

MINUTES			
Title of Meeting:	DWP Open Data Group		
Date:	8.7.2015	Time:	11.30 – 13.30
Attendees:	See attached list		
Apologies:	See attached list		

Agenda item 1 Introduction and Welcome

Nigel welcomed existing and new members to the sixth meeting of the Group. The group agreed the minutes from the last meeting in October 2014 and were updated on the following action points

APs 1,3 ,4 & 12 will be covered under agenda item 3

AP21 will be covered under agenda item 5

APs 10,19, 20 & 22 have been addressed and closed since the last meeting

Agenda item 2 – Organisational changes in DWP

Nigel Brough (NB) provided a session outlining recent structural change in DWP with the creation of a new directorate ‘Technology’ that brings together all our IT services into one area:

- **Platform Services** – end to end accountability for maintaining and developing new IT systems for key client groups
- **Development & Operation of Services** – using industry standard development lifecycle environments
- **Supporting functions including Data & Analytics** (where we are based)

He outlined:

- The benefits this new structure will provide in supporting the Government 2020 vision by developing digital systems in a fast secure way, with a strong focus on the ‘end user experience’.

And how this helps deliver

- Transparency / Open Data agenda including, more flexible access to DWP data such as the development of an API.
- Better use of open source software and interactive visualisation tools and techniques.
- Use of secure ‘sand pits’ for data scientists and related analysts to test data linkage and poof of concept approach.
- Improved data sharing to help vulnerable people benefit from government schemes such as fuel and water poverty.

Members welcomed the update and commented as follows:

- Seen as a positive in moving to ‘platform’ services as this will help provide more ‘real’ time data and fits with possible longer terms plans for the National Information Infrastructure (NII)
- Provides more opportunities to link more data across government and joins up with the work being done in the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to streamline the census. (NB) confirmed ONS are interested in

using DWP data to supplement future census statistics and improve the cross government migration statistics.

Jacqui Taylor (JT) asked how the future of survey data fits into the above. (NB) explained that there are on going internal debates relating to ‘survey data versus administrative data’. Ideally, the latter represents the true sources but there are timeliness of publication and cost issues too. No final decisions have yet been made on using Stat-Xplore to publish survey data in a more flexible fashion eg the Family Resources Survey.

Robert Barr (RB) asked if we were sighted on the development of an ‘official address database’ previously being progressed by the Open Data User Group (ODUG) because the existing address infrastructure is inadequate. (NB) stated if this was being taken forward across government then DWP could be in a good position as a ‘lead’ department for ‘address’ matching, due to the ‘benefits’ and ‘HMRC’ data we hold on a large percentage of the population. (RB) agreed particularly in respect of ‘multi occupation’ addresses.

(RB) also expressed an interest in the data matching we do for fuel and water poverty. A brief update was provided and the following action point was taken away

AP 24 (8.7.15) – DWP to provide a link to the case studies (fuel and water poverty) we are currently updating on the Transparency website including contact details - see [case studies](#) with current details held on the Transparency website (Cleared)

Agenda item 3 – Progress Update on DWP data releases

(NB) updated the group on the following statistical releases:

Development of an API for Stat-Xplore

Members were shown a ‘demo slide’ of what the API will look like on [Stat-Xplore](#) and how it will be accessed

- The API is due to be available to users at the in the near future, following agreement from DWP Commercial.
- All datasets contained in Stat-Xplore will be available via the API and ‘free’ for all registered users

Elaine Roche (ER) asked if there will be guidance available for users. (NB) confirmed the vendors would be providing API user guidance

The group agreed this was a good example to showcase the benefits of the transparency / open data agenda. This API had been developed due to direct feedback received from external data users, the Public Sector Transparency Board, and DWP’s own Transparency Boards

AP25 (8.7.15) DWP to inform members and provide a link when the API is released

Statistical Releases

- **(New)** Universal Credit (UC) statistics have started being released via Stat-Xplore on 15.7.15.
- Work Programme data is due to be released via Stat-Xplore at the end of the year
- Subject to resources being available, legacy benefits such as Attendance Allowance currently accessible via the departments Tabulation Tool are due to migrate to Stat-Xplore by the end of the year. This is in advance of the Tabulation Tool being switched off in March 2016

DWP are exploring the potential of releasing survey data via Stat-Xplore, which will throw up different challenges due to the structure of the data

(NB) informed the group that the trend is moving towards shorter concise statistical publications with access to more detailed information via Stat-Xplore if users require it.

