
The Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study (WPLS)

Neil McIvor

Aims of this Talk

- **What is the WPLS?**
- **Why did we create it?**
- **What does the WPLS contain?**
- **How did we create it?**
- **What has the WPLS been used for?**
- **Safeguards and Security**
- **Questions**

What is the WPLS?

- **Longitudinal spells based administrative database.**
- **Links Benefit and Programme information held by DWP on its customers with records from HMRC.**
- **Provides a single client view, with history, allowing client group and across client group longitudinal analysis.**

What is the WPLS?

WPLS provides for every single DWP client:

- **The Benefit(s) or Pension they first claim and any subsequent ones.**
- **Any help or interventions they receive from Jobcentre Plus, e.g. *referrals to a job interview, entry to a New Deal Programme, etc.*;**
- **Whether they go into work when they leave benefit;**
- **Whether they return to benefit – *work and benefit history*;**
- **Key information about their income, *including savings and investments*;**
- **Key personal details, e.g. *age, sex, where they live, etc.***
- **Housing/Council Benefit and Tax credits for DWP clients.**

Why create the WPLS?

- **Before WPLS – key knowledge gaps.**
- **WPLS offers opportunity to improve analytic evidence base and operational effectiveness.**
- **Focused around supporting Department's agenda for Welfare-to-Work and Retirement Income Planning.**

What does the WPLS contain?

- **Details for all DWP clients on Benefit or Programme at 6th April 1999 or starting after that date.**
- **Details of Employment Start and end Dates (P45/6) – 1998 onwards**
- **Self Assessed (including self employed) data – 1998 onwards**
- **New Tax Credit Data – 2003 onwards**
- **Earnings Data (P14) – 2003 onwards**
- **Bank and building society account information since 2001/02, for all accounts generating more than £50 a year, or an individual who has a cumulative amount > £100**
- **ISAs, TESSAs, PEPs, VCTs, and Private Pensions/Stakeholder Pensions for 2001/02**

What does the WPLS contain?

- **Details on the contact with DWP of some 34 million customers.**
- **Includes around:**
 - **34 million separate benefit claims for IS, IB/SDA, JSA, CA, BB**
 - **5 million periods on New Deals or other work-related activity**
 - **Around 3 million Pension Credit claims**
 - **Nearly 13 million periods on State Pension (RP)**
 - **2 million Attendance Allowance spells**
 - **3 million spells on DLA**
- **143 million separate linked employment records (+ further 146m unlinked HMRC employment records)**

How did we create the WPLS?

Legislation:

- **Data Sharing provisions introduced in Employment Act 2002.**
- **Social Security (Administration) Act 1992**
- **Section 3 Social Security Act 1998**
- **New Tax Credits Act 2002**
- **Pensions Act 2004**

Need to also consider:

- **Article 8 Human Rights Act**
- **Data Protection Act**

How did we create the WPLS?

- **Written Statement to Parliament December 2003.**
- **Introduced WPLS January 2004.**
- **Further written Statement to Parliament – Autumn 2005.**
- **WPLS enhanced October 2005.**

How did we create the WPLS?

- **Combination of Oracle and SAS processing sitting on UNIX boxes.**
- **Developed fuzzy matching algorithms to link data based on our knowledge of source data.**
- **Developed understandings of business processes in source data capture, internal manipulation and extraction to WPLS.**
- **Uncleansed data for Fraud referral processes. Cleansed for aggregated analytic use (depending on use).**

What has the WPLS been used for?

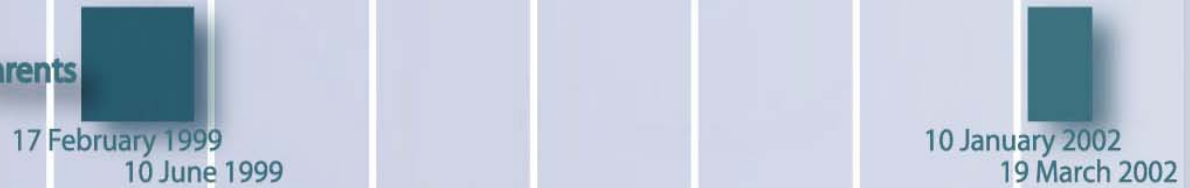
- provide statistics, management information and research on the success of Jobcentre Plus in helping people into work and keeping them in work;
- help to evaluate individual policies and their impact in the short, medium and long-term;
- aid in the investigation of fraud;
- supporting Pension Credit take-up campaigns;
- better understand people who work beyond state pension age as part of our research into retirement planning and to assist the development of pensions policy;

Jan 91 Jan 99 Jun 99 Jan 00 Jun 00 Jan 01 Jun 01 Jan 02 Jun 02

Income Support



New Deal Lone Parents



Basic Skills Screening



Employment



Jan 91 Jan 99 Jun 99 Jan 00 Jun 00 Jan 01 Jun 01 Jan 02 Jun 02

Safeguards and Security

- **Restricting Access**
- **Ethics Committee**
- **Monitoring Users**
- **Monitoring Uses**
- **Involvement of Information Commissioner**
- **Retention Policy**

Safeguards and Security

Data used for research and statistical purposes:

- For data on Employment outcomes for people who have been DWP customers – 25 years;
- For data on earnings for people who have been DWP customers – 25 years;
- For data relating to interest on savings, PEPs, ISAs, TESSAs, on the 60s and over – 5 years;
- For data on Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit – 25 years;

Data used for DWP operational purposes:

- One year's worth of data will be used.

ANY QUESTIONS?