**Minutes from UC Strategic Meeting – 16/03/15**

*N.B. These notes are not exhaustive, but a reflection of what Hugh was able to take down during the course of the meeting (missed a few points, while sorting out other issues). For more details on the presentations, please see the Powerpoint documents provided by the speakers, available on the CHC website.*

**Attendance (n.b. those who skyped in are highlighted in yellow):**

Ian Simpson Director of Community Housing and Support Bron Afon

Gareth Bevan Policy Officer National Housing Federation

Hugh Russell Policy Officer CHC

Paul Langley Senior Money Advisor Your Benefits Are Changing (CHC)

Jonathan Morgan Universal Support Project Manager Blaenau Gwent County Council

Paul Neave Manager - Advice and Homelessness Service Flintshire CC

Helen Matthews Welsh Government Engagement Lead & Universal

Support Development Manager for Wales - UC Programme

Department for Work and Pensions

Huw Thomas Wales Group Partnership Manager Job Centre Plus

Mike Halloran Housing Manager (Support and Leasehold) Wales and West

Andrew Harries Head of Change Management NPT Homes

Kevin Davies Principal Benefits Officer Neath Port Talbot CBC

Erika Helps Department for Local Government and Communities Welsh Government

Chris Bailey Welfare Rights and Debt Advice Officer Clwyd Alyn

Neil Moffatt Director of Housing Services Pennaf

Justin Wigmore Assistant Director of Housing Melin Homes

Roy Carroll Housing Manager Grwp Cynefin

Claire Maimone Director of Housing & Community Regeneration NPT Homes

Mark Edwards Supporting Sustainable Tenancies Review Officer NPT Homes

Martin Hughes Housing Manager Aelwyd

Dawn Wigmore Finance Officer (Rents) Aelwyd

Julie Little Financial Solutions Manager Charter Housing

Debbie Evans Rent&Financial Solutions Team Manager Charter Housing

Phillip Carroll Money Solutions Manager Bron Afon

Linda Lewis Income and Financial Inclusion Manager Hafod

Richard McQuillan Head of Housing Services Hafod

Karen Thomas Head of Neighbourhoods United Welsh

Emma Howells Neighbourhood Manager United Welsh

Steve Porter Operations Director Wales & West

Nicola Smith Assistant Director Linc Homes

Carol Tough Housing Manager Linc Homes

Cerian Jones Area Housing Manager Team Leader Coastal Housing

Joanne Carter Head of Housing Newydd

Stephen Job Income Services Manager Gwalia

Stephen Evans Director of Housing Charter Housing

Noela Jones Director of Housing and Communities Grwp Cynefin

Apologies:

Paula Holland- Welfare Reform Officer- Welsh Local Government Association

Claire Pearce-Crawford Income & Inclusion Manager Melin Homes

Karl Thomas - Head of Welfare Reform Housing and Rent Officers Wales – Welsh Government

**Future Activities Agreed at the Meeting:**

* **This group to meeting again in 6 months. CHC to arrange follow up meeting in September.**
* **Tranche 2 landlords to be invited to this meeting and learning to be pooled to pass on to tranche 3 and 4 landlords**
* **Operational issues to be raised, discussed and shared via the UC Working Group on Yammer (contact** **hugh-russell@chcymru.org.uk** **for an invitation to the group);**
* **CHC to collect data on a regular basis via online surveys. Data to include the type of quantitative information collected by NHF, along with qualitative, case-study, type information. This information will be used by CHC to lobby in favour of positive changes to the system, via routes such as the Core Landlord Group. This data collection can be reviewed at the meeting in September so that we can determine whether it is a reasonable use of resources and whether the data has been used effectively to that point.**
* **CHC to be first point of call for Universal Credit queries to the DWP. We’ll answer what queries we can and pass the rest on to Helen Matthews, who presented, or other points of contact. We’ll collate queries to produce an FAQ document which can be shared via our website and the Yammer group. Queries should be sent to** **paul-langley@chcymru.org.uk**
* **CHC to explore other forms of communication to members on the latest updates, such as webinars**
* **CHC will swap data with the NHF & join with them where appropriate in UK campaigns**

**Minutes from the meeting**

**The English Experience of Universal Credit**

***Gareth Bevan – Policy Officer – The National Housing Federation***

N.B. The video which formed part of Gareth’s presentation can be seen at: <http://bit.ly/1GnRaQ5>

The documents to which he made reference can be found at:

<http://www.housing.org.uk/publications/browse/universal-credit-early-learning-from-the-north-west-pathfinders/>

To cover: the online claim, benefit advances, personal budgeting support, alternative payment arrangements, data sharing and processes put in place by DWP and Housing Associations.

