

Horizon Compensation Programme Board Note

Chair: Carl Creswell (CC) **Date:** 17/09/2024

Attendees (DBT)

Rob Brightwell (RB), Helen Thomas (HT), Joel Miah (JM), Charlotte Heyes (CH1), Chris Hurne (CH2), Ellen Wasden (EW), Shay Abedin (SA), Solene Le Digabel (SD), Harry Fallowfield (HF), Elena Michael (EM), Eleanor Brooks (EB), Zebby Meredith (ZM), Amanda McMenamin (AM), Stephanie Cossom (SC), Richard [Rick] Howard (RH), Ross Fielding (RF), Grace Cockerill (GC)

External Attendees

Evelyn Hocking (EH) [POL], Richard Paddington (RP) [POL], Archie Bond (AB) [HMT]

HSS Update

- HF spoke through this presentation point and covered the following key areas
- Main questions from Hollinrake and others was around what would the eligibility criteria be.
- With the announcement complete, the next stage is the design of the scheme, with SC currently working with commercial colleagues on the procurement side to get the tender out for third parties to deliver the scheme
- Planning on some engagement with legal reps and adv board on some of the key design questions, end to end process and how far what should be duplicated from HCRS and GLO, increasing pressure to publicise what's going on around the scheme.
- The more quickly some steers can be provided on the above the better, and that post office input would be crucial.
- CC reflected on how high or low the bar was for people to come forward and how new the evidence would need to be, CC commented that the bar wouldn't be too high.
- Step and Carl had meeting with ministers about getting digital solution, would delay scheme to march, looking into options for something more pragmatic and this would allow the scheme to be up and running sooner, but at the risk that this would also be less efficient in the long term. Work on the options is important.
- Some criticism expected on schemes soon, as well as pressure on HSS timescales. CC opened the floor to questions and comments.
- Rob – well done to team on launch, 2 comments:
 - o 1) The bar for eligibility of scheme, Chris head had some criticisms on scheme, like allowed like applicants on HSS. RB reflected that this felt similar to HSS late applications, in the sense that they were only allowed because they were late applications. RB relayed that the Advisory Board's steer on the matter is that the eligibility criteria be pushed out as soon as possible to allow potential claimants to assess their eligibility.
 - o 2) Getting a portal, not sure why one is being acquired independently, given that lawyers already have them, this could be used to make things faster and more efficient. SC responded to RB, all options are being fully assessed, detailed discussions had with DDAT, looking at potential MS Teams forms for applicants for acquiring registration data, whilst looking at casework system via a third party provider. Viability is being assessed, quick and inexpensive option is the priority. RB agreed to share GLO experience with SC offline

HCRS Update

- AM provided a high level overview of the HCRS:
 - o It was in it's 7th week of operation
 - o Announced first targets for what it aims to achieve every 40 days
 - o Claimants' representative's roundtable set up, frequency of this meeting is to be reviewed
 - o Composition and structure of independent panel has been queried around whether claimants take £600k or a fully assessed claim
- 60/40 split on take up of £600k offer, not far off initial estimate of 55/45 split (higher figure is £600k)
- On eligibility, seen as a dependency for the project, NI Department of Justice and Scottish equivalent are responsible for notifying claimants that wrongful convictions have been lifted, despite delays this has progressed well.
- MOJ as of the previous Friday have assessed 1/3rd of cohort and have been able to confirm that 1/5th is within scope.
- Other development on MOJ side, agreed to align with DBT on monthly transparency publications, first to come out next month as of the programme board.
- In terms of casework numbers – 282 registrations as of the morning of the programme board– of those 43% eligibility has been established, where it has been established, half are having ID checked and other half ID is being awaited, of 115 cohort most preliminary payments to be going within the next two to three weeks
- Of those that have registered, Hudgells is the dominant firm in the HCRS field.
- Preliminary payments: 16 of 41 have been made, 25 to be made on the day of the programme board.
- 6 final settlements have been agreed, 3 of which have been paid with the other 3 pending.
- £8.2m in disbursement paid to date.
- CC asked, for individuals whom have already had their convictions overturned, what would the process be for communicating to those individuals. Given that they are out of scope from the scheme.
- CH1 provided an confident estimate, pending confirmation with MoJ, that about 100~ individuals who are out of scope, are part of the OC scheme. These names were sent over by POL.
- Might be odd to write to them and tell them they are out of scope (MOJ to confirm), as they are already part of an existing scheme. CH1 recommends thinking through of categories of eligibility.
- CC expressed the need to show progress has been made in this area, without there being confusion around the numbers.

Comms

- CH2 spoke through the slide, though there was no substantive discussions in this area.
- SC to come back to CH2 regarding upcoming Government Response to Capture Report.

Finance

- RH commented that apart from what was presented on the slide, there were no notable major updates
- CC reflected positively on the progress that had been made with the payments going out.

Scheme Stats

- EW began with a disclaimer that the stats as presented were unpublished, and produced for the purpose of the board, and that they are not shared wider than the attendance of the board.
- HCRS stats are being publicised as of the month of the board.
- CC also reflect that in a conversation with EM is that the rate of claims coming into the GLO is high, though the rate of acceptance is slow, attributable to the number of challenge cases
- EM agreed, that the team is now dealing with complex and challenging claims.
- CC reflected on HSS, that in joint conversation with the minister SC, the question was posed by the minister on whether there was enough panel capacity on the Post Office end, given the post ITV drama numbers coming in were only steadily climbing.
- EH mentioned there had been a number of catch ups with HSF, looking at efficiencies that can be made, and that in the next conversation with SC this would be discussed.

Plan on a Page

- JM highlighted that the timeline had been extended to the next financial year, as well as highlighting key upcoming Project and Programme Milestones. JM also highlighted the addition of a Capture swimlane to the Plan on a Page.

Main Dashboard

- CC spoke through the slide on a high level, providing a well-rounded summary on each workstream.
- HF suggested SRR could be amber, down from amber/red. CC recommended that the RAG changed be suggested to the SRR project board first.
- CH1 added that there was a lot of pressure on getting payments out, though a scheme such as HCRS has only been live for a month, are our lines robust enough to push back on such comments, are we doing enough to manage expectations.
- CC agreed with this, that the programme should be able to aptly manage expectations, and highlighted a series of achievements that had been made by the HCRS project in its early stages.
- RB commented that perhaps the OC rating could be improved to Green, CH1 highlighted the team is cautious and wary given the nature of the scheme. Adding that part of the risk is that this was not a DBT led scheme. CC also noted that part of this scheme, were very high profile postmasters, which further contributed to the scheme's Amber rating.
- Planned moment for the minister, though BBC have threatened to do an empty chair if he does not agree to an interview
- CH1 noted that family members policy needs to be highlighted, ministers have some ideas, though this could be a controversial piece of work – CC commented on treasury line also being quite hard, RB added that he went with Gareth to see CST last week, Gareth was supportive of Family Members, Capture, etc.

Risks

- JM highlighted updated principal risk.
- Line on Business trade and select committee to be added to the risks.
- JM also provided a high-level update on the Programme Issues.
- CC reflected on the resourcing issue, noting that it was very much relevant, and that on HCRS resourcing was still an area needing to be addressed.