**Minutes of the Software Development Forum meeting**

**4 June 2014**

**Cathays Park, Cardiff**

**Present:**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Kenny Barker (KB) | Advanced Learning |  | Lindsay Lewis (LL) | WG (Chair) |
| Tony Selby (TS) | RM |  | Tom Hume (TH) | WG |
| Carl Joseph (CJ) | Capita  |  | Arfon Owen (AO) | WG |
| Caryl Harding (CHa) | Capita SIMS |  | Natalie Hughes-Owen (NH) | WG |
| Jim Haywood (JH) | Capita SIMS |  | Rhiannon Evans (RE) | WG |
| Ceri Davies (CD) | Cardiff/ SIMS user group |  | Jenna Arnold (JA) | WG – am  |
| Luke Howells (LH) | Carmarthenshire / RM user group |  | Sian James (SJ) | WG |
| Mike Jones (MJ) | Swansea / ONE user group |  | Claire Horton (CHo) | WG |
| Eileen Baxandall (EB) | Wrexham / SIMS user group |  | Steve Hughes (SH) | WG |
| Alan Morris (AM) | Ceredigion / Teacher Centre  |  | David Heath (DH) | WG – am |
| Justin Denney (JD) | Ceredigion / Teacher Centre  |  | Rebecca Olney (RO) | WG |

# Apologies

## Glyn Thomas (GT) Cardiff/ ONE user group

## LL welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending.

# Minutes, actions and matters arising from the meeting on 18 March, 2014

## JH queried item 6 of the 18 March minutes, where the heading is ‘Post-16 2015 draft specification’ but the development cycle table refers to 2016. LL confirmed that the table was an example of the next standard development year (2016). LL also confirmed that the 2015 collection will go ahead as planned.

## It was agreed that the minutes of the meeting on 18 March 2014 were a true record of the meeting.

## LL then reviewed the action list. The status for each item had been updated where appropriate. In addition, the following information was provided at the meeting for those items not on the agenda:

Action 104: Will be actioned later this year.

Action 105: SH confirmed that there are a number of checks in place to prevent double counting of pupils who may have been included in both EOTAS and PLASC returns, including UPN matching. The action is now closed.

Action 108: CHo confirmed that guidance will be provided for 2015 PLASC. JH requested that SDF be informed when guidance notes are updated and that they are published on the SDF site as early as possible as this will help to provide additional context when developing software for schools.

**Action 122: WG to amend procedures to ensure that guidance notes for all collections are made available as early as possible on the SDF site.**

Action 110: MJ gave some more detail on this action point which is referring to the need for **LA systems** to import National Tests data. CHo confirmed that WG will liaise with Capita to enable LAs to import xml files for the National Tests.

Action 121: JH stated that names could be put in quotes so this format could be used to deal with the problem of commas being included in pupil names. It was confirmed that suppliers’ systems allow for the use of commas in names. A discussion was held on the possibility of using tab delimited files as opposed to csv files. JH stated that the use of tab delimited files can lead to their own issues with data inputting. CHo confirmed that the issue would be researched further.

Action 33: LL advised that new guidance is being issued this year, and any dual registration issues should be covered in that guidance. She suggested that the action be closed and an issue raised if the guidance does not adequately cover dual registration. It was therefore agreed to close this action.

Action 92: Closed – duplication of actions 118 and 119.

# EYDAF and Curriculum Review

## DH confirmed that EYDAF will be introduced on a statutory basis from September 2015, with data collected from 2016. He also confirmed that the current thinking is to collect on-entry data in NDC. DH noted that assessment should take place throughout the year and then be reported in summer. CHa confirmed that there would be no issue with recording assessment data throughout the year on Capita SIMS provided that the requirements are specified with enough notice.

## Attendees then discussed when the data should be recorded by schools and when it should be uploaded to WG. CHa and JH confirmed that systems would be ready to implement by September 2015 if a specification was delivered no later than December 2015 in time for suppliers’ spring release, provided that the specification follows the previous On Entry format. DH advised that timings would be dependent on the findings of Professor Donaldson’s Review so this timeframe cannot be guaranteed

## MJ highlighted that summer starters in nursery schools could miss the collection if it was in summer and suggested that the return could be collected with the primary school Attendance return in September. SH stated a preference to collect with NDC.

