Management and Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) Checks

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Management Checks

Introduction

1. In order to action a management check, the nominated person, for example the Team Leader (TL) or Quality Assurance Manager (QAM), will need to reserve the task first, **See**: Workflow and Task Management.

Background

2. A case may be selected for a management check for a number of different reasons including:

- pre-determined management checks set at Departmental level;

- management checks generated by a supervisor setting a specific management check profile for a particular user for example, a new member of staff; and

- management checks generated by the submission of evidence, benefit delivery cases or payment correction cases for approval.

Note - Management checks will also trigger a percentage of QAF checks. **See:** Quality Assurance Framework guidance. If you need to direct the check to the QAM, you should set a task, **See:** Workflow and Task Management guidance. Where a completed QAF checklist is available for the action a user has taken, you should also use that in completing the check. Where a QAF checklist is not available to assist with the check, you should check that the evidence held supports the action taken.

If a user attempts to approve or reject a management check or reserve or close a management check task generated by themselves an error message **"Error - you are attempting to action a check that you generated"** will be displayed

Submitted case selected for management check

3. To check the case:

Step	Action

1	access PIPCS and go to your homepage
2	select the 'Inbox', third tab, to display your 'My tasks' page
3	from the left hand side, expand the 'Shortcuts' panel to display a list of shortcuts
4	from the bottom of this list, select 'Available tasks' (this offers a search facility)
5	highlight the search criteria (if you need more than one entry from a column, click on each criterion while holding down the CTRL key). Click 'Search'. The tasks will display underneath.
6	select the 'Action' button next to the task and select 'Add to my tasks'
7	select the 'My tasks' tab and select the task by clicking on the hyperlink
8	select the 'Primary Action' link to display the case to be checked
9	the Benefit Delivery Case homepage displays, click the link on the claimant's name above the figure in the top left hand corner to display the Person homepage

4. From here the following should be checked as appropriate:

- cross reference with CIS to check:
  - ➢ name;
  - ➢ address;
  - ➢ DOB;
  - ➢ DOD (if appropriate);
  - ➢ phone number;
  - ➢ details of any known PAB/CPAB and check end dates;
  - ➢ any other benefits;
  - ➢ also check the time the changes were applied;
- cross reference any information held in DRS:
  - ➢ change of address;
  - ➢ change of name;
  - ➢ new/change of PAB/CAB;
  - ➢ bank details;
  - ➢ DOD;

- ➢ also check the time the information was received;
- • check the communication record.

This list is not exhaustive

The information above can be found by accessing the Teams and Workload tab:

- • **Tabs on the 'Person homepage' show:**
  - ➢ **Background** – highlights any relationships associated to this person, together with a historical record;
  - ➢ **Identity** – shows the claimant's details, together with any other names they may use or be known as;
  - ➢ **Contact** – details of addresses, phone numbers;
  - ➢ **Financial** – bank account details together with any deductions that may be in place;
  - ➢ **Verifications** – shows any items for which we have required verification or there is still verification outstanding;
  - ➢ **Cases** – any related cases to this claim;
  - ➢ **Applications** – any applications from this claimant;
  - ➢ **Issues and Proceedings** – any special caution markers can be seen here;
  - ➢ **Tasks** – any outstanding tasks associated to this case;
  - ➢ **Administration** – details of who has been involved in the case;
- • **Tabs on the 'Benefit Delivery Case homepage' show**:
  - ➢ **Claimants** – details of the claimant;
  - ➢ **Benefits** – currently will only show PIP;
  - ➢ **Timers** – any outstanding information we have requested where a timer has been set and not yet cleared;
  - ➢ **Evidence** – details of all the evidence in the evidence basket for the case;
  - ➢ **Dispute** – details of explanations, reconsiderations or appeals associated with the case;
  - ➢ **Attachments** – a list of all attachments associated with the claim;
  - ➢ **Assessments** – a list of all associated assessments to the case and their status.

Note – If new details arrive in DRS or CIS after the check is generated which highlights changes to any of the above, reject the case. Note on the comments box that rejection is due to new information received and not user error. For example:

- different account details which results in payments sent to the wrong bank account or;
- different address details which results in notifications to the wrong address if new medical evidence is received after the check is generated, reject the case and refer it back to the CM to consider in line with Decision Making guidance. Also, **See:** Quality Assurance Framework.

