**Minutes of the Software Development Forum meeting**

**17 November 2015**

**Cathays Park, Cardiff**

**Present:**

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| Munn-Tzing Bong (M-TB) | Capita One  |  | Mike Jones (MJ) | Swansea / One user group |
| Niranjan Yedamakanti (NY) | Capita One |  | Lindsay Lewis (LL) | WG – Chair  |
| Paul Walton (PW) | Capita SIMS |  | Claire Horton (CH) | WG |
| Jim Haywood (JH) | Capita SIMS |  | Alison Sharp (AS) | WG |
| John Ashworth (JA) | Capita SIMS |  | Dani Evans (DE) | WG – am only |
| James Boyd (JB) | Cardiff / SIMS user group |  | Gareth Thomas (GT) | WG – pm only |
| Justin Denney (JD) | Ceredigion /Teacher Centre |  | Lucy Robinson (LR) | WG – pm only |
| Jayne Thomas (JT) | Neath Port Talbot / SIMS user group |  | Steve Hughes (SH) | WG – pm only |
| Andy Ferguson (AF) | RM |  | Natalie Hughes-Owen (NH-O) | WG – pm only |
| Fiona Tang (FT) | RM |  | Beth Milton (BM) | WG – pm only |
| Simon Chilvers (SC) | RM |  | Tanya Wigfall (TW) | WG – pm only |

1. **Apologies**

Kenny Barker Advanced Learning

Luke Howells Carmarthenshire / RM & Teacher Centre user groups

Glyn Jones Cardiff / Capita One user group

Geoff Hicks WG

1. **Minutes, actions and matters arising from the meeting on 2 June 2015**
	1. It was agreed that the minutes of the meeting on 2 June 2015 were a true record.
	2. JA clarified the position in England regarding the introduction of new NCYears below N1 and N2. The proposal was to introduce N0 but this has now been changed to E1 and E2 instead.
	3. LL reviewed the action list, focusing on the open actions. The status for each item had been updated where appropriate. In addition, the following information was provided at the meeting:

Actions 196 and 200: Both actions relate to KS4 data. WG is moving to report performance for pupils in Year 11 as opposed to 15-year-olds. It is likely that the pupil count for the KS4 measures will be taken from January PLASC and it is intended that a decision will be made and confirmed in writing in the next few weeks. If this is confirmed we can then remove the KS4/KS5 container from the NDC collection and also remove the new <FEWBES> data item.

**Action 202: WG to confirm in writing the decisions regarding the collection of KS4 cohort data.**

MJ asked if the movements and changes in status of pupils between January and May have been taken into account with this decision. LL confirmed that this has formed part of the analysis to provide the evidence for this decision.

Action 104: The work on the review of summary reports is still in progress. MJ highlighted that this work is very important because the summary reports currently don’t reflect all the data needed to validate the PLASC return. For example, there is no information about LAC pupils and the section on exceptions could do with a redesign to make it more usable. CH thanked MJ for the input and confirmed this will form part of the review.

Actions 167, 168 and 169: These actions all relate to the interventions monitoring work and there is no further update to supply.

Action 182: There was some confusion as to what was meant by Action 182 and so CH will clarify in an email after the meeting.

**Action 203: Suppliers to confirm how the new discount codes have been integrated, in response to forthcoming email from CH.**

1. **A. Foundation Phase Profile (FPP) update**
	1. AS took the group through all the pertinent changes to the NDC specification since the last meeting, as detailed in NDC 2016 specification v3.0.
	2. AS confirmed that the pupils to be exported in the NDC-BA file are selected by age; pupils turning 5 from 1 September 2015 to 31 August 2016 inclusive will be included in the file. JA recommended that guidance should state both the applicable DOB range and the age and should be clear whether dates given are inclusive or not.
	3. AS then highlighted that some pupils of the correct age to be included in the file will not have a Baseline Assessment (BA) and will therefore trigger errors. For example, pupils in NCY1 (as FPP will not be used in NCY1 until 2016/17). These are expected to be very small numbers and will be managed by the Stats department in conjunction with the LA when they arise. Suppliers were concerned about the presence of such errors and the message it sent to schools if they were to be accepted. It was felt that the age range should be sufficient to select the relevant pupils and that, if validation was absolutely necessary, the rule should be downgraded to a query. AF requested that WG advise schools about this issue so that they don’t contact Supplier helpdesks with queries.

