Minutes	
Title of Meeting:	Welfare Sector Transparency Board (WSTB)
Date:	8th October 2015	**Time:**	11.30 – 13.30
Attendees:	See attached list
Apologies:	See attached list

Agenda item 1 – Introduction and Welcome

David Frazer (DF) welcomed everyone to the eighth meeting of this Sector Board and provided some background on the role of the Board for new members, see **here**

He explained the meeting will aim to bring everyone up to date with what we are doing to meet transparency and openness, as well as providing an insight into the future direction for statistical data in DWP

Agenda item 2 – DWP Progress updates and future direction for statistical data

David Frazer (DF) summarised DWP's current achievements for publishing data, for example implementation of the on-line tool Stat-Xplore providing open data to a lower granular level and improvements being made to quarterly statistical publications such as a brief overall analysis supported by new data visualisation tools.

He then highlighted the DWP's restructuring which has brought together IT, Security and Data Analytics into a new Technology directorate led by a new Director General, Mayank Prakash. This has brought together key expertise on designing IT, acquiring and using data, statistics and analytics, customer insight, data security and business value. The integration of all these functions should help us build on our existing achievements and support the move to the next level, i.e a Big Data environment alongside richer personal data for evaluation.

Examples of activities we are undertaking to move to the next level are:
- Development of a Data Science function which should provide improved analytics and techniques resulting in more intelligent use of real time data
- Improvements in Technology systems, capable of providing quicker more 'real time' data to the right staff at the right time.
- Developing digital systems to underpin more on-line services for customers as part of the Government 2020 vision
- Using agile methods to deliver data in more imaginative ways supported by intelligence led analytics which are legal and secure

Work on all of this has already started alongside on-going discussions to understand and assess what the appetite for our data is.

Pete Watson (PW) acknowledged the good work already being done and asked to what extent we obtain feedback on how people use our data and

what a difference being 'open' is making

DF and Martin Dillon (MD) explained that key feedback metrics are routinely obtained from over 4000 Stat-Xplore registered users. User feedback has helped us to identify the need to develop an API and for enhanced visualisation tools. Data.gov.UK also provides dataset popularity metrics

A further example is the Department's approach to open policy making which includes wider engagement with key stakeholders at the policy development stage. This ranges from ministers and delivery partners, to end users to hep ensure the final policy is more relevant and effective.

We also use feedback from external engagement including this Board, the DWP Open Data Group and formal consultation exercises to help us identify enhancements to our datasets. DWP will continue to review ways in which we can establish what a difference our open data is making

Fit Note data – The work to extract the anonymised fit note data from GP IT systems has been steadily advancing and by the time of the next meeting we should be in a position to bring this action point to a conclusion. More information should be available on GOV.UK by the end of October and the link will be provided to members

AP39 (8.10.15) – DWP to inform members when further information about fit note data is available on GOV.UK

Agenda item 3 – Universal Credit

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

This new UC 'digital' service is part of the Government's 2020 vision. It will eventually replace the existing 'live' service, currently being used for the processing of UC claims.

The UC digital service is still in 'beta phase' and is being piloted/tested in a small number of postcodes in the London area. This digital service is based on Government Digital Standard (GDS) principles and provides a secure platform to allow claimants to register and submit their claim on-line, as well as manage their account in real time to reflect change of circumstances etc.

The pilot will continue to scale up and be geographically extended over the next six months. Some raw data is now becoming available which provides new information about how citizens interact and use the system. DWP is gaining a deeper understanding of the scale of this interactive intelligence. It will ultimately inform future business development decisions. and DWP will explore opportunities for utilising this type of data for reporting purposes. We should be in a position to start to include data from Universal Credit digital services in the published official statistics next year.

Anna Robin (AR) asked what interactions we were measuring and what

intelligence had been used to inform system development so far.

Charlie Boundy (CB) explained that information was at a low level of granularity and allowed us to understand what was happening at each stage of the UC claim lifecycle. For example timings of citizen/agent interactions, intervening changes of circs etc as well as final outcomes. We are still in the early stages but moving forward it should allow for more 'intelligent use of data' which will help satisfy a wide range of needs, such as policy, operational, business development, providers etc

(PW) highlighted research in Citizens Advice which showed a number of people would struggle with on-line access. (IW) acknowledged the concern and clarified that feedback provided had shown more than 50% of users were already using smartphones to access UC.

AP40 (8.10.15) (PW) to discuss with (IW) the potential of sharing the Citizen Advice research findings with DWP

(AR) asked if the plan is to share UC behavioural data with the Work Programme providers. (DF) confirmed there shouldn't be any legal barriers as we currently share data with them as part of the service they provide to our customers. The department's vision for UC is segmented and does incorporate working with providers such as ERSA

Agenda item 4 –   Cabinet Office Update

Liam Murphy (LM) updated the group on the Government's wider Transparency agenda.

All data teams within Cabinet Office (CO), including the Transparency Team have now moved into the Government Digital Service. The move has brought together in one place policy, technicians and data sharing functions which will allow for improved delivery of integrated solutions..

National Information Infrastructure (NII) – The NII will continue to be rolled out with the next 3 exemplar departments scheduled for the near future.

