

MINUTES OF MEETING**Purpose: HMRC Tax Transparency Sector Board****Venue: 100 Parliament Street London SW1A 2BQ****Date / Time: Monday 17th December 2012 - 2-4pm**

Attendees:	Apologies:
<p>HMRC Edward Troup – HMRC - Central Tax & Strategy Mike Hawkins - HMRC - Knowledge, Analysis and Intelligence (KAI) Cindy Bell – HMRC - Central Policy Adrian Ball- HMRC - Security and Information Alec Waterhouse – HMRC - Personal Tax Bill Elmore – HMRC - KAI Data Policy & Co-ordination Daniele Bega – HMRC - KAI Data Policy & Co-ordination Ian Parfitt – HMRC - KAI Data Policy & Co-ordination</p> <p>Executive agencies Dyfed Alsop - Valuation Office Agency (VOA)</p> <p>Other Government Departments Ed Parkes - Cabinet Office (CO)</p> <p>Academia Professor Paul Boyle - Economic & Social Research Council (ESRC)</p> <p>Confidentiality and Data Protection Judith Jones - Information Commissioners Office (ICO)</p> <p>External representatives Peter Cummings – Experian (EXP) Johanna Edwards – Equifax (EQU)</p> <p>Jonathan Shaw - Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) Keith Dugmore - Demographics User Group (DUG) Peter Fanning - Chartered Institute of Taxation (CIOT) Dominique Lazanski - Taxpayers Alliance (TPA) Rory Meakin - Taxpayers Alliance (TPA) Richard Baron - Institute of Directors (IOD)</p>	

1. Welcome and introductions (Edward Troup - HMRC - Central Tax & Strategy)

- Edward welcomed everyone to the inaugural meeting of the Tax Transparency Sector Board and explained that HMRC was taking this initiative forward, as part of its commitment to the Open Data Strategy
- He highlighted that the purpose of the board was to set up a forum which would help HMRC identify datasets that could be released for wider reuse by industry and academia and establish a dialogue between HMRC and the external world, within the constraints imposed by the need to maintain taxpayer confidentiality
- He thanked everyone for taking the time to be part of this board, from a number of commercial and voluntary organizations, academia, representatives of taxpayers and Information Commissioners Office as well as colleagues from HMRC, VOA, Cabinet Office

2. The Transparency Agenda and Sector Boards (Ed Parkes - Cabinet Office)

- Ed gave a presentation the latest state of play on Open Data across public sector and placed the HMRC Board in the context of other Boards already in existence
- He provided an overview of Coalition Government Transparency agenda, highlighting the benefits of Open Data and Transparency
- He explained that over the last three years, www.data.gov.uk has become the UK's largest repository of 'Open Data', with an increased number of datasets available and visitor numbers
- The Open Data White Paper published in June 2012 set an aspiration for Government "presumption to publish" open data and clear steps towards achieving this
- The Government is currently supporting users to identify which datasets they would like released and is also working to develop an ecosystem of open data producers, intermediaries and end users to support new businesses
- Work has also been undertaken to develop a Right to Data and ensure Transparency is supported by existing access and re-use legislation
- A number of arrangements have been made to drive the delivery of Transparency at a cross-departmental and official level. Departments are also held to account through a quarterly Written Ministerial Statement to Parliament and an annual public report
- Tax Transparency Sector Board will oversee development of Transparency agenda in HMRC, including Open Data Strategy

3. Overview of HMRC data landscape (Mike Hawkins - HMRC - Knowledge, Analysis and Intelligence (KAI))

- Mike provided an overview of the current data landscape highlighting HMRC's role and functions and describing the data the Department uses and retains
- Mike went on to talk about the legislative framework for data releases and the duty of confidentiality that **S18 Commissioners for Revenue and Customs Act 2005** poses on the Department
- HMRC can publish data in support of its functions but all disclosures must comply with the principles of Data Protection Act 1998 (must be **fair and lawful**) and Human Rights Act 1998 – Article 8 (must be **proportionate** to the purpose for which the information is disclosed)
- A number of data items are published under HMRC's programme of National Statistics publications, which have attracted a lot of interests from external organisations
- The presentation also highlighted HMRC's Open Data Strategy Commitments and future plans for data releases, including the issue of personal tax statements to taxpayers, the expansion of the HMRC Datalab and the development of a Tax Administration Research Centre

4. Open discussion on the value of HMRC data

- The following questions were then asked of all attendees :
 - Which HMRC data is most useful to you and why?
 - How is it currently used?
 - What would make the information we provide more useful? eg new data formats / different breakdowns (geography, industry, other demographics)
 - What data currently unavailable would you find useful?