* 1. AS explained that all pupils on roll on the specified on roll date (10 May 2016) will be collected. Pupils who start school on or before the on roll date will need to be assessed and their results submitted, since there is sufficient time between on roll date and the end of the NDC collection to do so.
	2. AF suggested that as many scenarios as possible for pupils starting/moving /leaving Wales around the on roll date should be identified and their handling specified in advance.
	3. AS then discussed the use of the N code. This should only be used in rare circumstances, for example where a pupil is on roll at on roll date, but moves to a school outside of Wales within six weeks and before a BA has been carried out. This would legitimately allow the school to say that the pupil could not be assessed. CH also mentioned that validation around code N will be present as with the rest of NDC and will be monitored as the data comes in and challenged as necessary.
	4. PW asked whether WG had a DfE ‘Key to Success’ style pupil level database where schools can locate individual pupil assessment results for pupils who had moved schools. AS confirmed that this did not exist in Wales.
	5. AS confirmed that if more than one Baseline Assessment takes place in the first six weeks, it is the latest results that teachers should consider to be the Baseline Assessment for submission through NDC.
	6. Suppliers then expressed their preference that for 2017 the collection is kept as similar to 2016 as possible, to minimise confusion and extra work. Some changes, such as collection of older pupils who have a BA after moving from a school outside Wales, may be construed by the sector as changes in policy when in fact it is just a change to the data collection, so these should be carefully considered. JH and AF agreed that it is preferable to use one criterion to define the pupils to be included in the collection, rather than having a combination of several. Their advice was that age, as opposed to NCY, is the most effective, and would also be consistent with the approach for 2016. In particular it was raised that age would be a better way of collecting pupil results from special schools.
	7. AF requested that requirements for the 2017 collection, including consideration of pupils who arrive and have a BA after the on roll date, are considered and issued as early as possible as they may affect decisions for the 2016 development.
	8. MJ asked whether PRUs and special schools have to submit Baseline Assessment returns. AS confirmed that the rules are the same for BA as for the other NDC files, as per the specification and guidance notes.
	9. PW asked if schools will have a chance to resubmit their results if they identify a mistake. AS explained that they will have the same validation period following the submission deadline as the rest of NDC.
	10. MJ asked if there will be a report to help with validation. AS stated that in line with the rest of NDC, there is no XSLT report, but that a DEWi report containing basic data is being considered.

**Action 204: AS to consider downgrading validation errors to queries that trigger for pupils in NCY1 who legitimately have no BA results.**

**Action 205: WG to identify scenarios and guidance for ‘non-standard’ pupils for the NDC-BA collection.**

**Action 206: AS to consider a BA report to help with validation.**

**Action 207: AS to consider providing guidance to schools about:**

* **NCY1 pupils who legitimately have no BA results and who trigger errors/queries in validation.**
* **DOB ranges for pupils who should be included in the NDC-BA file.**

**Action 208: AS to communicate plans for the 2017 collection to suppliers as early as possible.**

**3. B. Foundation Phase Profile - CTF proposals**

* 1. CH introduced DE to the group. DE has taken over the statistics role looking after the NDC and WNT collections.
	2. CH then described the proposals for CTF16. For the 2016 specification, which is due out very shortly, WG would like the statutory Baseline Assessment outcomes to transfer school to school. Then from 2017 everything else under the FPP banner should transfer, if possible, for the latest assessment for a pupil.
	3. JA said it would be preferable for all proposals to go into the 2016 specification rather than waiting for 2017. That way, where suppliers have been able to implement all the NAW\_A\_COMP requirements this data could transfer earlier. Where MIS is not ready to receive or send the information, this can easily be left out of the transfer.
	4. CH agreed that this would be the best approach but was initially concerned that not everyone would be ready for this in 2016. Nevertheless, CH will endeavour to gain DFE approval for the entire raft of FPP items for the 2016 specification.
	5. AF asked for WG to provide rules about the calculation of AOLs and scores for where an outcome is sent with and without the accompanying ladder scores.
	6. CH asked if suppliers felt a partial CTF was required for FPP. At present it was felt that is was not needed and that this should be reviewed for the 2017 specification.
	7. CH confirmed that the plan of action was to include all the NAW\_A\_COMP items for FPP, both statutory and non-statutory for the 2016 specification and to make the <ResultDate> a mandatory item where the <ResultQualifier> is BA. The rest of the items fit within the established <StageAssessment> container so no adjustment to the CTF structure would be required.

