Department for Work & Pensions

Voluntary Application of the Code of Practice in DWP

Tom Davies – DWP, Acting Head of Profession for Statistics
Katie Dodd – DWP, Head of Profession Support

May 2018

Voluntary

Dictionary definition

1. Done, given, or acting of one's own free will.
   Optional, Discretionary, Non-Mandatory

2. working, done, or maintained without payment.
   Unpaid, unsalaried

Data in DWP

- DWP is an extraordinary government department
  - 170bn annual spend
  - 200m calls from the public each year
  - 6k people move into work every day
  - 10m data records exchanged per day

- DWP are one of the largest producers of statistics across government;
  - We publish over 100 Official Statistics annually;
  - We have over 200 Government Statisticians and a further 400 members of the Analytical Community (600 Analysts!)
  - We answer around 250 FOI's requesting numerical information to per year

- We produce statistics that highlight the effects of policy to over 22 million citizens.

Why in DWP?

Why did we take the decision to implement the voluntary code

Official Statistics vs Other Data

Official Statistics

- We routinely publish statistics on benefits, employment programmes and other subjects we are responsible for into the public domain via Gov.uk;

- Such data when made public, by government, can sometimes be described as official statistics, and in these cases the Code of Practice for Statistics applies in full.

Other Data

- DWP collect numerical information to process benefit claims, carry out research, and make estimates of various kinds in order to run the Department and inform decision making e.g. to evaluate policy, forecast spend.

Other Data is used to make important decisions

Official Statistics

- Routine - data previously released, or planned to be update in the future
- Ad-hoc – one-off, to inform debate, used in statements

Other Data and Analysis

- Management Information
- Research/evaluation
- Forecasts
- Impact Analysis
- Financial information

Is it easy to do?

How hard it has been to implement the voluntary code into DWP

How hard is it to implement the three pillars of the Code?

Where an organisation chooses to adopt and apply the Code pillars, it makes a public statement about how it does so.

- It involves a few steps:
  - **Understand:** T Q V
  - **Review**: your ways of working;
  - **Consider:** if changes to the process can be made;
  - **Publish**: a description of how far you apply the pillars in your own context.

‘I found the voluntary code helpful in this instance. The headings made sense and it was a useful structure, in fact it reassured us as the producers as much as anything.

We also enlisted an analyst from another team to QA the numbers, which again proved valuable’.

– DWP Statistician

Making interesting Excel tables meaningful

Spring Statement 2018	Benefit summary table: Benefit expenditure, Department for Work & Pensions and predecessors	2014/15 Outturn	2015/16 Outturn	2016/17 Outturn	2017/18 Forecast	2018/19 Forecast	2019/20 Forecast	2020/21 Forecast	2021/22 Forecast	2022/23 Forecast
	Benefit expenditure, £ billion, nominal terms									
	Children	1.8	1.9	2.0	2.0	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.6	2.9
	Working age	52.3	53.5	53.9	55.5	57.6	59.4	60.0	61.5	63.0
	Pensioners	114.1	116.4	118.0	119.8	122.1	124.0	125.6	130.4	136.1
	Contributory	94.5	97.6	99.9	102.2	105.0	107.3	109.3	113.7	118.8
	Income-related	45.8	45.4	44.9	45.1	44.8	44.5	44.3	45.0	45.8
	Non-contributory / non-income-related	27.9	28.8	29.0	30.0	32.0	33.9	34.5	35.9	37.4
	Total	**168.3**	**171.8**	**173.9**	**177.3**	**181.8**	**185.7**	**188.1**	**194.5**	**202.0**
	Benefit expenditure consistent with current DWP coverage, £ billion, nominal terms									
	Children	1.7	1.8	1.9	2.0	2.1	2.3	2.4	2.6	2.9
	Working age	52.3	53.5	53.9	55.5	57.6	59.4	60.0	61.5	63.0
	Pensioners	113.5	115.8	117.4	119.1	121.6	123.8	125.6	130.4	136.1
	Total	**167.6**	**171.1**	**173.2**	**176.6**	**181.3**	**185.4**	**188.0**	**194.5**	**202.0**
	Benefit expenditure, £ billion, real terms, 2018/19 prices									
	Children	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.7
	Working age	55.7	56.6	55.8	56.3	57.6	58.5	58.1	58.5	58.9
	Pensioners	121.4	123.0	122.0	121.6	122.1	122.1	121.6	124.1	127.3
	Contributory	100.6	103.2	103.4	103.7	105.0	105.7	105.8	108.2	111.1
	Income-related	48.8	48.0	46.5	45.8	44.8	43.8	42.9	42.8	42.8
	Non-contributory / non-income-related	29.7	30.4	30.0	30.4	32.0	33.4	33.4	34.1	34.9
	Total	**179.1**	**181.6**	**179.8**	**179.9**	**181.8**	**182.8**	**182.1**	**185.2**	**188.8**

