



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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Streamlining Welsh Benefits Steering Group meeting: 24 July 2024

Streamlining Welsh Benefits Steering Group meeting held on 24 July 2024.

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Contents

Attendees

Chair's welcome

Local Government SRO Advisory Group

Feedback from drafting sessions

Risk log

WINFY (What I Need from You)

Minutes of last meeting and any other business

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Attendees

Fran Targett, Chair
Amanda Main, Caerphilly CBC
Andrew Arrowsmith, Centre for Digital Public Services
Anna Friend, Flintshire County Council
Claire Germain, Welsh Government
Karen McFarlen, Children in Wales
Katie Till, The Trussell Trust
Lindsey Phillips, Welsh Local Government Association
Lisa Hayward, Welsh Local Government Association
Matthew Evans, Welsh Revenues and Benefits Managers Group
Miranda Evans, Disability Wales
Nigel Griffiths, Bridgend CBC
Simon Hatch, Citizens Advice Cymru

Also in attendance

Angela Endicott, Welsh Government
Ben Gibbs, Workstream Facilitator
Emma Morales, Centre for Digital Public Services
Glyn Jones, Workstream Facilitator
James Walsh-Heron, Welsh Government
Launa Anderson, Welsh Government
Paul Neave, Welsh Government
Sam Pidduck, Welsh Government

Apologies

Helal Uddin (Ethnic Minorities and Youth Support Team), Leah Whitty

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(Workstream Facilitator), Victoria Lloyd (Age Cymru), Josh Parry (Workstream Facilitator), Steffan Evans (The Bevan Foundation), Joanna Goodwin (Centre for Digital Public Services), David Willis (Welsh Government), Mel James (Welsh Government), Jen Griffiths (LG SRO Advisory Group)

Chair's welcome

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and thanked them for their contributions to the project in the past month.

The Chair reflected on recent changes to the Welsh Government, reminding members that whilst this project sits under a new Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip, Jane Hutt originated the work in her previous role of Minister for Social Justice. Furthermore, CG reiterated that the project has the support of the Welsh Government Cabinet and the Partnership Council for Wales.

Members also noted Local Government are the key partner(s) of this work. The Chair informed the group that the Local Government SRO Advisory Group Chair (Jen Griffiths) will be joining the steering group to aid informational flow and collaboration between the 2 groups.

Action point 1: terms of reference to be amended to reflect Jen Griffiths joining the Steering Group.

Local Government SRO Advisory Group

LH started this item with a brief update on the most recent meeting of the LG SRO Advisory Group which highlighted the need for further clarity on the project.

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Points raised:

- Clarification on the relationship between the groups involved in the project (such as the Steering Group, Local Government SRO Advisory Group, Workstreams, Partnership Council for Wales).
- A roadmap to set out the overarching direction of the project and Workstreams.
- The sharing of the Steering Group's project risk log.
- A detailed mapping exercise to identify similarities and variances in processes and systems across councils.
- A circular share of information between the 2 groups.
- Recognition that whilst at this stage, the project may not require additional funding, recommendations in future stages might.

In response, Members noted the ongoing work by the core team to clearly set out the relationship between all groups involved in the project.

Furthermore, it was noted that the concerns regarding the need for a roadmap and understanding of the existing processes and systems within councils, should be addressed as the Workstreams begin to identify the tasks required to take forward their priority actions.

The Chair agreed to regularly share the project risk log with the SRO Group and proposed a regular meeting with their Chair to aid information flow.

Action point 2: Chair of SRO Group and Chair of Steering Group to meet on a regular basis.

Action point 3: core team / WLGA to share risk log with SRO Group members.

Feedback from drafting sessions

At the last meeting, several members agreed to begin drafting the workplan template. Following 2 drafting sessions, members were presented with a proposed structure and draft template.

The proposed draft places the principles and commitments of the Welsh Benefits Charter at its core and has 3 tiers:

Visual Roadmap (High-level detail): Visual tool to help sequence the workflow across all 6 Workstreams and highlight interdependencies and key milestones.

- Roadmap Framework (mid-level detail): Used to provide additional high-level information such as priorities, outputs, impacts, timescales and lead contributors. It is a clear way of representing how each priority links back to the Charter.
- Phase 1 Workstream Action Plan (Granular-level detail): A prioritised list of tasks of what needs to happen, and when, to contribute towards achieving the agreed priorities for Phase 1.

Members were presented with a template for the Roadmap Framework, which along with the 2 other tiers would be further populated as workstreams continue to identify their key tasks.

Members approved the draft as a proof of concept and made the following recommendations for the next iteration:

- recognition that the workplan will be a living document and will therefore likely change over time
- a clearer way of representing the chronological order of the actions required for Phase 1
- further clarity on who is responsible for each action

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- it was decided that the drafting group would continue to meet across the summer and build upon the template. In the meantime, it was agreed to share the existing draft with the SRO Advisory Group

Action Point 4: workstreams to continue identifying the tasks required to fulfil their priority actions.

Action Point 5: further drafting sessions to take place across the summer to begin populating the workplan framework template.

Action Point 6: core team / WLGA to share draft workplan template with SRO Advisory group members.

Risk log

Members reviewed the risk log and discussed whether additional risks should be added.

Members agreed to amend the risk log to reflect the pressure placed on the capacity / resources of Third Sector Partners who are either directly involved in the project or who may see increased demand as a result of streamlining Welsh benefits activity.

Furthermore, members noted the risk that some Welsh benefit delivery partners may not have the theoretical and practical knowledge to effectively adopt a Social Model of Disability approach to service delivery.

To end the item, the Chair requested members send further risks/mitigations to the core team.

Action point 7: risk log to be amended to reflect the discussions on Third Sector resources and the Social Model of Disability.

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Action point 8: members to send any additional risks/mitigations to the core team.

WINFY (What I Need from You)

During this item, EM guided members through a “What I Need From You” exercise to help identify essential needs and to accept or reject requests for support.

The exercise aimed to demystify what individual group members need to achieve their common goals. There was evident support from members for most individual’s needs.

Minutes of last meeting and any other business

Members approved the minutes from the last meeting (25.06.2024).

The next steering group meeting is due for September 2024, with the date to be confirmed.

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