5. Once all the details above have been checked the evidence also needs to be checked. In order to check all the evidence details:

Step	Action
1	navigate to the Evidence Summary Case by selecting the Cases tab from the Person screen. Select the numeric link in the 'Reference' for the relevant Evidence Summary Case
2	to check the evidence, select the 'Evidence' tab. This takes you to the evidence screen. Select the 'active evidence' and 'in edit evidence' links from the left hand list, checking any evidence against that held in DRS/communication record/notes pages, for example, assessment notes (this list is not exhaustive)

Case approval check - approved

6. Once you are content that all of the areas to be checked are correct navigate back to the Benefit Delivery Case. To do this select the 'Home' tab which takes you back to the Evidence Summary Home page. Scroll down to the Cases section and select the link in the Reference column for 'PIP Benefit'.

7. If you are content that all the action taken is correct take the following action to approve the check:

Step	Action
1	select the 'Approve Case' option from the Action drop down menu
2	select 'Yes' to the message 'Are you sure you want to approve the case?' the task will show as 'closed'
3	send a manual task to the PIP user notifying them that the evidence has been approved and to remind them to take any outstanding actions, for example, informing HMRC if appropriate

Case approval check - rejected

8. If you decide that the action taken is not correct take the following action to reject the case:

Step	Action
1	select the 'Reject Case' option from the Action drop down menu

2	select 'Yes' to message 'Are you sure you want to reject the request for approval of this case?' the task will show as 'closed'
3	PIPCS clears the supervisor's task and sends a new task to the PIP user with reasons for the rejection together with any supporting comments

9. The PIP user takes corrective action as requested and then closes the task. They then create a manual task to you to advise that the action has been cleared and for the supervisor's further check.

10. If still incorrect, close the existing task and manually create a new task to the PIP user to take corrective action.

11. If correct, take action as described in the 'Case approval check can be approved' Step & Action table, closes the existing task and action is complete.

Special Customer Records (SCR) User Access Test Check generated

12. **Every** time a PIP user accesses or attempts to access a Special Customer Record (SCR) on PIPCS a Task 012 'Action required – User Access Check' is generated and automatically sent to their manager.
Note: This applies to PIPCS only. Action for existing systems remains unchanged. For example, CAMLite - No action is needed by user or manager. Close tasks received.

13. The user will complete a TC4 and give a hard copy to their manager.
The manager should record any information supporting the reason for access including

- the cases accessed
- the screens accessed
- what prompted the access, for example task, phone call,
- any relevant DRS documents accessed or communications record entries.

Note: This check maybe replaced in the future with a targeted ATAS check. Until then use the existing TC4 for this check. Teams may wish to maintain a small stock of hard copies.
http://intralink/1/pension/guidance/unconverted/cis%20forms/dwp_t374076.doc

14. The manager will check available records and relevant documents then complete the TC4 confirming if the access or attempted access was legitimate.
In the event this can only be done by accessing the PIPCS record, the manager will gain temporary system access. A 'User Access Check' task will be generated and automatically sent to your manager.

15. If the user being assigned access to carry out the outbound call is the same one a 'User Access Check' task has already been generated for, the manager will not clear it until the outbound call has been completed, or if not completed, the temporary access period (4 hours) is terminated.

Note: The 'User Access Check' task is generated by the combination of user ID and NINO. If there is an open 'User Access Check' task for a particular user ID/NINO combination another one won't be generated for any subsequent access whilst the task is open.

16. Once the check is complete the task can be closed.

17. Documents relating to the check must be held securely for 6 months then destroyed.

Reassessment Cases Only – Action required – deferred task check

18. If the CM accepts there's 'good reason' for delay in claiming PIP they access dialogue DA/AA110 (Notepad) to record the reason and action taken. For example, '2nd reminder matured. Claimant currently in hospital – good reason accepted. Task deferred - date'. Then defer the 'Follow-up PIP claim invite' task in PIPCS and record the details in the task Notes.

See: 'How to Defer an Existing Task'

19. If the task is deferred three times or more then 'Action required - deferred task' will be generated to the Case Management Team Leader to investigate. An auto prompt will be generated on PIPCs to remind the T/L to task the user

The CM TL decides if deferral action was appropriate:

- if it was appropriate to defer, the case will be referred to the CM to consider suspending DLA or a further deferral

- if it was not appropriate to defer, the CM TL will issue a manual task second reminder – Reassessment activity – consider outbound call/ suspension reminder advising the CM of the action needed to resolve the case

Removal of Date of Death

20. When the PIP user removes a date of death, PIPCS will select 100% of cases for a management check and raise a task for the supervisor to check the correct action has been taken.

21. On receipt of the task check what documents/information have been received to support the change and if the correct action has been taken the supervisor will approve the task as follows:

Step	Action
1	select the link from the task for approval
2	select 'Yes' to the message 'Are you sure you want to approve the case?' the task will show as 'closed'.