Demographics User Group (DUG)

- DUG required granular level data using geodemographic coding, such as area based statistics, covering income and wealth broken down at output levels consistent with Census;
- There would be appetite for a facility allowing to download entire lists of VOA's Business Register / Council Tax records, as the current website only allows downloading one record at the time;
- Mechanisms should be put in place to allow researchers to make full use of Datalab's admin / survey records. For example, HMRC could make more metadata available for researchers to explore potential new uses of data

Equifax (EQU)

- Equifax also sits on the DWP Welfare Transparency sector board
- From a business perspective, Credit Rating Agencies would like to link individuals' data to addresses and develop profiles that could benefit a wide range of commercial sectors
- Income data would be valuable to banks, to help inform decisions about whether and how much to lend
- The more person-specific, the more valuable the data would be

Institute of Directors (IOD)

- IOD expressed an interest in being able to replicate tax policy analysis and costings using HMRC data

Chartered Institute of Taxation (CIOT)

- Suggested it would be helpful if an accountant could have direct access online to their clients data, as this information currently cannot be accessed electronically
- Agents would also benefit from a system to assess how they are performing compared to their peers

Taxpayers Alliance (TPA)

- Interested in postcode data for personal tax allowances, allowing individuals to identify higher rate taxpayers, broken down into specific areas

Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS)

- The IFS would benefit from historical and time series data and the ability to link across dimensions eg by households, not just individuals

Experian (EXP)

- Data proxies from the Census could open up ideas for new usage of existing data
- The analysis carried out by Deloitte for Cabinet Office highlights a high demand for open government data on the economy, demographics and labour market.
- Time series on economically active population would be useful

Economic & Social Research Council (ESRC)

- The default position should probably be that information will always be made available in some form, provided it is done so in a way that is safe and non-disclosive. It would be helpful to define criteria under which information should be made available in different forms and through different mechanisms.

Information Commissioners Office (ICO)

- The ICO is represented on other boards and is willing to work with HMRC on data sharing and privacy along the same lines

HMRC

- Edward Troup emphasised that HMRC has a strict legal duty to protect taxpayers' confidentiality and guarantee the integrity of the tax system
- HMRC will consider what information they will make available within the existing legal constraints
- When discussing the publication of new datasets, the cost to HMRC of putting the data together also needs to be borne in mind
- HMRC will set out some principles regarding the kinds of data we would feel it appropriate for the Transparency Board to focus on

Outcome

HMRC to consider the above ideas from members on the feasibility of potential data releases from a legal, cost and ethical point of view. The Tax Transparency Sector Board will develop a work plan in the next meetings, outlining what can be released by when (AP1 17.12.12)

5. Purpose of the Board and Terms of Reference

- The board was broadly happy with the TOR
- It was agreed that the focal point of the initiative should be to consider and prioritise requests for information, based on assessment of costs and opportunities
- A work plan highlighting what the Board will be doing by when will be discussed at the next meeting
- The board will also serve as a platform to discuss commitments from the Open Data Strategy - Cabinet Office Quarterly Ministerial written statements highlight that HMRC is on track to meet all of its commitments

6. Future meetings and membership of the Board

- Everyone happy with frequency and members
- Cabinet Office recommended that a representative from the Public Sector Transparency Board should be invited to the Board **(AP2 17.12.12)**
- It was pointed out that the current focus of the board is perhaps more on individuals and consideration should be given to more representation of businesses and the corporate sector **(AP3 17.12.12)**
- HMRC will continue establishing links with the Social Mobility sector board
- The Tax Transparency Sector Board would also benefit from International expertise. The Chartered Institute of Taxation expressed their willingness to make their International network available to the group **(AP4 17.12.12)**.

7. Summary and AOB

Next meeting : Monday 25th February 2013 (2 to 4pm)
100 Parliament Street London SW1A 2BQ (Room 2/58 - Churchill Room)