2 Years working on UC

Manchester based

3 Docs produced: recommends viewing

Early Learning form NW Pathfinders

One Year In: experiences of HAs

One Year In: exec summary and top tips

Emerging Issues: Making a Claim

- Only partly online currently

- Rest is telephone/face to face

- Can take up to an hour to fill out (NW problem – library30 min time outs = lost forms – no save function)

- 1 month and 7 day wait after initial claim

- Benefit advances can be applied for

- These have to be repaid (some told over 6 months, some 3 )

- Tenants approaching other sources – family, loan sharks

- Household income is taken into account – flies in the face of the DWP’s claim that this encourages individual responsibility?

- Interview – vulnerability and support establishment

o Work coach makes decision

o Responsible for determining whether APAs should be put in place

o Work coaches looking at different questions to determine vulnerability

o T1 and T2 vuls

 T1 = APA without any other circs in place

 T2 = Other criteria come into play

o DWP = responsible for finding out if they have arrears – tenant needs to get an up to date rent statement from landlord

o If claimant doesn’t get that info, the DWP can come direct to landlord, without tenants consent

o At this point APA and Personal Budgeting Support appts (not currently sanctionable – may change) are put in place.

o Issue: Does claimant know what those Qs mean? Do they lie? Do they get suspicious about why their rent is being queried?

- 3 types of APA:

o Bi monthly payments

o Direct Payme4nts

o Split payments between household

- If arrears are 2 months + APA in place

- I consistent underpayment – APA can go in

- If later go into 2 months arrear – Landlord can make claim – download form, post to Wolverhampton – scanned – decision made (has been 50-60 days, now looking at 25)

- DWP collecting data on this at the mo, with landlords’ input

- RSLs sending APA requests by recorded delivery

- Can still get lost in DWP’s piles of work

- Letter from DWP can then get lost on the way back! Some letters give a week, some give precise date (much better)

- Temp. system

- Software coming out in June – gives notification of payment – uses reference no. (and NI number where no ref. no. is available)

- Each payment to the RSL is separate for each APA – not one lump sum from DWP.

- Payments coming through on varied dates through the month

- Manual process – occ. £ is paid to tenant in error, so RSL has to go to tenant. No use chasing DWP.

- Processing times – 60 days at first, then down to 20, creeping back up – around 25 days at the mo.

- DWP have introduced specialist housing teams in a couple of their service centres, so the email address and then telephone number can be used to escalate issues if APA hasn’t been paid

- Third party deductions for historical arrears: can apply on the APA form – processed by a separate team as part of 4 weekly schedule

- Repayments up from 5% to 20% of personal allowance - no flexibility.

- 10 – 20% dependent on other deductions

- 45 day processing time

- 31,030 currently on UC

- 1,500 people on UC are HA tenants

- 10% of total claims have housing costs (acc to DWP – so poss double the known figure)

- 96 LAs

- 450 APAs in place and in payment (1/3 of total claims) – some RSLs have said between ¼ and ½

- 28 days to process APAs

- 47 days for 3rd party deductions to be processed (ave)

- Total rent arrears = £1mil (1500 people)

- 70.3% of claimants cash collection rate

- Feb figures

- £673 rent arrears

Data Sharing –

Early days

No. Of RSLs haven’t heard from DWP yet

USDL – way DWP will work with local authorities to provide support to manage claims

End of this year, start of 2016 = national roll out

Digital Trial – ongoing in Sutton – probably another 18 months

Migration – NHF continue to work

Prep by Eng RSLs has included:

Preparing tenants

Preparing HA Staff

Preparing the organisation

Remaining Challenges:

• Roll Out

• Service from Service Centres – service was declining – resources are being pumped into this team

• Families are live in all sites pre Tranche 1 (low numbers)

• Data Sharing – regs in place – monitoring

• Migration – by geography? By change of circs?

• Working with a non-digital system

• Election

**Trusted Partner Status Update**

***Ian Simpson - Director of Community Housing and Support - Bron Afon Community Housing***

* Having undertaken a Direct Payment Demonstration Project (Report available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/direct-payment-demonstration-projects-final-reports>), Bron Afon found that 30% of people do not cope with direct payment and end up on Alternative Payment Arrangements(APAs), which tallied with the experiences of landlords in NW England.
* Time it takes in live running for APAs to come through = unsustainable escalation in rents
* UC Core Landlord Group – conceived idea of trusted partnership. There is a Welsh presence on that group, including representation from Cadwyn , Bron Afon, Welsh Government and CHC, WLGA.