On approval PIPCS will generate a task to the user for them to undertake the activity at paragraph 24.

22. If the supervisor decides that the correct action hasn't been taken they will reject the check as follows:

Step	Action
1	select the link from the task for rejection
3	PIPCS displays the Reject Confirmation screen
3	select 'Yes' and enter any supporting comments. Note: If no comments are entered here PIPCS displays the Reject Confirmation screen with an error message. The task will show as closed.

23. If the management check is rejected the date of death previously held will be reinstated. The supervisor must create a task for a PIPCS user and advise what action is needed and why the check was rejected.

24. If the check has been approved, the following actions maybe required. Case was in payment the Benefit Delivery Case (BDC) needs to be reactivated and the award end date manually amended. See: Modify the end date of the current award.

25. If the decision was not yet made, then the next step in the claims process needs to continue.

26. If decision had already been made to disallow then no further action is required.

27. The management check cannot be closed manually by the PIP User. While the check is outstanding no payments will be made.

28. The broadcast to CIS will not occur until the check is approved.

29. The task will go to the AP when the check is approved if the case is with the AP.

30. If the removal of Date of Death is rejected and there is Carers Allowance in payment, the supervisor will need to advise Carers Allowance manually that the Date of Death has been restored.

31. When the Management check cannot be approved as CIS cannot action the removal of date of death further action is required the supervisor will receive an

error message. The check must be rejected and the date of death removed manually via CIS500.

Evidence checks

32. An evidence check can be received for any or many different pieces of evidence at any point throughout the life of a claim, for example, hospitalisation or boarder dates. These checks are separate to the Case Approval checks and need to be completed before the case can progress.

33. Evidence checks are selected exactly the same as any other management check, **See**: Submitted Case selected for management check.

34. When you have selected the task from the 'My tasks' tab, the task will display with 4 links, 2 primary links and 2 supporting information links. Select the supporting information link to view all the particular evidence to be approved or rejected. The rejection reason will be written against the particular evidence. The evidence will need to be checked against the appropriate source, for example, DRS or a task generated from Helpline (this list is not exhaustive).

35. When you have checked all the information and are now in a position to approve the case:

Step	Action
1	select the 'My tasks' tab again and select the task
2	select the 'Approve evidence' link
3	select 'Yes' to message 'Are you sure you want to approve this evidence?' the task will show as 'closed'

36. If you decide to reject the case:

Step	Action
1	select the 'My tasks' tab again and select the task
2	select the 'Reject approve request' link
3	in the pop-up box that appears, select the rejection reason from the drop down box and complete the comments box as appropriate
4	select 'Reject evidence'

37. PIPCS will automatically close the task and create a new task for the user to take the correct action. The PIP user takes corrective action as requested, closes the task and resubmits the case for approval. PIPCS re-selects the case and creates a task in your 'Available Tasks' inbox advising that the action has been cleared and for your further check.

Note – you can view the rejection reasons by selecting the 'View History' link next to the 'Status' field on the BDC Home Page.

Amending a verified date of birth or death

38. When the PIP user amends a verified date of birth or death, or removes the verification marker in 100% of cases PIPCS will create a task for you to check the correct action has been taken. On receipt of the task check what documents/information have been received to support the change and if you decide the correct action has been taken, close the task.

39. If the correct action hasn't been taken, issue a manual task to the PIP user advising them they have taken incorrect action and close the task. **See:** 'Workflow and Task Management' guidance

40. On receipt of the task, the PIP user will take the correct action and forward the task back to you to check the correct action has now been taken. If the correct action still hasn't been taken, close the original manual task and continue to issue a new manual task to the PIP user until the case has been corrected.

Ending a NINO

41. When the PIP user ends a NINO, in 100% of cases PIPCS will create a task for you to check the correct action has been taken. On receipt of the task check what documents/information have been received to support the change and if you decide the correct action has been taken, close the task. See: 'Workflow and Task Management' guidance

43. If the correct action hasn't been taken, issue a manual task to the PIP user advising them they have taken incorrect action and close the task.

44. On receipt of the task, the PIP user will take the correct action and forward the task back to you to check the correct action has now been taken. If the correct action still hasn't been taken, close the original manual task and continue to issue a new manual task to the PIP user until the case has been corrected.

Amending Payment Correction Status to closed

45. When the PIP user amends a payment correction status to closed, PIPCS will select a percentage of cases and create a task for you. On receipt of the task check that the relevant follow up action has been taken and that the closure is correct. For overpayment cases this will also include checking the e-referral tool to ensure a referral has been made, if appropriate. For underpaid payment cases this will include checking why the underpaid case was closed without being paid and to ensure this was correct to do so. If the closure is correct close the task.