## MJ asked what ages would be assessed, as pupils enter the foundation phase at different ages. DH responded that it was planned for only pupils aged five and over to be assessed.

## DH noted all the issues raised around timescales and would take them back for consideration.

## LL summarised two options for the delivery of an on-entry collection.

## Plan A - specification by December 2014; school systems can be changed to capture data from September 2015.

## Plan B- specification after December; schools record the data outside their MIS until the MIS changes have been made. WG will need to liaise with the SDF to agree the format for recording the data so that it can be imported into MIS later.

## However if the specification is delayed for much longer, neither plan will be achievable.

## JH noted that difficulties could arise with regards to CTF as Wales and England diverge further for assessment arrangements. It was confirmed that in light of this, the impact of the curriculum review and EYDAF on CTF would be considered.

**Action 123: WG to consider impact of EYDAF on CTF**

## DHconfirmed that the call for evidence on the curriculum review will close on 30 June and the Revised Programme of Study consultation will close on 13 June.

# NDC & National Tests 2015

*NDC 2015*

## JA confirmed that from 2015 onwards the NDC and the National Test specifications have been entirely separated from each other.

## JA highlighted an amendment on page 7 within the Summary table for Study Welsh, where ‘not required’ has been changed to ‘not valid’ to avoid confusion. She emphasised that this does not require any change to validation.

## With reference to the Reporting to Parents section on page 9, JA asked if any issues would arise if the narrative became mandatory. CHa advised that a narrative is mandatory for schools in England but that a template for this is not supplied by Capita. JA stated that the length of the narrative is not defined. There were no objections in principle to the change, but suppliers may need to check if there would be any impact.

**Action 124: Suppliers to confirm that this change can be implemented.**

*Welsh National Tests*

## CHo presented the draft Welsh National Tests 2015 specification and went through the changes for this year.

## The import file structure is currently missing from the specification. All suppliers agreed to adopt the preferred solution of a single file import structure based on the CTF structure for 2015.

**Action 125: CHo to add the import file structure to the specification and publish on the SDF site.**

## CHo asked if the historical versions of A\_COMP are useful for suppliers. Suppliers were agreed that these are very useful and should be retained but that only the current year’s components need be included as an extract in the specification.

**Action 126: CHo to ensure that historical components are retained in the Excel version of A\_COMP and that only the current year’s components are included in the specification.**

## RO confirmed that the test window for 2015 will be set by the end of the summer term and that options are currently being explored based on the feedback received on this year’s test window. RO stated it could be up to two weeks before the current window but would not be as early as March. LH raised the point that schools find it difficult to achieve the LAs’ deadlines which are earlier than the WG deadline. This was a particular problem for schools taking part in the anchor tests and so better communication on this area will be needed for next year.

## CHo asked LAs how they would prefer to receive 2013 test data for schools that have closed or merged since last year. LAs agreed that as closures and mergers are identified by establishment number, they were all content to receive the data in a spreadsheet from DEWi.

**Action 127: WG to provide 2013 test data to LAs**

## CHo advised that the 2013 reading test progress and standardised scores have been revised and then asked how these scores could best be returned to schools. MJ and LH agreed that the original scores in MIS should be overwritten and that the new scores should be sent centrally to LAs to be distributed to schools.

## TS asked why the revision had taken place. RO explained that there were two standardisation models but that WG is only using one moving forward, therefore retrospectively applying the preferred model (standardisation using the live test data). MJ stated that LAs want a clear explanation to give to schools, highlighting that there would be confusion as scores had been reported to parents previously. It was also identified that 2015 would be too late for schools to receive the revised scores so WG should work with suppliers to deliver them sooner.

## SH confirmed that the calculated scores held in MIS for the 2013 reading tests are now deemed to be inaccurate so they must be amended in order to comply with the Data Protection Act. MJ stated a preference for receiving the revised data at LA level to control update of school records. CHo confirmed that options for returning data to schools and LAs will be investigated.