TPS Proposal:

- Set of principles that RSLs can sign up to with DWP which enables us to make early requests for APAs.

- Fundamentally, they will trust those RSLs and will not challenge it.

- Not all landlords will get this – RSLs have to opt in

- Effective and timely info sharing is key – data sharing regs = good step

- APA will not be conditional on support being in place

- Prevents crises

- APAs are the exception and not the rule. Part of the route, not the final destination – RSLs should be working to get tenants to the stage where they can pay their rent independantly

- Principles: we must have regard to DWP triage criteria; we must keep open books – we’ll be accountable and scrutinised; recommend timetable for review; we will make onward support referrals (internally or to USDL providers)

- Max levels of APAs? It’s been decided that you can’t arbitrarily set a limit (different areas, different issues), could encourage us all to make apps up to that limit; so we need to earn the trust of the DWP

TPS Current Position:

o 8 Week Trial (started 09.03)

o Targetted and small scale trial – Birkenhead, Oldham and Preston

o Lord Freud is right behind this

o 2 landlords in each area – very small numbers

o Testing paper trail. Trying to put system in place in regard to business-as-usual claims for US. Reluctant to add anything too complex into this.

o Big step forwards – We’ve made real progress (data sharing, TPS trial)

o Big Problem: Trial ends a week before the election – purdah – no results released

o Low Key for the DWP – no press,etc. – But a Huge issue for us.

o Could build trust; could break it. If this TPS doesn’t work, that trust will be damaged.

o DWP want feedback from our discussion

**GB**: DWP want this to work – big help with migration – will make their job a lot easier

**AH:** NPT randomly selected tenants and went to local trusted orgs (council, etc.) – We don’t have the knowledge of those tenants who are in trouble – need support from our own trusted partners in the third sector etc. Those networks are vital – we’re moving toward earlier intervention across public services

**AH:** No Welsh pilot – that 30% you mentioned will be 50-60% in some, hard up areas – we’re likely to have higher numbers of people with vulnerability issues.

- DPDPs have actually dealt with more tenants than UC so far, so those results are the more representative.

- If we do come across particular issues in Wales, the network that CHC’s establishing will be crucial in evidencing the issues that we need fixing

**CM:** IF nothing else, UC has brought us all together – a big positive is the level of communication that’s taking place between landlords and other partners.

**SE**: New Tenants – Great opportunity for bringing in these processes from the start

**CM:** Change of agenda to preventative = v similar to the way the homelessness agenda has changed.

**GB:** We don’t know our tenants? You’ll need to! Good opp to do some research into tenants and segment them into tier 1 and tier 2 vulnerability groups. Also, all this data around personal details – will tenants be happy to have their data shared? What if a complaint is made?

**SP**: Has there been any sort of test as to the efficacy of the TPS? What’s the success criteria?

**IS:** this needs to be co-produced with the RSLs – walkthrough with the core landlord group. Danger: we’ll be told it didn’t run smoothly, having not been able to get into the process early enough to make a difference

N.B. Ian was very clear that we should be pushing now on TPS across all parties given the chance that the results of the trial will get lost in purdah & TPS may consequently slip off the DWP’s agenda post election. The experience of UC live sites that Gareth related is telling - APA payments not reaching landlords until a month after the 2 month trigger is reached is scary & unacceptable - tenants will by then potentially owe £1200 which they have little hope of repaying with the obvious impact on their health & well-being. TPS is essential to mitigate this risk.