46. If the closure is incorrect, issue a manual task to the PIP user advising of the incorrect action taken and close the task. See: 'Workflow and Task Management' guidance

47. On receipt of the task, the PIP user will take the correct action as advised and forward the task back to you to check the correct action has now been taken. If the correct action still hasn't been taken close the original manual task and continue to issue a new manual task to the PIP user until the case has been corrected.

Check Payment correct task

48. There are two tasks called 'Action Required – check payment correct', one is generated by payment correction – underpaid being submitted for approval, and has the approval/reject option and one is generated for a batch payment and doesn't have the approve/reject option. You will need to check the evidence, which generated the payment, has been applied correctly, for example, if the claimant was discharged from hospital check the correct discharge date has been used.

Action required Check Payment Correct

49. This management check is produced if a payment has been returned from the bank with a reason type beneficiary deceased but when the payment has been re-issued PIPCS doesn't hold a date of death.

50. You must check the payment was issued correctly and if no date of death is held it is because the bank returned the payment with the wrong reason type.

Action required Manual Payment check

51. This Payment action task is created when a user records the issue of a manual payment in PIPCS. PIPCS may generate a Payment Correction – Overpaid case when the claimant hasn't actually been overpaid. In these circumstances the user should close the Payment Correction case with reason "Manual Partial Payment made" – See: 04 Payment Correction - overpaid Background.

52. Closing with this reason type will generate a task for the supervisor. You must check it was correct for the PIP user to close the overpayment with that reason type and the claimant wasn't overpaid.

Re-issue of a returned payment

53. PIPCS will create a management check task when a PIP user selects to re-issue a cancelled payment. When a management check is created the payment is suspended and the payment status will show as "Submitted" until the management check is approved.

54. On receipt of the task the supervisor must check if the payment is correct. In "My Tasks" tab select the relevant task: "Action Required – check payment correct". If the supervisor decides the payment is correct, continue as per Case approval check approved.

Note: When the management check is approved the payment will be re-issued and the suspension automatically lifted.

55. If the supervisor decides the payment is incorrect continue actions as per Case approval check rejected.

Note: A case will automatically be selected for a management check when a previous management check on that action was rejected and payment will remain suspended until approved.

High Value payment (HVP) management check

56. When the PIP user inputs evidence that results in a High Value Payment (HVP) Check, PIPCS selects a percentage to check and identifies the user, it creates a task for you as their Supervisor and suspends payment.

57. These tasks are generated when a High Value Payment has been calculated and payment exceeds a set amount. The payment is suspended and the action button is available to approve/reject within Financial Tab.

58. When the check is generated for a HVP the notification is suppressed (shown by the suppression marker in the communication record). The notification isn't issued unless the check is **approved.**

59. On receipt of the task, 'Action Required – check payment correct', take the following action:

Step	Action
1	access the Person Homepage and select the 'Financials' tab, select the 'Action' button against the payment you want to approve and select 'Approve' from the 'Action' menu
2	the 'Approve Payment Confirmation' screen is displayed, select 'Yes'
3	select 'Close'
4	PIPCS removes the suspension and issues the payment
5	notification issued Note: The suppression marker will not be removed until notification is produced overnight
6	close task manually

Reject Check

60. If you decide the payment is incorrect follow Para 60 above but select 'reject' instead of 'approve' at Step 1. PIPCS will then revert the payment status to 'Cancelled'.

61. Create a manual task of type **'HVP Rejected'** for the user to take action. If after 1 day the manual task of exactly this type hasn't been created a reminder task is generated for you to take this action. .On receipt of the task the PIP user corrects the evidence, which created the payment, as directed.

Rejected due to incorrect account details

62. If rejected due to incorrect account details send a task to an appropriate user to take action.

63. Once action has been taken, create a manual task type **'HVP Rejected'** to the appropriate user to remove suspension and re-issue payment. The HVP Payment check will be recreated and the management check task regenerated. The notification will remain suppressed until new check approved

64. A **Re-issue payment** management check could be generated upon selecting reissue (Para 54) and on approval HVP payment check will then be produced.

Rejected due to a change in determination

65. The supervisor is required to "invalidate" the payment before creating the **'HVP Rejected'** manual task:

Step	Action
1	on receipt of the task the user will modify the determination
2	remove the suspension
3	close the task

66. PIPCS will create a Payment Correction - Underpaid case. User will need to submit it for approval. See: Payment Correction-underpaid guidance

Notifications

67. A revised notification will be generated by PIPCS (overnight) except when the determination has gone from an award to a disallowance - if this is the case the user must prepare a manual notification and add a communication record manually.

