

PET work strands update – August 18

Action	Summary	Progress	Status
CIVIL APPLICATIONS AND MEANS			
Special Children Act cases – streamlining to reduce time taken to process	Completed – approx. 95% of items processed within 2 working days, all other cases e.g. linked cases, completed within 5 working days	Completed	Closed
Streamline capital means assessment	Completed – reduced evidence requirements, approx. 90% passported means applications processed within 2 working days	Completed	Closed
Review of capital passporting introduction	Review of introduction of capital passporting, consideration of removal of capital aspects	Ongoing – submission to ministers	Review monthly. no further progress to review at this stage.
Streamline non passported means assessments	Aim is to allow caseworkers to amend means assessments which based on the supporting evidence aren't correct, rather than referring back to providers. This will only cover minor errors. Will speed up significantly the processing of means assessment and reduce further information requests	Ongoing – to allow minor evidenced amendments by caseworkers a tool called the Means Functionality form needs to be enhanced – currently with IT and digital team to progress	The aim is to ensure MFF works as it should and test process fully with a number of cases before wider roll out. The IT team have identified some bugs in development which are being investigated so work is ongoing. Testing has been completed – minor issues to be resolved and we are looking to roll out more widely from September onwards.
Clear guidance on means assessment evidence	Improve knowledge of what is required in terms of civil eligibility evidence, providing top tips documents and clear guidance as to what is essential	Two documents drafted	Civil certificated eligibility document went out in May. Closed.
Review of 2 step emergency process	Concern is length of time it takes from submission to grant. Starting by looking at offer acceptance process, with a process map completed. Issue around offer and keeping it open to allow client time to accept. We are starting to look at a design alternative that allows providers to avoid the 2 step process completely.	Work has started on reviewing the process and outlining desired impact	ATP are no longer progressing this area therefore SME and caseworkers group set up looking at ways to improve the procedure with no digital change Initial review taken place – pilot case ownership to commence mid Sept. Options to be presented for review in terms of potential changes. Ongoing
Streamlining of children's means assessments	Changes to reduce time taken within system by changing some of the system processes.	Change request for system update submitted – being chased	Internal changes made to streamline process in June. Closed
Review of current document request process	We have revised the process to allow submission of documents at application stage (without a document request being generated	Looking at changes within CCMS in relation to amendment process and	Changes for document requests appear to be working well - work ongoing re amendments.

	first) and now need to change for amendments. Currently documents can't be uploaded with an amendment until a document request is generated	timings on submission of document request	Prior authority amendments and applications now have document upload facility. Closed
Review of application offer/acceptance/contribution process	Looking to make a number of improvements to speed up the process	Will require changes within CCMS – at very start of reviewing this process	An enhancement has gone in so we can unlapse an offer – a small working group met last week and came up with a process which will reduce the end to end time – and mean we no longer need to keep offers live. Our technical leads are currently writing guidance for caseworkers. Guidance being finalised – to be released to caseworkers 20 th August – application offers to come under case ownership - if offer not accepted within 28 days – offer will be lapsed – however in certain circumstances we can re issue the lapsed offer. Software downloaded onto windows 10 so the barcodes can be scanned which will speed up offer processing. Ongoing.
Streamlining of Prisoner's means assessments	Review of current process to identify opportunities to reduce evidence requirements/speed up processing in these cases	Data analysis completed which identified very small numbers of applications (365 CCMS cases from April 2016 to March 2017). now working through options for streamlining, albeit this isn't at the top of the priority list	Resource continuing to review the MFF and 2 step emergency processes. This has been moved back to June for review. agreed at meeting in July that this would be taken forward from September with assurance looped in to the process. Ongoing.
Pilot testing out revised approach to family certs and grant of scope and costs conditions by providers	Delegation of certificate management to providers in certain family cases, allowing them to decide costs and scope.	Pilot launched September 2017 – 90 applications received as at beginning of November. means and merits aspects running smoothly, billing aspects yet to be tested	The Pilot has gone well with positive feedback from providers. We are currently evaluating the certificates and the bills paid to build a business case for potential wider roll out. Ongoing.
Rejects	Overall review of rejects with a view to continuing to reduce. A number of rejects aren't submitted suggestion is if not resubmitted in a month.	New piece of work	Need both provider views on what is happening and views from technical experts on best way to take forward. Being picked up by Eve McNally with support from technical experts. Rejects – means set up a diary review and chase the reject if not submitted in 2 weeks – merits case ownership pilot does the same for merits rejects – merits case ownership

