cleared the outstanding Programme Board action around the consideration of a possible 4th UC Objective relating to delivery of AME savings (Action UCPB210716/01). It was noted that it has been agreed that the Programme should not have a specific AME savings objective. However the Programme needs to be accountable for decisions made and actions that lead to changes in AME. The approach moving forward will be reporting progress against AME spend and making sure that AME is part of the Terms of Reference for Governance meetings moving forward. The Chair thanked all those that had been involved in lengthy discussions to resolve this matter and felt the correct decision had been reached. The Chair drew members attention to the fact that the correct escalation route if decisions were not reached elsewhere was initially to Programme Board, then Investment Committee and the Departmental AME risk committee.

2. Programme Update

The UC Programme Director provided an update and summarised key elements of the Programme Dashboard.

The overall status of the Programme remains Amber, and rollout is continuing to plan. 3

possible as well as implementing Case Management. The DG for HR then asked about how unit costs may be affected by contingency. The SRO for UC stated that contingency was like an insurance policy which we may use or may not, however we need to ensure it is there in readiness to scale in October. The DG for HR felt that we need to understand whether contingency is included in the unit costs or not. The DG for Finance suggested we aim for the number of staff outlined at the previous meeting and do the things we planned to bring numbers down and only use the contingency if needed. The Director for Operations feels he will need the contingency to scale for October, but will not need this indefinitely.

c) The Chair had concerns over the revised date of the end of May for the migration to Amazon Web Services as the 3 month trial period would then take us to the end of August which is getting close to scaling in October. The Programme Director stated that if the strategic networking element of the design slipped again for any reason a tactical solution would be in place to hit the May date. He was hopeful that the milestone for AWS migration could go green by the next Programme Board meeting in March.

d) The Chair asked if the Performance Benchmarks for operations had been agreed by the Programme Board. The Programme Director said they had not been to Programme Board but had been cleared via the Programme Delivery Executive, so had been through Programme governance. The Chair was happy to accept this but asked if a below the line paper outlining the Benchmarks could be produced for the next Programme Board meeting in April, this was agreed.

e) The Director for HMT mentioned recent media interest in payment gaps and asked if the Programme was worried about a potential policy risk. The SRO for UC stated that the Select Committee had widened their remit to include waiting days and felt there may be some pressure, however once operational performance has improved this will go away.

Action – UCPB230217/1 – Paper on Benchmarks discussed at PDE to be issued as a below the line paper at the next Programme Board meeting in April – Secretariat Team

3. Operational Update

The Operations Director provided an update, summarising the key operational issues.

Operations are re-structuring Working Age Operations for Universal Credit, bringing 2 teams together as one (Jobcentres and Service Centres) under one Director General who will be Susan Park. The priority in Operations is to build a team equipped to successfully deliver exceptional Customer Services. Between now and Spring 2018 the Service Centre workforce will treble and the number of Work Coaches will double to support the rapid growth in our customer caseload. A new UC Operational Executive Team (UC OET) has been created to drive continuous improvement and resolution of operational risk with Janice Hartley, Lara Sampson and Paul McKeown from the UC Programme as part of the team.

The first set of Case Management Benchmarks have been established to give timelines of critical activities these are likely to be fully embedded by May. Telephony is working flexibly to keep claimants on line; telephony in the Live Service is very good and is on track to achieve the 90% target of calls answered as they are currently achieving 89.83%. Full Service is improving and an improvement plan is in place to reach the Benchmark by the start of the next performance year. We need to ensure that the first activities with the

The Chair also signalled the intent to invite the respective DG for UC Operations to join the Programme Board, emphasising the importance of moving from design to operational rollout.

4. Verify

Craig Eblett and Nic Harrison provided an update

Craig attended Programme Board last November to update the Board on identity verification. On this occasion Craig was joined by Nic Harrison from GDS to update the Board demonstrating that DWP and GDS colleagues are joined up on this issue. Ministerial and Permanent Secretary meetings have taken place recently to ensure cohesion of claimant authentication across government.

It was expected that Verify would be achieving a minimum 40% success rate at this time rising to 60% by October 2017. However for the last six months Verify is consistently performing at approximately 30%. In part to mitigate the risk of Verify not improving success rates, we agreed at the November UC Programme Board to commence work on a Complimentary Service to be deployed before October 2017.

We have now settled on a potential solution for the Complimentary which involves paying 1p into a bank account along with a reference number. When the claimant authenticates back to UC we would ask for part of the reference number to ensure the claimant has access to the bank account. This approach leverages the banking industry "Know Your Customer" rules which we can leverage to secure UC Full Service. The approach is still being tested however early indications are positive and the National Cyber Resilience Centre (includes CESG) have just completed a detailed design review and we are expecting a positive outcome. The Complimentary Solution is planned for delivery into live by June allowing time to test, learn and iterate ahead of scaling in October 2017.

There has been good collaboration between DWP and GDS on Verify to satisfy both business cases – UC and Verify. Nic expressed gratitude to DWP for working through the problems together and said that there are multiple facets to improving Verify success rates and there is no silver bullet. Services which use Verify have different characteristics and attributes making comparison between them more difficult.

GDS is developing a new service within GOV.UK Verify which offers a lower Level of Assurance (LOA1) and it is hoped this will help UC as it will make verification simpler and is expected to achieve much higher success rates, thus keeping claimants in the digital channel. Verify LOA1 will need to be augmented with additional security to meet the needs of UCFS. DWP has agreed to plan to incorporate LOA1 into the UC journey on the basis of successful testing, preferably on another DWP service (Child Maintenance Group are currently engaged with GDS to do this). The new service is planned to be in use around May/June 2017 for DVLA services and GDS have prioritised the development of LOA1 in an attempt to ensure it is available to meet UC needs.

Programme Board members:

a) The DG for Finance asked if LOA1 was not available until next year would this put more pressure on Craig to manage this through and provide a usable service. He also asked where we might be in October. Craig said that LOA1 would be available this year but we will need to look at a best fit with the current backlog. The ultimate fall back would be to

so once UC is rolled out fully we will have to look at other ways to measure UC performance. Some of the measures being looked at require complex data developments and integration of new data with the UCFS build.

Programme Board members:

a) The Director for HMT felt it may be useful to compare effectiveness of conditionality against legacy. [REDACTED] felt that we would have more capability to undertake this type of analysis as the caseload builds. The SRO for UC felt this is all really good stuff however the comparison group is now shrinking.

b) The Chair thought it may be a good idea to get the Office of National Statistics (ONS) to peer review, and also to put in a measure +/- to get an indication of what we are driving towards. We also need to look at the impacts on policy.

6. Hard Facts

Hard Facts

- a) Both Gov.Verify and the Complementary Service need a continuing focus.
- b) Focus on the milestone for migration to Amazon Web Services.
- c) Would welcome greater Senior Operations representation at Programme Board.

7. Any Other Business

The next Programme Board meeting will be on Thursday 6th April; this change in cycle is due to the Easter holiday period and ensures a maximum 6 week gap between meetings over this period.

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