**Action 209: CH to clarify the CTF proposal for FPP, including rules for calculation of AOLs where ladder scores are not present, and share with SDF.**

**Action 210: CH to liaise with DFE to try and ensure FPP requirements are included in the 2016 CTF specification.**

1. **Post-16 collection, matters arising from 2015 and future collections**
	1. CH introduced BM and NH-O to the group and explained that the Post-16 collection for 2015 had experienced several issues, leading to two extensions to the submission deadline. BM said that around 14 schools’ returns were still outstanding and that these were being worked through to understand the individual circumstances.
	2. BM stated that the majority of the issues with the collection were as a result of the introduction of programmes of study and their associated guided contact hours. There were a number of combinations of learning activities which didn’t fit into the list of programmes of study and further guidance on where these should be recorded was provided during the collection period. It was agreed that further information was needed to explain to both the sector and the suppliers how the data will be used in terms of funding to ensure that only relevant information was collected.
	3. MJ asked why information about Programmes of Study cannot be derived from the Learning Activities when the data is submitted to WG or automatically in software. BM agreed to take this question back to the funding team.

**Action 211: BM to ask the funding team to clarify the purpose of collecting the Programmes of Study and associated guided contact hours.**

* 1. MJ raised an issue where some Year 11 pupils were pulling through to the Post-16 file. This could be due to them being kept on roll ready to move up into Year 12 and their timetables being entered early. Suppliers asked for the rules about which pupils are to be included in the return to be clarified. It was believed that only pupils in Year 12, 13 and 14 should be in the file, regardless of age, so these Year 11s should not have been included.

**Action 212: WG to clarify which pupils are to be included in the Post-16 return.**

* 1. JT and MJ expressed concern that LAs are not able to validate files for their schools as they don’t have anything adequate to check against, apart from basic pupil numbers. JB agreed and stated that some schools were putting anything into the return just to get through validation and LAs did not have the time to go through the return in enough detail to be confident of its quality.
	2. It was agreed previously that XSLT for 2016 would not be released until after the 2015 collection was finished to avoid any confusion. Given the delay with the deadline being extended, CH asked when the final deadline for receiving the 2016 XSLT needed to be. JH stated that if there was no change they could wait a while longer, but if there were to be changes to address the issues from this year’s collection, early sight of those would be appreciated.
	3. It was agreed that by the end of the week, WG would provide a date when the revised specification and XSLT, or at least outline plans for the changes, would be provided to suppliers.

**Action 213: WG to provide a timeline and outline of possible changes to the 2016 Post-16 collection.**

* 1. BM then talked about the proposal to replace Learning Activity codes with QAN codes from the 2017 collection. SH explained that QANs would be required to help with matching to performance data, which is currently troublesome using the Learning Activity codes. BM suggested that WG could supply a list of the most commonly used QANs, perhaps all those used in the past five years if this would help. BM confirmed that maintenance of this list would remain with the post-16 data management team if this approach was agreed.
	2. Suppliers suggested that any subset of a long list could be a risky approach. It would be better to have a long list that could be intelligently filtered. SH agreed this would be preferable as the long list contains all the approved qualifications.
	3. JH explained that a problem with using a QAN on its own is that it does not uniquely equate to a Learning Activity. A discount code is needed in conjunction with the QAN to give the unique definition. AF provided an example: the QAN might be for music, but the discount code describes everything underneath music, such as flute or singing. There are often multiple discount codes for each QAN and these would be required for the system to work properly and to enable matching to performance data.
	4. Suppliers also pointed out that as QANs change over time, a retake may have a different code to the original qualification, even though it is actually the same, so any system has to be able to cater for multiple codes for the same qualification.
	5. JH also advised that DfE had at one time moved to using QAN/discount code combinations, but then reverted to Learning Activities, before returning to QAN/discount combinations again.
	6. JA said that the DAQW website often archives QANs too early and then has to revise end dates based on schools choosing that qualification for their pupils just before it is due to expire. He advised that schools will get QAN codes wrong if they have to key them in and even if they have to choose from a list. Some validation of the discount code against the QAN would be required. JH said that it would also be preferable to back this up by using the base data.
	7. AF asked for a more detailed proposal to be circulated to the group so that suppliers can look at the best possible solution. This should include the reason for the change and the purpose for the data rather than the answer so that a sensible approach could be agreed.

