

Appendix 2

Payments Team Consultation - Response to Staff Questions

1. How will the move to Liberata affect Financial Regulations that we follow now. At the moment we sent out AP1s to be signed. Do Liberata have their own financial regulations for paying invoices

A. Liberata would still be governed by the Council's Financial Regulations and would continue to use AP1s and AP2s.
2. Will payments functions still be audited by London Borough of Bromley

A. Yes.
3. Who will be sending out Domiciliary Care Statements to Suppliers.

A. The Domiciliary Care templates will be sent to suppliers by LBB staff.
4. Will we still be liaising with Care First Support desk and LBB Brokers when service agreements are not set up on Carefirst for Domiciliary Care Services

A. Yes.
5. Will we still be liaising with Care Managers when services agreements are not set up on Carefirst for Direct Payments and Domiciliary Care.

A. Yes.
6. Will we be liaising with Charging Team when paying invoices, when client contributions are not set up or when clients are overcharged for services

A. Yes.
7. For the 2nd and 3rd phase, All these payments are client based. Will clients have to be informed of the takeover.

A. All stakeholders including clients will be informed if the decision is to proceed with the transfer to Liberata.
8. 3rd Phase – Work is dependent on client files which will still be property of LBB

A. Our aim is to have all of the client files on CareFirst by the end of this year. The information will therefore be accessible electronically by the staff carrying out this work.

9. Will Property and I.S. invoices still be paid through confirm.

A. Yes.

10. Payments team commit orders and set up cost codes on confirm, will this still be done. Audit in the past said property couldn't do this as it was a conflict of interests. Where would this now sit as payments team commit orders for The London of Bromley in confirm. Would LBB want Liberata to commit their orders.

A. All processes will be mapped and if it is felt that a particular task should remain with LBB then this will be put into place.

11. Surveyors in property quite often ring up payments to enquire about how much has been paid on a works order or certificate. They don't all have access to confirm will this change and if they need this information will Liberata be charging for it. If we can no longer do this, property will need to be informed before the transfer.

A. Liberata has provided a proposal to undertake all of the work referred to in the consultation document; there would be no additional charge for providing information to the Surveyors.

All service departments will be informed if the decision is to proceed with the transfer to Liberata.

12. For confirm orders we send out invoices AP1s to be signed. This is an LBB financial regulation. Will this change.

A. No.

13. Staff are concerned with the last paragraph of Appendix 2 where Liberata are stating that they will need to make changes over the contract term and may need to make redundancies.

A. Liberata currently has no intention making any redundancies. If at any time a reduction in the number of staff is required Liberata will look to move staff to alternative work on either the Bromley or other contracts.

14. Will staff keep the same working hours.

A. Staff will be transferred on their current terms and conditions, which would include working hours as stated in their contracts of employment. However if there were service implications e.g. no adequate cover, this may be something that the new employer would need to discuss and negotiate with the staff.

Liberata have a "Flexible Working Policy". Whilst flexible working is operated at Liberata's discretion and to meet business requirements, every effort will be made to accommodate the needs of employees.

In Bromley Liberata also operate "Flexi Time" where staff are able to work additional hours if the business requires and the time accrued can be taken as additional leave.

15. Why are job titles different.

A. The job titles shown in the consultation document are taken from the HR database Resourcelink. When staff moved into Exchequer from service departments or Corporate finance their job titles were not standardised.

16. How can LBB justify keeping Exchequer Manager and Deputy Exchequer Manager when already six staff have gone to Liberata and another 24 are planned to go over the three phases in this consultation. This deletes 30 of the staff they currently manage and one of these jobs could potentially save LBB the same as above over the contract period.

A. Management capacity has been stretched around this service for the last two years with both managers doing in excess of 50 hours a week, leading to times when both managers find it quite stressful. Added to that, management of Appointee ship & Deputyship moved into Exchequer from April 2012 adding further pressures to the team. As an interim arrangement this team is reporting directly to the Deputy Finance Director due to capacity issues.

Should the payments team transfer to Liberata the delivery of the Contract will need to be managed by the remaining staff. There is also the income team still sitting within Exchequer which needs more focus from management.

17. In the first phase the Team Leader doesn't have knowledge of all payments. Will training be given before the transfer. Have not done Iproc for about 3 years, have never supervised Supplier Team. Only three of the areas that are being transferred are supervised by me at the moment.

A. Yes training will be provided for the Team Leaders prior to any transfer to enable them to supervise areas of work that are new to them or where refresher training is required.

20. Domiciliary Care payments currently use several databases that have been created by in-house staff. These are periodically amended / updated by persons not on the list for possible outsourcing.

A. LBB will continue to be responsible for any of their systems/databases used by Liberata to carry out the AP functions.

21. Please can you provide me with a copy of the specification for the service that Liberata have been asked to carry out?

A. A Health check on the payments function has been undertaken by Liberata that indicates improvements can be made around our payments team. At the moment we are only in the consultation process with staff who may raise issues that will need to be considered as part of the outsourcing proposal.

If the Council's decision is to transfer the work to Liberata following consultation, then officers will develop a detailed SLA which will ensure that there is no detrimental impact on the service. As part of this process Due Diligence will be undertaken by Liberata to ensure that they have a detailed understanding of our service requirements. It is only once Due Diligence has been completed that the SLA will be finalised.

22. What contractual guarantees have the council demanded in relation to the number of staff working on the Bromley Contract for this service?

A. None as we are not in contract at the moment – see response to question 21 above.

23. What contractual guarantees have been sought and given that council clients will have locally based staff and not have to resort to a call centre based hundreds of miles away.

A. If the outsourcing proposal goes ahead, the SLA will ensure that there is no detrimental impact on the services we provide to our clients. The Health check identified that there were service improvements that could be made and therefore the intention is to deliver an improved service in the longer term.

24. In light of the proposed changes to the delivery of the service and its impact on the community can you tell what steps have been taken to consult with service users and when an EIA (Equality Impact assessment) was carried out and please provide me with a copy of it.

A. We have considered the impact of the proposed transfer and there is no evidence or reason to believe that the transfer would have an adverse or negative impact on staff or service users.

25. Can you explain why a private contractor (Liberata) who was a prospective bidder was able to be given a commercial advantage by being able to undertake a "health check" on the service that it has subsequently been awarded?

A. Section II.2 of the procurement Contract Notice included accounts payable in the scope of the contract and stated that these services could be

considered for inclusion at a later date. For clarification at this stage the contract had not been awarded to Liberata.

26. Please can you provide me with a copy of the Health check?

A. We are happy to provide the summary of Liberata's findings.

27. The report states that the privatisation will save the council £255,750 over the lifetime of the contract. However the report contains no financial details as to how these savings can be achieved.

A. A full report will go to E&R PDS committee breaking down the service and financial benefits.

I would be grateful if you could provide me with a full breakdown of the current costs of the service, and how given that TUPE will apply that Liberata has been able to demonstrate that they can make the savings as well as make a profit without a negative impact of the service?

A. Information on the current costs of the service will be provided shortly.

Liberata have indicated that the reduction in cost to this service will be driven by process improvements and enhanced technology. As a result of these improvements where capacity is released, Liberata would look to retain staff and seek suitable alternative roles.