**UC Preparation Programme Update**

***Andrew Harris and Mark Edwards – NPT Homes***

* Important to build up relationships – Strong internal Team and strong external relationships
* We had no knowledge of some of our tenants
* Anticipate around 3,700 of their 8,800 tenants will be effected
* 2,500 tenants on housing benefit over 65 so still a lot of £ coming in via traditional means (staffing issues – HB Teams still needed)
* Spent time looking at the tenants - found that 75% they have no real knowledge of. ‘How are we going to deal with this?’ Housing officers out speaking to tenants – asking them what matters to them as tenants – staff found it difficult! Lot of queries as to why this was important!
* Turns out that it’s not easy to build up those relationships – not just a knock on the door every time!
* ‘What Matters to Tenants’ slide – list of items
* How and when do we engage with these tenants?
* Worked with low numbers – 10-15 tenants. Struggled with going to directors and saying ‘it takes as long as it takes’ – not a quick process, hard to relate this to directors.
* Has to be built around the individual.
* Agrees with Steve – new tenants = great opportunity to build a positive relationship
* E.g. of an issue: a tenant with no debt to the landlord, but has £25Kdebt elsewhere! She’d have been a green light, no APA, but could be all sorts of issues when she gets that 1st UC payment.
* Again, found that people also had e.g. drug issues, that they don’t come out with: Got to listen to what they’re not saying
* To understand potential tenancy issues, have to understand tenants’ life issues.
* 50 random cases sent to police, social services, etc.
	+ 74% were known to Social Services (case currently open or recently closed)
	+ 54% were know the polices as either victims or perps of DV
* Fortunate that NPT Homes have an excellent relationship with their JCP and council
	+ Talking about having a desk in the JCP
* Risks:
	+ Financial
	+ APAs – Magenta – anyone 4 weeks into arrears they applied to DWP for an APA and got 100% success
	+ Arrears for tenants who’ve come into
	+ Have started making Bad Debt Provision with finance teams
* Job Centre – Magenta have no relationship with their Job Centre Managers, NPT see this as crucial
* Wirral – DWP have been accepting homemade ‘landlord certificate’ as evidence for an APA in place of a rent statement
* NPT have made their own version – happy to share
* List of positives provided in presentation
* NPT Will share their APA process experiences
* Barcud update – Texting – Bron Afon sending 2K texts a week, MVH 100, NPT none! Redemption Balance – see slide –
* **GB**: Local relationships with jobcentre = KEY, relationships will vary – go speak to Huw Thomas – JCP Partnership Manager if you’re having problems
* **GB**: Service centres are varying in quality (Bolton most experienced)
* **CM**: Resources required from RSLs are huge. Costs need to be considered

**Wales & West’s Experiences of Universal Credit**

***Michael Halloran - Housing Manager (Support and Leasehold) - Wales & West HA***

* Experiences from Shotton
* 5 case studies!
* Half their residents will not be effected (half are over 60)
* Geographically dispersed – lead in time on UC – blessing
* W&W Went out to visit 850 people they thought would be effected by bedroom tax, put out lots of information about bedroom tax,
* Recruited additional staff to tackle welfare reform, as well as the issues raised by intensive meetings with tenants
* Housing Officers now cover areas, not specialisms.
* Spent a lot of time sharing info on telling tenants about problems
* Also spent a lot of time with call centre staff – very useful
* Became everyone’s responsibility – useful in the finance team and call centre team
	+ Positive results inc. Newly flexible direct debit system
* 5 cases, one of which has come to an end! All male in their 40s
	+ 1st Case: Due to very close working relationship with tenant, worked well. Deductions are causing an issue – 20% is very high.
	+ 2nd case: Working on 0 hours contract – work dried up so signed on. Didn’t want support, W&W didn’t consider he needed it. Contact was made by him. HE had been claiming housing benefit prior to UC. He left the property without arrears, but there appears to have been overlap between UC and HB. Not a huge issue for W&W, but resident could be chased for the overpayment later.
	+ 3rd Case: Again 0 hours, work dried up. Requested APA due to some arrears.Turned down due to it be ing under 8 weeks. Resident started to pick up hours at work in Jan 15 – possibly working better for him now. Doesn’t know how much he’s going to receive in work payments from week to week, due to his contract, as such he doesn’t know how much he’ll be paying from week to week. Hard for RSL to provide the accurate support he needs.
* Issues: Quality of info from DWP has often been poor. Apollo lists were raised by DWP!? Not info that landlords or tenants have!
* **GB**: Apollo list issue should have been resolved. DWP would like a similar list for RSLs (i.e. a list of named individuals they can contact to share data with.
* ‘Clunky’ systems – e.g. told to expect a call back in 3 hours, which doesn’t come.
* Problem with Council Tax reduction. Not being picked up by DWP so HB can be overpaid.
* Entitlement letters are clear- but claimant is learning quite late, when hours change, for example. Presumably when the online system is working, this will be ironed out
* Personal Budgeting support
* Learning:
	+ Key staff need to be made aware of what’s happening.
	+ Assume the first payment of UC will go directly to the claimant – whether an APA is in place or not!
* Relationships with Job Centres: working with Bridgend and Wrexham. Questions that they have for LAs, etc. are often not for the front line staff (that’s going smoothly), if
* Possibly do not have the details of everyone who’s got UC
	+ **GB:** If Rent goes up in April, DWP will be asking for a list of addresses.
	+ What data protection is in place?
		- **GB** Just asking for addresses at this point – so no data protection issues
* **AH:** Wary of sending out marketing data on UC for fear of it not being useful and scaring lots of tenants needlessly.
* **MH:** Numbers are so low, why would you go out with it? W&W are pushing info on getting on top of your finances and budgeting at this point.
* **GB:** Warrington have, after 2 years, got 150 claimants. On notification that a claim has been made, the DWP need to know exactly where to send that letter (should come through at latest on day 8). We can make it easier for them and also need an internal process to ensure that the letter goes to the right person. Also, DWP are aware that service centres are unaware of what’s going on with regard to housing association queries being poorly answered.
* **SP:** Looking at things from a resident’s point of view has been very influential (over stats): has helped with designing processes, also on other areas of work.

