

LMI 4 All

Key findings from the careers LMI feasibility study.

The growth of the UK economy depends in large part on the effective functioning of the labour market; itself supported by the availability of high quality intelligence. Individuals making decisions about careers and learning need to be informed about opportunities; areas of potential growth; and the skills and attributes needed to move into these areas. The UK gathers a lot of high quality Labour Market Information (LMI), but this is located in a number of places and is often highly technical, reducing its value to non-experts.

In April 2012 the [UK Commission for Employment and Skills](#)' (UK Commission) *LMI 4 All* feasibility study reported to the Skills Minister John Hayes. This built on an initial proposition made by Sir John Holman in October 2011 as part of the government's Growth Review, which recommended the development of a robust and comprehensive repository of LMI. The core focus of Holman's recommendations was on making high quality LMI accessible to users, particularly learners and their parents, to enable better, more informed decisions about careers, education and training options.

This paper provides an overview of the key findings of this feasibility study and an outline of the UK Commission's initial plans to develop a fully functional data tool that can be used and tested in the open market. At heart this is an open data project, which supports the wider government agenda to encourage use and re-use of government data sets.

The LMI 4 All Feasibility Study

The feasibility study involved extensive data gathering and development activity to improve and maximise the value of deploying existing data sources, particularly national survey data, as well as investigating options for new or enhanced sources. It also involved constructing and testing a prototype data tool of careers-related LMI. This was designed to be accessible and amenable to developers of careers-focused websites and applications and through these to aid individual decision-making by providing key facts about particular jobs, their skills requirements and earning potential.

The study was supported by a group of data experts from the Department of Business Innovation and Skills (BIS), Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), the Skills Funding

Agency (SFA) and the Office for National Statistics (ONS) who supply important sources of national LMI. The expertise of this group was supplemented by consultation and advice from a broader range of leading data and technical experts, a [hack day](#) with experienced developers, and input from professionals within the careers and skills sector.

Open Data: connecting intelligence to people

The foundation of the project in open data principles means that it is intended that the public availability of the data will result in innovation and use of the data in ways that may not be anticipated by the project team.

The prototype data tool sought to be relevant to the decisions individuals need to make; dynamic; simple to access; and supported to enable its optimum use. An important innovation was to design the data tool and its associated API (Application Programme Interface), to enable external developers to access and use the data to develop targeted applications and websites that present LMI in a more engaging way, shaped to specific audiences. By so doing, it intended that LMI will be more widely deployed and play a more active role in informing the operation of the labour market.

