

Department for Work and Pensions

DWP Data Access

Ethics Committee

Third Annual Report

Year ending 31 December 2007

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Foreword

I am pleased to present the third Ethics Committee Annual Report.

The report outlines the work of the Committee undertaken in 2007 and takes a forward look to some developments expected in 2008.

The setting up of this Committee is innovative within the Department and it is an example of best practice in the area of data handling and statistics. DWP is the first government department to set up such a committee and it is one of the safeguards that we have put in place to ensure that we are seen as behaving responsibly with data from the Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study.

Following the well-established ways of working of the Committee and a clear role in respect of the use and access to WPLS, the Committee has now been expanded to consider the ethical implications of all Information Directorate's use of non-DWP data. The Committee has therefore been renamed the DWP Data Access Ethics Committee.

The Committee has played an important role in helping to ensure that all uses of these data are appropriate and that there are no unintended impacts on any individuals who are covered by it. It has also helped to shape DWP thinking on possible new uses of the data so that any ethical issues are addressed as part of the proposals to do so.

Lively debates have continued to be held around ethical and other issues connected with using data for research and operational purposes.

I should like to thank all members of the Ethics Committee for their commitment and work during the past year.

David Frazer

Chair
DWP Data Access Ethics Committee

1. Introduction to the report and the Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study (WPLS)

- 1.1. The WPLS is a series of linked databases that allows detailed, cross cutting analysis of DWP customers. From January 2004, DWP has been able to link benefit and programme information held on its customers with employment records from HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC).
- 1.2. An Ethics Committee was considered necessary to ensure that new proposals for utilising the WPLS took account of concerns amongst citizens about how such a potentially rich data source might be used.
- 1.3. The annual report highlights the achievements of the committee during the past year, reflects on issues they have discussed and a change to the committee's remit.

Membership of the Ethics Committee

- 1.4. The Committee comprises twelve members. Six of the members are experts from government departments including DWP Social Research, Office for National Statistics, DWP Communications Standards, HMRC and HM Treasury. The other six members are individuals who were appointed following a national advertisement for suitable candidates. The Committee members and a short biography are shown in **Annex 1**.
- 1.5. Since the 2006 annual report the committee has changed status from that of a temporary ad-hoc advisory group (which have a lifespan of 2 years) to an expert committee. This is to reflect the more permanent role that the committee is now undertaking

Role of the Committee

- 1.6. The Ethics Committee was originally appointed to consider proposals for utilising the WPLS database that have a significant ethical dimension.
- 1.7. The goal of the Committee is to foster, through debate and accountability, a proper culture of respect in using and developing uses of non-DWP data. Consideration is given to human dignity within a framework of active research to support the development of policies for a free, inclusive and prosperous society.

- 1.8. Following the success of this role, the remit of the Committee was widened to take account of other uses of non-DWP data. They now scrutinise all proposed and actual uses of such data by DWP's Information Directorate (IFD). IFD is responsible for WPLS and other central sources of information. It also provides DWP with a range of information services from it, including statistics, management information and data matching for operational purposes, including the detection of fraud and error.
- 1.9. This means that the Committee is providing valuable advice on a wider range of issues to DWP.

Key Achievements during 2007

- 1.10. Specific examples of matters considered by the committee is shown in **section 4** of the report covering committee meetings and papers.

In summary the main achievements during 2007 were:

- That all uses of data were appropriate and took account of ethical considerations
- Through challenges to reasons for research and data use, this changed the culture of DWP analysts and other data users to be more proactive at the outset in thinking through ethical and security issues.
- Helped to shape thinking within DWP about possible new use of data to improve customer service.
- Provided advice on obtaining improved consent to data linking for DWP surveys.
- Provided advice on the review of IFD security arrangements.
- Provided advice on project proposals that aimed to improve customer service, by factoring into the discussion issues that might cause concern amongst citizens.
- Helped to establish a strong culture of adhering to security policies.
- Independent meeting held separately to consider corporate governance of the committee and wider issues.

