**GSS PRESENTATION AND DISSEMINATION COMMITTEE**

**Notes of meeting held at 1 Drummond Gate, London, 27 June 2017**

**Attendees/Members:**

Julie Brown Department for Transport, Chair

Tegwen Green GSS Good Practice Team

Laura Dewis Office for National Statistics

Bowie Penney Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

Katy Nicholls Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

Tony O’Connor Ministry of Defence

Gregor Boyd Scottish Government

Jamie Jenkins Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Madeleine Watson NHS Digital

Tom Leveson-Gower Office for Rail and Road

Sam Wilkinson Health and Safety Executive

Dawn Fagence Department of Health/NHS England

Colin Yeend Valuation Office Agency

Daniel Shaw Department for Communities and Local Government

Sandra Tate Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (audio)

**Guest Speakers:**

Becki Aquilina Harmonisation Team, Office for National Statistics

Penny Babb Office for Statistics Regulation

**Secretariat:**

Gareth Pryce GSS Good Practice Team (acting on behalf of Nikesh Lad)

**Apologies:**

Peter Antoniades Department for International Trade

Katie Dodd Department for Work and Pensions

Nikesh Lad Department for Transport

1. **Minutes and actions from previous meeting**
   1. Julie Brown welcomed everyone to the group, particularly those attending a meeting for the first time.
   2. The group reviewed the minutes and actions from the previous meeting. Action 9 is the only one outstanding. All PDC members are expected to volunteer either to lead or support at least one strand of the 2017/18 workplan. Currently there are a number of items with a RAG status of Red because there are no persons committed to taking them forward.

**Action 1 – Those departments not currently assigned to a work stream to contact the secretariat with their preference by the end of July.**

1. **PDC workplan for 2017-18**
   1. The draft 2017/18 PDC workplan was discussed at a high level. Julie Brown ran through some of the key items and shared thoughts on each.
   2. Julie Brown queried who was leading the organising committee for the 2017 GSS Conference and commented that she’d like to get in touch with the committee to ensure that there is PDC representation at the conference. Gareth Pryce confirmed that the Chair is Alex Miller at the Department for Education.

**Action 2 – Julie Brown to contact Alex Miller by end of July to ensure PDC representation at the 2017 GSS Conference.**

* 1. Julie Brown asked the group for ideas of persons who could be invited to come and challenge what and how things are done at PDC.

**Action 3 – All members to consider, and inform PDC Secretariat of, potential external stakeholders for invitation and add to the current list by the end of July.**

* 1. Jamie Jenkins said that he is working with Gareth Pryce from the GPT to prepare a series of roadshows with Presentation Champions. This will give Champions an opportunity to showcase their work and encourage best practice across the GSS.
  2. With reference to action SS1, Julie Brown queried who was now responsible for the RAG ratings of GSS publications. Tegwen Green explained that historically GPT has completed them. Now the team has 2 new recruits coming on board it’s a good opportunity to get these up and running again. Jamie Jenkins also said that Presentation Champions have been encouraged to get involved in this area. Julie Brown acknowledged that this work could be quite a burden on GPT resource alone, so repeated the call for others to get involved.
  3. Tony O’Connor asked if there were any common standards or a checklist of common areas that were used to assign RAG status to ensure that different people reviewing the same publication would come up with the same RAG rating. Others agreed that it would be good to get a wider perspective of what “good” looks like.
  4. Other ideas in this area included asking all departments to pick 3 publications: one rated Red, one Amber and one Green, comparing with results in other departments. Similarities with a GPT scrum were raised but after brief discussion there was agreement that RAG ratings served a different purpose to scrums,

**Action 4 – Jamie Jenkins and the GPT to agree a plan on taking the RAG reviews forward by end of August**

* 1. The same action also raised discussion about having a named statistician on every GSS publication which is a requirement of the Code of Practice and is also something that Full Fact have requested. This could affect RAG status going forward. Julie Brown asked all departments to ensure that their publications had a named statistician in the contact details . Tony O’Connor explained that MOD have a named position rather than named person on their publications due to strict security procedures in the department. It was accepted that MOD and organisations in a similar position may be granted exemption from this.