(LM) provided an overview of the Open Government Partnership (OGP) National Action Plan (NAP) which is being developed in conjunction with civil society.

The UK's National Action Plan is a result of the UK's membership of the **OGP** - a multilateral initiative that aims to secure concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. Find out more about the OGP here**http://www.opengovpartnership.org/**

The new NAP will cover the period January 2016 to June 2018 and will be published early in the new year. CO is working with departments to identify possible commitments to be included in the NAP. DWP provided an update paper on the commitments they are exploring across the 6 key themes, which

was sent to CO on the 9ᵗʰ October

(DF) enquired about wider engagement Cabinet Office have been doing to develop the plan. (LM) confirmed that as part of the launch there had been meetings with all interested parties including Civil Society, Amnesty International etc

Agenda item 5 – Data Scientist role

Charlie Boundy (CB) provided an overview of the data scientist role being developed in DWP, including the current position, goals and challenges.

This new function will help us move to secure deeper technological skills to provide the department with improved analytics and techniques resulting in more intelligent use of data. Looking to deliver on demand live data intelligence and accurate real time data use as a default

Currently DWP are in the process of:
- Setting up the infrastructure and skilling up staff to perform the data science function. 'Virtual' teams are being set up in technical hubs spread across the country
- Clarifying what information is required and by whom for example, front line services need real time data to effectively manage the business, Strategy is to support front-line delivery, policy making and analytics
- Identifying and collating new data and using agile techniques to deliver projects which will test and drive effective and new technical solutions
- Working interactively across government / key external stakeholders to gain an insight into wider data needs and new problem solving techniques to support DWP innovation. An example is deciding where and how APIs can add most value

The group discussed and raised the following comments / questions:
- Is there guidance to show how stakeholders can get involved and provide feedback on what data would be useful to include
- What was the purpose of APIs

(CB) confirmed there are wide ranging discussions taking place. Once we have samples of data to test the methodology (early next year), it should provide the opportunity for more in depth stakeholder input, possibly done as part of a hackathon

(CB) explained that APIs provide a window to new data sources and that the requirement of APIs is still being developed, including the potential for producing a catalogue. Some APIs already in hand for internal use - sharing data in legacy systems is a rich source of future API usage.

AP41 (8.10.15) – DWP will arrange a session with the DWP Open Data Group to let them know more about the Universal Credit digital data that is coming on-line and early work being produced from our data science function

Members agreed the importance of understanding the key questions which

access to new datasets will help resolve. This will ultimately lead to a single claimant view which will enhance customer service, minimise interactions, and reduce costs in both time and efficiency.

Agenda item 6 – Policy in Practice
Lisa Stidle (LS) from the Policy and Practice Team provided a session on the work they have been doing with councils to help them map the impact of welfare reform changes on low income households. For further information see **http://policyinpractice.co.uk/about/** including details of the exercise in Leeds at **'big data' approach in Leeds** and the on-line calculator **online system**

They have worked with 4 local authorities so far including Leeds and Birmingham. The findings have resulted in some changes already being made, as well as, providing the opportunity for councils to manage and target their high risk groups.

The group discussed and raised the following comments / questions:
- Had the impact of debt been considered as part of the process
- Was the data used publically available
- Is this a methodology or a tool which the data is input to

(LS) confirmed that secure data sharing agreements had been put in place to receive the data and the process included the impact of debt on households. There was scope to add more data from other sources which would then provide a more holistic view.

At this stage it was a methodology fed by data from various sources which is then input into a bespoke analytical tool to produce impact calculations. A more streamlined process is being developed

(PW) highlighted this was a good example to show where impacts fail, to enable targeted interventions to be delivered alongside tailored services.

Agenda item 7 – AOB

There were two items raised as follows:

- To formally record the valuable contributions and expert insight Heather Savory provided during her membership of the Welfare Sector Transparency Board

- Review of the WSTB membership and the DWP Open Data Group – Various membership changes across both forums provides an opportunity to take stock of the balance of memberships, their overlapping roles and whether we still have the right organisations on board to help take us forward. Further information for both sector boards can be viewed at **WSTB** and **DWP Open Data Group**

Department for Work & Pensions

AP42 (8.10.15) DWP to contact members of both groups to obtain feedback on possible options for the future.

Future Welfare Sector Transparency Board meeting dates
- **To be arranged for April / May 2016**

Welfare Sector Transparency Board – 8.10.2015	
Attendees	
David Frazer (chair)	DWP Director of Information Technology
Pete Watson	Citizens Advice (CA)
Joanna Lake	Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)
Anna Robin	Employment Related Services Association (ERSA)
Julie Hewitt	Equifax
Lisa Stidle	Policy in Practice
Giovanni Tonutti	Policy in Practice
Liam Murphy	Cabinet Office
Charlie Boundy	DWP Technology
Iain Wright	DWP Strategy UC Analysts
Martin Dillon	DWP Technology
Michelle Pickard (secretariat)	DWP Technology
Apologies	
Sue Markey	Information Commissioners Office (ICO)
Keith Dugmore	Demographic User Group