			aiming to roll out nationally in September. Ongoing.
Use of incorrect Proceedings	Piece of work starting looking at firms who select incorrect proceedings (top reason for reject) to see if they need additional training / support – to prevent the applications being submitted with incorrect proceedings.	New Piece of work	Being picked up by Eve McNally with support from technical experts. Review of all rejects with SME taking place (21 st August) - firms with high reject reasons (merits its incorrect proceedings) but looking at all rejects not just merits – firms with highest rejects to be contacted and offered training / assistance to reduce rejects. Ongoing.
Reduction in time taken to process appeals	Impact on providers of 20 day target, increased calls to CST, chasers via case enquiries.	Aim was to reduce backlog of work in progress to 10 working days.	Time taken has increased but we continue to aim for a backlog of 10 working days whilst balancing all other areas of work. Ongoing.
Streamlining of immigration means	Reduce time taken when processing these assessments	Action agreed at meeting in July, work to start from September	Update to be provided in September, will also take into account means assessment changes around upper tribunal work Ongoing
FINANCE			
Excel based CW3	Development of electronic excel versions of CW3 forms for providers to use when making applications for asylum and immigration matters	Completed	Closed
Electronic file submission	Encouragement of submission of an electronic file rather than a paper file. not planning to mandate electronic file submission at present, although there are a number of benefits to working this way	Communication required externally	Legal Help escape cases. We are working to explore how best we can facilitate electronic file submission for those firms that want it. There is also work going on more widely looking at how we can support secure electronic file exchange. We'd like to get to a position where this is a realistic option for providers that want to use this facility. We are still a long way off getting something set up. The secure file exchange pilot (see below) will be piloting an approach imminently with online file storage. The escape cases team are keen to be involved with this. Ongoing.
Secure File Exchange	The Secure File Exchange Project Board has now decided that SharePoint will be used for a one-month proof of concept, to then move into a wider pilot (we will engage with PET on the		Update to be provided September. Ongoing.

	<p>wider pilot). Five internal teams will take part in the proof of concept. There will be two internal team members and a maximum of two external providers to each team.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Escape Fees Team • Assurance • Peer Review • PDS • Crime Billing (AGFS/LGFS) 		
Case outcomes	<p>Following feedback from providers we put extra resource into processing outcomes which resulted in a reduction in time taken to process an outcome from 10 days to 2 days</p>	Completed	Closed
CCMS changes to allow only appropriate fees to be claimed		Completed	Closed
Default document requests	<p>Improved these so providers are more aware of what is require don initial submission. This has resulted in less rejections/requests for information</p>	Completed	Closed
Electronic EC claim 1	<p>Electronic version of the form designed for use in all escape case categories. it allows completion of the EC claim1 online</p>	<p>It has been piloted with a number of firms and has received positive feedback. awaiting update on roll out if required</p>	<p>Legal help Cases - we have built an electronic version of the EC claim 1 form to make submission of the claim easier and reduce rejections. The electronic form is now available for all escape case categories.</p> <p>Closed.</p>
Extrapolation	<p>Pilot of a new way of assessing claims. Involves assessment of a sample of files over an agreed period with extrapolation of assessment results across all files submitted for that period</p>	Next steps to be agreed	<p>This applies to Legal Help cases. The idea is to reduce the admin burden for providers and us by limiting the files that need to be submitted. Pilot has now been completed and has been well received by those involved. Extrapolation now part of business as usual processes and looking to extend to other firms where appropriate.</p> <p>Closed.</p>
Reduce amount of document requests	<p>Review of common reasons for document requests and agree a way forward to reduce</p>	To be discussed at January meeting	<p>Review of main reasons for rejection and for document requests completed along with identification of providers with highest rejection rate.</p> <p>Training sessions undertaken for providers with highest reject rate</p>