Aims and Objectives of the Committee

- 1.11. The committee review DWP's decision-making on access given to non-DWP data including WPLS and their deliberations include:
- The ethical issues surrounding the proposal
 - Whether the proposal is acceptable
 - Suggest modifications to any proposal, where the amount of data is considered intrusive given the proposed objective.
- 1.12. The committee also provides ethical advice on possible developments in the use of data.
- 1.13. The full Terms of Reference for the Committee are at **Annex 2**.

Meetings

- 1.14. The Committee has met four times in January, April, July and October 2007.
- 1.15. The independent members of the Committee have also met separately to consider corporate governance of the committee and see whether items of interest needed to be brought to the attention of the wider Committee.

2. Accesses to the WPLS and other non-DWP Data

- 2.1. Users of WPLS and other non-DWP data are mainly operational and research analysts for the purposes of providing information on policy and customer service issues.
- 2.2. To gain access to the WPLS and other non-DWP data, a business case is completed by each user/group of users via an electronic register. The business case requires a clear justification as to why the user needs access.
- 2.3. Details of every application for access to WPLS and non-DWP data are taken from the register each month and presented to Committee members. The role of the committee is to satisfy itself that the access process has been properly applied and that the reasons for access and use are valid.
- 2.4. Where appropriate, the committee will:
 - Discuss individual cases and reach an agreement as to whether there are any ethical considerations; and
 - Request further information about individual cases in order to reach a decision.
- 2.5. The Committee are notified separately if access is required to non-anonymised data for reasons other than sampling.
- 2.6. By working closely with the Ethics Committee fewer business cases are being challenged as DWP users are now providing better descriptions and reasons for data access.
- 2.7. Feedback from the committee influences the way DWP seek to improve the construction of business cases and the information provided to data users.
- 2.8. There have been further developments requested by the Ethics Committee in order to improve their ability to monitor accesses.

2.9. The key aspects of this have been:

- Continue to improve the quality of the descriptions of why access is requested
- Providing an expected end date of uses of data in order to ensure data is not being held longer than is necessary.

Approving access to datasets

2.10. Since its formation in 2004 and up to the period ending 31 December 2007, the Ethics Committee considered a rolling total of 236 applications to access the WPLS for linking data. In addition the Committee have considered a further 9 applications for the use of other non-DWP data. Whilst there have been occasions where the Ethics Committee has asked for an explanation of applications there have been no cases to date where the Committee has disagreed with the decision taken.

2.11. The table in paragraph **2.12** shows the history of accesses to WPLS since referrals began to the committee in 2004. The figures are cumulative and therefore since 2004 there have been a total of 236 requests. The figure for expired cases is also cumulative and shows numbers where access is no longer required and has been removed.

2.12. As consideration of other non-DWP data is a new role for the committee it is not yet reflected in the table, but will be included in future reports.

2.13. Table 1: - accesses given to the WPLS since the inauguration of the WPLS

Status of application	Number of applications to access the WPLS at August 2004	Number of applications to access the WPLS at 31 December 2005	Number of applications to access the WPLS at 31 December 2006	Number of applications to access the WPLS at 31 December 2007
Total	18	89	186	236
<i>Of which Current</i>	11	20	45	19
<i>Renewed</i>	0	15	39	77
<i>Expired</i>	4	39	82	120
<i>Refused</i>	2	12	16	17
<i>Development of WPLS</i>	1	3	4	3

Definition of Terms in above table:

- Current: The number of business cases in which access has been approved. This does not include business cases that have been renewed and therefore all current business cases are no more than six months old.
- Renewed: The number of business cases which have been renewed. It is our policy to review all business cases every six months regardless of how long access is required. This will contain business cases, which have been renewed on a previous occasion.
- Expired: The number of business cases which have expired and therefore access has been withdrawn.
- Refused: The number of business cases which have been refused access to WPLS. Requests to access WPLS are challenged rigorously and will often be rejected before a business case is submitted.
- Development of WPLS: A small number of business cases require access to WPLS in order to improve data processes but do not have an end use of the data.