Interactive Universal Credit (UC) map

- (NB) demonstrated the UC interactive map which is now available on GOV.UK. It shows UC caseloads and starters at Jobcentres rolled out across the country [see map](#)
- A new version for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) has now been developed and is also available at [see map](#)
- There are plans to extend these interactive maps to include 'migrant workers' and for internal management information within DWP

The group agreed this was a useful visual tool. (JT) informed everyone they had developed a G-cloud version which overlays this as part of the project work being done in the UC Analytical Hub (see agenda item 5).

Agenda item 4 – Data Visualisation

Adam Pearce (AP) provided an overview of how data visualisation can enhance transparency by making information more accessible, [see slides](#)
This technique was illustrated using complex work programme statistics and has been designed around the end user and their preference for accessing information via smart phones and tablets [see tool here](#)

The new format had been accredited by the Government Statistical Services (GSS) as 'excellent' for it's use of visuals and storytelling to explain complicated data to the non-expert citizen.

(AP) informed the group there were plans to extend this technique to other welfare reform benefits such as UC and PIP

Members agreed this was an excellent product and welcomed it as a powerful new format for presenting complex data.

AP26 (8.7.15) (JT) to provide (AP) with useful web addresses / books relating to visualisation techniques, including 'mapping the future'

which explains the science behind the visual analytics. (Cleared)

Agenda item 5 – Universal Credit (UC)

Iain Wright (IW) provided an overview of the UC digital service being developed in DWP.

The new UC ‘digital’ service being developed is part of the Government 2020 vision and will eventually replace the existing UC ‘live’ service, currently being used for the processing of UC claims.

The UC digital service is being piloted in a small number of postcodes in the London area. It provides a secure platform to allow claimants to register and submit their claim on-line as well as manage their account to reflect change of circumstances etc.

As the pilot is extended more data will become available. The DWP project are already working with data scientists to advise on the best way to produce this data in the future, including discussions about visualisation tools and techniques

The group acknowledged this was a brave complex new system development, and longer term would bring overarching benefits.

Agenda item 6 – National Information Infrastructure (NII)

Liam Murphy (LM) provided an update on the development of the National Information Infrastructure (NII) including background information for new members.

AP27(8.7.15) (LM) to provide an update on the NII next steps when it becomes available

Beta guidance is now available on DGU [see here](#) following the piloting of the new approach in three exemplar departments (DEFRA, DH, DfT) prior to the election.

The remit and role of the Chief Information Officer is currently being reviewed including where the NII will sit. A decision on the NII next steps and the Government Digital Service is due to be made in September 2015.

(JT) highlighted the NII paper the Open Data User Group (ODUG) had published on DGU highlighting a demand-led approach for the next stage of the NII, [see here](#). ODUG’s suggested approach is currently being trialled by the Home Office to support structural changes in preparation for the next phase of the NII. It was acknowledged that DWP were already well placed for the next phase of the NII but any further preparation which could be identified would be useful

Agenda item 7 – AOB

Fit Note Data –. An update was provided to members at the meeting

Future DWP Open Data Group meeting dates

- To be arranged

DWP Open Data Group - meeting 8.7.15	
Attendees	
Nigel Brough (chair)	DWP Technology
Jacqui Taylor	CEO FlyingBinary Ltd
Julie Hewitt	Equifax
Professor Robert Barr	Chairman Manchester Geomatics
Lee Thomas	Decision Analytics Manager EON
Elaine Roche	Experian
Liam Murphy	Cabinet Office
Adam Pearce	DWP Technology
Iain Wright	DWP Strategy UC Analysts
Martin Dillon	DWP Technology
Michelle Pickard (secretariat)	DWP Technology
Apologies	
Iain Sterland	Senior Portfolio Analyst Sainsburys
Paul Bivand	Associate Director of Statistics & Analysis CESI
Paul Davidson	CIO Sedgemoor DC
Peter Watson	Corporate Management Information Citizen Advice
Peter Elias	Employment Research University of Warwick