

HIGHLAND LOCATION DIRECTOR UPDATE NOTE – OCTOBER 2018

Support for CPPs and Examples of Innovation

How are local partners and CPPs tackling obstacles to progress on local priorities, and where are examples of good, innovative or potentially powerful practice in local partnership working? CPPs and local partners should be aware of two websites which can assist in this.

- ***Where can CPPs and local partners find out what improvement support is available to them?*** The [Community Planning in Scotland Support Portal](#), run by the Improvement Service, provides information on the support available to local partnerships, such as CPPs and health and social care partnerships. It features support offers from national improvement agencies (including the Care Inspectorate, Education Scotland, Healthcare Improvement Scotland, Improvement Service, NHS Health Scotland and NHS National Services Scotland) and national programmes.
- ***Where can CPPs and local partners find out about good and innovative practice?*** The [Innovation Exchange](#), run by SOLACE and the Improvement Service, pulls together examples of innovative practice which local authorities have submitted for sharing. While originally set up to showcase examples of local government practice, the Exchange is increasingly featuring examples of local partnership working.

Social Security Scotland

Social Security Scotland was formally established as an executive agency of the Scottish Government on 1 September. The first payments were issued from 13 September for Carer's Allowance Supplement, which brings the rate of Carer's Allowance in line with Jobseeker's Allowance. To support a safe and secure transition, payments are being staggered in batches. In line with our commitment to implement CAS by the end of the summer, all payments, including those that require special handling, were due to be completed in early October. The second round of payments will be made from December 2018, with payments in 2019 to be made in June and December.

The next benefit due to be administered by Social Security Scotland will be for the pregnancy and baby element of the Best Start Grant. The First Minister recently announced that the first payments will be made before Christmas 2018, more than 6 months early.

Engagement is continuing across Scotland with Local Authorities and public sector organisations to raise awareness of Social Security Scotland and the services it will deliver. All 32 Local Authorities were met with over the summer and remain positive over the changes and welcoming of co-location opportunities. Some concerns have been raised over the lack of local services for the delivery of the initial benefits. While Social Security Scotland's local delivery service will not be operational for the first phase of benefits, where a person wants face-to-face support arrangements will be made to meet this need.

Ahead of a full local service 19 Local Delivery Relationship Leads have recently joined Social Security Scotland. Their role is to plan for the local presence of frontline services. While some Local Authorities will not have a Local Delivery Relationship Lead based in their area they will have a designated Lead. The Leads will meet regularly and work closely with Local Authorities and other public and third sector organisations to develop a service that is appropriate to the needs of the community.

Recruitment for operational staff in the HQ in Dundee continues with 44 people due to join in October. A further recruitment exercise is also currently underway for an additional 40 people to join in February. In line with expansion plans more floor space is being made available in both Dundee and Glasgow offices. Work is also continuing on the development of a business case outlining the options, analysis and recommendations for longer term property plans for Social Security Scotland.

Scotland's Census 2021

On 27th September National Records of Scotland (NRS) published 'Plans for Scotland's Census 2021', setting out current proposals for the census, including logistics, the census date of Sunday 21st March 2021, and plans for a large scale rehearsal in October 2019. The document also includes the proposed question topics, and new questions are proposed on veterans, sexual orientation, and transgender status/history. Parliament will decide on the final question set in due course. For the first time in 2021, people in Scotland will be encouraged to fill out their census questionnaire primarily online, with support and help available for those who need it.

To support planning and community engagement ahead of the census, NRS is now engaging with local authorities, with letters issuing to Chief Executives. The rehearsal will take place in Glasgow, Dumfries and Galloway and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, and they will be engaging more closely with their Chief Executives in the following weeks.

Donna MacKinnon
Scottish Government