



THE RT. HON. STEPHEN TIMMS MP

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Labour Member of Parliament for East Ham

Sir Michael Scholar KCB
Chairman, UK Statistics Authority
Statistics House
Tredegar Park
Newport NP10 8XG

10 November 2011

Dear Sir Michael,

I write to seek your comments on the Government's assertion that UK Statistics Authority legislation means it cannot publish data on the Work Programme until April 2012, nor permit providers to publish their data as they did in earlier schemes.

The Work Programme began in June 2011. The Government does not intend to publish data on referrals to the programme until April 2012, and will not publish job outcomes until October 2012 – 16 months after the programme commenced. Job outcomes payments are made after 6 months of sustained employment for claimants on Jobseekers' Allowance and 3 months for claimants on Employment and Support Allowance, so outcomes could be published earlier. Data on referrals could be collected from the point of entry onto the programme.

Data on the Flexible New Deal, one of the Work Programme's predecessors, was released in November 2010 following an October 2009 start. Additionally, providers were permitted to publish their performance data. This has been forbidden under the contracts for the Work Programme.

In an answer to a Parliamentary Question, the Minister of State informed me that the delay in publication and the ban on providers sharing information was 'essential to ensure that the publication of official information is properly managed in line with the UK Statistics Authority legislation' (copy enclosed).

What legislation issued by the UK Statistics Authority would prohibit the issuing of data on referrals prior to April 2012 or outcomes prior to October 2012? Was there any change in UK Statistics Authority advice that allowed providers to share their data under the Flexible New Deal, but not under the Work Programme?

Thank you for your help,

Yours sincerely,

STEPHEN TIMMS MP
Enc.

Department for Work and Pensions

PQ/11/77964

PQ/11/77965

PQ/11/77967

Question type
Ordinary Written

For Answer on:
Monday 31 October 2011

Date of dispatch:
Tuesday 01 November 2011

Stephen Timms (East Ham):

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how long he plans to prevent Work Programme providers from making public their performance data. [77964]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will lift the contractual ban on publication by Work Programme providers of their performance data. [77965]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the Cabinet Office's data transparency initiative on the publication of Work Programme performance data. [77967]

Rt Hon Chris Grayling:

There are no plans to allow Work Programme providers to share their performance data ahead of the publication of official Work Programme statistics, nor do we intend to change the contract clause that prevents providers from publishing their performance data. This is essential to ensure that the publication of official information is properly managed in line with the UK Statistics Authority legislation. Early publication of providers' own performance data could undermine the principle of making the information available to all at the same time through the official publication process and also impact on the accuracy of the data.

The Work Programme only started in June 2011, it lasts two years for each individual and, as providers only receive job outcome payments once a participant has been in employment and off benefit for up to 26 weeks, it will be 2012 before performance data starts to be recorded. The intention is therefore to publish official statistics on referrals to the Work Programme from spring 2012 and on job outcomes from autumn 2012.

In line with the Government's transparency agenda we have published providers' minimum service offers to all customers to ensure that customers are aware what they can expect, and that providers live up to what they have told us they will deliver.