



Cabinet Office

Public Correspondence

70 Whitehall

London

SW1A 2AS

Jen Persson

[jen@defenddigitalme.org](mailto:jen@defenddigitalme.org)

Our reference: TO2024/07063

17 June 2024

Dear Jen,

Thank you for contacting the Cabinet Office on 17 May about data sharing between the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and the Department for Education (DfE) for the purposes of fraud detection and prevention. Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding.

Please see our responses to your queries below.

1. The Digital Economy Act (DEA) register provides a high level overview of each data sharing pilot. This information is agreed by and provided by the bodies involved in each data share. In this case the DWP and DfE.

The register records this data share between 1 January 2023 and 13 April 2024. However, the pilot's end date has now been extended to 12 October 2024. The register has been updated to reflect this.

This is a live data sharing pilot and has not ended yet, meaning there is no routine operational agreement or business as usual (BAU) arrangement in place.

2. The DEA Secretariat can only comment on data sharing agreements listed on our register. We can confirm that there has been one data sharing pilot between DWP and DfE. Please contact DfE for further information on the DfE register and data sharing agreements they may have made with other departments using other legal gateways.

The pilot proposal was presented to the Debt and Fraud Information Sharing Review Board on 16 June 2022. The Review Board members assessed the pilot and recommended that it be approved by the Minister for the Cabinet Office, subject to some minor amendments to the data share. The pilot was subsequently approved on 9 December 2022 by the Minister for the Cabinet Office.

3. The data share pilot is ongoing therefore we are unable to respond further to this question.

Currently there is no BAU or wider scale data share in place. The implementation of a BAU or wider data sharing activity is dependent on the success of the pilot and a request from the pilot bodies. The BAU proposal would also require the Review Board to analyse the metrics and findings provided by the pilot bodies and make a recommendation to the relevant Minister around whether it has met its objectives and whether the data sharing should continue on a BAU basis. BAU data sharing requires Ministerial approval.

To clarify, our role as DEA secretariat is to aid the operation of the Fraud and Debt Powers, any public body using the powers is required to follow the Code of Practice.

4. This pilot was approved by the Debt and Fraud Information Sharing Review Board which includes members from the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and privacy rights groups. The Board determined that this pilot met the requirements under the code of practice and complied with data protection law. Use of data within the pilot is limited to the purpose set out in the data sharing agreements and associated Data Protection Impact assessment (DPIA). The Board recommended that the Minister approve the pilot, subject to some minor amendments to the data share.

**Minutes** - There is no code of practice or legislative requirement for the board minutes to be published, however a decision was made by the board for these to be published. We are currently seeking to resume publishing the minutes from June 2021 and have attached a copy of the relevant minutes for the DWP/DfE pilot.

**Coded Register entries** - Thank you for your feedback on the retention period entries. We will pass this onto the publishers of the register for their consideration.

At this time we are treating your questions as an official government response via the DEA Secretariat. There is no requirement of the Board members to receive this correspondence where it has been addressed in the appropriate manner.

Thank you again for contacting the Cabinet Office. I hope that this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Jessica

Correspondence Officer  
**Public Correspondence Team**  
**Cabinet Office**