**Minutes of the Software Development Forum meeting**

**11 October 2016**

**Cathays Park, Cardiff**

**Present:**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| John Ashworth (JA) | Capita SIMS  |  | Mike Jones (MJ) | Swansea / One user group |
| Paul Featherstone (PF) | Capita SIMS - am only |  | James Boyd (JB) | Cardiff / SIMS user group |
| Ruth Vincent (RV) | Capita SIMS |  | Lindsay Lewis (LL) | WG – Chair  |
| Jim Haywood (JH) | Capita SIMS |  | Claire Horton (CH) | WG |
| Fiona Tang (FT) | RM |  | Aly Jamal (AJ) | WG |
| Simon Chilvers (SC) | RM |  | Madog Williams (MW) | WG |
| Niranjan Yedamakanti (NY) | Capita One |  | Beth Milton (BM) | WG – pm only |
| Craig Hughes (CHu) | Method4 - pm only |  | Geoff Hicks (GH) | WG – pm only |
| Luke Howells (LH) | Carmarthenshire / SIMS User Group / Teacher Centre User Group |  | Sarah Angel (SA) | WG – am only |
| Cara Jones (CJ) | Carmarthenshire / SIMS User Group / Teacher Centre User Group |  | Steve Hughes (SH) | WG – am 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 Aly Jamal (WG), Glyn Thomas (Cardiff / One user group) and Alan Morris and Justin Denney (Ceredigion / Teacher Centre).

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

2.1 The minutes from the last meeting were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

2.2 LL then ran through the open actions with the following information:

Action 104 – WG to arrange a review of summary reports - CH suggested using the afternoon of the next SDF meeting on 15 November for this review. This was agreed so this will be taken forward.

Actions 167-169 – Interventions monitoring actions – LL suggested, as this work has stalled due to other priorities at present, to close these actions and re-visit them when the work commences again at WG. This was agreed. JH mentioned that Capita has been doing some work in this area and asked if WG would be interested in seeing their progress. LL replied that this would be welcomed and invited other suppliers to do the same if they wished.

Actions 228 and 237 – Suppliers to confirm they are geared up to deal with the changes in performance measures in Wales – LL suggested that these actions be closed and that any issues can instead be reported to WG as and when they occur. This was agreed.

Action 234 – Review communications channels for Successful Futures – LAs confirmed that this is still an issue and that the messages are not making their way from consortia to authorities. LL said that the team is aware of the issue but that this will be fed back to the team and that the action will remain open.

Action 235 and 236 – WG to consider how SDF can input to Successful Futures – both actions are still under consideration by the team and there are no further updates to share at this time. Claire Rowlands will be invited to attend the SDF again when there is further news to share. Both actions will remain open.

Actions 238 and 241 – both related to KS4 performance reporting will be picked up in item 3 on the agenda. Both actions will remain open.

Action 245 – WG to consider SDF meeting for School Workforce requirements – CH updated the group on the timing of the SWF work with some information provided by Gareth Thomas. A consultation on the regulations is planned for January 2017 with a view to them coming into force in May 2017. Gareth will continue to provide updates at each meeting and plan a longer session on the collection requirements as early as possible. All agreed that early information is imperative for this collection to be successful and so that MIS can be prepared well in advance for use by LAs and schools. JH also highlighted the need for WG to be clear on the benefits for schools in completing the return in order to get ‘buy in’ and the most accurate data possible. This action will remain open. JA stressed that if a collection for 2017/18 was to take place in November 2018 the specification would need to be with suppliers by February 2017.

Action 246 – new English proficiency item in England – MJ clarified that this action was actually to do with how this item is transferred across the border from England to Wales in CTF and not an action for Capita. This action will transfer to WG and will be followed up with DfE for clarification in the CTF specification.

MJ then asked about Action 242 – WG to consider the timing of the BA collection – schools and LAs would prefer the collection to take place in November so it’s closer to when the majority of the assessments take place in the autumn term. LL said that, with all the likely changes to the collection of teacher assessment data, it would be unwise to make a big change for 2017. For the time-being this action has been closed but it will still be considered when looking at the future of the collection in its entirety.

MJ also said that the BA data this year was not very reliable but hoped this would improve as schools get used to the process. He also thought an earlier collection in the autumn term could improve data quality.

LH commented that the WG guidance for the BA collection is at odds with the ethos of the assessment. In one place it states that the assessment should be continuous throughout the year and in another says it must be complete within six weeks of starting school. CH confirmed that it is only the assessment that takes place within the first six weeks that is collected by WG but agreed to look into the guidance and clarify where required.

**Action 248 – WG to ensure guidance for the timing of the BA assessments for the collection is clear.**

**3. School performance reporting update – Sarah Angel and Steve Hughes**

3.1 – SA ran through the latest performance reporting bulletin which was sent out to the group prior to the meeting, highlighting the biggest changes for suppliers to be aware of. All updates to this information will be published on the same page of the WG website here: <http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/schooldata/using-school-information-and-reporting-on-performance/?lang=en>.

