Presentation by the Department of Home Affairs on how the Department of Home Affairs uses DEX - May 2021

Questions and Answers – Data Exchange - Technical and SETS - Policy

The following questions were provided by SETS Community of Practice (CoP) members who attended the presentation by the Department of Home Affairs on 26 May 2021. Questions have been collated by the SETS CoP Secretariat to assist with responses, as appropriate, from the Data Exchange (DEX) team at the Department of Social Services and the Settlement Grants Management Section of the Department of Home Affairs.

DEX technical questions

Q) How can we register people under 18 years of age in the Household Composition section of DEX?

Registering people under 18 years of age in the Household Composition section in DEX functions the same as a person over 18 years. The household composition will be 'Couple with dependent(s)' if the client is a child with two parents plus siblings in the household. If the client's living situation does not fit into the available options, 'inadequately described' is the appropriate option.

Q) Would it be possible for there to be a function on DEX, which provides access to an organisation's client list and an individual caseworker's client list?

There is a feature within the DEX to accommodate this with clients, referred to as Tags. Tags can be added to a Client record in DEX to group or categorise different records. For example, users may elect to create a Tag called 'Friday' and attach all clients who attend a service on a Friday to this Tag.

Providers could create a Tag with the name of the caseworker, or some other relevant name. Then at the 'Find a Client' screen in the DEX, you simply type in the Tag you wish to search for in the Tags search field, add it to the search, and run the search. The list of clients that will be returned will be all clients with that specific tag, i.e. clients for that caseworker.

More information about adding Tags can be found in the Add a client and Find and edit a client task cards at the DSS Data Exchange website https://dex.dss.gov.au

In regards to Cases – at the 'Find a case' screen, users are able to search for cases using *Advanced* search options. To do this, click 'Show Advanced Options' beside the search fields. This will populate additional fields to which to search for cases. One of these is 'Search cases created by me'. By checking this box and running a search, you will only return cases that were created by yourself. This can be a helpful way to find your case list.

There is currently no way for a user to search for *another* user's created cases.

Q) Can the selection of languages be expanded to include Kachin and Karenni?

As per the information in the Data Exchange Protocols (section **5.1.7 Cultural and Linguistic Diversity (CALD)**), the 'Main language spoken at home' values in the Data Exchange come from the Australian Bureau of Statistics Australian Standard Classification of Languages (ASCL), 2016

Languages that are not part of this classification can not be added on an ad-hoc basis. Although not guaranteed, a new version of the ASCL may be released in 2022, based on the 2021 Australian Census results. If there are changes to the languages in the ASCL, the Data Exchange would make the corresponding changes in the 'Main language spoken at home' values.

Q) Can we enter data for a client we have supported under SETS who is not in our organisation's catchment area?

In accordance with service areas specified in Grant agreements and Activity Workplans, providers should target clients in those locations. The Department of Home Affairs notes that in some instances clients may choose to travel to seek services through a SETS provider, outside of their immediate residential location and that providers often do not turn clients away from services because of where they reside.

If this occurs, for DEX client's details should be recorded against the appropriate outlet where the service was delivered. Catchment areas are an internal organisational process and outlets are not restricted to these areas when recording clients in DEX.

Where other stakeholders are referring clients from outside provider's current service areas, the Department would encourage providers to provide further guidance to these organisations on referral pathways, and funded providers offering SETS services in relevant locations.

Q) Who should we speak to if we are having technical issues with DEX, such as it is not recording the data we have entered and is affecting our contractual requirements?

Please contact the Data Exchange Helpdesk. The Helpdesk can provide a variety of technical support and if necessary, escalate issues. The Helpdesk is open Monday to Friday from 8.30am – 5.30pm (AEST/AEDT) and can be contacted on 1800 020 283 or dssdataexchange.helpdesk@dss.gov.au, as per the website.

Q) What is a "full" SCORE assessment and what is a "partial" SCORE assessment on DEX.

A "full" SCORE assessment is when an initial SCORE and at least one subsequent SCORE is recorded for the same client for the same program activity and the relevant domain. A link is then established between these assessments, and it is possible to measure the shift between them

A “partial” SCORE assessment means that a client has received a SCORE, but only one, and a subsequent SCORE has not yet been recorded for them. In this instance, they are considered “partially” assessed as there is not yet the ability to measure the shift or change between the SCOREs.

