

# Transparency – External Stakeholder Group

Thursday 20 September 2012  
Caxton House London

<b>Chair:</b>	Nigel Brough	DWP Information Governance & Security (IGS)
<b>Attendees:</b>	Iain Sterland	Senior Portfolio Analyst Boots
	Lee Thomas	Decision Analytics Manager EON
	Paul Bivand	Associate Director of Statistics & Analysis CESI
	Richard Hopper	MI Manager SERCO
	Mark Nicholson	Principal Consultant Public Sector Equifax
	Rachel Smith	Centre for Cities
	Ian Tait	DWP Information Governance & Security (IGS)
	Paul Wilson	DWP Professional Services HWD
	Martin Dillon	DWP Information Governance & Security (IGS)
	Mike Payne	DWP Information Governance & Security (IGS)
<b>Apologies:</b>	Rhys Farthing	Child poverty Action Group
	Peter Watson	Corporate Management Information Citizens Advice
	Maxine Willitts	DWP Professional Services HWD

## 1. Background

Nigel Brough welcomed members to the first meeting of the external stakeholder group whose aim is to support the work of the Welfare Sector Transparency Board (more details can be found [here](#)). In particular by

- helping shape the flow of data from the introduction of Universal Credit (UC) and Personal Independence Payments (PIP),
- identifying and assessing uses of the data that will emerge from the Department's electronic fit-note initiative
- providing user input and feedback on the planned new publicly available tabulation tool called Stat-Xplore.

Martin Dillon explained the background to the Government's transparency agenda including the role of the [Public Sector Transparency Board](#) which is supported by a range of sector boards set up by central government departments and other Open Data governance bodies such as the [Data Strategy Board](#) and the Open Data User Group.

## 2. Overview of DWP data landscape

Nigel explained the future transition of DWP benefit statistics from individual level client data to household level data as Universal Credit (which will absorb housing benefit and tax credits) is rolled out from October 2013 to 2017. Future stats releases are likely to be split into “in work” and “out of work” segments with a transparency strand delivered via Stat-Xplore. The plan is that a frozen UC data set will be available quarterly then linked to flows during the UC transition. **PB asked that during transition the inflows/out flows be tracked by occupation.**

## 3. Universal Credit (UC) & Personal Independence Payment (PIP) data – Ian Tait

Ian summarised the emerging UC and PIP data requirements and how they could be utilised. Not all data components would be available at once so some prioritising would be needed. IBM is currently sourcing the data items to be captured including the relationship data needed to understand household structures. UC pathfinders would begin in Manchester from April 2013. The “claimant count” would continue as now with some small definitional changes once UC is rolled-out. The *check first* and *pay later* model would be informed by risk management governance including IRIS.

A number of points emerged from discussion which Ian agreed to explore further with colleagues and then update the group in writing. These included:-

- Work Programme (WP) providers would continue to need data on work sustainments once UC was introduced. ERSA concerned that the WP model may need to adapt to UC. Also need confidence in integrity of data linking – fuzzy matching not sufficient for Work Programme providers. **And assurances were sought about the frequency of UC data refreshes.**
- **The Standard Occupational Classification code needed to be a data requirement to understand household make-up.**
- **UC MI Users need to understand what type and % of data items would be available, and by when, during UC roll-out.**

## 4. Stat-Xplore – Mike Payne

Mike summarised the existing tabulation tool capabilities currently available on the Department’s website. He then provided a demonstration of its planned replacement called Stat-Xplore. This will be the Department’s one-stop service for disseminating, visualising and reusing DWP data sets. It will include robust disclosure controls which protect personal privacy, be supported by strong meta data and provide more data at a more granular level in more reusable formats than the Department’s current on-line version.

Mike demonstrated Stat-Xplore using HB data which prompted a number of comments from the group.

- The group are content that Stat-Xplore will deliver data to standard ONS level geographies.
- Prefer user registration to guest user status which would require no registration though the guest user option is likely to be useful for occasional users.
- Maps/data can be downloaded as SDMX files as well as kmz/pdf formats which can utilise existing mapping software. URL versions will also be available.
- Would prefer api formats – **this will be checked with the Stat-Xplore software developer**
- Timing of delivery of full version of Stat-Xplore dependent on internal DWP security accreditation. May be scope for an earlier launch of an aggregate data solution (with visualisation tools) with the full version available for use by the end of March 2013.
- **Mike will contact the group about a user testing workshop to be held in an IT suite at the Department's Sheffield office.** This is likely to be towards the end of November - final timings will be confirmed in writing.

## **5. Fit note data – Paul Wilson**

Paul provided an overview of fit note data, DWP's approach to gathering MI and what we expect it to cover. Approved suppliers in England are now rolling out the electronic version of the fit note with most GP practices expected to be on-line by the end of October. There are different NHS organisations in Scotland that DWP are engaging with so a bit behind there. Next steps involve encouraging GPs to use this functionality in place of paper fit notes, and agreeing the transfer of anonymous fit note data to DWP. Final fit note statistics are likely to be published annually.

Points raised in discussion included the view that it would be useful to link fit notes to a unique identifier to facilitate UC credit checks and diagnosis codes could usefully be linked to UC data. However Paul confirmed that the system will not identify individual patients.

## **6. Summary and Next Steps.**

Action points raised during discussions are reflected in the separate note attached and will be followed up.

**The group agreed to meet again in March for further updates on UC/PIP**

MI, progress on fit-note data and Stat-Xplore developments and that the group's meeting minutes should be routinely published.

**In the meantime group members can suggest other data items for the next agenda and PB would be provided with a separate update on vacancy statistics by Nigel.**

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