Motability Payments

68. Unless the award is being changed a HVP check against a Motability payment must NOT be rejected. This is because the validation prevents the Motability payment being selected for 'Re-issue' by a user.

Amending bank account details

69. When the PIP user amends a claimant's bank account details, PIPCS will select a percentage and raise a task for you to check the correct action has been taken.

70. On receipt of the task check what documents/information have been received to support the change and if you decide correct action has been taken, approve the task as follows:

Step	Action
1	select the link from the task to display the appropriate case for approval
2	select the 'Approve' option from the Action drop down menu
3	select 'Yes' to the message 'Are you sure you want to approve the case?' the task will show as 'closed'.

71. If you decide that the correct action hasn't been taken, reject the case as follows:

Step	Action
1	select the link from the task to display the appropriate case for rejection
2	select the 'Reject' option from the Action drop down menu
3	PIPCS displays the Reject Confirmation screen
4	select 'Yes' and enter any supporting comments. Note: If no comments are entered here PIPCS displays the Reject Confirmation screen with an error message. The task will show as closed.

72. On receipt of the task the PIP user corrects the case as directed, closes the task and re-submits it for approval. PIPCS re-selects the case for a check and creates a task for you as above.

73. Notifications, tasks and alerts not required will be suppressed within PIPCS. The only notifications that will remain are Management Checks and Task Escalations. Users need to take appropriate action on the Alerts/Notifications before deleting them. To access Recent Notifications, take the following action:

Step	Action
1	go to Users In Box, select 'Notifications' at the bottom RHS
2	select 'my notifications', select the tick box on the RHS, select 'Delete Selected' on RHS
3	are you sure you want to delete the selected notifications' then appears select 'yes'
4	PIPCS then deletes the notification alert and brings the User back to 'My notifications

Note: If the Recent Notifications POD has been de-selected on the user's homepage, it can be re-selected if required. All notification based action can be undertaken within the My Notifications shortcut in the user's box.

74. To re-select the Recent Notifications POD, take the following action:

Step	Action
1	select the 'Customise' button in the top right hand corner of the Home Page
2	select the 'Recent Notifications' option from the drop down pane
3	select 'Save'

Action required Check Notification Suppression

75. Cases where a notification is suppressed will be subject to management check. PIPCS will generate the following task: 'Check Notification Suppression' on five per cent of daily suppressed notifications. The manager must check the user was correct to suppress the notification. System suppression of notifications used as part of the Batch Payment management check is not subject to this management check.

Note: This task does not stop suppression action.

Claims with New Tax Credit interest

76. When a management check is generated on claims which have New Tax Credit (NTC) interest, the management check is not appearing in the Supervisor's Work Queue. The management check is not owned by a specific user and will default to the Scotland Workflow 1 work queue. Reassessment cases will default to Blackpool Benefit Centre Service Centre 1 Workflow 1. Therefore, you will be unaware that a management check has been generated.

77. When the workflow team leader identifies an 'Evidence of type other benefit requires approval' task, they will need to notify you that a management check has been generated and provide you with the relevant case details. You must access the Person Homepage on the relevant case, select the Evidence tab and action the management check as follows:

Step	Action
1	expand the information available for the task by clicking on the triangle on the left hand side of the task ID
2	click on the 'Claimant Homepage' link under supporting information. The claimant homepage will be displayed on a new tab
3	record the claimant's NINO and close the tab. The queue with the expanded task will be visible again
4	select the 'View Evidence' link in the 'Supporting Information' section. This displays a view of the evidence within the task
5	view the evidence displayed and once satisfied, click the back arrow at the top left of the screen
6	expand the task again as in step 1
7	select the 'Approve Evidence' link in the 'Primary Action' section. This displays the Evidence Approval window
8	select 'Yes' to approve the evidence
	Note: selecting 'yes' automatically closes the Management Check task but the evidence will remain in 'Edit' and another unassigned task is created. If the evidence is not activated at this point the DM will receive

	an error when they select to 'Award' PIP after running the full 'Check Eligibility'. Therefore, it is suggested that the Other Benefit evidence is activated at this point
9	inform the user to activate the Other Benefit evidence to prevent the CM from receiving an error message when the select to 'Award' PIP

Setting a management check profile

Background

78. The Personal Independence Payment Computer System (PIPCS) functionality enables managers to create new case approval checks for a user and to modify, delete and view existing case approval checks. Supervisors will only be able to amend approval check parameters, for example percentages and values, for certain defined case types. This is because the majority of check parameters have been pre-determined at Departmental level and can only be amended by a specialist user.