MAKE A STATEMENT

T.Q.V

How DWP present our voluntary code statement

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/benefit-expenditure-and-caseload-tables-information-and-guidance/benefit-expenditure-and-caseload-tables-information-and-guidance

Principles followed in the compilation and release of these tables

Although the tables are not Official Statistics or National Statistics, where possible we follow the Code of Practice for Statistics. The code is built around 3 main concepts, or pillars:

- trustworthiness – is about having confidence in the people and organisations that publish statistics.
- quality – is about using data and methods that produce assured statistics.
- value – is about publishing statistics that support society's needs for information.

The following explains how we have applied the pillars of the code in a proportionate way.

The Statement clearly sets out the commitment to applying the Code of Practice pillars in the production and release of the data tables.

Trustworthiness

These estimates are published on a regular basis following a fiscal event. They are published on the day of the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Public Sector Finance release, in line with Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) practice (except when there is inadequate time for the production and quality assurance of the information, in which case release is deferred until the same day in the following month.)

DWP has regular conversations with OBR who provide challenge and scrutiny to the robustness of the forecasts.

Ministers will see and make decisions on these estimates in the run up to fiscal events, and they will feed into overall OBR estimates of spending, so they cannot be released to all users at the same time.

The Statement is open about how the data is seen and used by Ministers to inform the Government's fiscal decision making prior to public release

T1 Honesty and integrity
T3 Orderly release

Quality

Past data is a combination of departmental accounting data, which is audited by the National Audit Office, and data released as, or underpinning, departmental Official or National Statistics.

To ensure accuracy, forecast figures are consistent with the latest forecasts produced by the OBR.

Forecasts and assumptions are compiled by professional analysts taking account of the latest data and applying methods using their professional judgement. These forecasts and assumptions are scrutinised and approved both within DWP and by the independent OBR.

Real terms spending figures are calculated using the latest GDP deflator, so that meaningful comparisons can be made over time.

The Statement highlights the data source, methods and outlines the key aspects of the quality assurance arrangements

Q1 Suitable data sources
Q2 Sound methods; Q3 Assured quality

Value

These figures form the basis of understanding benefit spend and forecast spend.

The figures provide an overview of benefit expenditure and caseload so the public can see how many people receive each benefit and the value of these benefits.

The figures are used to inform the government's budget. They are used by parliament in the scrutiny of the government's budget and policy decisions to inform debate and increase the stock of information available to policy makers.

The analysis included has evolved over time to reflect key areas of interest including those identified by members of the public and their representatives.

Making this information accessible helps reduce the administrative burden of answering Parliamentary Questions, Freedom of Information requests and ad hoc queries about benefit expenditure.

The Statement highlights why the information is needed and its main use. It also makes clear about how the producer is responding to user needs

V1 Relevance to users

DWP Management Information

Department for Work & Pensions

Conversion of Support for Mortgage Interest from a Benefit into a Loan: claimant communication and intention to take up a loan

One off | Published: 23rd March 2018 | Great Britain | Ad hoc

Policy background and introduction

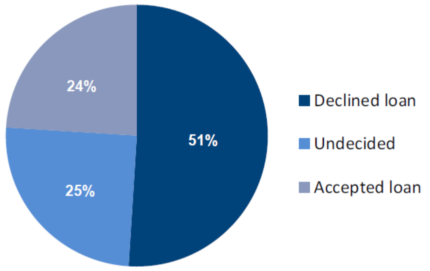
Support for Mortgage Interest (SMI) helps protect claimants on qualifying benefits with mortgages from repossession when out of work, retired or sick by contributing towards the interest payments on the claimant's mortgage. Claimants are eligible if they have a mortgage and are in receipt of certain benefits. SMI will cease being a benefit and will become an interest bearing loan from 6th April 2018.

This statistical release contains figures on communication undertaken with claimants on the changes to SMI and claimants' intentions on taking up the loan as at 21st March 2018. Figures on the total volume of correspondence and telephone calls as at 15th March 2018 are also included.

