



## Higher education data reduction taskforce (HEDRT)

Notes of the meeting held on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2022, 10:00-13:00, held in Sanctuary Buildings, London, Room SB5.04 and via MS Teams.

### Attendance

#### Chair

Neil McIvor, Chief Data Officer and Chief Statistician, Department for Education (DfE)

#### Attendees

- Alison Berry – Director of Statutory Operations – Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)
- Don Campbell – Head of Data Centre of Excellence – Student Loans Company (SLC)
- Sarah Pearce – Further Education & Skills statistician – Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (Ofsted)
- Richard O’Kelly – Head of Analytical Data – Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)
- Sarah Ardin – Head of Research & Analysis – Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education (IfATE)
- Richard Puttock – Director of Data, Foresight and Analysis – Office for Students (OfS)
- Nadir Zanini – Associate Director of Research, Data and Analytics – Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual)
- David Craig – Director, Data Science – Department for Education (DfE)
- Matt Bollington – Higher Education Statistics Unit lead – Department for Education (DfE)
- Shauna Vulliamy – Head of OfS Sponsorship team – Department for Education (DfE)
- Andy Youell – Executive Director of Regulation – University College of Estate Management
- Mark Corver – Founder – Data HE

- David Hayes – Chief Data Officer – Open University
- Daniel Kidd – Deputy Academic Registrar – University of Wolverhampton
- Sally Turnbull – Chair of HESPA’s Higher Education Data Insight Group
- Alan Fenton – Academic Registrar – Newcastle College
- Jackie Njoroge – Director of Strategy – University of Salford
- Nathan Michael – Academic Registrar – Grimsby Institute
- Terry Hutchinson – Director of curriculum and governance – DN Colleges Group
- Tim Hogan – Head of HE Economics and Senior Economist – Department for Education (DfE)
- Henna Akram – Analyst – Department for Education (DfE)
- Olly Clifton Moore – Head of HE Analysis – Department for Education (DfE)
- Jack Thomlinson – Deputy Director for International HE – Department for Education (DfE)
- Lydia Turpin-Beesley – Secretariat – Department of Education (DfE)

## Apologies

- Lindsay Jones – Head of MIS – Leicester College
- Rebecca Tyers – Chief Media Officer – Department for Education (DfE)
- Simon Groomell – Senior Statistical Officer – Department for Education (DfE)
- Nick Manton – Deputy Director of Digital and Analytical Services – Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education (IfATE)

## 1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

Members of the Taskforce and the Chair, Neil McIvor, introduced themselves to each other, their roles and organisations.

## 2. Chair’s address

The chair explained that Minister Donelan has asked him to set up this Taskforce, which looks to bring together a range of stakeholders involved in the reporting and collecting of data across higher education and identify where these processes can be rationalised with the aim of reducing bureaucracy across the sector.

The intention is to create a formal structure to allow the sharing of knowledge across the sector and encourage both data collectors and reporters to work together to improve the efficiency of data collections, with bureaucracy rationalised and reduced.

The Chair wanted to ensure that there are concrete actions and recommendations based on Taskforce discussions.

The Taskforce will run every 6 weeks for 6 months.

### **3. Terms of Reference**

Terms of Reference were agreed with several small changes. To be recircled and published.

### **4. What are the challenges and opportunities?**

All members of the Taskforce were invited to share challenges and opportunities within the terms of reference. The taskforce recognised the importance of the initiative and the opportunity it created to be forward thinking.

As part of a wide-ranging discussion, a number of themes were discussed by a number of members:

- Definition and purpose of data collection – can we agree more common definitions across the data collecting organisations.
- Recognise that there does need to be an element of data burden on providers, but that there could be opportunities for better compromise from the centre, e.g. accepting what exists already.
- Burden is relative to the “yield” from the data; wider access would increase the value returned to providers in relation to the costs they bear supplying data.
- To understand the cost of data collection to the sector would be useful and give perspective.
- We need to think with the best interests of the students when determining what we collect.
- Need to reduce red tape on data sharing as this can be the reason why duplicate information is collected.
- How to ensure governance of data bodies is effective and up to date, given the current data landscape.

Other themes were also identified and discussed.

### **5. Developing a work programme**

Following the discussion about priorities and other challenges, and a further discussion on challenges, the Chair proposed the following workstreams and owners were identified:

- Definitions – understanding those areas where similar definitions or coverage are causing additional work – identification of the issues. **David Hayes agreed to coordinate this.**
- Sharing and release of information, value chain – what sort of information would help complete the circle – better or different ways of disseminating information so that providers get value from the data they supply. **Sally Turnbull agreed to coordinate this ‘provider’ strand.**
- Data sharing blockages – Data collecting organisations can impose additional burden if there is red tape in obtaining what they need. Is there a common ‘minimum’ data-set that could be held across organisations? **Don Campbell agreed to coordinate this ‘data collectors’ strand.**
- Better common governance – how can we get better at governing what is collected and to what definitions so as to minimise burden? **Alison Berry and Richard Puttock agreed to coordinated this ‘data collectors’ strand.**

## 6. Proposed dates of future meetings

09/05/2022, 1100hrs – 1300hrs

23/06/2022, 1000hrs – 1200hrs

04/08/2022, 1000hrs – 1200hrs

12/09/2022, 1100hrs – 1300hrs

27/10/2022, 1000hrs – 1200hrs (final meeting)

**ACTION: All - To let the secretariat know whether you can attend the above meetings.**

A discussion took place regarding having these meetings in different locations around the country.

## 7. Any other business

None

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