**Minutes of the Software Development Forum meeting**

**02 February 2016**

**Cathays Park, Cardiff**

**Present:**

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| John Ashworth (JA) | Capita One |  | Andy Milne (AM) | WG |
| Paul Walton (PW) | Capita One |  | Lindsay Lewis (LL) | WG – Chair |
| Rachael Marshman (RM) | Capita SIMS |  | Claire Horton (CH) | WG |
| Munn-Tzin Bong (M-TB) | Capita |  | Aly Jamal (AJ) | WG |
| Mike Jones (MJ) | Swansea / One user group |  | Madog Williams (MW) | WG |
| James Boyd (JB) | Cardiff / SIMS user group |  | Jenna Arnold (JAr) | WG |
| Glyn Thomas (GT) | Cardiff / SIMS user group |  | Claire Rowlands (CR) | WG – am only |
| Justin Denney (JD) | Ceredigion /  Teacher Centre |  | Sarah Angel (SA) | WG – am only |
| Alan Morris (AM) | Ceredigion /  Teacher Centre |  | Steve Hughes (SH) | WG – am only |
| Fiona Tang (FT) | RM |  | Gareth Thomas (GT) | WG – pm only |
| Simon Chilvers (SC) | RM |  | Lucy Robinson (LR) | WG – pm only |
| Jayne Thomas (JT) | NPT /SIMS user group |  |  |  |

1. **Introductions and apologies**

LL welcomed the group and thanked everyone for attending. Apologies were received from Luke Howells (Carmarthenshire/ RM user group), Jim Haywood (Capita) and Natalie Hughes-Owen (WG).

1. **Minutes, actions and matters arising from the meeting on 02 February 2016**

2.1 The minutes from the last meeting were agreed.

2.2 Open Actions from the last meeting

2.2.1 – Action 104 – WG to arrange a list of summary reports (WG to continue work on this and provide when complete).

2.2.2 – Action 173 – Post 16 2016 – LAs to find out if it is recorded if pupils start early. (No feedback from LAs on this. WG suggest closing action. All in agreement).

2.2.3 – Action 219 – SEN data items in NI - sent by JA so can now be closed.

2.2.4 – Action 221 – Exclusions in EOTAS - CH confirmed that some changes had been made to the EOTAS 2017 specification to clarify the requirement and to remove the enrolment status from EOTAS. MJ highlighted that duplications are still possible across EOTAS and PLASC. CH confirmed that work is ongoing to limit this as much as possible in 2017.

JT raised a point regarding exclusions and schools which have closed and asked what data is required with this. SH stated that WG is aware of this issue and at present there is no way around it.

2.2.5 – Action 227 – Learning Activities and Programmes of Study Table – suppliers were asked if they would like to add anything on this. JA said it would be good to have a condensed list as over 70% of the listed PoS were not used last year. MJ echoed this and suggested that schools would find a reduced list helpful.

2.2.6 – Action 230 – CTF Files for the FPP – SC asked if WG is recommending that schools transfer the whole tracking profile including ladders as well as the statutory BA items. CH responded that a recommendation of good practice will be included in the next version of NAW\_A\_COMP but that this is not a statutory requirement at present. Only the Baseline Assessment is statutory using the FPP.

**3. Successful Futures – an update and discussion – Claire Rowlands**

3.1 – CR informed the group that there were no major updates to report but suggested that another meeting in the future to delve deeper into possible changes could be helpful.

3.2 – A detailed discussion about the direction of possible curriculum and assessment framework changes took place. RM was able to provide considerable input about Capita’s experiences with similar changes in England for the DfE.

3.3 – A written update was supplied as a hand out.

3.4 – PW asked that suppliers are informed as soon as possible regarding any changes as pioneer schools will wish to track data / assessment.

**Action 234 – Review communication channels for Successful Futures as LAs report that information isn’t getting through to them via consortia (WG).**

**Action 235 – Consider how SDF could input to the development of thinking about revisions to the assessment framework and to implement a two-way process (WG)**

**Action 236 – Consider how SDF could input to the work in pioneer schools and their needs given the differing requirements (WG)**

**4. KS4 performance reporting – Steve Hughes & Sarah Angel**

4.1 – SA informed the group that changes will be taking place over the next three years. She confirmed that the cohort data will continue to be taken from January PLASC.

4.2 – SA took the group through the changes happening between now and 2018 using the handouts provided.

43 – MJ asked what happens when a pupil changes year group just before PLASC. SH responded by saying the same principle would apply as when a pupil moves school. MJ also pointed out that double counting of pupils who resit Year 11 will be an anomaly of this change.

4.4 – PW asked why the vocational subjects are now worth 2. AM responded saying that this was so as not to disadvantage those pupils taking a vocational route. The trend for vocational qualifications in Wales is increasing, which is different to the situation in England.

4.5 – PW asked what the implications for AS levels will be. SA said that AS levels will count where they are approved for the pre-16s so as not to hold back high achievers.

4.6 – RM asked if there was a worked example of the calculation of the capped points score available. SA replied it is currently being worked on but the logic for the calculation is the same as the existing measures.

4.7 – MJ asked how England’s new GCSE grading structure of 1-9 will be factored in. SA stated that England’s GCSEs will count if they are designated qualifications in Wales but that we are still looking at attaching values to the grades as there is not a straightforward one-one mapping relationship. It will be added to the grading structure lookups.4.8 – PW asked if there were specific measures that will be dropped. SA replied that the CSI will be dropped and the threshold measures will change when the new Welsh Bacc comes in. Capped points will replace the current arrangements.