2.14. A list of all uses of WPLS can be found at http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/longitudinal_study/WPLS_Uses.pdf

3. Audit and Risk Assessment of DWP

- 3.1.** The Ethics Committee is asked on an ongoing basis to consider the security measures that DWP has in place to protect the data held on WPLS; and DWP regularly updates the Committee about its security and data protection measures.

- 3.2.** Following an audit and risk assessment of data protection systems against the audit principles on the Data Protection Act undertaken by Enterprise Privacy Group (EPG), Data Matching has taken forward recommendations. These findings have been published on the internet at:
http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/longitudinal_study/DATA_PROTECTION_SELF_CERTIFICATION_SYSTEM.pdf

- 3.3.** One of the recommendations including devising a questionnaire for all staff to test their knowledge of the principles of the Data Protection Act. Information Directorate have developed a database of over 250 questions and tested their suitability with a cross section of staff members through a series of focus groups. The questions are delivered through a web interface that greatly simplifies system management by dispensing with the need for a client application. Workflow monitoring ensures that users complete the questions within the required timescales, and then generates automated management reports. These are supported by 'confidence factor' measurements that provide the management team with assurance that the questionnaire results reflect 'real world' behaviours.

4. Committee Meetings and Papers

- 4.1.** The Committee Meetings have included a number of oral presentations and detailed papers. The discussions have been mainly focused on the potential new use of data. Subjects have included:

Family Resource Survey – Update on linking data with administrative data

- 4.2.** During 2007, work continued on the project to link data from the WPLS with the Family Resources Survey (FRS). The FRS is an annual survey of around 28,000 private households, designed to be representative of the UK population. It gathers information on incomes, benefit receipt and related household characteristics. Fieldwork is carried out by a consortium of ONS and the National Centre for Social Research.
- 4.3.** In 2006, a question was piloted and then introduced into the FRS to seek the informed consent of respondents for DWP to link their survey responses to WPLS data. In January 2007, papers were presented to the Ethics Committee reporting on results of the pilot study and the decision to introduce the question from November 2006. Papers were also presented on the data release protocol for the FRS and the data linking strategy.
- 4.4.** In July 2007, the EC was provided with an update on data linking work, informing them of the decision to withdraw the consent question due to a poor response rate. It was planned that resources would be focussed on developing and testing a new, improved consent question to be introduced from April 2008. A further paper was submitted on this in October 2007 which also outlined the plans for testing a new question. In November 2007, results from the pilot study were circulated to the EC for comment. It was agreed that the EC would continue to be kept informed of developments in this area.

Rapid Review Project

- 4.5.** A presentation was given by The Pension Service on the use of predictive analytics techniques. This involves using data, combined with business knowledge, to predict customers' financial circumstances, behaviours and needs.
- 4.6.** The Pension Service is looking at ways that the review process for existing benefit customers can be streamlined as the experience for some low-risk customers could be enhanced by removing the need for unnecessary and worrying form-filling or questioning at the review stage.

- 4.7. The plan is to use data from a range of sources, including DWP systems and HM Revenue and Customs, to establish categories of risk for types of customers.
- 4.8. The Ethics Committee gave positive support to the proposal and its members have provided helpful comments on the draft customer communications. They also highlighted an important policy issue on whether the responsibility for any benefit overpayment in the new process rested with the customer.

Project Griffin

- 4.9. More intelligent use of information is required to support all DWP business decisions relating to interactions with its customers. In particular there is a need to determine levels of risk in order to reduce verification documentation and to reduce fraud and error.
- 4.10. Project Griffin was a joint partnership between The Pension Service, DWP Housing Benefit Strategy Division and DWP Information Directorate.
- 4.11. The Project designed and built a demonstration model for using a predictive analytics approach to the delivery of DWP products and services.
- 4.12. The Proof of Concept model was demonstrated to the Committee. The model used actual data and a set of analysis rules which identified the probability of entitlement to Pension Credit and other benefits.
- 4.13. The Committee appreciated the benefits of Project Griffin but did have some concerns, mainly surrounding verification where there were savings. In addition, if there were vulnerable cases such as customers with Alzheimer's, the Committee asked how these would be handled. DWP said that it was early days in the development of using these techniques and the Committee's views would be taken into consideration.

