

17 December 2012

Dear Chief Executive

Data Sharing with Local Authorities for the purposes of Local Welfare Provision (LWP) Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF)

I am writing to update you on the proposed process for sharing LWP/SWF data with LAs/DAs from April 2013.

We remain confident that a Legal Gateway will be in place from April 2013 to allow the sharing of data for the purposes of LWP/SWF.

We want to do all that we can to support you in your delivery models within the Data Sharing Framework and have been working on options to do this. But we are limited by the capacity of our IT systems. I need to advise you that:

- there is no further capacity within the current Customer Information System platform, so no extra users can be added at this time;
- there are plans to replatform CIS which will allow extra users to be added but this is unlikely to be completed until the end of 2013 at the earliest; and
- the scheduled CIS work programme means that we are unable to include information about Short Term Benefit Advances (STBA), Budgeting Loans (BLs), Budgeting Advances (BAs) and People Leaving Care in the near future.

As a result of the CIS capacity issues the decision at this time is that we are unable to provide additional access to CIS to LAs. We are also unable to include any additional data on CIS.

We know from the recent CIS returns that many LAs have built LWP models based on benefit eligibility and that access to CIS is seen as integral to the delivery model. **To support the LA, a decision has been taken to allow LA staff that have access to CIS for Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit (HB/CTB) purposes to access CIS for LWP/SWP purposes.** This carries some risks for DWP as staff may have access to more information than is required to deliver their specific LWP/SWF scheme. We will work closely with you in the next few months to ensure that the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is updated to support this decision and to mitigate the risk.

We have provided details at Annex A of the CIS screens and information that can be shared for the purposes of LWP.

If any LAs/County Councils (CCs) processing LWP do not have access to CIS then they need to arrange for the most appropriate LA office to access the data on their behalf and transfer the data via secure e-mail and in accordance with their responsibilities as data owners. If any LAs/CCs do not have a secure e-mail system in place then they need to send an e-mail to SOCIAL.FUND@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK titled 'CIS Access'

The Project is currently working with our IT colleagues to establish when a new CIS platform will be in place, at this point it may be possible to increase the number of users. Once we have received confirmation of the dates for CIS Replatforming we will notify LAs.

Next Steps

Where a LA requires access to DWP data for the purposes of LWP/SWF they may wish to consider utilising existing Benefits and Revenue staff that have access to CIS for HB/CTB purposes. These staff will be able to access CIS to obtain information on behalf of LA colleagues. Information that is shared must be shared securely and in accordance with guidance that will be outlined in the MOU.

We are unable to provide data on STBAs/BAs/BLs. You will need to consider how this information can be obtained from the customer. CIS will help you to establish how long a customer has been on benefit and the customer themselves may be able to provide evidence of the outcome of any application.

We realise that many LAs will be disappointed with this news however at present this is the only option available.

Yours Sincerely
Mike Keegan
Social Fund Reform Project

Annex A – CIS Data available for LWP Claims

Current CIS – Screen Details
Account Summary: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identity Details• Contact Details• Special Indicators – pv• Has record been updated that day
Verification: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Displays a person’s Known Facts Information, which includes details of their DOB, NINO, Postcode
Address History: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Current (already provided in Account Summary Dialogue) and previous known history
Relationship History: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Current and historical data relationship details.• Relationships are split into 3 sections – payee details, other payee, person relationship
Award History: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A summarised Award History• A full Award History.• Income Related Legacy benefits – information currently supplied in award history
Full Award Details: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Displays the full details about a specific benefit award. Access to this screen is from the Awards section in the Account Summary screen and from the Award History screen.
Breakdown of Assessed Income Figure: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The screen shows a detailed breakdown of a customer’s Assessed Income Figure