Q) Has an exit reason been added to DEX? If so, where can it be found?

Yes, an exit reason has been added to DEX. When exiting a client from a case, open the relevant case records and then select the ‘referral source and reasons icon’ against the client to which you wish to add the exit reason. This will open the edit form of the referral source and reason screen. At the bottom of this screen there is a section called “Reason for client leaving this case.” The exit reason drop dox box is found here. Please see the Add a Case Task card on the DEX website for these instructions.

Q) Is there a report on the type of services that have been delivered within a group? If so, where can we find this?

Within the Program Overview report there is a service type sheet that details the different types of services delivered. If you would like to see these results for group clients, select group clients on the filter page instead of individual or all clients.

Q) Do we need to complete two SCORES for the same client in the same domain during the same reporting period? Or can we have an ‘open’ SCORE at the end of the reporting period and enter an end SCORE in the next reporting period once a particular issue has been finalised?

As per the SETS’ Program Specific Guidance a *“client SCORE assessment is recorded at least twice – towards the beginning of the client’s service delivery and again towards the end of service delivery. Where practical, you should also collect SCORE assessments periodically throughout service delivery.*” If a service delivery is longer than 6 months, then it is acceptable to have SCOREs span over these reporting periods, but if appropriate, consider entering a periodic score assessment as well.

Q) Should we be using the community SCORE function or the individual SCORE function to track SETS group work or community events?

Community SCORE reflects changes that may occur through the provision of large group or community engagement work.

For SETS – Community Capacity Building, if you are delivering group functions and it is not practical to collect individual data, you should use the Community SCORE to reflect the outcomes for all participants rather than individuals.

SETS – Client Services does not have Community SCORE reporting.

Q) Is there an opportunity to work with the Department on enhancing the data collection requirements and reporting system to be better able to capture community capacity building (CCB) work and enhance the quality of data?

The DEX welcomes feedback on the system to identify opportunities to make it more user friendly. If you have any feedback, please utilise the "provide feedback" button on the Data Exchange website.

Whilst The DSS DEX team are not currently planning any system changes, the team may have the ability to prosecute and adapt feedback and suggestions at a later time. The DEX team also publish monthly system updates if you would like to know what changes are being made.

If you would like to provide feedback on data collection requirements, please discuss this with your Funding Arrangement Manager, who will pass on feedback to the Department of Home Affairs.

Q) Does the Department have any recommendations that can assist SETS providers in how to capture quality data, use the DEX system and meet reporting requirements when working with community leaders and members under CCB?

The Department of Home Affairs recommends that general issues related to best practice in capturing quality data and meeting reporting requirements for SETS – CCB be discussed at the SETS Community of Practice CCB sub-group which is designed to share information related to this component of the program.

Similar to all programs, it is recommended that providers submit data regularly (as opposed to just in January and July) as this ensures higher quality data by encouraging the regular resolution of data issues. These can be found earlier and addressed within sufficient time. It is also recommended that providers use the 'Organisation Data Quality' report to "health check" entered data and take the opportunity to address present or emerging issues.

Contractual requirements and policy related questions

Q) Key activities in CCB include stakeholder engagement and facilitating a range of network meetings. Is outlining this work in activity work plans only, sufficient to meet contractual requirements?

DEX reporting is designed to capture information about clients receiving services under grant programs, as such stakeholder engagement activities and attending network meetings is not included. These activities are an important component of the SETS program and are expected to be reported on in Activity Work Plan reports.

Q) Many clients do not consent to their data being shared. When we tick that they have not consented, the client converts into an anonymous client. How

could this be addressed so that we can accurately capture our client numbers and meet contractual requirements?

All organisations are required to obtain client consent on behalf of DSS before storing personal information in the DEX. Organisations reporting through the DEX must ask clients if they consent to the collection of their personal information for storage in the DEX.

When consent is not given, the client's personal information is not stored in the DEX. In these cases, organisations can only see demographic data for that client.

When consent is given, only the organisation will be able to access information identifying who clients are. Each organisation is expected to have internal policies to protect client records.