Main stories

- At 21st March DWP has sent a letter about the new SMI loans scheme and attempted a follow up telephone call to 95% of SMI claimants[1].
- Over half (51%) of claimants at 21st March who communicated their intention to the Department in a follow up telephone conversation have said they will decline the offer of an SMI loan. One quarter (25%) are undecided. Just under one quarter (24%) indicated that they will accept the loan.

SMI loans: claimants' intentions at 21st March 2018



[1] Those not yet contacted include some people who have only very recently claimed SMI, those where DWP has no record of a valid telephone number and some cases where the claimant has an appointee in place to look after their interests.

1

Setting out how we have applied the Code

About these statistics

The figures presented in this *ad hoc* statistical release are based on DWP management information and data supplied by Serco. Serco has been contracted by the Department to undertake the majority of customer communications in relation to the transition to the SMI loan scheme. Data is reported without detailed verification.

This statistical release contains figures on communication undertaken with claimants on the changes to SMI and claimants' intentions on taking up the loan as at 21st March 2018. Figures for the previous week, 14th March 2018, are provided in the accompanying tables and relate to the figures discussed on Saturday, 17th March in an SMI item on the BBC Radio programme Money Box.

Statement of Compliance with the Code of Practice for Statistics

The Code of Practice for Statistics (the Code) is built around three main concepts, or pillars: Trustworthiness, Quality and Value.

- Trustworthiness – is about having confidence in the people and organisations that publish statistics.
- Quality – is about using data and methods that produce assured statistics.
- Value – is about publishing statistics that support society's needs for information.

The following explains how we have applied the pillars of the Code in a proportionate way.

Trustworthiness

The figures are based on DWP management information and data supplied by Serco. DWP Analysts have scrutinised the figures with the Department's SMI Project management information team and provided challenge to ensure the figures are an accurate representation of data collected on communication undertaken with claimants and claimants' intentions on taking up an SMI loan.

Quality

The statistics presented are derived from the Department's Support for Mortgage Interest Tracking System (SMITS). SMITS was developed to initiate claimant contact and hold records of claimant discussions to support the engagement of the SMI claimant caseload ahead of the switch to the SMI loan scheme. SMITS was developed by the Department's Digital Team and approved by the Design Authority in July 2017. Records of contacts in SMITS are updated based on data recorded by Serco on successful contacts and call outcomes on a weekly basis. The SMI Project management information team maintains regular contact with Serco to ensure the quality of the information supplied.