Migration Statistics: Exploiting the WPLS

- 4.14. In January 2007 a paper was provided to the Ethics Committee giving an overview on access to WPLS data to support work on migration issues. DWP have been exploring the use of WPLS datasets across three broad strands of work [a] improvements to DWP National Statistics, [b] development of analyses tracking migrant workers activity to improve estimates of migrant populations and leavers, and [c] externally commissioned work to analyse the labour market impacts of migration.

- 4.15.** Business Cases have been approved for each of these strands of work. The Committee confirmed they were content with accessing WPLS datasets to improve DWP National Statistics and estimating migrant workers activity and it was agreed that the Ethics Committee would be kept informed of progress.

Child Support Agency

- 4.16.** The Child Maintenance and Other Payments Bill (introduced on 5 June 2007) contains provision for the disclosure of information to credit reference agencies for the purposes of linking payments of child maintenance with ability to obtain credit.
- 4.17.** In conjunction with Experian (one of three UK based credit reference agencies) the Department undertook an analysis of child maintenance data in order to ascertain whether compliance with maintenance payments were predictive of individual's behaviour towards other forms of financial liability.
- 4.18.** The research was published in January 2008.

5. Future of the Ethics Committee

- 5.1. Following the decision to widen the remit of the Ethics Committee work will continue throughout 2008 to implement these measures. The Ethics Committee will continue to offer ethical advice on all uses of non-DWP data held on Information Directorate's systems. This will include reviewing current uses of data and new items of interest to the Committee
- 5.2. A review will be undertaken of membership of the committee.
- 5.3. The Committee will look to invite guest speakers to future meetings in order to understand the roles of others in the use of data and to exchange views and explain the role of the committee.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1. The Ethics Committee has had another successful year. It has continued to build on the achievements as a key part of the process for using the Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study.
- 6.2. In addition, following the widening of its remit, the Committee has now started to offer invaluable ethical advice in considering Information Directorate's use of non-DWP data.

7. Contacting the Ethics Committee

DWP Data Access Ethics Committee Secretariat
Department for Work and Pensions
Level 2, Kings Court
Sheffield
S3 7UF

Telephone: 0114 209 8562

Fax: 0114 209 8189

Web site:

http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/longitudinal_study/ic_longitudinal_study.asp

Email: wpls@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

DWP Data Access Ethics Committee

Stuart Burgess: Independent Member

Stuart is a Church Leader (Methodist Church) on an international, national and regional basis. His interests include: education - especially in higher education; ethics - especially medical ethics and holding the balance between theory and practice; debt cancellation for poor countries and related issues, i.e. HIV/Aids; working with the police on creating safer neighbourhoods. Stuart chairs the Patient Liaison Group of the British Medical Association. Having been Chairman of the Countryside Agency and Rural Advocate, Stuart is now Chairman for the Commission of Rural Communities.

He is interested in travel, music and playing tennis

Gabrielle Cox: Independent Member

Gabrielle Cox was Head of Social Inclusion Policy at the Northwest Development Agency prior to retirement in 2004. She was responsible for the mainstreaming economic inclusion perspectives across the whole of Agency's work. Before this she had worked for thirteen years as Director of the Greater Manchester Low Pay unit, overseeing the Unit's extensive research and advice work. During this time she was also a member of the Churches Enquiry on Unemployment and the Future of Work, which published a major report in 1997.

Gabrielle was for five years a member of the Greater Manchester County Council and was Chair of the Greater Manchester Police Authority. She has also worked for the North West Community Health Councils, as a teacher in inner city schools in Manchester, and as a community worker. She began work with Unilever before studying at the London School of Economics.

