

Data authority sets new standards to improve data sharing across government

- Guidance on how government departments share data will help improve services
- Standards will be used in line with data protection rules and the data ethics framework

The Data Standards Authority (DSA) has recommended the use of new open data standards to improve data sharing across government.

At the Spring Budget, the government made a commitment to improve how it uses data to drive better public services.

Data standards create a consistent way to record and share data within government. These standards will improve services for citizens by allowing departments access to high quality data quickly, easily and securely, protecting personal data at all times. People will then experience more personalised government services and support.

The DSA has today published [summaries of these metadata standards and guidance](#) on how to implement them.

The standards focus on data shared privately between departments, as well as open data published on GOV.UK and other public sector websites. They also include best practice for sharing CSV files which convert data from spreadsheets into another format. The standards will be used in line with government data handling guidance, such as the data protection regime and the data ethics framework.

Director General of the Government Digital Service, Alison Pritchard said:

I'm delighted by today's launch of the metadata standards; they're the first step in assuring how data is shared across government. Standards are critical in allowing us to make sure our information is better managed. They will improve the quality of government data and help us deliver the best possible services to citizens.

The metadata standards and guidance are the first deliverable of the DSA, a cross government authority led by the Government Digital Service.

The DSA is responsible for driving greater standardisation of data across government to improve data quality, findability and sharing. By improving the foundations, government data will be uniform, easy to use and trusted.

The DSA is advised by a steering board in setting and delivering a government strategy for this work. The board is made up of representatives from several Whitehall departments including the Department for Digital, Culture, Media

and Sport, the Home Office, the Office for National Statistics and the Department for Work and Pensions. The board meets on a monthly basis to discuss strategic priorities and the roadmap for the DSA.

Director General for Data Capability and ONS Deputy National Statistician, Frankie Kay, said:

The DSA's work allows the government to further capitalise on the benefits of data to improve our services. Through participation on the Steering Board, ONS is able to ensure alignment with wider data initiatives and implement data standards in line with our priorities.

The metadata standards and guidance have been published on GOV.UK and included in the [Technology Code of Practice](#). [Regular updates on the work of the DSA will be published on GOV.UK](#) and on the [Data in Government blog](#).

[Consultation launched on bathing water status for River Wharfe](#)

Press release

New eight week consultation launched on giving bathing water status to an area of the River Wharfe in Ilkley



River Wharfe

The Government has today (7 August) [launched a public consultation](#) on an application for an area of the River Wharfe to receive bathing water status.

If successful, it would mean a part of the river flowing through Ilkley would be monitored regularly during the bathing season (15 May to 30 September) for

bacteria detrimental to human health. Bathing waters are classified annually as Excellent, Good, Sufficient or Poor, based on an assessment of the level of bacteria in the water.

The area of the River Wharfe under consideration runs between Ilkley Main Bridge and Beanlands Island.

Local residents in Ilkley, including farmers and swimming groups, are invited to give their views. After eight weeks the responses will be reviewed and a final decision will be made by the Environment Secretary.

Environment Minister Rebecca Pow said:

We protect people's health at popular swimming spots across the country by requiring the water quality at those sites to be regularly monitored. At present, 93% of bathing waters in England have 'good' or 'excellent' water quality.

I encourage local residents to take part in this consultation so we can have as many views as possible to inform our final decision.

Any surface water can be designated as a bathing water if it is used by a large number of people and meets the requirements for designation. There are currently 12 inland bathing waters in England, all on lakes.

If successful, this section of the River Wharfe would become the first river bathing area to be designated as a bathing water.

Published 7 August 2020

[Coronavirus support measures help 65,000 businesses in Scotland](#)

- over 63,000 loans worth over £1.8 billion have been offered under the Bounce Bank Loans Scheme
- over 2,600 loans and support worth £587 million have been offered under the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme
- 29% of employees furloughed and 155,000 people supported through the SEISS

More than 65,000 businesses in Scotland benefited from over £2.3 billion of support to bounce back from COVID through government-supported loan schemes.

Figures published today reveal that under a third of employees in Scotland (29.8%) benefitted from the furlough scheme, as the government moved quickly to support businesses across the whole country and protect jobs.

Loan schemes have supported businesses across all sectors. But the retail, construction and hospitality sectors, including hotels and restaurants, have benefitted the most. This demonstrates how government support helped those businesses that were impacted hardest by the pandemic.

Similarly, furlough and the self-employed income support scheme has benefitted firms across all sectors, with 155,000 people in Scotland benefitting from SEISS.

In addition, the government committed last week that the Scottish Government will receive a minimum of £1.9 billion in additional funding this year, on top of £4.6 billion confirmed since March to help provide support following the coronavirus pandemic. Companies across the region including Mac Adventure have benefitted from this support.

Ahead of a visit to Scotland to see the impact of the government support schemes, and to meet people who have benefitted, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, said:

I'm proud that we have supported more than 65,000 businesses in Scotland through our loan schemes, and we are committed to continuing to support them to bounce back and succeed through the measures set out in our Plan for Jobs.

Neil Lapping, Chief Adventure Officer, Macs Adventure said:

As an internationally focused tour operator Macs Adventure was hit early and hard by the COVID-19 outbreak and faces a long road back to business as normal. The fast turnaround and hassle-free handling of our application by Barclays was hugely helpful as we deal with the operational issues of supporting our team, customers and suppliers. The loan we have secured from Barclays will enable us to continue to trade through 2020, protect jobs and restart and rebuild our business in 2021.

