

Public Sector News

Jane Inman, Customers and Communications Manager, Environment and Economy, Warwickshire County Council
(janeinman@warwickshire.gov.uk)

Keeping track of the changes in the machinery of government is always challenging and no more so than after a General Election with a complete change of government as we have just had in the UK.

How do we keep up to date?

www.Direct.gov.uk carries a link on its home page with the headline *Key ministerial appointments*. The appointments are given and the changes to Departments.

The Department for Children, Schools and Families has been replaced by a Department for Education and HM Treasury has a new Office for Budgetary Responsibility.

A new website is up and running at <http://www.education.gov.uk> for the Department for Education. The publications of the old department are under review, and the link to publications and to content of the old site (which can still be searched) carries the warnings:

Due to a change of government, a review of all Departmental (including National Strategies) publications is taking place and as such dispatches of publications are currently on hold until further notice.

And

A new UK Government took office on 11 May. As a result the content on this site may not reflect current Government policy. All statutory guidance and legislation published on this

site continues to reflect the current legal position unless indicated otherwise.

How do we find the old websites?

The department has changed and new content is being created but how do we find information from the old department for research or general information?

The preservation of Government websites is the responsibility of the National Archives www.nationalarchives.gov.uk. To find the Department for Children, Schools and Families, follow the quick link on the home page to the UK Government Web Archive. The content is arranged by topic, and drilling down through these the old Web site is quickly found. The simple and the advanced search were not as successful.

The archive has been developed by the Digital Preservation department of the National Archives, and it preserves all types of electronic government records; it has been operational since 2003. It is split into:

- UK Government Web Archive,
- Electronic Records Online which covers the 95% of UK government records which are 'born digital', and the
- National Digital Archive of Datasets, which provides access, as its title suggests, to data sets that have been developed to 'collect, store and analyse statistical information' and that comprise the information that has been used to formulate policy and legislation so are a valuable resource.

Open data to continue

David Cameron will continue to support moves to make public-sector data freely available as begun under the previous government. In local government the example of London, which has <http://www.data.london.gov.uk>, and the Government, which has published data at <http://www.data.gov.uk>, has now been followed by <http://www.opendata.warwickshire.gov.uk> and <http://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/data> and <http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/about/standards/opendata.htm>. These are just the first page of results from a search of Google, so I am sure there are others.

It is anticipated that the publication of public-sector expenditure in a standard format will be required in due course and the model used by Windsor and Maidenhead has attracted some publicity. It is clear and easy to understand; it can be found at:

<http://www.spotlightsonspend.org.uk/Lite/996/Royal+Borough+of+Windsor+and+Maidenhead>

Public Sector News is supplied by ALGIS in LARIA (The Affiliation of Local Government Information Specialists in Local Authority Research and Intelligence Association) which represents information professionals providing information services to local authority staff and elected members. Jane Inman is currently Chair of ALGIS. ALGIS welcomes anyone with an interest in public sector information who feels they would benefit from being part of a community working in the same area. For more information go to <http://www.algis.org.uk>