

Appendix One DWP Restricted Data Policy update memo

4th Floor, Zone A1
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU

7th July 2008

To: All Local Authority Chief Executives / Council Leaders in England and Wales

Dear Colleague,

Government Connect:
Revised Data Access Policy for DWP RESTRICTED data

On 1st April this year a £33m funding package was announced to complete delivery and implementation of Government Connect, the programme which delivers secure communication links to all local authorities in England and Wales. Since 1st April Government Connect has engaged with and received excellent support from the local government community. Huge progress towards the stated target of 100% availability by 31 March 2009 has been made and currently all but 50 of the 410 English and Welsh local authorities have either implemented or are actively progressing implementation of Government Connect.

The case for all of government to have a secure communications capability built on common government approved standards has never been greater and is underlined by the recently published reports, "Data Handling Procedures in Government" and Kieran Poynter's review of information security at HMRC. The LGA will soon be releasing equivalent guidelines for local government.

Building on the April 1st announcement and clearer data handling guidelines we are today announcing a revised policy concerning access to DWP case data. On 31st March 2009 DWP will cease the provision of RESTRICTED data to local authorities and the receipt of "sensitive personal data" from local authorities through means other than a government approved secure IT communications channel. This essential measure means that we now urge all local authorities to make information security a top priority and to commit to completing the Government Connect implementation process without delay. We have written today to your Section 151 Officer fully detailing the new policy and explaining what action needs to be taken.

Inability to access DWP case data would have an impact on authorities delivering housing and council tax benefit services. Conversely, secure electronic data access opens the door to a whole range of transformation opportunities to help all authorities deliver improved efficiency and better public services.

The Government Connect team are at your service to confirm the case for Government Connect, to help your authority through the connection process and to facilitate access to service improvement opportunities. Contact details for the Government Connect Programme Director or your Regional Account Manager are available at <http://www.govconnect.gov.uk>.

Yours sincerely

Joe Harley Janet Callender OBE
Director General, DWP Corporate IT Chair - Government Connect Programme Board
DWP CIO Chief Executive Tameside MBC
Chair Local Government Delivery Council