**Action 5 – All departments to ensure that their publications are displaying a named statistician clearly.**

**Action 6 – PDC secretariat to contact FullFact by end of July to ask them to let us know when they come across publications that don’t provide a named statistician.**

* 1. Collaboration with the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) was discussed as a new action on the workplan (EI3). The statistical domain model in operation within OSR was cited as a good approach and some “quick win” scenarios may help to demonstrate the value of the approach.
  2. Julie Brown asked if there are already similar groups around who could be contacted for more information on how this works in their department. It was agreed that Julie should contact Hugh Stickland and Jonathan Athow to discuss how PDC could supplement the current work in this area.

**Action 7 – Julie Brown to speak to Jonathan Athow to scope out where the best possible lead might be on this.**

Laura requested further information about the results of the social media survey and agreed to discuss next steps with Joanna Goodwin before deciding how best to proceed.

**Action 8 – Laura Dewis to catch up with Jo Goodwin as to the results of the GSS Social Media survey and discuss next steps**

User personas (SD5) were the subject of a detailed discussion as recent research at ONS has extended their user personas from 3 to 5. Laura Dewis stressed that these were ONS specific and would not necessarily be relevant to all GSS departments, nor should they be taken to be so.

* 1. Gregor Boyd said that Scottish Government were working to validate ONS user personas for their own users. Jamie Jenkins said that there would be a persona networking session at Friday’s PDC Symposium.
  2. Julie Brown agreed with Laura Dewis that the persona work is really important to the GSS Data Discovery project and that validating the personas for this work could be a really valuable next step. More widely there is work to be done to take a GSS wide view of personas and establish who all the users of GSS statistics are.
  3. A potential gap in the ONS personas relate to minsters’ use of statistics and Tony O’Connor suggested that the best place to assess the ministers’ use of statistics may be in talking to staff in Private Office.
  4. Laura Dewis sought to clarify the difference between the user persona work (who our users are) and user research (more about the use of digital products) as it’s very easy to get the two confused.
  5. It was agreed that the overall action here needs to be to gather all of the available user research that takes place in the GSS. Members agreed raising the awareness and value of user research is vital.
  6. Laura Dewis’ team have written a short paper containing recommendations for launching GSS products on Visual.ONS (See action SD8). There are a great number of opportunities in doing this, but also a number of challenges, particularly around editorial control of collaborative products.

**Action 9 – Laura Dewis to circulate the paper around the committee for comments by correspondence.**

* 1. Members agreed actions on the workplan surrounding user engagement and working with comms teams.

**Action 10 – Tegwen Green and Secretariat to fully scope actions to be included in the workplan.**

**3. Revised Code of Practice for Statistics**

3.1 Penny Babb from the Office for Statistics Regulation presented the high level principles of the new draft Code. She thanked all those who had been in touch to request workshops on the new code in their department.

**Action 11 – Departments to consider if they would be interested in holding a workshop at their department during the code consultation, contacting penny.babb@statistics.gov.uk.**

3.2 The new Code’s focus will be about widening reach. It will be mainly focussed on statistics produced by Government but is expected that the principles can be applied outside of this context.

3.3 Penny presented the outline of the new Code 2.0. It will be a more interactive code with an online version, but this will still be available in a booklet format for use in the more traditional way. The tone has been changed to be more accessible and less legalistic.

3.4 The Code will be split in to 2 main parts. Part 1 contains the overarching principles of Trustworthiness. Quality and Value, Part 2 contains more detail of the practices.

3.5 The new Code will likely be out at the end of 2017 or early 2018 with a consultation on the draft being launched on 5 July and running until 5 October 2017.

3.6 Julie Brown asked if there were changes specifically related to Presentation and Dissemination. Penny said there is generally more in the new Code covering this area, under the Value principle, and encouraged the group to look at this area when the consultation launches and highlight any deficiencies they are concerned about.

3.7 Some members felt the word ‘transparency’ deserved to feature more prominently in the new Code?

1. **What’s New update**
   1. Julie Brown ran through the latest What’s New? Dashboard, and highlighted a few things that she would be interested in knowing more about at a future PDC meeting.
   2. These included:

DFE and their use of R markdown

MOJ’s sankey diagram

DCLG

BEIS Coffee and Coding sessions

Home Office moving away from html

* 1. Julie invited comments from other members and Jamie Jenkins explained champions had raised a concern about the lack of hosting for interactive apps across Government and had

suggested exploring a central Government account. Laura Dewis explained there may be some security and capacity issues to consider, and suggested speaking to the Data Science Campus in the first instance.