3.2 – PF asked if systems should include WBQ as part of the level 2 inclusive measure from 2017, even though it is not mandated until 2018. SH replied that schools would probably welcome this to provide added value early, but there is no obligation to do so. He added that the level 2 inclusive was likely to be in place for at least a further three years.

3.3 – A question was raised about the counting of the new Maths GCSEs towards the numeracy element of level 2 inclusive. SA explained that both new GCSEs would count, the old ones will not and that the best result will count towards level 2 inclusive. If a learner is entered for both and does well in both, the second score can count towards one of the other GCSEs included in the measure.

3.4 – JH raised a concern about GLH as this is used elsewhere in Capita SIMS modules and may affect their reporting function. He will look into this further and report back if this will be a problem that can not be resolved by using the export file from QiW.

3.5 – SH highlighted that the same qualification numbers in England and Wales, sometimes using different discount codes, could lead to different points being awarded and that it should not be assumed that the points are the same in England and Wales.

3.6 – PF asked if QiW lists a Qualification Wales Approval/Designation Number for all qualifications. SA stated that it does and that discount codes are also included.

3.7 – SA informed the group that where learners have been enrolled on qualifications under the impression that they counted towards the measures, only to find out that they don’t, to contact WG for advice.

3.8 – SH drew attention to the importance of qualification numbers being in systems for schools to choose from rather than relying on them typing them in which could lead to data entry errors. JA commented that it would be very helpful if the export file from QiW could also have information on when the file was last updated and how. SA agreed to look into this.

**Action 249 – WG to check if the QiW export file includes details of when it was last updated and how.**

3.9 – PF was concerned about possible doubling efforts to accommodate the English and Welsh requirements in the system. SH suggested that MIS specific exports from QiW could be looked into to save time and work.

**Action 250 – WG to look into the possibility of having MIS specific exports from QiW to help with development.**

**Action 251 – suppliers to inform WG of their requirements for an export file from QiW by 31/10/16.**

3.10 – SH informed the group that the QiW website is the single source of information on qualifications in Wales: <https://www.qiw.wales/>.

3.11 – MJ asked if qualifications that have been undertaken in England can count towards Wales measures if a pupil moves during KS4. SA said that they may count as FEWBES but also mentioned that this along with the NEWBES policy is currently being reviewed and suggested that individual cases should be referred to WG for consideration and advice.

3.12 – MW highlighted that currently the export file from QiW does not included archived qualifications and these would be wanted by suppliers for their systems. SH replied that this was being looked at with the aim to release a fix later this month.

**Action 252 – WG to confirm that archived qualifications are included in the export file from QiW.**

3.13 – MJ asked if there was any progress on the mapping of England’s new 1-9 GCSEs (Action 241). SA replied that this was still being worked on with the primary aim of ensuring pupils who sit these GCSEs are not disadvantaged.

3.14 MJ then asked if Attendance targets are still required. SA wasn’t sure if Attendance was intended to be one of the three mandatory targets so took this as an action to find out.

**Action 253 – WG to clarify if Attendance forms part of the statutory target setting requirements.**

3.15 – SA mentioned that the QiW database is being looked at to see if multiple discount codes can be accommodated for a qualification so that it’s possible to search for a discount code and find all relevant qualifications. JH then asked if discount codes are required for Post-16 as they are included in England’s Post-16 data collection. MW replied that they are not required in the collection but this needs to be checked as they could potentially affect Post-16 performance measures.

**Action 254 – WG to confirm if discount codes are required at Post-16.**

3.16 – MJ asked if EOTAS pupils are now included in the reporting cohort. SA replied that yes, all previously excluded pupils under the EOTAS umbrella are now included in the cohort. This however excludes elected home educated learners.

3.17 – PF asked if EOTAS pupils who are dual-registered and therefore appear on both EOTAS and PLASC will be used as part of the demographic at a school level. SA replied that no, EOTAS pupils’ performance is used only at a local authority level as this is the only level where the data is comparable.

**4. Post-16 2018 draft specification – Madog Williams**

4.1 – MW took the group through the changes in the draft specification for 2018, drawing particular attention to the new programme tags and the worked examples showing how systems should treat records where learners have changed their programme or activities, and also the move to collecting Qualification Wales Approval/Designation Numbers as opposed to Learning Activity References.

**Action 255 – WG to update worked examples in the specification and the completion notes to ensure the requirement is clear.**

4.2 – A discussion then took place as to the need for the Programme ID tag which is intended as a link between the programme and its associated activities.

**Action 256 – WG to consider how best to link activities to programmes.**

4.3 – JH then asked for clarification about the Programme Reference field length being variable as he was concerned this would lead to error.

**Action 257 – WG to clarify field length for Programme Reference and consider additional item for Programme Extension code if it is required.**

4.4 GH talked about the new code which allows schools to record when a pupil’s entire programme is transferred to a new provider. He suggested that this would allow schools to more accurately reflect these changes so they don’t have to be reported as withdrawn and therefore count negatively towards performance measures. LH pointed out that this could lead to schools over-using this code to disguise their drop-out rates. BM said this would need to be monitored.

