West Midlands – Care Leavers Benefit Pilot

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History

- Existing partnership
- Partners initially meeting to resolve issues around claims for unaccompanied minors
- DWP lead with key partners from local authorities and Jobcentre Plus

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Aim to simplify

- Existing system – not working for vulnerable young people; especially care leavers
- Claim process already in place for vulnerable groups
- Relationship established between Leaving Care Teams and JC+ specialist advisors

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The Process

- 2 – 4 weeks prior to young person's 18th birthday, LA Personal Advisor (LAPA) to contact named contact at the appropriate Jobcentre Plus office (named contact to be 16/17 year old Advisor) to arrange for appropriate benefit claim form to be issued.
- LAPA to ensure the young person has an N.I. number and acceptable identification/evidence if an N.I. no. Interview is required and also if possible basic bank account/post office account details to be available.
- LAPA to ensure the form was fully completed and sent to the named contact at the Benefit's Delivery Centre with all appropriate evidence and a mandate for disclosure of information.

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The Process (contd.)

- The Job Centre and LAPA to complete the relevant notification (JCP4) if the Young Person was required to attend a JF interview.
- The BDC processor to ensure the JSA claim was assessed as a priority. Income Support /Employment Support Allowance also to be assessed as a priority, providing all the evidence requirements and conditionality to entitlements were met.
- Any problems with payments would lead to be discussed by the care worker with the named contact at the B.D. Centre.

Issues

- Identifying impact on DWP / JC+
- Size of cohort
- Concerns from Leaving Care Teams as to their responsibility
- Encouraging young people in to claims culture?
- Housing Benefit??

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Solutions

- Partnership between LA and DWP
- Cohort profile
- Training for Leaving Care Teams
- Benefit as last resort – identifying opportunities for care leavers within Jobcentre
- ??

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Next Steps

- Wider roll out across region
- Identification of outcomes for participants
- Continue savings (£7,000 +)
- National roll out

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Questions?

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