**Action 12 – Jamie Jenkins to speak to Data Science Campus by the end of August.**

4.4 Gregor Boyd shared that the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation had been awarded the Champion of Champions in a previous update, and had now gone on to win a further award in Scotland.

1. **Head of Profession survey results**
   1. Daniel Shaw shared the high level findings from the 2016/17 HoPs’ survey. Some of the key findings included:

* Most HoPs were aware of the Presentation and Dissemination Committee
* More input from the PDC would be valued on statistical graphs and commentary in GSS publications.
* Committee papers not being distributed early enough to potential attendees a key issue. This meant that PDC members and constituency representatives did not have enough time to raise any views for discussion in advance of the meeting.

**Action 13 – PDC secretariat to ensure that papers are sent out well in advance of the meeting, a minimum of 2 weeks before.**

* 1. Daniel suggested some of the actions on the workplan could be prioritised based on this feedback. Julie Brown agreed with this and other comments that more needed to be done in the workplan around open data and capability.

1. **Subgroup updates**
   1. Jamie Jenkins, chair of the Presentation Champions subgroup, shared the latest update from the meeting held on 1 June 2017. The main focus was around planning more activity in between meetings to generate more engagement with and between departments. The first of these activities would be a day’ show and tell session for Champions to showcase their work to each other and demonstrate the workings.
   2. Presenting work to John Pullinger once a year was also seen as a good opportunity for Champions. Updates were presented on the latest scrum peer reviews held by the GPT, and actions to arrange sessions with private offices on communicating with ministers. Each of the Champions is being encouraged to own a roadshow, and the group would use the events to raise awareness of PDC.
   3. Jamie also shared the final details of the GSS Symposium taking place on Friday. Frank Field MP, Sir David Norgrove, John Pullinger, Amanda Farnsworth and Patrick Worrall are all keynote speakers. The focus will be the use of different tools to disseminate data andcommunicating with ministers and the inquiring citizen.
   4. Jamie apologised that there wasn’t a slot specifically dedicated to Open Data. This was because of complications with getting confirmations of speakers for the day due to election commitments.
   5. Gregor Boyd presented the latest Open Data subgroup update. Some of the key areas discussed at the meeting were the desire to make progress on new standards for data and metadata, especially in light of the GSS Data Discovery Project. The group also expressed that it would be useful to include some new priorities in the PDC workplan.
   6. Bowie Penney said that BEIS would be keen to be more involved in the open data space. Gregor Boyd agreed to share the terms of reference with the group so members could consider how their department might get involved.

**Action 14 – Gregor Boyd to share the Open Data Group terms of reference with members, update the PDC workplan to reflect future work and encourage wider take up of membership of the group.**

* 1. Julie suggested that some basic practical guidelines could be drafted to help HoPs progress in the Open Data space. Gregor Boyd said that he and Laura Dewis were due to meet after this meeting and this was a point on the agenda for discussion.
  2. There was no verbal update presented by the GOV.UK subgroup and no comments from members on the paper provided.

1. **Harmonisation programme** 
   1. Becky Aquilina presented to the committee on behalf of Charlie Wroth-Smith, giving an overview of the latest work within the Harmonisation Team at ONS. The team are looking for increased support from the PDC as they look to strengthen the impact of Harmonisation across the GSS.
   2. Becki asked for any verbal comments from the committee on the current status of their forward plan.
   3. Laura Dewis commented that it was really good to see this work taking place, and was interested in the key messages Harmonisation wanted to get across, especially in light of wanting to get their work more widely established across the GSS. Becki said that some of the key things that they wanted to get across were comparability of outputs across the GSS, and achieving this through the extensive communication channels listed in the annex of their paper.
   4. Becki Aquilina then had to leave the meeting, but discussion continued.
   5. The question was raised whether Harmonisation principles were referenced in the Code of Practice. Although they are mentioned, there currently isn’t any real governance which means a lot has to be done via persuasion. Laura Dewis continued and stated that if it’s about influence and persuading departments to adopt the principles, a lot of their dissemination is currently about publishing and emailing information. Perhaps the message needs to be more of an enforcement one to get attention. Perhaps it needs a “start from scratch” approach, explaining in the first instance why harmonisation is important.
   6. Penny Babb said that it would be worth the team talking to OSR and how harmonisation is reflected in the new Code, and for them to feed their views in to the consultation.
   7. Tomas Sanchez (Chief Data Architect due to start at ONS shortly) may be a good point of influence here in terms of getting the principles across to the GSS.