The Chancellor set out his Plan for Jobs last month, which will support jobs with the Job Retention Bonus to help businesses keep furloughed workers, and expand Worksearch Support including a Flexible Support Fund and a £2 billion Kickstart scheme to subsidise jobs for young people.

The government is also creating jobs in the construction and housing sectors through funding to decarbonise public sector buildings, and protecting jobs

with VAT cuts for hospitality and tourism, as well as the Eat Out to Help Out discount scheme.

Scottish Secretary Alister Jack said:

The UK Government is doing all it can to help Scotland's economy through this pandemic and providing more than £2.3 billion in loans to 65,000 Scottish businesses is a key part of this. We are also supporting almost 900,000 jobs in Scotland through the pioneering furlough and self-employed schemes.

This comes on top of an additional £6.5 billion funding for the Scottish Government to spend on public services and further support businesses in Scotland.

The UK Government is working hard to help our economy bounce back and we want to see all sectors open again where it is safe to do so.

Business Secretary Alok Sharma said:

We were clear from the start of this crisis that no region would be left behind, and it is heartening to see the difference our support has made for businesses of all sizes in Scotland.

As we rebuild from the pandemic, we will continue to prioritise jobs and skills, while placing the environment at the heart of our recovery.

[First Operation for RAF Poseidon tracking Russian Warship](#)

News story

A P-8 Poseidon Maritime Patrol Aircraft shadowed a Russian warship in the North Sea near to UK waters



RAF P-8A Poseidon overflies Vasily Bykov over the North Sea.

A Royal Air Force (RAF) P-8 Poseidon Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA) completed its first operational mission this week shadowing a Russian warship in the North Sea near to UK waters.

On Monday morning, a P-8A Poseidon from 120 Squadron based at Kinloss Barracks demonstrated its speed and readiness by completing a prolonged overwatch of the Russian warship, Vasily Bykov, as it passed through the North Sea. It did so with support from Typhoon Fighters, based at RAF Lossiemouth and the VIP Voyager refuelling aircraft, stationed at RAF Brize Norton.

Minister of State for Defence, Baroness Goldie said:

In an increasingly unstable world of persistent challenge and competition, it is important that the UK Armed Forces possess cutting edge technology to meet threats wherever they emerge.

The sight of our new Poseidon aircraft, working in concert with the Royal Navy has showcased the UK's readiness to defend its waters from any incursion.

The Poseidon's operational debut follows shortly after the Prime Minister's visit to Kinloss Barracks last month and heralds a significant development in the UK's Maritime offensive and defensive capabilities. The P-8 offers a potent blend of tracking options and associated weapons able to find surface and sub-surface vessels, once more allowing the RAF to complete effective joint maritime operations with the Royal Navy.

Air Vice Marshal Ian Duguid, Air Officer Commanding 11 Group, said:

The RAF continues to evolve and develop as the Next Generation RAF becomes a reality. The Poseidon aircraft is a key part of that development and evidence of the hard work performed by all those involved. This mission by the Poseidon, to monitor Russian naval

activity, shows how the RAF will now be able to contribute to Maritime Security alongside the Royal Navy and our NATO allies, to secure the seas and skies.

Monitoring and tracking all activity in the airspace and seas around the United Kingdom is paramount to our security, with aircraft from the RAF and vessels from the RN ensuring our skies and seas are constantly patrolled and defended.

Working with the aerospace and construction industries £470M is being invested by the UK Government at RAF Lossiemouth to provide a state of the art home for the Fleet of 9 aircraft in Scotland.

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Stay safe around the River Thames

With the sunny weather during the school holidays, the public is being warned to stay safe around water. Youngsters are risking their lives by jumping in rivers.

The Environment Agency, which manages locks, weirs and many bridges along the non-tidal River Thames, wants people to be aware of the hidden dangers in the water.

Drowning can occur very quickly, even in shallow water, and the key to keeping safe is to take all necessary precautions to avoid getting into difficulty in the first place.

Experience shows it is often young people who get into trouble whilst swimming in open water, which can contain hazards, particularly in and around locks, weirs and bridges. Unexpectedly cold waters or strong currents can also catch bathers off-guard.

Top tips for river safety:

1. Don't jump or dive in, as the depth may vary and there can be unseen hazards.
2. Don't go in near weirs, locks, pipes and sluices. These and some other water features are often linked with strong currents.
3. Inland waters can be very cold, no matter how warm the weather. Those going into cold water can get cramp and experience breathing difficulties very quickly.
4. Keep a look out for boat traffic. Boaters, especially on larger vessels, can find it very hard to spot swimmers.

Parents and guardians can help keep children in their care safe by:

- teaching them to swim
- warning them not to go into water alone, or unsupervised
- ensuring they know where the children are and what they are doing
- supervising them closely when near any open water

Last year, the National Water Safety Forum reported 223 deaths from accidental drowning or natural causes in UK waters.

Russell Robson, River Thames operations manager for the Environment Agency, said:

One of the main risks is cold-water shock, causing you to breathe in water, weakening your muscles, and causing immediate heart problems.

Unseen currents and reeds beneath the surface could pull you under.

I'd urge parents and guardians to supervise younger children closely in and around water. Teenagers and young adults should be warned of the dangers and to remember some basic safety points when out having fun.

Read and act upon our water safety advice on GOV.UK – search 'stay safe around water.'

Anyone out in any kind of boat should wear a life jacket.

Swimmers should also bear in mind that rivers and other open water locations not designated as bathing waters, including the Thames, are managed for the purpose of protecting fish and wildlife, and the risks to human health from using them may be higher compared with designated bathing waters. For information on designated bathing waters in England visit www.gov.uk/quality-of-local-bathing-water.