**Universal Support Delivered Locally Experiences**

***Jonathan Morgan – Blaenau Gwent CC and Paul Neave - Flintshire CC***

Paul Neave:

Difficulties with changes to welfare are nothing new!

UC Flintshire: 1 year of UC. 383 Claims to date. 226 of those remain live. 2 claims from couples, 1 family claim.

Referral process previously was very difficult. DWP have made amendments. Previously if a work coach called a claimant 3 x (unknown caller) and got no answer, the claim was annulled. This has been reversed.

FCC offer Free Training on UC across Flintshire across a variety of different professions – health workers to housing association staff. Upskilling people so that they can

Working with Private Landlords to enable them to get APAs.

Working with people as part of a broader anti-poverty agenda – all links in

They’re finding that UC makes single people working part time better off than those in part time work on HB

Long road ahead but they’ve found that partnership working with DWP, JCP, HAs, has been effective. Hardest cases are still to come.

**Blaenau Gwent Trial**

One of 11 Las working across the UK to trial this

2000 ESA Claimants (with a control group of 400)

Provisions being trialled: Triage; Personal Budgeting and Support; Digital Inclusion

Very ambitious project

Excellent working relationship with local JCP

Team includes 1 engagement officer from council and one from JCP

Engagement Form – very lengthy document

Referral to appropriate organisation (i.e. those orgs who endorsed BG’s bid to take on this trial). Some are receiving huge range of claimants, some none at all.

‘Some Statistics...’ slide is as of last week.

Tweeting is totally ineffective.

Lessons:

* People do not know that UC is coming in and how it will affect them
* They anticipated a low level of trust, but this was misguided. The flexibility they provide, by going to places they feel comfortable for example, has really helped with this trust development.

Not all going swimmingly: not convinced people are taking their offer of specialist support; many just waiting to see what UC actually looks like for them.

An evaluation of the trial is taking place.

**Your Benefits Are Changing Update**

***Paul Langley – Community Housing Cymru***

CHC will take questions from sector and put through to DWP if we need to and build a FAQ to distribute throughout the networks we build up.

Case Studies from Clwyd Alyn, show us that £300 seems to be the set advance that is provided when requested by a claimant.

Lack of information coming through from UC call centres to claimants.

Budgeting advice poor (‘sell your car’ – would lose ability to get to work)

Problem with Joint Tenancies

Most People here are on Yammer

**DWP and Jobcentre Plus**

***Helen Matthews - DWP & Huw Thomas - Jobcentre Plus***

**Huw Thomas - DWP**

Changes to job centres – changes in staff to ‘work coaches’, addition of lap tops to enable digital inclusion. Intro of claimant commitment.

Working more closely with the Welsh Government – hoping to embed work coaches in communities. Appreciate that they need to get out to people, in many cases, to enable them to

**Helen Matthews - DWP**

* Don’t expect the election to change UC. Can’t now be rolled back. Scale of change of UC is the biggest so far.
* 16 hour rule with UC has been removed. Based on earnings, not hours.
* ‘In Work Progression’
* April sees 10 tests on people who are in work, but need to take on more work. If earning under 35 x NMW they will be ‘subjected to support’ from a life coach
* The claimant commitment is drawn up with the claimant so there should be no surprises.
* From May 2016 the other ‘legacy benefits’ will be closed down. Last claims will be in 2017. Then those people will be migrated, with a total coverage of UC by 2019.
* Data Sharing legislation – name, DOB, NI, address ,amount awarded
* Addressing data sharing around USDL – not there yet.
* WLGA, LAs, DWP are talking about how to deliver services: Supported Online Access; Personal Budgeting Support; Support for UC Service Centre; the LAs will be given flexibility on how best to deliver these services (and with whom).
* Carmarthenshire are looking at Skype to reduce travel costs for claimants who need to talk to work coaches
* See Working with Landlords slide
* Horror story about APAs taking 20 weeks (turns out it was a one off case and things have been put in place to manage this) – Focus on housing is at a senior level.
* Trial in Blackpool with the PRS underway

