



Government  
Digital Service



Department for  
Science, Innovation  
& Technology

6 May 2025  
1pm - 2pm  
Virtual meeting

## Data Standards Authority Steering Board Meeting Summary

### Attendees

Jenny Brooker, Chair (GDS) Firoze Salim (GDS) Suzanne Fry (GDS) Christophe Prince (HO) Neil Cholerton (HO) Nicholas Oughtibridge (NHS)	John Olatunji (GDS) Idris Malji (GDS) Jody Parker (GDS) Becky Leader (MHCLG) Zelda Wheatley (DWP) Charles Baird (ONS)
---	--

### Record of discussions

1	<b>Welcome and Introductions</b> Jenny Brooker, JB, Chair (GDS)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>JB opened the meeting by welcoming all attendees and thanking them for their time.</li><li>JB highlighted the two main agenda items for the session:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Data Management</li></ol></li></ul>

## 2. Essential Shared Data Assets (ESDAs) and the Data Ownership Model

## 2

### Data Management

Suzanne Fry, SF (GDS)

#### 1 Overview

SF presented on the ongoing work within GDS to enhance data quality management across government. The session focused on the development and endorsement of materials designed to support the implementation of Data Quality Action Plans (DQAPs), particularly in relation to ESDAs.

#### 2 Purpose and Next Steps

SF outlined the aim of the session as seeking endorsement for the newly developed guidance and artefacts that support the implementation of DQAPs.

- Next Steps:
  - Publication of materials on GOV.UK.
  - Ongoing support for adoption, including development of implementation examples with departments.

#### 3 Context and Approach

SF emphasised that strong foundational data management is essential for enabling effective and secure data sharing across government.

- Rather than enforcing universal data quality standards, the emphasis is on supporting *fit-for-purpose* assessments by data users.
- GDS's long-term goal is to embed data quality management as a core activity across government, especially for ESDAs.

#### 4 Developed Artefacts

SF discussed the following developed artefacts to support the implementation of DQAPs:

- Implementation Guide: A step-by-step document outlining how to create and maintain a DQAP. Based on nine practical steps and aligned with the Government Data Quality Framework.
- Issue Prioritisation Framework: Helps practitioners define and prioritise data quality issues using risk-based assessment.
- Supporting Tools (on request):
  - *Issue Priority Calculator*: Assists in assessing the impact and urgency of data

quality issues.

- *Practitioner Workbook*: Consolidates templates and step guidance for easier navigation and practical use.

## 5 Engagement and Testing

SF highlighted that the materials were co-developed in collaboration with the Data Quality Community and a dedicated working group, which consisted of 29 members from 16 different departments.

A pilot conducted with Natural England validated the practical utility of the guidance. Feedback from the pilot led to enhancements in usability, including the addition of more visuals and improvements to the workbook tool.

## 6 Integration with Broader Data Management Work

SF explained that the work is closely aligned with the ongoing Data Management Discovery initiative, which aims to identify barriers and propose solutions for improving data management practices across government.

The findings, due in summer, will provide key recommendations for supporting ESDA data management. These recommendations will include the integration of DQAPs and metadata standards as essential components.

## 7 Request for Endorsement

SF asked attendees to endorse the publication of the DQAP materials, which will play a key role in contributing to a broader, unified approach to establishing government-wide best practices for data management.

## Discussion Highlights

- Charles Baird (ONS) expressed support for the guidance and its practical value. CB asked about integration with broader data management practices for ESDAs. SF confirmed DQAPs are a foundational step in a broader data management suite.
- Nicholas Oughtibridge (NHS)) noted the importance of federated metadata models and advocated for a more robust, distributed approach to *government-wide registers*. NO concluded by announcing that he was stepping down from his role as Board Member, with thanks from the group.

## Closing Remarks

- SF and JB thanked attendees for their engagement.
- SF welcomed any further questions or feedback and committed to revisiting the group once the Discovery findings are ready.

