Chapter 19 - Reducing Avoidable Contact

Introduction

1. The following instructions focus on good practice, hints and tips and potential avoidable contact products. This is not only a source of information but can be used to develop your understanding of avoidable contact, how impacts on our claimants and what you can do to support that. For managers, it is about promoting a discussion within your teams. By working together we can reduce the burden that avoidable contact and repeat calls brings to all of us and our claimants.

2. We would like to hear from you, tell us about the things you think could be improved to reduce unnecessary calls from claimants. Talk to your managers and colleagues and look to generate further ideas about how we can improve the way we deal with claimants on a once and done basis. Don't forget to send these on to Bright Ideas who will take them forward.

Handover and Outbound Telephony Tool (HOTT)

3. For further information see Handover process and HOTT

Make Every Contact Count

4. These two documents list the main actions for us all across operations. The first document supports conversations with our customers, the second relates to the processes:

- must do conversations
- must do processes

Thorns & Roses Poster

5. Thorns and roses depicts examples of things we might say to claimants that are likely to generate repeat contact (Thorns) with suggested wording (Roses) that should reduce them. Not to be displayed in public facing areas.

Compliance with Standardised notes in Notepad

6. All staff must record quality notes within systems e.g. Notepad and LMS, to inform other staff what has happened on individual cases and to clear claimant questions without referral back to other parts of DWP. Managing Benefit and Jobcentre Enquiries across DWP paragraph 35 onwards takes you to operational instructions on how to record quality concise and relevant notes including accepted abbreviations.
7. Failure to record quality notes could lead to the claimant ringing back and the agent being unaware of any previous action and so creating an unnecessary duplicate handover/escalation.

Managing Claimant Expectations

8. It is vital that we manage claimant expectations more effectively to significantly reduce repeat or progress chasing calls. Consistent messages and standardised timescales along with next steps must be given to the claimant and be used at all points in the claimant journey. This ensures claimants are informed of when and what will happen next with their claim.

9. To avoid confusion claimants must be advised of the specific date by when action will be completed as opposed to referring to the number of 'working days'.

Work Available Reports (WARs)

10. WAR's must be actioned timeously and correctly ensuring payments are made on time and prompt action taken on claim closures.

Call Backs

11. All call backs from handovers must be made within three hours. The call backs need to be undertaken appropriately to ensure the query is resolved.

12. Put yourself in the claimant's situation. You will likely have waited for a call back from an organisation (utility company etc.) and have been frustrated when that call back is late or does not occur.

13. Escalation - this is the process that will be used for Priority Duplicate/Escalation handovers.

SMS

14. SMS text messages can be used along the customer journey but must be used appropriately and care needs to be taken that a text message does not then lead to a further call from the customer.

Consistent Messaging

15. All staff must be aware how they can play their part in reducing avoidable contact and delivering excellent customer service.