Creating a Case Approval Check

79. This functionality enables the supervisor to create a new case approval check for a specific Personal Independence Payment (PIP) user.

Step	Action
1	access the Administration Workspace screen and select the appropriate PIP user from the list displayed.
2	access the Case Approval Check List screen and select the 'New' link to create a new Case Approval Check for the PIP user.
3	PIPCS displays the interface to enter or select the parameters.
4	enter the percentage (mandatory) and estimated cost (optional if applicable) details, select the relevant case approval check and if required, input any comments.
5	on selecting the 'Save' button, PIPCS validates and saves the data and displays the new Case Approval Check List screen.
6	if invalid details are input or mandatory fields are left blank and details are then saved, PIPCS displays an 'exception' message prompting the supervisor to enter valid or mandatory details.
7	if the 'Cancel' button is selected, PIPCS closes the window without saving the Case Approval' check and displays the Case Approval Check List screen.

Modifying a Case Approval check

80. This functionality enables the supervisor to modify an existing case approval check for a specific PIP user.

Step	Action
1	access the Administration Workspace screen and select the appropriate PIP user from the list displayed.
2	access the Case Approval Check List screen and select the 'Edit' option from the Action drop down menu for the relevant existing Case Approval Check.
3	PIPCS displays the Case Approval Check 'In Edit' mode with the existing details populated.
4	amend the relevant details and select the 'Save' button.
5	PIPCS stores the modified Case Approval Check details and displays the Case Approval Check List screen.
6	if invalid details are input and saved, PIPCS displays an 'exception' message prompting the supervisor to enter valid details.
7	if the 'Cancel' button is selected, PIPCS closes the window without saving the amendments and displays the 'Case Approval Check' list screen.

Deleting a Case Approval Check

81. This functionality enables the supervisor to delete an existing case approval check for a specific PIP user.

Step	Action
1	access the Administration Workspace screen and select the appropriate PIP user from the list displayed.
2	access the Case Approval Check List screen and select the 'Delete' option from the Action drop down menu for the relevant existing Case Approval Check.
3	PIPCS displays a 'confirmation' screen.
4	confirm deletion by selecting 'Yes'.
5	PIPCS changes the Case Approval Check status to 'Cancelled' and displays the Case Approval Check List screen.

Note: On completion, the deleted Case Approval Check will still be viewable on the Address List screen with a status of 'Cancelled'.

Viewing Case Approval Checks

82. This functionality enables the supervisor to view the different case approval checks that have been created for a specific PIP user.

Step	Action
1	access the Administration Workspace screen and select the appropriate PIP user from the list displayed.
2	access the Case Approval Check List screen and expand the relevant Case Approval Check for viewing.
3	PIPCS extracts the Case Approval Check information from the database and displays it.

Spare paras 83-89

Quality Assurance Framework (QAF)

The Importance of Quality Assessments

90. All administrative systems need to measure their processes to be able to provide assurance they are working as they should. Rigorous, robust quality assessments contribute to:

- **Public confidence**. The public have the right to expect Civil Servants to carry out their duties correctly. They have the right to expect that any decision made that affects the financial support they receive from public funds is made in accordance with the law and that the process is subject to testing to ensure that this is the case.

- **Consistency of approach.** The public have a right to equal treatment. Where there is an element of discretion in decision making, there is some legitimate scope for different outcomes on the same facts. However, there is also potential for local practices to develop which are not consistent with the legislative intention. A national system of checking that applies the same universal standards helps guard against this.

- **Ensuring financial probity and safeguarding public funds.** Checks should ensure not only that there has been no impropriety involved in decisions that affect the amount of support given, but also that decisions affecting benefit payments should allow appropriate financial support to be awarded.

- **Improving standards.** Overall standards of decision making can be improved by identifying trends and providing feedback about what is going well or what can be improved. Errors in individual cases can be identified and corrected where necessary.

91. The PIP Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) aims to deliver a standard, which will be applied in all areas of the business. It will cover telephony, decision

making, evidence gathering, workflow and task management, quality assurance, written communications, managing resources, security and standards of behaviour.

92. This is an overview of the Audit Trail, Method Products and related supporting Guidance Documents that together, form the QAF.

Why adopt this approach?