Value

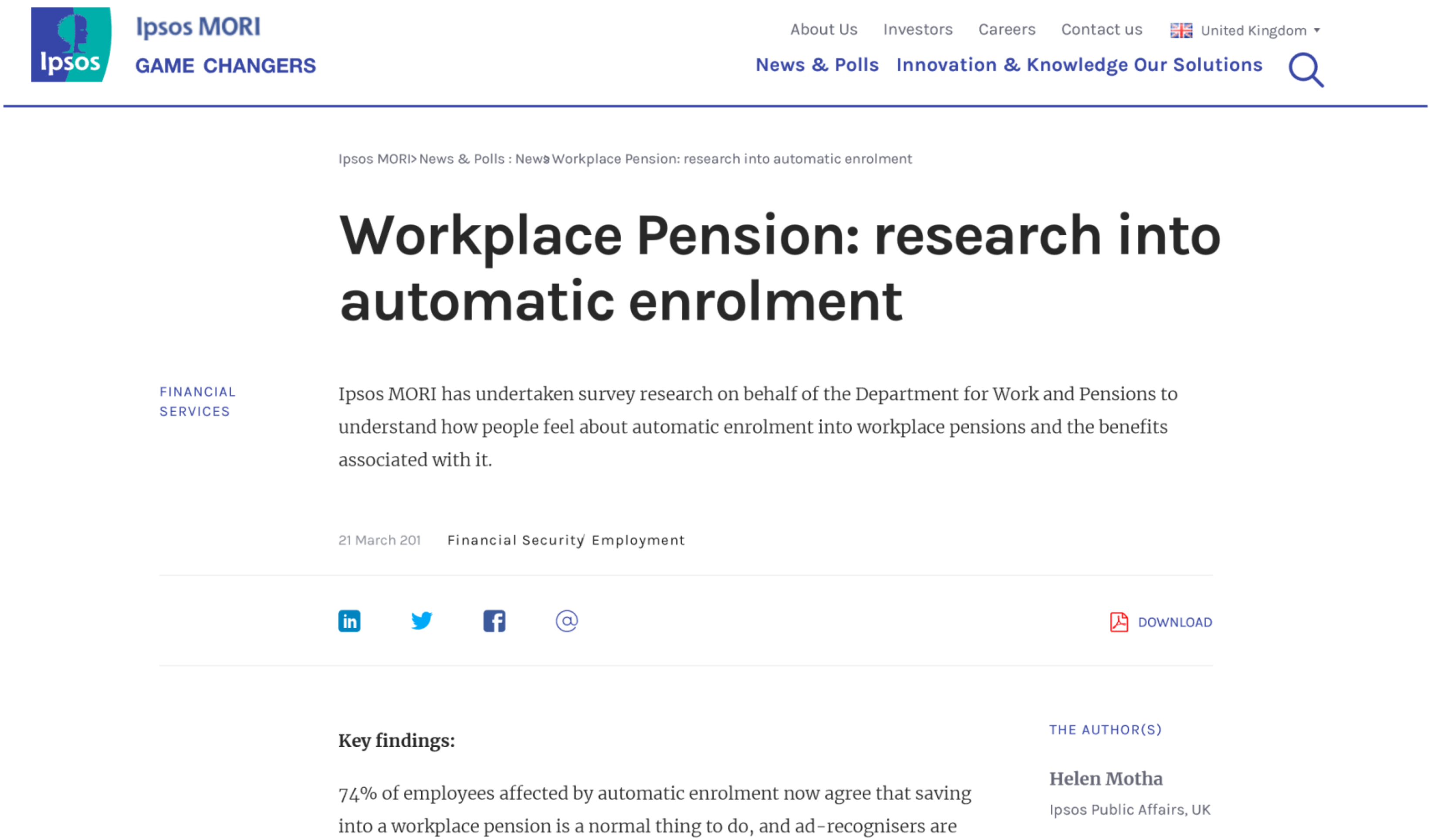
This *ad hoc* release provides an overview of contact with claimants ahead of SMI becoming a loan and an indication of how many claimants are planning on taking up an SMI loan.

Making this information accessible provides Ministers and stakeholders with an overview of claimant awareness of the changes to SMI and claimant intentions on taking up a loan, while helping to reduce the administrative burden of answering Parliamentary Questions, Freedom of Information requests and *ad hoc* queries about changes to SMI.

5

Ipsos MORI example

https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/workplace-pension-research-automatic-enrolment



Ipsos MORI
GAME CHANGERS

About Us Investors Careers Contact us United Kingdom

News & Polls Innovation & Knowledge Our Solutions

Ipsos MORI > News & Polls : News > Workplace Pension: research into automatic enrolment

Workplace Pension: research into automatic enrolment

FINANCIAL SERVICES

Ipsos MORI has undertaken survey research on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions to understand how people feel about automatic enrolment into workplace pensions and the benefits associated with it.

21 March 201 Financial Security Employment

DOWNLOAD

Key findings:

74% of employees affected by automatic enrolment now agree that saving into a workplace pension is a normal thing to do, and ad-recognisers are

THE AUTHOR(S)

Helen Motha
Ipsos Public Affairs, UK

How Ipsos MORI are adopting the Code

Ipsos MORI

News & Polls Innovation & Knowledge Our Solutions

information.

The following explains how we have applied the pillars of the Code in a proportionate way.

Trustworthiness

- Ipsos MORI are bound by the Market Research Society's code of conduct. The MRS code of conduct represents ten principles which are designed to ensure that the research has been carried out in accordance with professional standards and in an ethical manner.
- Ministers and Comms will see the findings before publication in order to make decisions about the content of Communications campaigns, so they cannot be released to all users at the same tim Not all findings are published as Communications research is primarily used to develop campaigns and advise Ministers.

Quality

- The survey took place using established quantitative research methodology.

What are the benefits?

What are the benefits?

- It highlights your commitment to demonstrating trustworthiness, reassuring users about the quality of your information, and ensuring that the information serves the intended purposes;
- Provides a quick win to improve users understanding of the data presented;
- Demonstrates a common sense approach to sharing numerical information;
- Prompts you to review your own processes;
- Builds confidence and trustworthiness.

Contact us:

Tom.Davies@DWP.gsi.gov.uk

Katie.Dodd@DWP.gsi.gov.uk