			<p>Additional guidance provided within handbook for caseworkers and providers on what constitutes a reject or a document request</p> <p>News articles on website to provide additional guidance for providers</p> <p>Closed.</p>
Reduce the level of nil assessments	Review of the reasons for nil assessments and agree a way forward to reduce assessments and subsequent appeals		<p>Reasons identified and changes introduced or in progress. Redesign of legal help form (CW1) to reduce incorrect completion and highlight requirements. Introduction of associated checklist to assist with correct completion. Publication of third party support detailing documentation requirements and telephone attendance notes to clarify evidence of means. Additional guidance drafted.</p> <p>Closed.</p>
Refine documentation required to simplify the appeals process	Simplification of evidential requirements for appeals to reduce admin burden		<p>Confirmation to providers that only relevant documentation is required rather than the full file – relaxing contractual requirement. Pilot introduced to assess level of interest.</p> <p>Appeals proforma designed to facilitate more structured appeals and highlight documentation submitted.</p> <p>This is at an early stage with the pilot – accounting for 8% of escape case appeals.</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
Additional guidance for providers	Additional guidance provided through additional quick guides and advanced guides	ongoing	<p>A number of these have been produced to cover areas of need e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Billing High Cost Cases Submitting Outcomes Avoiding Document requests How to submit court assessed bills Quick and advanced guides on submitting appeals How to avoid common bulk upload errors
Streamlining of Escape Case process	Review of current process to identify opportunities to reduce evidence requirements/speed up processing in these cases		<p>Update to be provided September.</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

WORKSHOPS AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING			
Hosting visits for providers across the organisation to share best practice on CCMS, share training opportunities, deal with ad hoc queries, provide shadowing of caseworkers in specific work strands	Programme of visits has been ongoing since 2017. In last couple of months we have held; a group session with Resolution members, VHCC case planning workshop, Bindmans visit. The aim is to tackle any specific issues, provide training and guidance and allow shadowing opportunities to improve relationship building and understanding on both sides	Programme of visits planned into provider engagement strategy with programme rolling out into 2018	Hodge Jones and Allen and Wilsons LLP visits in July went well and received positive feedback from both the firms and their Contract Managers. Deighton Pierce Glynn are pencilled in to visit the South Tyneside office on October 15 th . 2 firms have now asked for a WebEx type session instead of an office visit due to travel constraints. Will work with Digital Assist to get these set up. Duncan Lewis visit took place 9 th March. Bindman's visit went well and we continue to add in visits as needed. VHCC CCFS review is ongoing. Date for immigration workshop to be confirmed
Finance specific work - Building relationships with providers	Programme of sessions to provide training and additional support and guidance.		Telephone session for counsel chambers is based on points of contact with chambers to increase awareness and identify where support is needed. These are ongoing but have been well received. Training sessions for providers with high levels of reject/document requests to assist in reducing return levels. Attending conference for association of cost lawyers and providing training on CCMS processes.
Involvement of Providers in continuous improvement reviews of LAA work	Currently involving Makin Dixon in a CI review of VHCC family case plans. workshop took place November 17 with follow up on actions due to take place during 2018.	Aim is to streamline the process to the benefit of both LAA and providers. first workshop very successful with mapping out of process and identification of hot spots	Ongoing – see update below
Blog	Provision of a blog for circulation internally and externally covering PET meetings. prepared by Richard for LAA and by Rep body members on alternate months	First blog produced re Bristol Pilot by Richard. Richard to produce blog following November meeting, Carol to provide Blog after January meeting	Carols blog uploaded 29/3/18 Suggested we do a PET intranet article following attendance at the LAPG conference and a further blog summarising key activity by the end of the year.

