

## Cabinet Member for Residents' Services

### 'Tell Us Once' – Department of Work and Pensions national notification scheme on death registration

#### Report by Executive Director Residents' Services and Director of Law, Assurance and Strategy

**Ref No: RS13  
(14/15)**

**Key Decision:**

**No**

**Part I**

**Electoral  
Divisions:  
N/A**

#### **Executive Summary**

Currently, customers who register a death in West Sussex have to make separate contact with every government department with whom the deceased may have had contact. This can be difficult and burdensome for a bereaved family. This report recommends a service that would allow them to advise specified local and central government departments by way of a single point of contact. 96%\*of England and Wales offer this service. West Sussex does not.

This is an enhancement to the current, local Tell West Sussex service, which informs specific County Council departments but not government or other Local Authority departments. This was an interim service put in place whilst the County Council liaised with District and Borough Councils, as all councils need to be engaged before the full 'Tell Us Once' service can be offered. We now have that engagement from all Borough & District councils.

\*calculated based on percentage of population

#### **Recommendations**

- i. That the County Council work with Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and Boroughs and District councils (B&D) to offer the national Tell Us Once (TUO) service at death registration.
- ii. That Tell Us Once at birth registration is explored further with DWP when a customer benefit can be established.
- iii. That Tell West Sussex be discontinued once 'Tell Us Once' is introduced

## **1. Introduction**

1.1 It can be difficult and burdensome for a bereaved family to tell several agencies about the death of a relative. TUO facilitated by the DWP, has been designed for citizens to give relevant details to one organisation which will then be passed on to others. See Appendix A.

1.2 For the national scheme to operate all B&D councils in a two tier area need to participate and the IT systems need to be able to communicate. In 2011 the B&D

councils in West Sussex decided that they would not join the national TUO system, due to the cost to them and the apparent unreliability of the DWP's IT system.

13. Following a recent push by the Minister for Pensions, and corporate support within West Sussex County Council, recent discussions with B&D councils have now achieved agreement by all to join up to this scheme and take action on the information shared. This service is now so widely available country wide that customers frequently seek to use it in West Sussex.

## **2. Proposal for Tell Us Once:**

2.1 The service will involve taking further details from the customer at the point of death Registration. The Registrar will access the DWP system in order to input relevant information about the deceased. The informant registering the death, in this case the customer will be given a letter containing a unique reference number. The service can then be activated by customer self service via the DWP website or via a dedicated TUO line, managed by DWP.

2.2 Once the process is activated the recipients of the information as detailed in Appendix A will receive notification of the death thus enabling early amendment of records with no further contact from the customer.

2.2 The benefits for customers include less stress, having one point of contact, no unnecessary correspondence sent to the deceased person, no cost to the customer for postal or telephone charges and less time taken informing relevant agencies.

## **3. Other options considered**

3.1 Do nothing and therefore continue with Tell West Sussex only. Due to the potential enhancement to the customer journey at a time of considerable stress for the customer this is not a recommended option.

## **4. Consultation**

4.1 The following have been consulted in relation to this report:

- Customers, by way of discussion following enquiries received
- Department of Work and Pensions
- Borough and District Councils
- Other county services, including IT engagement
- General Register Office
- Neighbouring local authorities regarding their involvement and approach to Tell us Once

## **5. Financial and Resource implications**

5.1 In West Sussex there are around 7,500 death registrations per annum.

Resource implications

- Training time for Registrars
- Increased time taken during death registration appointments
- Requesting and activating changes to:
  - the on line booking and appointment system

- website
- contact centre handling pages
- Bereavement Guide

Other financial implications:

Printers fit for purpose to cope with volume of printing required at point of registration will be required which may necessitate replacing some items.

5.2 It is anticipated that the resource requirements and cost of any necessary replacement IT equipment be met out of the existing head count and budget of the Registration Service.

## **6. Other implications - Equality Impact Report**

6.1 An Equality Impact Report has been undertaken and is attached to this report. This highlights that the recommendations relate to a service that would be offered to all customers with protected characteristics as well as those who are not within that category. Very few people with protected characteristics would be affected differently. Those with certain disabilities should benefit. The service would enable any customer who has difficulties using written or verbal communication to advise government departments of a death in a simple manner, via a single point of contact.