**Action 15 – PDC Secretariat to feedback highlights of PDC’s discussion on Harmonisation and suggest a way forward.**

1. **Changes to the PDC constituent model of membership**
   1. Tegwen Green presented a short proposal written by Nikesh Lad (regular secretariat) about the effectiveness of the current PDC constituent model. A number of departments have recently voiced concerns about its effectiveness in terms of their representation if they aren’t considered a full PDC member.
   2. The proposed changes include minor vocabulary changes to alleviate confusion - in future all constituency members and representatives will be known as ‘members’. Departments will also be allocated to clusters based on current departmental links. Current PDC members will continue to form core attendance at the quarterly PDC meetings with other cluster members all given the opportunity to attend every PDC meeting if the agenda items are of particular interest to their department. Departments were invited to comment on the proposal. Laura Dewis said that she had already run this past Welsh Government and they were happy with the changes.
   3. Bowie Penney (BEIS) commented that Nikesh has done a great job in making the structure clear and he felt this would work much better. A wider comment was made around logistics and communications more generally. On occasions multiple people have been emailing around the same departments for updates and requesting information. Clarity around the responsibilities of PDC members and champions in this area would be helpful.
   4. Colin Yeend (VOA) noted that clusters can be cut in all manner of ways, and asked what the underlying principles were for the current set up as he felt core PDC membership was not balanced across the proposed.
   5. Jamie Jenkins (Defra) said that from the perspective of impact, perhaps the biggest producers of official statistics should always have a seat at the PDC table. For example, Welsh Government are the second largest producer of official statistics but they are currently a constituent department represented by the ONS.
   6. Julie Brown concluded that ultimately it’s up to departments which cluster they wish to belong to and there is an action for all departments to review and let the PDC secretariat know which cluster they wish to be in.

There was some challenge from members about the rationale behind the new cluster model and acknowledgement that there were a number of ways to slice departments up, including the option to have a rotating programme of bigger and smaller invite lists similar to the model adopted by OR profession. JJ suggested contacting current constituent members to gather their feedback on current involvement with PDC.

**Action 16 – all departments to review the new cluster model and email Nikesh with which one they want to be a part of if they don’t agree with the suggested allocation.**

* 1. Following this discussion it was agreed to have a think about the best way forward, considering the views presented.

**Action 17 – PDC secretariat to contact constituent PDC members to evaluate their opinion on the current and proposed structure, review all relevant feedback and propose a way forward**

1. **Introducing User Personas to comms and press office**
   1. Sam Wilkinson from HSE presented to the committee on the concept of user personas.
   2. Sam went on to showcase the work that statistical teams in HSE had done to introduce the concept of user personas to their comms and press office teams.
   3. Focussing on dedicated products for the Inquiring Citizen they were able to forge a better relationship and understanding of each other’s roles and skills, to create more targeted products.
   4. HSE conducted a user survey following the changes this demonstrated a better understanding of their audiences.
2. **GSS Discovery Project**
   1. Laura Dewis summarised the recommendations and findings from the GSS Data Discovery work. She began by giving some caveats around the lack of consistent and detailed user research across GSS departments. Laura explained that the core issue John Pullinger had highlighted was users not being able to find the statistics they need in one place. Currently GOV.UK is not moving fast enough in keeping up with user needs.
   2. The team have been working with GDS on this project to ensure that it’s on their roadmap. Over 600 hours of preparation was undertaken with this work, including interviews with 7 candidate departments to get in depth information. A questionnaire was also sent out to all departments to get an idea of the various arrangements currently in place.
   3. Laura went through some of the key things that were found out about users, our GSS and then the proposed next steps.
   4. Initial (but limited) user research suggests that our users want to download structured data and discover statistical data easily. They don’t want yet “another” data portal or visualisation tools..
   5. In terms of the GSS, some of the key suggestions were having a data registry, imposing consistent data and metadata principles and producing reusable data by default with web as the platform. Other actions included a need for the GSS to refresh its’ user research, break the historical “publication” model, and reduce the reliance on commercial services. It is estimated that the GSS currently spends at least £24 million a year on various tools in this space.
   6. Laura showed a current “solar system” of statistics, a prototype interactive tool that begins to identify relationships and potential gaps in the wealth of data produced by the GSS.
   7. The committee was invited to comment during a short brainstorming session. One of the first comments was around the feasibility of bringing this together. Members agreed the best solution would be to produce open data, made available via APIs. In this way departments could continue to own their data and it could feed centrally in to any new product. At present this is not possible because there is a lack of knowledge and capability in departments as to how they even get in to this space. There is a lot of uncertainty in the statistical system in general that makes it difficult to move forward. Members suggested the starting point may be the agreement of some common standards that would be needed, to help prepare departments.
   8. Sam Wilkinson asked if there were any other countries currently doing a similar project that we could currently draw off. Laura said that there aren’t any known examples at present.
   9. Members agreed the business case for this work will also need to be carefully drafted. Resources are limited and there currently isn’t any commitment for further funding to take this forward. It was suggested the best route forward might be a business case to Jeremy Haywood to request funding for the project.
   10. Jamie Jenkins said that managing expectations would be key, as some people might think this project represents one new website for all publications. In the first instance we need to understand what we are asking for And perhaps need to understand the answer to a hypothetical question posed by John Pullinger “If GOV.UK were to stop publishing statistics, what could we produce as a minimum viable product to replace it”?
   11. Laura D agreed to keep PDC updated on progress and next steps and PDC’s work programme will be amended accordingly when future plans have been scoped out?
3. **Any Other Business**