<p>LAPG conference</p>	<p>PET members to attend the LAPG conference and participate in a workshop sharing the work of the PET group</p>	<p>Attendance at conference in London 5/10</p>	
<p>EXCEPTIONAL AND HIGH COST CASES</p>			
<p>Review of very high cost family case planning process</p>	<p>Workshop to review the end to end process of case planning for family cases costing 25k and over. aim is to streamline and improve the process</p>	<p>Takes place in November</p>	<p>Update on action taken:</p> <p><u>Automatically add VHCC restrictions when registered</u></p> <p>There has been a change in protocol recently and its saved a lot of time for both us and providers. Changes have been implemented to our notes screens that prevent these being paid accidentally by finance, mitigating the risk of removing these before full checks are completed.</p> <p><u>Automate cost increases once agreed/ Returned contracts identified early on CCMS to prevent extended queue/ LAA input cost amendment following contract agreement/ Speak to PUI expert about how to automate cost increase</u></p> <p>Upon reviewing all 4 of these suggestions, the practice of submitting an amendment at the same time as a contract results in both cases being considered within the time frame a cost amendment, which is significantly shorter than that of a case plan. Ensuring they are both completed together has now been built in as an agreed action as part of the high cost case planning work flow. The next step is to ensure this is as well communicated as possible to providers.</p> <p><u>Look to agree contract on as many cases as possible first time</u></p> <p>The work with the FAST process has resolved this significantly and the next step is simply sharing the success of this. Contracts are generally issued after one submission currently and even the more complex cases take a much shorter time.</p> <p>The work to be reviewed on the next couple of months will be aimed at the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add a "VHCC Query" option for case enquiries • Use log in page of CCMS to inform key messages of changes • Auto response added to CCMS to inform of turnaround times • Read receipt to be added to certain tasks • Allow Solicitors to see what they have

			<p>sent/submitted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable cost limit to be amended in high cost cases when costs are agreed without requiring cost amendment request <p>Case Ownership has been added into the review following last month's feedback from PET</p> <p>Bindmans were also given the opportunity to input during their visit on 8th February</p>
<p>Review of individual case contracts</p>	<p>We are currently reviewing our process for awarding and managing individual case contracts</p>	<p>This includes ensuring consistency and transparency in applying the criteria to award contracts, considering whether we should require specific financial checks before awarding a contract and having a clear internal process for agreeing and setting up these contracts.</p>	<p>Applies to firms without legal aid contracts, and work will include review of internal processes.</p>
<p>Review of Immigration work</p>	<p>Review of current processes and procedures in liaison with Providers</p>	<p>Currently identifying dates and participants. It will follow a similar format to VHCC family CI event</p>	<p>The first workshop took place 11 May and a second workshop with additional providers took place two weeks later , these were for immigration and public law providers .</p> <p>At both workshops it was acknowledged that bad practice had arisen from both providers and the LAA and all sides agreed to start a fresh with a clear understanding that applications must be submitted in good time and the LAA must deal with them within KPIs</p> <p>The outputs focused on the current system, improving the current system, and then a hypothetical question do we need case plans at all?</p> <p>Relating to the current process, it was clear that future guidance must be improved particularly regarding CCMS and case plans. In due course the provider pack needs a refresh to be written in a more user-friendly language to assist all</p> <p>Second ideas were discussed on improving the current process notably using a template for the costs schedule part which reduces the need for individual bespoke schedules. Also, ideas regarding contacts and reducing the amount of</p>

			<p>CCMS transactions and no value transactions</p> <p>The template is being piloted now</p> <p>Thirdly some time was given to removing the case plan regime all together – this work is still in its early stage.</p> <p>The main output was to make the process work better for al and that meant implementing some key changes</p> <p>At the same time an LAA internal workshop took place with key SME to work up a new process. This is being finalised and will soon be available for further discussions with providers</p>
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