**Action 214: BM to provide a detailed proposal for the replacement of Learning Activities.**

1. **School workforce collection discussion paper**
	1. GT presented a discussion paper, which had been circulated to the group prior to the meeting, on a possible new data collection for school workforce.
	2. WG would like to gather more information about teachers and staff in schools to help with modelling the new pay and conditions framework and inform workforce planning across the sector in Wales. GT stated that the positioning of this collection had been considered and that January would be ideal, alongside PLASC. JT advised that this might not be the best time, given how busy schools and LAs are with PLASC and EOTAS and suggested late November could be better.
	3. MJ highlighted that if teacher data was removed from PLASC, cross validation between classes and teachers would not then be possible, potentially reducing the quality of class data. JT identified the workload for schools in providing this data. Although some of the data may be held and could be provided from LAs, some of the data is only held in schools, for example curriculum.
	4. Data would need to be provided at an individual level to enable career tracking, such as leavers, promotions, allowances, etc. AF questioned some of the proposed data items and GT said that this was an initial list based on the DfE collection that still needed further refinement. AF stated that for purposes of validation and linking across years fields including name, NI number and date of birth should be mandatory fields.
	5. Suppliers advised that it’s best to not attempt to move data into systems just for the purposes of a data collection and therefore this collection may need to come from multiple sources such as schools, LAs and HR/payroll. This approach is taken for the DfE version of this collection and it was felt that this could be improved upon in Wales, given the less complicated structure of the sector.
	6. JA highlighted the need for a long lead-in time if schools were to be expected to populate their systems with some of this data in advance of a collection. GT asked for an idea of how much lead-in time would be needed and it was confirmed that more detail would be required before that could be provided.
	7. Capita and RM offered to demonstrate their existing workforce systems to GT to aid understanding.
	8. MJ and JT invited WG to visit to discuss data and their and schools MIS in further detail.

**Action 215: GT to refine the school workforce collection requirement and update SDF.**

1. **AOB**
	1. MJ asked how to go about getting new and merged schools up and running on Secure Access and S2S, given Welsh LAs are not able complete a service request form on the DfE site. CH confirmed that this form was being amended to include Welsh LAs but that in the meantime, all requests should be sent to her.
	2. CH explained a proposal to include all SEN needs in the PLASC collection from 2017. Currently only two SEN needs are included in a pupil record and these are ranked 1 and 2. Ranking is no longer required and all needs should be submitted. AF suggested that RM may only be able to store and export up to four needs. NY advised that ranking was required in the Capita One system and it was agreed that schools can be advised that ranking does not form part of the data collection but may still be present in MIS.

**Action 216: CH to include new requirement for SEN needs in January PLASC specification for 2017.**

* 1. JT asked if WG would consider extending the SEN classifications to include ‘school concern’, i.e. pupils who may have a need but are not in School Action, School Action Plus or Statemented. It was agreed that this would be fed back to the policy area for consideration.

**Action 217: CH to feed back ‘school concern’ suggestion to policy team.**

* 1. LL informed the group that Siân James has now left Welsh Government, so queries that would have been directed to Siân should now be sent to IMS@wales.gsi.gov.uk.
	2. LL then closed the meeting by thanking AF for his contribution to the group over the years, now that he is leaving RM.
1. **Dates of next meetings**

2 February 2016 – Cathays Park, Cardiff

8 March 2016 – Cathays Park, Cardiff

1 June 2016 – Cathays Park, Cardiff