

Protocol on Data Sharing and Rationalisation in the Schools Sector

The organisations signing this protocol recognise a collective responsibility to minimise the burdens of data collection on schools, and Local Education Authorities, and ensure that data collected is used effectively to support individual pupil learning, whole school improvement and system-wide capacity building.

We are committed to the principles that:

- data should be collected once and used many times
- collection and sharing of data should be fully automated
- the value of any data collected should demonstrably outweigh the costs
- personal data on individuals should be properly protected.

We will work together to put these principles into practice through ...

... fully implementing the Common Basic Data Set

- completing the definition of an agreed Common Basic Data Set (CBDS) covering pupils, adults, schools and LEAs
- defining a limited number of core and standard items to be agreed as the sole source for all the data needed regularly from all schools
- ensuring all core items have been agreed collectively on the basis they are either:
 - what a well-run school would be expected to hold and update for its own purposes, or
 - have been justified with a clear business case

... supporting a shared technological infrastructure

- agreeing and abiding by common technical standards for the transfer of data
- ensuring schools have access to the technology needed for automated data collection and transfer
- developing shared, common databases accessible to all legitimate users

... rationalising other data collection

- mapping systematically all existing data collections from schools
- developing a timetabled programme to eliminate other data collections outside the CBDS
- introducing a single integrated annual programme of data collection with a published timetable
- policing any requests for new data collections within our own organisations
- allowing exceptions only where these are:
 - one-off
 - very infrequent, or
 - a sample exercise, and
 - can be justified with a clear business case

... providing added value analyses back to schools

- developing a coherent set of tools and services accessible electronically to schools and LEAs
- bringing together previously separate products such as PANDAs (Performance and Assessment reports) and the Pupil Achievement Tracker

... acting responsibly with personal data

- meeting our responsibilities under the Data Protection Act
- distinguishing clearly between use of data to meet individual and statistical needs

Implementation of this protocol is ongoing. We will look at all stages to align with developments beyond the schools sector, particularly those flowing from the "Every Child Matters" Green Paper.

We expect to make rapid and tangible progress over the next 12 months. Our aim is that it should be fully implemented in 2006.

Carol Adams

Carol Adams
Chief Executive
GTCE



Owen Lynch

Owen Lynch
Chief Executive
Becta



Sir Brian Briscoe

Sir Brian Briscoe
Chief Executive
Local Government Association



Ken Boston

Ken Boston
Chief Executive
Qualifications and Curriculum Authority



Cynthia Welbourn

Cynthia Welbourn
President
CONFED



Ralph Tabberer

Ralph Tabberer
Chief Executive
TTA



Mark Haysom

Mark Haysom
Chief Executive
LSC



David Bell

David Bell
HM Chief Inspector
OFSTED



Steve Bundred

Steve Bundred
Chief Executive
Audit Commission



Peter Housden

Peter Housden
Director General for Schools
Department for Education and Skills



For further information or copies contact:
Department for Education and Skills
School Workforce Unit
Sanctuary Buildings
London SW1P 3BT
Email: martin.childs@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

Published February 2004

department for
education and skills
creating opportunity, releasing potential, achieving excellence