

Minutes of the Steering Group Meeting

Date: 9 September 2024

Time: 10:00 AM

Location: 2 Marsham Street, SW1P 4DF, and virtually on Microsoft Teams

Attendees

Members:

Emily Sullivan (ES) – Chair, Head of Product, Local Digital MHCLG

Firoze Salim (FS) – Head of Frameworks and Standards, Data Strategy and Standards CDDO

Sam Hollings (SH) – Head of Coding and Data Standards, NHSX

Kate Cooper (KC) – Lead for Data & Transparency, Local Government Association

George Russell (GR) – Digital Transformation Delivery Lead

Chris Storey (CS) – Security Design Assurance and Risk Control Framework Lead, Universal Credit

Secretariat:

Sheldon Ferguson (SF) – MHCLG

Mike Thacker (MT)

Ben Unsworth (BU)

Catarina Matos Heuvel

Toyin Ogun (TO) – TPX Impact

Presenters:

Linda Vernon (LV) – Head of Digital Empowerment: NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board

Ben MacInnes (BM) – Product Manager: Family Hubs

Welcome and Housekeeping

Emily Sullivan welcomed everyone to the meeting, followed by a round of introductions from all attendees, both in person and online.

Minutes from Previous Meeting

Attendees confirmed their approval of the minutes from the previous meeting.

Scope

The group confirmed that they were satisfied with the current scope of the project.

Presentation by Users of Open Referral UK (ORUK)

A presentation was given by Ben Macinnes on Family Hubs using the ORUK standard (see annex A) .

A discussion followed the presentation focused on collaboration, technology choices, and standards:

- **Taxonomy Guidance:** FS expressed interest in connecting BM with a colleague who leads a taxonomies oversight group to share best practices.
- **Technology Stack:** BM confirmed that their project was being built using .NET and C#, with decisions on API technology pending.
- **Code Sharing:** BM confirmed that the project's code would be published in open GitHub repositories for others to access and learn from.
- **Collaboration with Local Government:** BM noted that most partner organisations were entering data manually, avoiding complex technical decisions, but Somerset, with its own data engineers, made independent technology choices.
- **Taxonomy Workshop:** MT highlighted that ORUK is part of a broader standards effort and expressed interest in organising a workshop to gather input on taxonomies.

A presentation was given by Linda Vernon on the adoption of the ORUK standard across the Lancashire and South Cumbria health and care ecosystem (see Annex B)

A discussion followed Linda's presentation:

- **Unique Approach in NHS:** ES asked if Lancashire and South Cumbria's approach was unique, and Linda confirmed it was, although Leeds was also exploring mapping Snowmed codes to ORUK.

- **Integration with NHS App:** SH praised Linda's vision for integrating with the NHS app and offered to connect her with someone in NHS England to explore further collaboration.
- **Federated Data Ownership:** SF inquired about data ownership. Linda explained that most components had been funded, with Place being proposed to manage data capture and quality assurance. A proposal was being prepared for the health and well-being board.
- **Council Data Survey:** KC mentioned plans to survey council heads of data across England to understand how they are managing their data functions.

Update on procurement and tendering for support services for Years 2 and 3

SF updated the group on pre-tender engagement discussions he had within the department, as well as with Commercial and Procurement colleagues. They were exploring different ownership models, including recommendations from TPX Impact.

SF advised a review had been commissioned through Public (a consultancy), to conduct an options appraisal and review recommendations. Public's findings would be presented to the board after the review has been completed.

Discussion on Incentives for Council Adoption of ORUK Standard

MT presented options for incentivising councils to adopt the standard. He stressed that these are only proposals and not a commitment. A simple two-level scheme was proposed:

Level 1: Provide a compliant Open Referral API endpoint, tested using a validator tool.

Level 2: Demonstrate data sharing by providing contactable examples for verification.

MT noted that these were modest proposals contingent on potential funding from MHCLG. He requested feedback on a related paper that had been distributed.

Any Other Business (AOB)

ES highlighted the need for oversight of data standards beyond ORUK to identify potential gaps and opportunities. She encouraged attendees to share relevant work with their colleagues.

FS mentioned that he and MT were collaborating with SAVVI colleagues to develop broader standards for vulnerabilities. A working group was addressing terminology, standards, and tooling in this area.

FS suggested he present their work to a peer review group of experts across government departments. He also mentioned the development of a Standards Observatory to improve the discoverability of standards used by various departments.

Date of next meeting: 2 December 10.00 – 11.30 am