11.1 The next PDC meeting takes place on Wednesday 20 September 2017 at ONS Drummond Gate, 1pm-4pm.

**Actions from GSS Presentation & Dissemination Committee meeting of 27 June 2017**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **No.** | **Action** | **Due date** |
| **1** | Those departments not currently assigned to a work stream to contact the secretariat with their preference by the end of July. | 31/07/2017 |
| **2** | Julie Brown to contact Alex Miller by end of July to ensure PDC representation at the 2017 GSS Conference. | 31/07/2017 |
| **3** | All members to consider, and inform PDC Secretariat of, potential external stakeholders for invitation and add to the current list by the end of July. | 31/07/2017 |
| **4** | Jamie Jenkins and the GPT to agree a plan on taking the RAG reviews of GSS publications forward by end of August. | 31/08/2017 |
| **5** | All departments to ensure that their publications are displaying a named statistician clearly by the end of August. | 31/08/2017 |
| **6** | PDC secretariat to contact FullFact by end of July. | 31/07/2017 |
| **7** | Julie Brown to speak to Jonathan Athow to scope out the best possible collaboration opportunities with the Office for Statistics Regulation by end of August. | 31/08/2017 |
| **8** | Laura Dewis to speak with Jo Goodwin by end of August to discuss the next steps following the results of the GSS Social Media survey. | 31/08/2017 |
| **9** | Laura Dewis to circulate GSS and Visual ONS publications paper around the PDC committee by the end of July for comments by correspondence. | 31/07/2017 |
| **10** | Tegwen Green and Secretariat to fully scope our suggested actions to be included in the PDC workplan by end of August. | 31/08/2017 |
| **11** | Departments to consider if they would be interested in holding a workshop at their department during the code consultation, contacting [penny.babb@statistics.gov.uk](mailto:penny.babb@statistics.gov.uk) by the end of July. | 31/07/2017 |
| **12** | Tegwen Green and Secretariat to fully scope actions to be included in the workplan. | 31/08/2017 |
| **13** | PDC secretariat to ensure that future meeting papers are sent out well in advance, at least 2 weeks before. | 06/09/2017 (for September meeting) |
| **14** | Gregor Boyd to share the Open Data Group terms of reference with PDC members and update the PDC workplan to reflect future work. | 31/07/2017 |
| **15** | PDC Secretariat to feedback highlights of PDC’s discussion on Harmonisation and suggest a way forward. | 31/08/2017 |
| **16** | All departments to review the new cluster model and email PDC secretariat with which one they want to be a part of if they don’t agree with the suggested allocation. | 31/072017 |
| **17** | PDC secretariat to contact constituent PDC members to evaluate their opinion on the current and proposed structure, review all relevant feedback and propose a way forward. | 31/08/2017 |