--	--

<b>3</b>	<b>ESDA's &amp; Data Ownership Model</b> Firoze Salim, FS (GDS)
	<p><b>1 Welcome and Introductions</b></p> <p>FS opened the session, introducing his role as Head of Frameworks and Standards and supporting the work of the DSA.</p> <p><b>2 Project Background and Purpose</b></p> <p>FS outlined that the Data Standards Authority (DSA) has been tasked with developing the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ESDA Policy</li> <li>• The Data Ownership Model</li> </ul> <p>FS highlighted that this work has been developed collaboratively across government, with oversight and governance provided by the DSA Steering Board with both artefacts successfully undergoing alpha and beta testing phases.</p> <p><b>3 Review and Revision Process</b></p> <p>FS explained that recent peer review feedback, including input from departments such as Defra and DVLA, has led to several key updates to the artefacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarification of the inclusion of open data and data of public interest within the ESDA framework.</li> <li>• Strengthened guidance on the relationship between Information Asset Ownership (IAO) and Data Ownership.</li> <li>• Introduction of a responsibility grid and implementation pathways, including hybrid models, to provide greater clarity and flexibility.</li> <li>• Provision of examples to support better understanding and facilitate easier implementation of the guidance.</li> </ul> <p><b>4 Roadmap and Implementation Plan</b></p> <p>FS outlined a phased approach for the implementation plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define department-level expectations over the first 6 months and longer term.</li> <li>• Require central government departments to coordinate returns from their ALBs.</li> <li>• Prioritise assets that are aligned with government missions and key public services.</li> </ul>

- Mandate the application of the Data Ownership Model to all designated ESDAs.

## 5 Engagement and Governance

FS confirmed that the DSA will present the artefacts and roadmap to key governance bodies, including:

- CDO Council
- CDO Council Executive
- Functional Leadership Group (FLG)

The goal is to secure Cabinet Committee agreement by late May or early June to ensure cross-government commitment.

## 6 Support and Feedback Request

FS invited departments to engage with the next stage of the process by:

- Reviewing the revised artefacts (to be shared around 9th May)
- Submitting any final feedback, including views on the type of support that they may need from the centre to aid implementation (e.g. GDS guidance, tools, or training)
- Sharing the materials across their organisations to support wider awareness and engagement

## 7 Discussion Highlights

- Charles Baird (ONS) emphasised the need for clear, practical guidance and tools to help build effective data management infrastructure across departments. CB noted challenges in aligning data ownership and information asset ownership, particularly in relation to security provisions and risk appetite, which had emerged from a recent data management audit. CB suggested that embedding this work within broader management processes could strengthen internal alignment and make the case for data infrastructure investment more compelling.
- FS agreed, recognising that the Data Ownership Model is intended as a foundational framework to support this kind of detailed work. FS noted that while the model won't answer every question on day one, it sets out the structure through which more specific best practice artefacts—such as those being developed under SF's leadership—can be introduced over time. FS acknowledged ongoing collaboration with colleagues to refine the approach and support departments in applying the model effectively.

## 8 Next Steps

FS confirmed the following next steps:

- The DSA will distribute the revised ESDA and Data Ownership artefacts around 9th May
- Departments are expected to:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Review the documents</li> <li>○ Provide feedback, including any central support requirements</li> <li>○ Begin internal preparations for implementation</li> </ul> <p><b>Upcoming governance meetings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Peer Review Group (PRG): 24th June</li> <li>● DSA Steering Board: 1st July</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<p><b>AOB and Close</b></p> <p>Jenny Brooker, JB, Chair (GDS)</p>
	<p><b>9 Any Other Business</b></p> <p>JB confirmed that there were no further items of business.</p> <p>JB thanked participants for their valuable feedback and timely contributions, and encouraged attendees to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Share any additional comments via email, particularly on the Data Quality and ESDA guidance.</li> <li>● Stay engaged and look out for further updates and discussions at the next meeting.</li> </ul>