**Action 128: WG to provide clear communications on the revision of 2013 reading test scores.**

**Action 129: WG to work with suppliers to ensure revised scores are delivered to schools as soon as possible, with clear instructions.**

## CHa asked about the 2014 import files which contain raw scores as well as calculated scores. There was some confusion as to whether raw scores that do not match those held in MIS should be overwritten. CHo advised that systems would be expected to overwrite raw scores where they do not match the score already held in MIS.

*Update after the meeting SENT OUT 05/06/14: the above advice has been revised and the following has been included in the 2015 WNT specification:*

*Raw scores will be included in the import file and will* ***not*** *be expected to overwrite the value contained in the MIS. When an imported raw score differs from what was in the MIS, an alert* ***or warning message*** *should be triggered to inform the school of the discrepancy.* ***The school may then contact their LA or WG for advice on what to do.***

## LL confirmed that quartiles could be affected by the amended 2013 data.

**Action 130: SH to distribute revised quartiles.**

## CHo asked if it is possible for schools to manually amend calculated scores imported from DEWi. CHa confirmed that this was possible within the valid range, but that it was unclear why some schools had changed the value of standardised scores to D. LL asked if once the data had been input it could be locked down. EB confirmed that this was possible and some Headteachers choose to do so, however JH said that lock downs can cause more problems and support calls and if schools want to change the results they will.

## MJ raised the issue of reporting standardised scores of \* for below the range and \*\* for above the range instead of 69 and 141 and enquired if this could be amended because asterisks are not valid in Capita ONE. SH explained that the asterisks are used as it is not valid to give a precise score for those at either end of the spectrum. 69 and 141 can be used to calculate LA averages, but it is not correct to say that a pupil has a score of 69 or 141 as the standardisation model does not measure to that level of accuracy at the extremes.

## MJ then queried a pupil who has moved from a Welsh medium school to an English medium school just prior to the test window, the language of the test that they should sit and how the results can be submitted. It was confirmed this would be looked into outside the meeting.

**Action 131: WG to respond to Mike’s query.**

## JD queried whether the separation of the WNT and Teacher Assessment specifications would result in separate xsd files. CHo confirmed this would be investigated.

## **Action 132: CHo to confirm xsd filesets for summer 2015.**

# Post-16 2015

## LL welcomed NH, SJ and AO to present the Post-16 2015 draft specification. AO highlighted the changes to the specification. He stated that dates have been rolled forward; there is a new summary report for programmes and the accompanying explanatory notes have been updated. The xml structure now includes all programmes and learning activities. Learning activity categories and identifiers have also been added.

## AO then went through the outstanding actions for Post-16.

## Action 112: AO explained that there are different people within LAs dealing with the different streams of post-16 which may explain the current gap in awareness of the new collection details. LH requested a copy of the guidance and LL asked if all information could be passed on in order to make sure all schools and LAs are informed. Action will remain open.

## Action 114: Notes to be issued by the end of June.

## Action 115: There are too many programmes to make it feasible to include blank/zero lines in the reports. Action will now be closed.

## Action 116: This will be included when the notes are released later this month.

## Action 117: In progress.

## Action 118: AO stated that a mapping table between activities and programmes was not feasible due to complexity and the number of programmes available. JH queried how you would identify commonalities in vocational subjects without mapping; also mapping would show possible learning activities for possible programmes and could prevent confusion in schools over subject combinations. AO clarified that funding is on a broad level so not all pupils would need to match within a programme and that because of the large number of programmes and combinations of activities it would be very difficult to programme. JH also requested for the specification to state suppliers do not have to control software to limit activities on a programme. Actions 118/119 would now be closed and the following two actions added:

**Action 133: AO to include a line in the specification that software does not have to validate activities within programmes.**

**Action 134: AO to provide LAs with the link to information about programmes on the WG website.**

## CHo explained that it might be possible to have validation rules for some of the most popular academic programmes taken within schools, for example a three AS level programme should have at least three activities. JH explained that it is difficult to validate on combinations without a defined rationale. TS asked if schools entered an incorrect combination would errors occur. AO said this should not happen. The possibility of defining some validation would be considered further.

**Action 135: WG to consider validation rules.**

## SH stated that schools would need to be informed that from September they would need to record every learning activity. JH asked if WG want to record the first two weeks’ worth of programmes and activities; LL stated a six week qualification period was discussed at the July 2013 SDF but it was confirmed that all programmes and activities from 1st September should be returned. MJ asked if pupil choices will be duplicated if pupils move schools, but AO confirmed that this should not happen as each school will have a record of the date started/ finished.