4.9 – The existing arrangements for discounting will continue until 2018 and the process will be reviewed for 2019 onwards.

**Action 237 – suppliers to confirm they are able to meet Wales’ requirements using the pre-Woolf discount codes list, which is different to the list in England**

**Action 238 –WG to provide QAN list for specific qualifications where possible.**

**Action 239 – WG to send link to the letter about changes to KS4 performance reporting**

**Action 240 – WG to provide the methodology and a worked example for the Capped Points Score calculation.**

**Action 241 – WG to provide the mapping of DfE grades 1-9 to Wales’ grades**

**5. NDC 2017 Draft Specification – Jenna Arnold**

5.1 – JAr asked the group for feedback on this year’s collection. GT said that the condensed timetable because of half term had made things more difficult. MJ said that the BA collection had gone better than expected. JT said the biggest issue was getting schools to input the correct Result Dates as the system automatically applies the date the data was entered to the result.

5.2 – JT asked if the collection could be moved to another time of the year. MJ seconded this and said that November would be a good time.

**Action 242– WG to consider the timing of the Baseline Assessment data collection**

5.3 – JT asked how BA results for pupils that arrive after the on roll date will be collected. LL stated that this is being considered and for now there are no changes to the current process.

5.4 – JAr then ran through the 2017 NDC Draft Specification with the group, highlighting the key changes and items which can be found on the issues log.

**6. WNT 2017 Draft Specification – Claire Horton**

6.1 CH took the group through the 2017 WNT draft specification stating that there are no changes except for dates being rolled forward.

6.1 - A new item has added to the pupil report. A statement on significance of movement between progress measures from one year to the next will give parents an idea if their child’s progress score difference is consistent with their peers. MJ raised an issue with this as children can score very low on tests but still be considered as ‘average’ as the class as a whole would score poorly on a test. CH acknowledged this and stated that this was how the standardisation works for these tests as we often end up with very skewed data towards the lower end of the scale which leads to lower scores being considered average.

6.3 - CH then asked the group for feedback on if they would like to see the new ‘significance’ item go into import files to be stored in MIS. The group confirmed that this would be very useful and CH confirmed this would be added to Modular CBDS, NAW\_A\_COMP and version 1.0 of the specification.

**Action 243 – CH to add ‘significance’ to Modular CBDS, NAW\_A\_COMP and WNT specification**

6.4 – CH informed the group of plans for all schools in Wales to move toward paperless testing from 2018. However no timeframe has been set for this as of yet.

AM raised a concern about this as rural schools struggle to obtain strong internet connections and some are still without personal computers.

MJ echoed these sentiments stating even though schools within Swansea have broadband and Wi-Fi the network would struggle if entire groups of pupils were to be conducting online exams all at once. MJ also mentioned that some schools in Swansea already have online testing capability but choose not to use it.

**Action 244 – WG to relay this information to the Assessment Team**

**7. School Workforce collection update – Lucy Robinson & Gareth Thomas**

7.1 – LR stated they have visited twelve LAs in order to discuss existing IT set-ups. LR confirmed that there are significant differences with IT and HR models between the LAs.

7.2 – LR discussed the different categories of data to be collected, highlighting the fact that certain data items are only held by schools.

7.3 – PW asked when the first School Workforce collection will take place. GT informed the group that the intention is that the first census will take place in November 2018.

7.4 – JA asked if the collection will take a snapshot of the school workforce or look at historical data over time. GT confirmed that it will require certain information provided at a given ‘census date’ along with certain information (e.g. absences and recruitment over a census period, similar to the approach taken for the PLASC and DfE school workforce census.

**Action 245 – WG to consider setting up an SDF to go through the School Workforce data collection requirements**

**8. AOB**

8.1 – MJ raised an issue regarding categorisation of EAL pupils to Capita. MJ informed the group that there is disparity between the English and Welsh models and Capita still allows ‘ENG’ to be used as home language.

**Action 246 – Capita to look into this issue.**

**UTF-8 encoding**

8.2 CH informed the group that all specifications now specify UTF-8 encoding, As discussed earlier, this is not a change to existing arrangements, this move is just to have it documented accurately.

**Archiving data from a schools database**

8.3 CH asked the group for feedback on auto archiving pupil records from MIS. The Chair of the Capita SIMS user group had asked for the issue to be raised at SDF as there have been a few occasions recently where files could not be exported from SIMS for data collections due to the size of the school’s database.

All suppliers confirmed that there is no automatic archiving that takes place because each LA and school will have its own retention schedules as per Welsh Government advice. There are functions available to manually archive which potentially saves room in the database.

**Class Size Exception Codes**

8.4 – January PLASC 2016 had an issue that arose as the software previously allowed blank entries. To combat this, SIMS introduced ‘N’ as a code for class size exceptions. CH proposed this is to be used across all suppliers’ systems at primary and junior levels and that summary reports could be adjusted accordingly. The group was in agreement with this proposal.

**Action 247 – CH to include changes in Modular CBDS and January PLASC 2017 specification.**

**Language preference**

8.5 – New Welsh Language Standards mean we have to give stakeholders the option of language preference. All present were happy to continue to communicate in English. Ceredigion said although they are happy to communicate in English anything we send to them which they in turn would have to cascade to schools in the authority **must** be in Welsh. LL agreed that this would be the case.

**9. Date of next meeting and close**

9.1 - Next SDF meeting dates will be 11th October and 15th November 2016