Recommendations from Phase 1

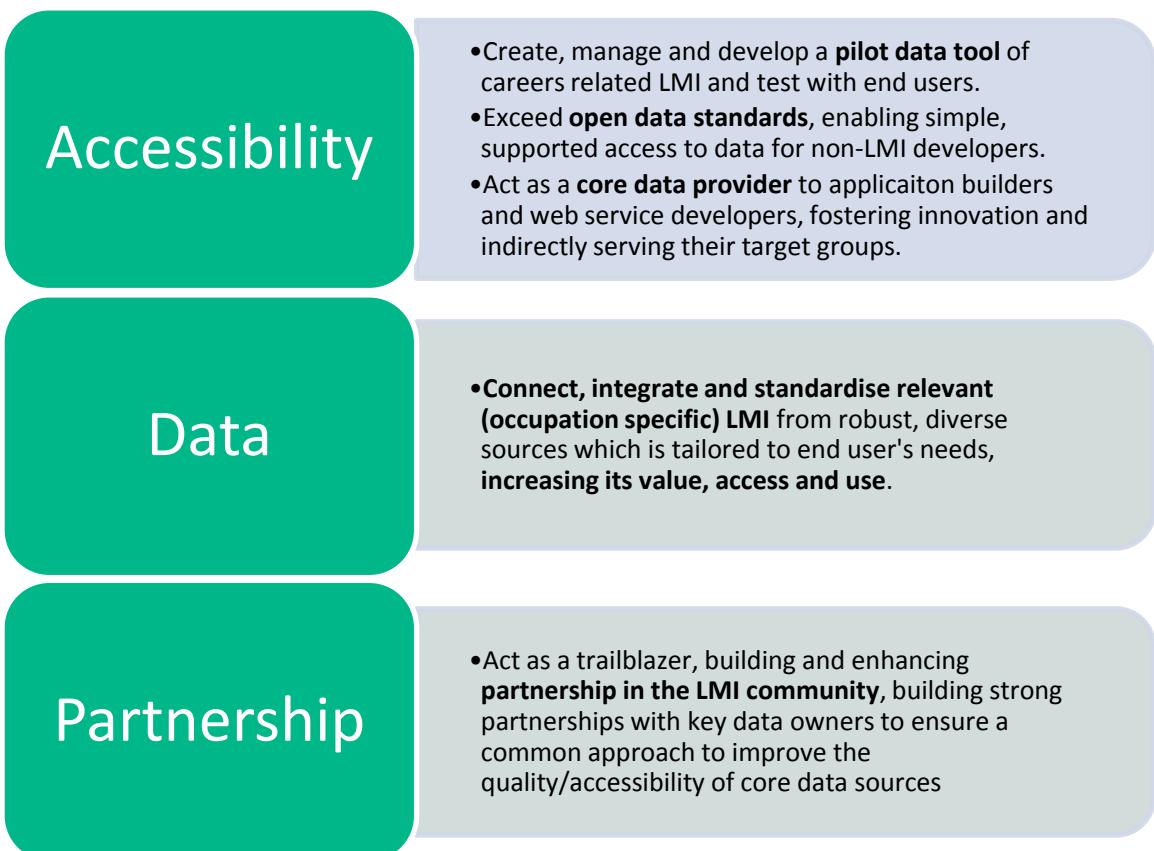
The experience of developing the prototype data tool in phase 1, its testing with expert web and application developers at the hack day and consultation with a range of stakeholders led the UK Commission to conclude that the development of a fully functional data tool could offer real value: better connecting individuals to the range of high quality information gathered about the UK labour market and thus supporting the effective operation of the market. The report recommended that a second phase of work be conducted, led by the UK Commission, to build a more robust open-access fully functional data tool based on existing, accessible sources of LMI for piloting in the open market.

In parallel to this development it was also recommended that further data development work be conducted to test wider feasibility and explore ways to improve or develop new data sources to enhance the quality of intelligence available to individuals about the UK labour market over the longer term.

Next Steps: Plans for Phase 2

The UK Commission's core recommendations were accepted by the Skills Minister in April 2012 and the Commission was asked to take forward phase 2 of the *LMI 4 All* project. Phase 2 of the project will seek to meet the following objectives:

Figure One: Core Objectives of the *LMI 4 All* Project.



The proposed model of development for *LMI for All* is based on a phased approach with a number of different stages over 2012-14. It is anticipated that these stages will be:

Stage 1: Development, enhancement and joint working to increase the accessibility of existing data sources: working with and developing formal partnership and data sharing agreements with core data owners to explore ways to maximise the potential and increase the accessibility of core data sources such as the Labour Force Survey (LFS), Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), Job Centre Plus vacancy data etc.

Stage 2: Development of the data tool: the data tool will be designed to maximise flexibility, so that it can adapt to new and changing data inputs without negatively impacting

on data end-users. Based on a flexible dynamic structure it will involve sophisticated mechanisms through which to clean and standardise data to meet the needs of non-technical end users. The database will be structured around the UK's Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system to provide a common framework from which to 'hang' data from various sources.

Stage 3: Testing with end users: the database will be developed in continued and close consultation with end users to ensure that it meets their needs. In particular this will allow the development of a 'social layer' to the database involving detailed guidance to using the data, FAQs and support. This will ensure that whilst developers have the freedom and flexibility to use the data as they wish, they will be supported to use it: enabling those who do not have LMI or statistical expertise to make informed interpretations of the data.

Stage 4: Enhancing and developing new data sources: the feasibility study explored the potential of using wider data sources at a more detailed level to enhance the range and richness of data available to users. Further exploratory work will be undertaken alongside the development of the pilot database to more fully explore the feasibility and value of deploying such data (e.g. development of 5-digit SOC codes, integration of data from the US O*NET system).

Ongoing: Engagement of partners: we will engage with a range of partners throughout the project. In addition to owners of the data sources, we will consult the end user community to ensure that the data tool is appropriate to the needs of developers. We will also engage core stakeholders including government departments and organisations, the LMI community, the wider careers community and other organisations with an interest in this agenda.

Contact Us

The UK Commission is keen to engage with potential partners, experts and stakeholders as the *LMI 4 All* project develops. For more information please contact:

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