

Local Government Open Data Breakthrough Projects Evaluation Report 2013/14

Project title: [Local government legal and business guidance as open data](#)

Lead organisation: [Kent County Council](#)

Submission date: [14 April 2014](#)

Type of project:

[Collection and ongoing publication of data on the legal and business requirements of Local Government to provide services and keep records.](#)

Total grant:

[£47,500](#)

Summary of the project

[The project reviewed existing legislation requiring English and Welsh local authorities to provide public and internal services \(powers and duties\) and to keep records \(records retention\) of service provision. It also suggested business requirements for keeping records where there was no legal requirement.](#)

[The powers and duties and the retention requirements were mapped to the Local Government Service List \(LGSL\) and then published as Open Linked Data with links to the linked data site \[legislation.gov.uk\]\(#\) for legal requirements.](#)

[Retention data \(see <http://retention.esd.org.uk/data>\) has been online since October 2013 and Powers and duties data \(see <http://powersandduties.esd.org.uk/data>\) was published in January 2014. Powers and duties was also integrated as a list in the local government standards website – see <http://id.esd.org.uk/list/powersAndDuties>.](#)

Challenge/opportunity:

[Before this project's work there was currently no single source of information either on legislation requiring or allowing local authorities to provide services or on the retention requirements for local government records. As a result, most local authorities have been duplicating effort in researching this information to inform decisions about the services they provide and the records they keep. External parties have no simple way of seeing what local authorities do under legislation or what types of record they should keep.](#)

[Project outputs provide a model which is suitable for easy adoption and processing by all councils and will inform councils, community groups and the public:](#)

- [what services local government is required to provide;](#)
- [what local services are discretionary;](#)
- [what records we can expect a council to keep.](#)

Data published and uses:

[Engagement has been via](#)

- [esd-toolkit programme Information Management Working Group presentation – London](#)
- [Breakthrough project learning events – London](#)

- esd-toolkit programme news release
- Local Directgov mailed news letter

The above involved meeting approximately 100 people and email communication to approximately 5,000 people.

The following table shows how many powers, duties and records retention guidance are included in the project data at first release. These numbers may change with ongoing maintenance.

	Number
Legal power to provide services	1124
Legal duty to provide services	1194
Record types and associated retention guidance	1216

The following cumulative data gives an indication of the usage of the data to mid April 2014 and will be gathered from now to monitor take-up:

	Number
Page views of powers and duties pages	1902
Unique visits to powers and duties pages	705
Page views of retention guidance pages	1703
Unique visits to retention guidance pages	570

Initial types of user are:

- Records managers
- Officers of public sector bodies wanting to understand which services they must provide and which services they can provide

The approach has been demonstrated to the National Archives and the Metadata Working Group as a guide to how central government might reference record.

Local government esd-toolkit has built value added services using the data including:

- Online search and browse facilities
- Output of a formatted draft records retention policy document with auto-generated contents, using user-selected elements of the data

Approach to publishing data

The project has delivered:

- Retention and powers and duties data as Linked Open Data with a SPARQL end point and sample SPARQL queries
- An open Powers and Duties List mapped to the open Services List with online browse features; download to CSV and XML; SPAQRL querying.

Benefits and impact

Publication of the powers and duties data has provided local authorities with the information on which services they must provide and those they may choose to provide without the burden of authority officers needing to review legislation.

Local authorities are required to publish their own retention schedule. The retention guidance published through this project provides records managers with an accurate and up to date starting point, removing much of the initial burden of compiling a local schedule.

The data clearly identifies which types of council must provide which services and the required scope of services. This and the retention data allow citizens and pressure groups to see what councils should be doing and what records they can expect councils to hold.

Further evidence of use, take-up and benefits will be accrued during 2014/5.

Further information:

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Support: support@esd.org.uk

Website: <http://standards.esd.org.uk/?uri=list%2FpowersAndDuties>