

PinPoint Information Limited and The Coal Authority: Progress Report

In October 2011, the Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI), part of The National Archives, published a [complaint report](#) under the Public Sector Information Re-use Regulations and the Information Fair Trader Scheme (IFTS), in respect of PinPoint Information Limited and The Coal Authority.

In the report, we partially upheld the complaint, identifying a number of suggestions for improvements to be made under IFTS and recommendations under the Regulations. There were in total nine recommendations and suggestions for improvement.

This progress report documents the actions that have taken place since publication of the complaint report.

Overall Assessment

We consider that The Coal Authority has substantially met all of the recommendations made under the PSI Regulations, and note them as completed here. The Authority has made some good progress against the suggested areas for improvement under IFTS and has committed publicly to reviewing its information strategy. This review should enable The Coal Authority to report further to OPSI on its ability to progress against the other suggested areas for improvement.

Our complaints procedure includes provision for bringing matters to the attention of Ministers should we consider that sufficient action has not been taken to comply with the PSI Regulations. We do not consider it necessary to refer this matter to the relevant Ministers.

Summary of Actions

A summary of actions taken follows for the Recommendations made under the PSI Regulations and suggestions for improvement made under IFTS.

OPSI Recommendations Section

i. The PSB should publish a statement of its public task under the Re-use Regulations to provide clarity to re-users and potential re-users of the PSB's information.

Actions taken: The Coal Authority has published a [statement of its public task](#), having first sought and taken account of the views of OPSI as to its suitability against the published public task principles. This recommendation has therefore been completed.

ii. Having determined and published its public task under the Re-use Regulations, the PSB should ensure that it complies fully with Regulation 16 (Information to be published by a public sector body), in particular Regulation 16(1)(c).

Actions taken: The Coal Authority has redesigned the layout of its website to ensure that [information available for re-use](#) is prominently displayed, and linked to from the public task page. This recommendation has therefore been completed.

iii. The PSB should formally respond to the Complainant's original request to re-use information as required by Regulations 8 and 9.

Actions taken: The Coal Authority acted to formally respond to the complainant's original request to re-use information upon receipt of the draft investigation report prior to publication. This recommendation was therefore completed in September 2011.

iv. The PSB should review its communications with OPSI as Regulator under the Re-use Regulations and ensure that any future significant changes to the PSB's licensing policies and practice, terms and conditions are discussed with and reported to OPSI in a timely manner. The PSB should report on steps taken to OPSI.

Actions taken: The Coal Authority has taken steps to improve formal communications with OPSI and with its licensees, and has for instance communicated regularly with licensees about changes and developments to Coal Authority services and activities since the publication of the investigation report. While OPSI will continue to evaluate Coal Authority communications as part of our routine oversight under IFTS, we consider that this recommendation is presently being met.

OPSI Suggested Areas for Improvement

v. The PSB should demonstrate its commitment to maximising re-use of the data covered by this complaint by publishing a statement that the information will be available for re-use (not for CON29M purposes) at the end of the information dissemination work in September 2012, and should set out, and keep up-to-date, the timetable and key events to make this happen.

Actions taken: The information dissemination programme continues. The Coal Authority has not felt able to take action to meet this suggestion for improvement, and published the following [statement](#) on its website in October 2011:

The Authority has high aspirations with regard to information accessibility and dissemination, but due to the nature of the information and economic reality, the Authority may not be able to go as far or as fast as OPSI and potential users would like.

The Authority intends to re-evaluate its information strategy following the outcome of the Government's current consultations on Public Data and a Public Data Corporation.

As the consultations referred to have now been completed, OPSI is now seeking the outcome of the Authority's intended re-evaluation, and in particular an update on The

Coal Authority's ability to implement the suggestions for improvement and its timetable for doing so. We will report further on this in due course.

vi. Having done this, the PSB could begin to engage with potential re-users working with trial data to allow them to start developing innovative applications.

Actions taken: We are aware of ongoing action by The Coal Authority to work with PinPoint Information Limited to enable the latter to re-use Coal Authority information. Further The Coal Authority website now includes [links](#) encouraging developers to request sample data to work on. OPSI will continue to evaluate Coal Authority's actions to enable developers to access sample data for development purposes as part of our routine oversight under IFTS, and we consider that this suggestion for improvement is presently being met.

vii. The PSB should explore the possibility of making the database information available for commercial re-use on a region-by-region basis as the information dissemination programme is completed in each area.

Actions taken: See above under item v.

viii. The PSB should review its communications with licensees and potential licensees to ensure that they are transparent and report on steps taken to OPSI.

Actions taken: See above under item iv.

ix. The above recommendations should be acted upon within six months of publication of this report.

Actions taken: As noted, OPSI will continue to observe the performance of The Coal Authority through IFTS. We have noted actions as completed against items i, ii, iii, iv, vi and vii. We have asked for a further update from The Coal Authority against items v and vii based upon its intended re-evaluation of its information strategy noted on its website, and we will publish a further progress report in due course once we have received that update.

Office of Public Sector Information, part of The National Archives, June 2012