



Department  
for Work &  
Pensions

# DWP Open Data

The story so far and the DWP Open Data vision

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## The story so far

The Department is committed to Open Data and improving the use that can be made of the rich source of data it holds on much of the population. Our mission is to embed a culture of transparency so that more and more data is released routinely for wider re-use.

We put considerable effort into meeting our obligation to keep personal data secure but are now doing more to take opportunities to make better use of it for policy development and service delivery. This includes record level data in both personal and non-personal form and the various types of information that can be created from it (research findings, statistics, MI, etc.).

The key activities we are undertaking to support transparency are:

- A published [Open Data Strategy](#) describing what data we hold, how we currently use and re-use it and the new data and statistics that we plan to release. More information is available on our [Transparency](#) website.
- A public commitment to three Growth Review measures. Firstly Universal Credit will be designed with Open Data considerations in mind and aggregate benefits data will be published during the first year of live running. We are consulting on the content of anonymised fit note data and, dependent on the successful rollout across GP practices of the electronic fit note, will start publication to drive innovation in the Occupational health sector and improve management of sick absence. And we will explore opportunities for linking welfare data sets to other government and commercial datasets to increase their value to industry. More information is available in [HM Treasury's latest update on implementation of the growth measures](#).
- A new Welfare Sector Transparency Board, chaired by Gill Aitken Professional Services Director General, includes members from industry, academia and the public sector. This Board will help us understand where this work will add most value. For example sharing data with the Office for National Statistics to test whether it will be possible to replace the population Census with an administrative data based system (the 2011 Census cost over £450 million). Further details and examples are provided in the [DWP Open Data case studies](#)
- The launch of new on-line software (Stat-Xplore) will allow the citizen to create their own statistical tabulations based on DWP's rich sources of customer data. Claimants' privacy will be protected by sophisticated disclosure control

mechanisms. It will cover most existing benefits and pensions and over time will include statistics on Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payments.

- We are supporting a Task Force on Administrative Data which brings together Government and academia to look at how more data sharing can be done for research purposes within existing legislation. We are exploring a 'proof of concept' pilot to link DWP and Department of Health data securely and safely. This could open the door to doing more research with other departments and academia to support the development of public policy.

## DWP Open Data Vision

Openness and transparency has the potential to transform Government. It can strengthen people's trust in Government and encourage greater public participation in decision-making. Freeing up public data and putting it in people's hands can help them have more of a say in the reform of public services.

DWP is committed to supporting the Government's transparency agenda and now routinely releases large amounts of expenditure and procurement/contractual data each month alongside a wide range of benefit case load statistics. These activities are now part of normal business.

Making more public data available for re-use will also help realise social and economic benefits by enabling the growth of new, innovative information-based businesses.

DWP's aim is to create a culture of transparency which becomes firmly embedded in the business. Examples of initiatives which will support this include:

- Develop a list of data sets held and consult with a range of data users to understand the demand for, benefits of, and priorities for releasing new data sets.
- Push more data out for re-use via a new enhanced on-line tabulation tool called Stat-Xplore.
- Release performance data relating to the Department's work programme contractors.
- Release detailed management information on Universal Credit in the first year of live running.
- Release anonymised fit note data to help drive innovation in the occupational health sector and improve management of sickness absence.
- Support the Administrative Data Task Force recommendation and explore how to deliver more data sharing for research purposes within existing legislation. For example by a 'proof of concept' pilot to link DWP and Department of Health data.

- Continue to look for opportunities to share data with other organisations to support wider welfare provision including, sharing data to support the Warm Home Discount Scheme, Population Census beyond 2011 and the Electoral Registration Transformation Programme.
- Continue to use the Welfare Sector Transparency Board and External Stakeholder Group to drive forward the Transparency and Open Data agenda, looking at further opportunities to link welfare datasets to increase their value to industry and society.