



Work Programme Partnership Forum: Terms of Reference

Purpose

The Work Programme Partnership Forum will enable effective dialogue between DWP and Work Programme providers, continuously developing and strengthening the relationship. The Forum itself will take a strategic view of current progress and future developments, supported by an operations sub-group (the Operations Group) through which providers and officials will address live running issues.

Meeting

Meetings will be face to face and normally quarterly, unless the frequency is changed by mutual agreement. The Chair will reserve the right to call ad hoc meetings in exceptional circumstances. If this happens the default will be to meet via telekit to minimise unscheduled time and expense.

Membership

The Contracted Customer Services Director will chair the forum.

The core membership will be representatives of Work Programme prime providers and DWP. As the principal representative organisation ERSA would also have a seat. Given the Forum's purpose all members should be senior people who have authority to speak on behalf of their organisations and who are on top of current business and policy. Nominated, empowered deputies would be expected to attend when members are unavailable.

When appropriate the Chair may invite other ad-hoc representation.

Key Tasks and Responsibilities

The overarching aim will be to drive forward the performance and success of the Work Programme. The Forum's particular role will be to:

- consider and feed in to emerging policy developments;
- provide rapid and informed insights into the front line impacts of new policy as it is rolled out;
- review strategic initiatives across the wider welfare to work agenda, considering the potential interdependencies between the Work Programme and other aspects of welfare reform and providing steers to DWP Strategy;
- identify strategic matters of common concern and where appropriate commission the Operations Group to resolve; *and*
- take appropriate action on recommendations and options submitted by the Operations Group.

ERSA would have an additional role where appropriate in seeking input from other interested parties such as subcontractors.

Administrative Arrangements

DWP will initially provide the secretariat and administrative support for the Work Programme Partnership Forum:

- arranging meetings and circulating invitations;
- agreeing the agenda with the Chair and commissioning papers in advance of meetings;
- circulating papers at least five working days in advance to Forum Members – only in exceptional circumstances will papers be issued fewer than five days in advance; *and*
- producing and circulating minutes to capture key discussions and action points within five days of meeting.