93. Historically checks on benefit claims have generally centred on payment accuracy, rather than the substance and quality of decision making and the administrative processes. Initially the programme anticipated the QAF would focus on decision making activity. This was because of increased interest from parties, such as the DWP Decision Making Standard Committee, and the Work & Pensions Select Committee who highlighted decision making standards as an area for concern. In addition the Harrington Review also recommended that:

- written communications to the claimant are comprehensively reviewed so they are clearer, less threatening, contain less jargon and fully explain the process

- DWP Decision Makers are put back at the heart of the system and empowered to make an independent and considered decision

- there should be better communication between DM and healthcare professionals to deal with borderline cases

- DM's receive training so that they give appropriate weight to additional evidence.

94. However operational stakeholders were keen to take the opportunity to redefine Quality Assurance for PIP by widening the scope to include administrative processes and decisions. This would see the QAF take into account things that may currently be covered by management checks but are not routinely monitored.

Standards

95. As the QAF supports Departmental standards and principles, workshops were held with Operations and other stakeholders to establish how the following standards apply to PIP.

DWP Charter Standards:

96. The DWP Charter contains four basic standards:

- **Right Treatment** – We will do our best to help you, listen to you and make sure you feel comfortable dealing with us

- **Right Result** – We want you to have confidence in our decisions. If the outcome is not what you hoped for, we will explain why and tell you what will happen next

- **On Time** – We will deal with you as quickly as we can. We will tell you how long we will take and do our best to keep to the time we have said

- **Easy Access** – We will make sure you can contact us in ways that are simple and easy to understand. We will tell you about other services that may help you.

97. These standards should apply across everything we do, however it is possible to look in more detail at the standards expected in certain areas of PIP administration.

Principles of decision making

98. The principles of decision making are that the:

- decision maker is unbiased and the claimant has been treated fairly

- key issues are identified and the decision is based on them

- necessary evidence is held to establish the relevant facts

- law has been interpreted and applied correctly to the facts of the case

- determination and the reasoning for it are recorded clearly

- outcome of the decision is one that is reasonable in the circumstances and the decision is soundly based on fact and law

Securing improvements

99. Statistical data will provide evidence around compliance with the standards and guidance, but this information serves little purpose in identifying improvements unless it is used as part of a set of meaningful feedback. This in turn helps to identify training needs and nurture good practice, resulting in continued improvements in the overall standards of decision making.

100. To enable this, it is essential that anyone involved in assuring quality has a thorough understanding of how the administrative and decision making processes work and what standards and behaviours are required.

The Quality Assurance Framework

101. The aim is to identify any fundamental errors rather than minor mistakes that have no potential impact on the decision making process, the outcome and any subsequent contact with the claimant. However, to avoid continued minor mistakes, checkers must notify the user to allow corrective action to be taken.

102. A fundamental error is where the outcome is wrong, the claimant has not been treated fairly, or an important stage of the decision making process has been handled incorrectly so that, even if the outcome was acceptable to the claimant, there was potential for a wrong outcome.

103. The QAF aims to:

- ensure the actions of our staff are: consistent, reasonable, fair and equitable, within our expectations; and within the boundaries of the law
- provide claimants with:
  - ➢ the opportunity to present their case
  - ➢ a rational, clear and understandable outcome
  - ➢ a clear explanation of how decisions are reached
- promote a minimum standard for quality assurance by monitoring, improving and maintaining the quality standards
- ensure that action is taken as a result of quality assurance checks and that all details are recorded.

104. The QAF will contribute towards:

- gauging if there's a consistent approach to gathering, weighing and presenting evidence
- holding meaningful discussions at 1-2-1s with staff
- helping identify Learning and Development (L&D) needs
- building on and sharing good practice
- providing a national assessment route for determining current knowledge and skills levels
- influencing the development of future L&D products (technical and 'soft skills')
- enhancing the Department's reputation by ensuring decisions are fit for purpose, in line with the Principles of Decision Making and Evidence chapter of the Advice for Decision Making guide (DMG)
- getting it right first time and minimise disputes and appeals
- delivering services that meet the DWP Charter standards, including PIP's strategy for supporting claimants in a vulnerable situation throughout the journey (every job role should include this element)
- delivering the signposting strategy - signposting claimants to alternative support where required
- fulfilling the Department's aims of "digital by default" and PIP's channel strategy. From April 2013 the main channel will be telephony, with post as an alternative format for those unable to use telephony. However the long-term aim is for the e-channel to be the main route in to claiming benefit.

QAF Checklists

105. Rather than including the lower level detail about the specific checks in the main body of this document, we have decided to use checklists for each function.

106. We did consider the use of Case Studies but concerns were raised as this may lead to perverse behaviour. People could simply copy the examples 'parrot fashion' rather than considering the specific element of the case in front of them. To prevent this negative behaviour and to ensure the QAF is user friendly, it was decided that instead of developing case studies, checklists would be produced for each PIP function. The checklists demonstrate how standards should be applied in given activities.