She has extensive experience of the voluntary and community sector, and has been active in community issues in Moss Side, where she lives, for over thirty years. She is currently a Non-Executive Director of the Manchester Primary Care Trust, a member of the Board of United Utilities Trust, and does occasional consultancy on economic and social inclusion issues.

Mike Daly: DWP

Head of Analysis, Disability and Carers Benefits Division

Mike is responsible for building the evidence base relating to the work of Disability and Carers Benefits Division – principally, but not exclusively, around Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance and Carers Allowance. He has a particular interest in evaluation methods, and the use of administrative data in evaluation.

Mike graduated from Cambridge University in 1979 with a degree in Mathematics, and subsequently obtained a postgraduate Diploma in Mathematical Statistics before joining the then Department of Employment in 1980.

He has worked on a variety of subject areas including: retail prices, labour supply analysis and forecasting, small business statistics and research, monitoring and evaluation of youth and adult training programmes, employment policies for disabled people. He joined the Employment Service in 1997 specifically to develop evaluation databases for the New Deal programmes using administrative records. He was heavily involved in the extension of these databases to cover a much wider range of sources and programmes, before becoming more involved with programme evaluation, often using the evaluation databases as data sources.

David Fraser: Independent Member

David Fraser lives in Edinburgh, and was a Chief Executive in the public sector in Scotland. His experience included working with Ethics Committees in the health service. David is Vice Chairman of the Scottish Refugee Council, Vice Chairman of Castle Rock Edinvar Housing Association and a Board Member of the Air Transport Users Council. He has a particular interest in how organisations can learn to improve service delivery to customers.

Chris Hughes: Independent Member

For many years, Christopher has taken an interest in the governance of the public domain and ensuring effective leadership and decision-making by public bodies. He has served as a member of various health authorities and has worked for and been a member of local authorities. His current roles include chairing a Regulatory Body, Mental Health Tribunals, tribunals hearing cases of alleged misconduct by members of local authorities, and the Chemical Stakeholder Forum. Christopher is a solicitor and a member of the Institute of Biology and the Board of the Legal Complaints Service.

Paul Jackson: Office of National Statistics

Paul joined ONS as a Senior Research Officer to manage the 1999 Census Quality Survey and to develop the 2001 Census validation methodology. He joined ONS Methodology Group as a Principle Methodologist in 2001 to set up a Confidentiality and Data Sharing centre of expertise in ONS. As this work became so closely tied to the development of the National Statistics Code of Practice, the centre moved into National Statistics and Planning Group where he now runs the Legal and Data Sharing branch. This branch is the home of ONS casework and case law in legal matters, including Data Protection, Human Rights, Freedom of Information. It is also the home of data sharing and micro-data release policy for ONS, and 'owns' the Protocol for Data Access and Confidentiality. The branch maintains ONS' links with the Office for the Information Commissioner and the Information Rights division of the Department for Constitutional Affairs. Like all functions of the NSPG, there is a Government Statistical Services function.

Liz Kettle: DWP

Information Standards

Liz Kettle was born in Washington DC. Her family returned to the UK when she was five and she grew up in Cambridge and Sussex. After graduating in philosophy and economics from LSE, Liz spent some years working in publishing publicity and promotion in London and Edinburgh. She gained further experience as a BBC press officer in Glasgow, followed by a period in academic bookselling, subsequently moving over to the editorial side of academic and educational publishing. Liz has also had considerable freelance experience as a writer, editor, journalist, PR practitioner, advertising copywriter, book reviewer (press and broadcasting) and reader for a literary agency.

Liz joined the civil service in 1994 as a Benefits Agency national press officer and now leads the Standards team in the DWP Communications Directorate...