**Action 258 – WG to reconsider this code and contemplate ways of ensuring the code is not used to falsely report on withdrawals.**

4.5 – JH asked for clarification on how to record pupils who leave a school and then come back again.

**Action 259 – WG to include guidance on pupils who leave school and then return.**

4.6 – RV asked if we need the ‘/’ characters in the Qualification Wales Approval/Designation Number. MW replied that this is currently included in the download from QiW but this could potentially be stripped out on export or by MIS.

**Action 260 – WG to clarify if ‘/’ characters are required in the Qualification Wales Approval/Designation Number.**

4.7 – A discussion then took place on the usefulness or otherwise of dates provided as part of the QiW export file. Some dates such as start date and date of amendment may be useful to suppliers but they need to be clear as they were previously confusing on the DAQW site.

**Action 261 – WG to look into date fields included in the QiW export file and ensure their clarity and usefulness.**

4.8 – GH told the group that he has visited seven local authorities and seen first hand how the Post-16 collection is recorded. He has reiterated to senior management that it is their responsibility to ensure the data is accurate. As a result of some of these discussions, he is looking into reducing the number of programmes of study.

**Action 262 – WG to confirm when and if the programmes list will be altered, ensuring early notice to schools.**

4.9 – CJ asked how gaming to do with funding at the eight-week point has been addressed. GH replied that now the Post-16 collection data is used to monitor both funding and planning and quality, schools will miss out somewhere. If schools choose to say a pupil is studying four A-levels at the eight-week point to maximise funding and then allow the learner to drop one A-level, this will count as a 75% success rate (assuming the other three A-levels are completed) which doesn’t look good. So this should deter schools from attempting to ‘game’.

4.10 – MW then alerted the group to the changes in the summary reports. Some of the tables rely on the qualification type which has to be looked up from the QiW export file according to the Qualification Wales Approval/Designation Number. Chu confirmed that it would be best for this to be included as part of the xslt provided to suppliers.

4.11 – JH was concerned about the changeover point from learning activity references to Qualification Wales Approval/Designation Numbers and how this will work. The 2017 collection takes place after the Qualification Wales Approval/Designation Numbers will be applicable (for the 2018 collection) so this will need careful planning and communications. MW replied that unfortunately there is no one-to-one mapping that could facilitate this move.

4.12 – JH commented that currently it is not possible to change a Learning Activity Category from Main (M) to Other (O) in SIMS. This would presumably be necessary when a pupil resits a qualification. He said that this will be addressed for the next collection.

4.13 - This led to a discussion about the difference between a resit and a retake and that it’s not clear what each means.

**Action 263 – WG to clarify the definition of resit and retake and provide guidance on how these should be treated for the Post-16 collection.**

**5. XSLT versioning – Claire Horton and Craig Hughes (Method4)**

5.1 – CH explained the XSLT versioning table that has been circulated to the group prior to the meeting. The purpose of this item was to clarify which versions of XSLT are applicable to which collections and the timetable for their development and release.

5.2 – A number of issues with, and suggestions to improve, the current process were then highlighted by suppliers:

* Release notes are not always accurate.
* Headers do not always reflect the correct version numbers.
* Not all files in a fileset change at the same time and therefore the numbering appears to be out of sync.
* Could a move to sets of rules per collection be considered?
* Could the release note show which collection is supported?
* Deletion and recreation of date rules every year is cumbersome – although Chu noted that both the new and old rule is needed to support backwards compatibility where a rule applies to more than one collection.

**Action 264 – WG to consider suggestions for changes to the XSLT process.**

**Action 265 – Suppliers to report any issues with filesets immediately so that they can be corrected at the time.**

**6. AOB**

6.1 – JT asked what the process for getting new and merged schools on EduBase is. The URN, which is required to get an account on S2S and Secure Access, is only available once a school is registered on EduBase and this can take some time. CH replied that this process is managed by the School Stats team in WG and that there are some internal checks that need to take place before a school can be registered. Also, the site is managed by colleagues in DfE so WG has little influence on the process, although some improvements have been made.

**Action 266 – WG to clarify process for getting a URN and ensure this is as efficient as possible.**

6.2 – MJ asked if there was any more news on the Early Years census. LL replied that this was not a collection managed by SIIB but that we would get an update on it.

**Action 267 – WG to provide an update on the Early Years census.**

6.3 – JT asked what the process for requesting new school domain addresses on DEWi is. CH said that any requests should be sent to the IMS mailbox and they will be added if they are appropriate.

6.4. MJ asked if Completer Hours is a necessary field in the collections and what is was used for.

**Action 268 – WG to review the need for Completer Hours across all collections.**

6.5 – CJ asked if all references to ‘Year’ in completion notes could be amended to ‘NCYear’ if this is what it meant by it.

**Action 269 – WG to ensure the correct term ‘Year’ or NCYear’ is used in guidance across all collections.**

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

9.1 – The next SDF meetings are booked for the following dates:

* 15 November 2016 (to include working group for reviewing PLASC and P-16 summary reports)
* 2 February 2017
* 7 March 2017

all in the Cathays Park offices in Cardiff.