**Action 136: WG to clarify in the specification if subjects are being recorded but not used for performance.**

## JH raised the point that the survey reference date is currently 31st July. He noted that this could be an issue with schools moving pupils to different academic years and suggested that this could be moved back to May or forward to September. It was agreed that schools should be notified not to change the data on year taught until the following September.

**Action 137: Suppliers to notify schools not to change the year taught data item until September.**

# 2014 Performance Tables

## SH confirmed that the stakeholder survey closed a month ago and that he would share the results with SDF. He stated that Wales and England are rapidly diverging for reporting data, with some qualifications available in England not available in Wales, and some having different values.

## SH asked what the implications would be for the software systems as England is now discounting across all subjects but Wales is operating on last year’s more limited system for discounting. He queried whether schools would misread MIS in light of this. TS confirmed this should not happen.

## SH asked how suppliers would record discounting as Wales has never issued codes. CHa confirmed that Capita use a publicly available mapping table for discounting purposes. SH advised that a mapping table was being developed by WG for 2014.

## SH noted that any proposed changes to Performance Tables would not be undertaken until 2017.

**Action 138: SH to share stakeholder survey results with SDF.**

**Action 139: SH to share the mapping table for Wales.**

**Action 140: SH to review the outcome and advise SDF of any implications for summary reports that suppliers may provide in their systems.**

# EOTAS 2016

## CHo stated that WG wants to start collecting exclusions from PRUs and asked if the definitions in CBDS currently applicable to schools would also be acceptable for LAs. Suppliers agreed that this would be acceptable. However MJ explained that there could be a duplication of exclusions from schools and PRUs depending on who enters it on the system first.

## There was no objection to the proposal and after considering the double counting issue, exclusions will be added to the EOTAS 2016 specification.

**Action 141: WG to consider the double counting issue when including exclusions in the EOTAS 2016 draft specification.**

# XSLT fileset naming convention

## CHo distributed a draft release note for xslt filesets created by Method4. It was agreed that the format was fine and that the release note will be helpful in seeing what changes have been made in filesets.

## It was agreed that the release note will be trialled with the next set of xslt, for January 2015, and that suppliers would provide feedback. If required at that stage, additional changes can be considered to the fileset numbering convention.

**Action 142: WG to trial release note with next release of new xslt filesets.**

# SDF Cycle

9.1 CHo stated that the development for the 2015 Post-16 return would have an effect on validation CBDS numbering as an additional validation CBDS would be required, and asked suppliers for a preference. It was agreed that the extra version of validation CBDS would be numbered v1516.0 and it was agreed this would have no impact on development. CHo stated that further explanation of the change would be sent to the SDF in due course.

**Action 143: CHo to send out more information on the changes.**

#  Response times to queries

## The SDF agreed that the changes made with regard to response times to queries had resulted in an improvement. CHo then noted that it would be possible to re-introduce the Suppliers Issue Log on DEWi if deemed necessary at a later date.

# AOB

## LL drew attention to the PowerPoint presentation containing the latest update on Hwb to the group and asked for any queries to be directed to the contact detailed in the presentation.

## CHo stated that WG is considering requesting information on fixed penalty notices being issued by LAs on behalf of schools for persistent absenteeism, with a view to linking the data to attendance figures. A discussion was then held on the various issues with issuing penalty notices, such as if the penalty notice is attached to the parent of the child and if a parent has more than one child in the school with penalty notices do they have more than one given. It was agreed to discuss at a regional level and the DfE to share good practice. LL stated that WG would be in touch with stakeholders for views on the issue.

**Action 144: WG to contact LAs for feedback on this item.**

## LH felt he had an unsatisfactory outcome to action 103, CHo agreed to get back to him outside of the meeting.

**Action 145: CHo to get in touch with LH to resolve the query.**

## LH raised the ULN issue with school 669 4029. CHo to look at the CTF file and get back.

**Action 146: CHo to get in touch with LH to resolve the query.**

# Date of next meeting

## 11 November 2014 - Cathays Park, Cardiff.