David Leibling: Independent Member

Freelance transport and motoring consultant

Formerly Director of Corporate Communications for Lex Service PLC

David is a non-executive member of the Board of the Driving Standards Agency and a member of its Audit and Risk Management Committee and also the Audit Committee of the Vehicle Certification Agency. He is a board member of London TravelWatch, the consumer body for users of transport in London and a Member of Public Policy Committee for RAC Foundation for Motoring. He is Trustee of Roadsafe (Prince Michael Road Safety Awards), the motor industry's road safety initiative and Trustee of a number of community charities.

Tony Martin: DWP

Social Research

Tony Martin is one of three deputy heads of profession for the 90 social researchers across DWP who provide research-based evidence through designing and commissioning programmes of research and evaluation. He has a particular interest in the ethical issues involved both in undertaking social research and in linking research and administrative data.

Tony started as a Government Social Researcher in DHSS and has also had stints outside of DSS/DWP; in DfEE taking forward the early years and schools research agenda; and also with the States of Jersey Government, researching poverty and employment issues on the island. In his time in DSS, he has represented the Department on external advisory committees for specific longitudinal/panel surveys e.g. BHPS, NCDS, and also a number of ESRC programme boards. He currently is the senior analyst on the cross government strategy for ageing and older people.

Anna Richardson: HM Treasury

Anna Richardson is a principal research officer within the Government Social Research Unit (GSRU). She has recently taken over responsibility from Siobhan Campbell for ethical guidance developed by GSRU for the Government Social Research community.

Anna has a first degree and an MSc in social research methods and has worked as a government social researcher since 2001. Her first post was within the Home Office, working on alcohol-related crime and later in the Drugs Strategy Directorate, working on a longitudinal outcomes study of drug treatment.

Simon Sapper: Independent Member

Simon has been an Assistant Secretary (National Officer) at the Communications Workers' Union since 1989. Before that, he worked for the Institution of Professional Civil Servants (now Prospect) and the Anti-Apartheid Movement. He serves on a number of other bodies including the Secretary of State's Legal Services Consultative Panel, advising on legal services and those who provide them, and is Independent Chair of the London Borough of Merton's Standards Committee.

In addition to this specialism in the areas of Ethics and Governance, Simon has practical experience in research work from his principal areas of employment.

Sean Whellams: HMRC

Sean Whellams joined the civil service in 1986 as an assistant statistician in the Ministry of Defence. He has had a number of different statistical posts and is currently the Chief Statistician in HMRC's information centre.

DWP Data Access Ethics Committee

Terms of Reference

Aim

The DWP Data Access Ethics Committee will provide ethical advice to the Department for Work and Pensions on issues relating to any use of data held on IFD's systems where the projects include use of non DWP data to ensure that the rights, dignity and welfare of the individual are protected and balanced against the common good.

Terms of Reference

To provide ethical advice on the uses of non-DWP data held on IFD's systems taking account of relevant professional standards, legal, methodological and other relevant advice given.

To review the decision-making of the Head of Database and Matching Service on access given to the Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study and other Non-DWP data to ensure that full ethical consideration has been made throughout the decision-making process.

To provide ethical advice on the development of non-DWP data held on IFD's system taking account of relevant professional standards, legal, methodological and other relevant advice given.

To ensure that a record is kept of the decisions taken by the Committee.

Advice provided by the Committee is made available to the Secretary of State through the Chair and Secretariat.

Membership

The Committee comprises 6 Government members and 6 publicly appointed members.

The current membership is:

Publicly appointed members

Simon Sapper
Gabrielle Cox
David Leibling
Stuart Burgess
Chris Hughes
David Fraser

Government members

Anna Richardson, HM Treasury

Paul Jackson, Office for National Statistics

Tony Martin, Deputy Head of Profession for Social Research, DWP

Sean Whellams, HMRC

Mike Daly, Disability and Work Division, Welfare, Work and Equality Group, DWP

Liz Kettle, Deputy Head of Marketing, Department for Work and Pensions

Chair and Secretariat

David Frazer, Head of DWP's Information Directorate chairs the committee with secretariat provided by Douglas Edwards and Caroline Caterer from DWP's Database and Matching Service.

