

Minutes			
Title of Meeting:	Welfare Sector Transparency Board (WSTB)		
Date:	21 st July 2016	Time:	11.30 – 13.30
Attendees:	See attached list		
Apologies:	None		

Agenda item 1 – Introduction and Welcome

David Frazer (DF) welcomed everyone to the 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, as well as providing an opportunity to discuss the future of the board and whether it continued to be a useful forum.

Agenda item 2 – Overview of the Government Data Programme, Cabinet Office

Peter Hatchard (PH) gave an overview of the Government Data Programme and how it will help to make better use of data across government.

PH explained that focus is now on improving the quality, accessibility and reliability of data and using data better ourselves. Focusing on giving users what they need within fiscal constraints by:

Making better use of data; by preparing new legislation to help cut out inefficient extra data gathering when other government agencies hold that data and working with ONS to build data science capability.

Modernising data infrastructure; To make it clearer what data we hold, how to share it and how to use it the aim is to produce an ecosystem of canonical registers, making a single, reliable public register; with the idea to also produce private registers. The number of action plans is available online

PH highlighted the need to develop standards and introduced the data science ethical framework; 6 questions you should be asking if you are undertaking a data science project in government.

Keith Dugmore (KD) and Judith Jones (JJ) gave positive feedback on the data science ethical framework.

Positive feedback was also given on the canonical registers, but it was emphasised that there needs to be more awareness of free resources.

Agenda item 3 – DWP Statistical Progress Update

Neil Mclvor (NM) provided an update on the future direction for DWP statistical data.

NM discussed the implementation of a new standard template for DWP Statistical publications to enhance the dissemination of the statistics making them easier to understand, sticking with simple words and pictures, trying to limit them to 10 pages if possible. The template has been implemented for a number of recent publications including the Households Below Average Income series which has seen it reduce from 132 pages to 22.

NM outlined the recent improvements to Stat-Xplore including the introduction of Work Programme data, taking the number of series released to 7 and the introduction of an API which allows users to access the background data.

The new data visualisations being produced within the Statistical Services Directorate utilising the new API functionality were then discussed with Gemma Kirk (GK) providing a demonstration of two of the products.

NM also discussed the consultation regarding the decommissioning of the tabulation tool and the move of some data to Stat-Xplore, requesting board members provide feedback to him should they miss the deadline for response.

Agenda item 4 – Universal Credit (UC)

Graeme Connor (GC) provided an update on Universal Credit.

The Live Service is now available in all 712 Job centres with Full Service available in 18 sites. A further 43 sites will be rolled out by Christmas with full roll-out by September 2018.

There are ½ million claimants, 40% of which are in work - an impact assessment on this has been published.

A lot of the interaction is done through an online journal, which provides a rich source of data.

Under UC full service 99% are making their claims online and 79% are doing change of circumstances online. Work with Social Researchers is being undertaken to discern how many are completing forms themselves and how many are working with citizen's advice etc.

We have published ad-hoc publications expanding the amount of information available publicly.

Paul Meller (PM) asked if there had been much engagement with academics. GC discussed the use of an expert advisory panel, which includes academics with which our emerging findings are discussed and feedback on what we should prioritise provided.

Agenda item 5 – Data Scientist Role

Charlie Boundy (CB) provided an update on the work of the Data Science function.

For the last 6 months CB has been establishing new data science capability and helping educate different user groups to know what data science is and how it can help them. Key for CB is understanding our customers and services using data visualisation, machine learning and embedded analytics to meet their needs.

There are lots of inevitable challenges with infrastructure, how to get the data which is out there and identifying who the data is useful to.

CB gave an overview of some of the current key areas being investigated such as;

1. A prototype of a policy maker app which provides information on the demographics and labour market split of different geographical areas which can be used by policy makers and strategists.
2. Projects aimed at improving the service we provide by providing service designers with better information about customer journeys and user behaviours to identify the characteristics of people who might need extra help.
3. Projects aimed at front line interactions using predictive analytics to help make recommendations such as to help work coaches.

Julie Hewitt (JH) asked how fraud and error markers are identified and what is done about it?

CB explained that we could look at the characteristics of different customer types. In some circumstances we may then use behavioural nudges such as asking people to re-confirm information but the quick wins are to mostly focus on the low risk groups and try to bring them through quicker with less paperwork.

KD asked if Data Science have been talking to anyone in the commercial world, for example mortgage vendors and offered to provide contacts. CB confirmed there are lots of suppliers currently engaged but was always open to other ideas.

Agenda item 6 – DWP's future external engagement for Open Data

Before moving on to the final agenda item reviewing the future of the board and the Open Data Group, DF asked to pause for reflections from board members.

Praise was given to the usefulness of Stat-Xplore and the new statistics template, in particular the Fraud and Error publications, which provides really useful info graphics.



The general view was that we have the right approach, the meetings are a useful way to provide updates and gather a wide range of views and we should focus the review on how we could improve.

DF asked board members if they felt there were any additional people who should be invited to join the board. KD suggested someone from the Energy industry or DEC.

Future Welfare Sector Transparency Board meeting dates

- To be arranged for Jan/Feb 2017

Welfare Sector Transparency Board – 21.07.16	
Attendees	
David Frazer (chair)	DWP Director of Data and Analytics
Afzal Rahman	Citizens Advice (CA)
Paul Meller	Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)
Rick Wright	Employment Related Services Association (ERSA)
Julie Hewitt	Equifax
Keith Dugmore	Demographics User Group
Judith Jones	Information Commissioners Office
Peter Hatchard	Cabinet Office
Neil McIvor	DWP Technology
Charlie Boundy	DWP Technology
Graeme Connor	DWP Strategy UC Analysts
Gemma Kirk (secretariat)	DWP Technology
Lottie Devaney (secretariat)	DWP Technology