**Martyn Hughes (Aelwyd):** Pension Credit Plus... what’s happening?

**HM:**It’s on a slower track than UC. The PCP element will take longer than this.

**AH**: Arrears – what provisions are in place to capture level of arrears?

**HM:** Dedicated number for eviction support for RSLs. APAs are in place for 2 months arrears, etc. When it comes to Migration we’ll use the data we’ve collected so far. If you’ve got a tenant that you know is vulnerable (i.e. t1 or T2) and you tell us that they’re vulnerable, then you need to let us know and we’ll grant an APA.

**CM:** How much info do you want from the ground? How will it be fed in?

**HM**: Via the core landlord group.

**IS:** Core Landlord Group has not met enough, not since end of Nov.

**HM:** Contact the links you have in DWP, Sandra, Elaine, etc. Ian – we shouldn’t be waiting on this CLG. We need to make progress ourselves. New contact centres are opening, one in Wrexham.

**GB:** Bolton and Glasgow increasing staffing from c. 20 to 120 (total)

**CM:** It’s a reciprocal process – DWP will want to know of issues on the ground as we want to know changes in the process

**GB:** Graham Mowatt will be pleased to hear of any suggestion

**ME:** Sanctions for failure to progress in work?

**HT:** Nothing determined yet, but there will encouragement of claimants to take more hours

**ME:** in some cases the personal element of a claim is being processed, not the housing element

**HM:** I will take this back and look into it

**HM:** If you’re not getting what you need you have to be persistent.

The housing team at DWP will answer queries about more than APAs and Evictions on the number that’s provided

**??:** Where there are questions from the sector, what’s the process? Delays will make this more difficult? How do DWP want to communicate with us?

**HM:** Can’t commit to answering questions ‘willy nilly’, but we can use CHC as a filter.

**CM:** This isn’t meant to be critical – there’s great joint working going on – it will help us both if we can

Feedback from representative groups into the DWP.

**Kevin Davies (?)** – having those local partnerships is absolutely vital. HAs and LAs coming in and talking to people on a local level is really important.

Wales DWP Strategic Stakeholder board meets 2 or 3 times a year. Good opportunity to feed back (Amanda Oliver at CHC sits on this).

**Kevin Davies (?)** – we have a chance now to work with those most vulnerable cases at an early stage.

**HM:** Landlords are increasingly looking to prepare their tenants for UC; the more people do that, the easier it’s going to be later.

Chair’s Summary

**CM:** Thanked speakers - Great to see so many people are willing to share their experiences

Important to continue with this sharing – how do we want to achieve this?

Online working group – provides opportunity for sharing of issues and escalation of trends

Is group happy to progress via the Yammer Group and for CHC to act as a filter?

**AH** asked how using CHC, who don’t have all the answers, will help?

**PL**: we’ll use DWP, NHF, etc. And build a database.

**GB:** Evidencing your issues is key – consistency of message.

**IS:** Various levels:

1. Operational – peer support – Yammer – Expand across Wales later
2. Issues will be raised here which we can bring to a higher level at DWP
3. Get on the front foot- what problems do we have? What do we want to see changing? For example the length of time from an APA claim to £ arriving. HOW DO WE MAKE THESE POINTS EFFECTIVELY before the election?

**GB**: We have longer term issues, which we’ll look at and we separate these from the short term, operational issues

**CM**: Yammer as operational forum then? FAQ pinned to the top?

**CM**: We could put on webinars for those trending issues that come up.

So: Operational issues on Yammer; Data collection will highlight trends; we’ll

**Ian:** No need for a virtual network for local authorities.

**SP**: As more landlords sign up and the roll out progresses, then themes will come out. Could use Yammer to focus face to face meetings

**CM**: Reconvene strategic meeting in a few months; Yammer ongoing will inform the meeting’s agenda; Data collection to inc. Both quant and qual data.

**CM**: How do we share our experiences with T2? Sharing notes and presentations. We can share in our local areas with T2.

**GB**: Might be worth T1 and T2 coming together in September to pool knowledge for 3 and 4

**AH**: We at NPT felt quite vulnerable – data sharing is really important - Perhaps we have quick feedback meetings.