DWP Legal Group provides legal advice to the Department, representatives of which will attend each Ethics Committee meeting.

Ways of working

When deciding the ethical framework, the Committee agree that the following themes should act as a starting point for any ethical debate:

- Consideration of the public interest of proposals
- Ensuring that the ethics as well as the legality of confidentiality are considered
- Considering the likelihood of any proposals to cause distress or harm to an individual against the common good of the citizens.

The Committee is committed to equality of opportunity and inclusion and all proposals will be asked to show that they promote equality and inclusion.

Where any member has concerns about how the Committee is working, they should raise these with the Chair in the first instance.

Behaviour of Members

Members of the Committee have a duty to provide advice to the best of their ability to the Secretary of State. In order to retain the confidence of the public and the Secretary of State:

- Unless they have prior approval, Individual Members will not speak for the Committee at public conferences or seminars, or in articles or broadcasts. While they may identify their role on the Committee, they equally should take care to identify that they do not speak for the Committee unless approved. Approval should be sought from the Committee in session where this is possible or from the Chair or Secretariat where this is not possible.

- Members of the committee owe a duty of confidence. Information shared in confidence with the member either within or out of committee meetings should not be disclosed without approval from the Chair or Secretariat where this is not possible.

Meetings and Decision-making

The Committee will meet quarterly.

It is the aim of the Committee to reach conclusions by Consensus wherever possible and to fully debate issues in order to achieve this. However, there may be occasions where a Consensus cannot be reached. In these circumstances, the Committee will revert to a modified majority voting system. The Committee is quorate when at least 7 members, or their named representatives, are present of which at least 4 are publicly appointed. A majority is achieved when at least 7 members of the Committee or their named representatives agree that a proposal is ethical of which at least 4 votes are from the publicly appointed members. (NB only named Government members can supply representatives not publicly appointed members).

The Chair and Secretariat are present to facilitate the workings of the Committee and as such have no voting rights.

Role of the Chair

The Chair is to provide a non-voting lead to the work of the Committee. The key roles of the Chair are:

- To facilitate the work of the Ethics Committee to ensure that debate at meetings is conducted openly, honestly and taking account of all views held around the table
- To summarise and record the decisions of the Ethics Committee and to ensure these are fully incorporated into the work of DWP in the development of DWP's work in this area.
- To ensure that any public announcements on developments of the WPLS or new uses of non-DWP databases contain the advice of the Ethics Committee and that the Secretary of State is aware of the advice of the Ethics Committee when taking decisions.
- Where DWP has chosen not to follow the advice of the Ethics Committee to ensure that the reasons why are communicated to the Committee and made publicly available.

Role of Secretariat

The Secretariat is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the Ethics Committee are kept fully informed of all work relating to the use of non DWP data including the Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study

- Providing high quality papers which allow the Committee to function properly
- Publishing all papers according to the processes of the Ethics Committee
- Providing all reports on access given and access denied and the reasons for this
- Responding to enquiries on behalf of the Ethics Committee
- Providing minutes of the meetings and ensure that all papers are prepared and circulated on time
- Facilitating the efficient running of the Committee
- Suggesting a forward work programme for the Ethics Committee
- Preparing and publishing the Committee's annual report

Transparency of the meetings of the Ethics Committee

The Ethics Committee aims to be as transparent as possible in the conclusions it has reached. Where a proposal from DWP is already in the public domain then the conclusions of the Committee will be made available as soon as possible after the meeting.

However, there will be occasions when the Committee are considering proposals, which have yet to be publicly announced. In these circumstances, the ethical advice will be released at the time of announcement of the idea.

All members of the Ethics Committee have agreed that their details, alongside these Terms of Reference should be placed on the DWP WPLS website. Individual members of the Committee will not respond to enquiries relating to their work as members of the Ethics Committee. All enquiries about the work of the Committee should be handled through the Secretariat.

The Ethics Committee will produce an annual report of its work.