## **7. Risk Management Implications**

The risks are that:

- One or more of the Borough or District Councils could withdraw from the scheme
- Failure to elicit participation from other WSCC departments
- Increased time taken during registration appointments could result in insufficient time during the working day to complete other essential tasks
- Increased time taken during registration appointments could result in the inability to complete appointments within current appointment slots
- Failure to introduce face to face electronic payments could increase further the time taken during registration appointments
- Project management requirements could delay other projects

Tony Kershaw  
**Director of Law, Assurance and Strategy**

Geoff Mee  
**Executive Director Residents' Services (Interim)**

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## **Appendices**

**Appendix A** - List of services included in TUO

**Appendix B** – Equality Impact Report

## Appendix A - List of services included in TUO

<b>Service List</b>	
<b>Central Government services</b>	<b>Local Authority services</b>
<p><b>Department for Work &amp; Pensions (DWP)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State Pensions</li> <li>• Pension Credit</li> <li>• Attendance Allowance</li> <li>• Disability Living Allowance</li> <li>• Carers Allowance</li> <li>• Incapacity Benefit</li> <li>• Income Support</li> <li>• Jobseekers Allowance</li> <li>• Bereavement Benefit</li> <li>• Employment Support Allowance</li> </ul>	<p><b>District/Unitary Council</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council Tax</li> <li>• Council Tax Benefit</li> <li>• Housing Benefit</li> <li>• Electoral Roll</li> <li>• Council Housing</li> </ul>
<p><b>HM Revenue and Customs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working Tax Credit</li> <li>• Child Benefit</li> <li>• Child Tax Credit</li> </ul>	<p><b>County/Unitary Council</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Libraries</li> <li>• Social Care (adult)</li> <li>• Social Care (children)</li> <li>• Blue Badges</li> </ul>
<p><b>Identity &amp; Passport Service (IPS)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passport</li> </ul>	<p><b>County/District &amp; Unitary Council</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Payments owed to councils</li> </ul>
<p><b>Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drivers License</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Additional services</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Helping to complete forms</i></li> <li>• <i>Advising utility companies</i></li> <li>• <i>Advising the local authority</i></li> </ul>

*pension provider*

- *Collecting and returning bus passes*
- *Signposting to aftercare services e.g. CRUSE.*

## Appendix B - Equality Impact Report

<b>Title of proposal</b>	<b>“Tell West Sussex Once” a single point of notification for residents when someone dies</b>
<b>Date of implementation</b>	To be confirmed
<b>EIR completed by:</b>	<b>Name:</b> Margaret Butler <b>Tel:</b> 03302227657

**1. Decide whether this report is needed and, if so, describe how you have assessed the impact of the proposal.**

The proposal will affect all of those registering a death in West Sussex. The outcome of the proposal will be identical for those who have protected characteristics and those who don't but the benefits of the proposed enhanced customer journey may most keenly be felt by those with protected characteristics. This is because the proposed gateway to advise WSCC of the death of a resident will be via a single point of contact thus reducing the need for several contacts.

**2. Describe any negative impact for customers or residents.**

It is not anticipated that there will be any negative impact for customers or residents

**3. Describe any positive effects which may offset any negative impact.**

Customers and residents will be able to advise several WSCC services of the death of a resident via a single point of contact thus reducing the need for, and the cost of, telephone calls emails or letters

**4. Describe whether and how the proposal helps to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.**

The service will be offered to all and therefore the benefits will be felt by those with protected characteristics such as those who have problems using the telephone, keyboards or writing. It will also reduce the need to travel to several different County Buildings to convey information about a death.

**5. Describe whether and how the proposal helps to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.**

See response to 4.

**6. Describe whether and how the proposal helps to foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.**

People with protected characteristics will have full access to the service as well as those who do not.

**7. What changes were made to the proposal as a result? If none, explain why.**

N/A. There has been no negative impact identified

**8. Explain how the impact will be monitored to make sure it continues to meet the equality duty owed to customers and say who will be responsible for this.**

A pilot of the scheme will be run for 12 months following which there will be a full review and assessment of all aspects including accessibility of the service.

**To be signed by a Director or Head of Service to confirm that they**

have read and approved the content.

Name

Tony Kershaw

Date

5<sup>th</sup> December 2014

Your position

Director of Law, Assurance and Strategy