107. Where there is a need to develop case studies for L&D these must comply with QAF standards.

108. There are a range of checklists for PIP, they are:

- 02. PIP QAF Making a Decision Checklist
- 03. PIP QAF Making Outbound Explanation Call Checklist
- 04. PIP QAF Making a Decision Reconsideration Checklist
- 05. PIP QAF Preparing an Appeal Response Checklist
- 06. PIP QAF Making a Decision Intervention Checklist
- 07. PIP QAF Taking Appointee Action Checklist
- 08. PIP QAF Making General Outbound Enquiries Checklist
- 09. PIP QAF Written Communications Checklist
- 10. PIP QAF Dealing with a Change of Circumstances Checklist
- 11. PIP QAF Attendance at Appeal Hearing Checklist.

Selection and Monitoring

109. There is a need to monitor QAF performance at different levels of the PIP organisation hierarchy. This should be simple and kept to what is required for monitoring and assurance purposes.

110. We will check whether someone has met the standards at each of the touch points, to identify improvements and development needs rather than a pass or fail across the whole check. This will allow us to monitor how well we are performing as a team and if L&D needs to be improved.

111. Although the QAF is targeted around quality it is important that accuracy be monitored alongside quality to prevent duplication of effort.

112. PIP has not applied a rigid QAF checking regime but will look to work with Regional Benefit Centre staff, managers and Operational Excellence Directorate to develop a checking regime that fits with the business in practice, rather than in theory.

Guide to allocation of QAF check

113. When a Management Check is triggered by PIPCS the task is routed to each of the Team Leader positions in the User's team and will appear in each Team Leader's available tasks.

114. They will be able to see if the task relates to a member of their staff by interrogating the information within the task. **See**: Management Check

115. They will also be able to access the case prior to reserving the task.

Who decides that a Quality Check is appropriate?

116. QAF checks will be undertaken on the CM's first 5 decisions (or more, until they have attained the required standard) and there will be a 100% check on appeals.

117. The TL/HEO who is responsible for the management check will have to liaise with the QAM by e mail, telephone or face to face (as appropriate) to establish if the case is required for a QAF check (for example if the CM needs to have their first 5 decisions checked the TL/HEO will have to ask the QAM if they have undertaken the required number of QAF checks for that user).

118. QAM's do not have appropriate access to enable them to receive and clear management checks on PIPCS and tasks generated by a management check cannot be forwarded to another user. Therefore, if the QAM confirms that they need to undertake a QAF check the TL/HEO should create a new task to the QAM to enable them to undertake the QAF check. At this stage the TL/HEO should not reserve the Management Check task. **See**: Task Overview

The QAF check

Selecting the appropriate Checker's template

119. The QAM will select the appropriate Checkers template and complete the full check. See: Annex Checkers Templates

120. For all the QAF checks apart from the one for the Outbound Explanation call the QAM will record whether the standards have been met or not met.

121. The checkers template for the outbound explanation call includes the facility to record "applicable" or "not applicable" for some of the expected standards as well as "met" or "not met". This is because the CM may be unable to get hold of the claimant by telephone to give them the explanation for the decision and it is not appropriate to record that the CM has not met the standard expected if this was due to circumstances outside their control.

122. Where standards have not been met the QAM should provide details of why they have not been met in the notes box.

123. It is not anticipated that there will be any notes where the standard has been met but the QAM may wish to record positive outcomes.

Feedback

124. The QAM will complete and print a copy of the checkers template to feed back to the individual who is being checked.

Accuracy Checking Record (ACR) and Monitoring Stats

125. The QAM should then open the Accuracy Checking Record (ACR). This document contains tabs for recording the outcome of each of the QAF checklists as well as tabs for collating the statistics for each of the QAF checks that have been undertaken by the QAM.

126. The QAM should select the tab for the appropriate QAF check that has been undertaken and excluding notes insert the data they have already recorded on the QAF Checkers Template onto the appropriate ACR. When this information is entered onto the ACR the stats sheet will be automatically populated with this data. The data recorded in this stats sheet should be saved by the QAM.

127. After completing the ACR the QAM should close the Checkers template without saving the information entered.

128. On completion of this action the QAM should return the task to the TL/HEO that referred it to them so that they can reserve and then clear the management check.

Collating Stats

130. A SPOC will be required to collate the stats from each of the QAMs ACR on a monthly basis.

131. There will be a requirement to start a new ACR following collation.

132. The products should be retained in individual "my docs".