A client providing their consent or not, should not affect an organisation's ability accurately capture client numbers and meet contractual requirements. A consenting client and a non-consenting client will still result in a client record being created in DEX, and that client record being attached to the relevant case and session records.

The DEX takes client consent very seriously and cannot store personal information of the client without their consent. We encourage organisations to keep in-house processes to ensure anonymous clients can be identified by the organisation if needed, possibly by the nomenclature of the 'Client Id'.

Please note, the 'Client Id' must not contain any identifying information about the client's personal information, such as name, or initials. If organisations have client identifiers assigned to clients in their own systems, filing, etc. – then it might be good to adopt these for the DEX Client Id, noting the above privacy advice.

Please see our Privacy Impact Assessment Report and Protocols to understand the Data Exchange's approach to privacy and our legal obligations. We also recently published a training module further explaining consent.

Q) To mitigate unknown or poor data entered into DEX, could particular questions that would assist the Department with high level policy decisions and program development, be mandatory?

The Department of Home Affairs is currently working with the DSS DEX Team on refining the Program Specific Guidelines. In particular, making clear those aspects of data collection that the Department would like it to be mandatory for organisations to collect.

Q) How is the Department working towards making DEX and its data policies more suitable for community programs such as SETS CCB?

The information and fields in DEX are necessarily broad, as they need to apply to a wide range of program activities reported in the system. In light of this, Program Specific Guidance is developed for each program, including SETS – CCB.

This document provides practical and tailored information for SETS providers regarding data reporting expected including which service types to use and examples of activities that fit within each service type.

The Department appreciates any feedback on specific issues related to data entry in DEX for the SETS – CCB program. All feedback should be provided through provider's Funding Arrangement Mangers who will pass this on to the Department as required.

Q) Is the Department going to incorporate outcomes not just outputs into the DEX system, such as aligning data reporting to the National Settlement Outcomes Standards?

DEX is a whole-of-government system, not specifically designed around SETS, as such the outcome fields do not match exactly to settlement areas, such as those set out in the National Settlement Outcomes Framework or associated outcomes documents that have been developed by the sector. However, the domains used to collect SCORE data are broadly consistent with the settlement areas identified in these documents eg Financial resilience, material wellbeing and basic necessities, house, mental health, wellbeing and self-care, physical health, personal and family safety and age appropriate development.

Q) Did the Department use DEX data to inform the additional $26.8M investment in settlement services to target domestic and family violence (DFV)?

The Department of Home Affairs uses DEX data as an evidence base for a range of matters including assessment of the impact made by programs. For example, the Department regularly responds to questions asked on how the SETS programs addresses various settlement issues, including for example facilitating acquisition of English language skills, improving employment outcomes, addressing issues such as domestic and family violence etc. DEX data is also used to demonstrate the return on Government investment, for example funding per client; and to help determine future investment for the program, including in informing the investment of additional funding for SETS providers targeting women's safety.

Evidence used to inform the case for additional funding for DFV included reference to the Reason for Seeking Assistance, Referral Reason and the Circumstance domain for SCORE, including identifying trends in client numbers and outcomes related to 'personal and family safety''.

To capture DFV activities related to the additional funding, the Department has requested to have added a new Service Type into DEX to capture client 's specifically receiving DFV services. . This should be available for the first six monthly reporting period in 2021-22 and will be reflected in an updated Program Specific Guidance document.

Q) Does DEX data demonstrate a need for services for clients over 5 years in Australia? Is this being considered in policy development?

DEX is designed to capture information for clients who are eligible for the SETS program. A range of issues, including the current five year period for some settlement services, are being reviewed as part of the overall settlement reform work being led by the Coordinator General for Migrant Services.

Q) Does the Department also pay the same amount of attention to qualitative data and if so, how?

The Department reviews both the six monthly quantitative performance reports from DEX and the qualitative information in the annual Activity Work Plan report. The information in both reports contribute to creating the overall evidence base for the program.

Q) Does the Department use DEX data to assist with briefing the minister, particularly before he visits particular SETS providers? If so, what information is generally included?

The Department uses DEX data (and AWP Reports) to assist in briefing the Minister on a range of issues, including for visits to SETS providers. Information provided in briefing is tailored to the particular issue for discussion, however it can include, for example, information on client numbers, types of services provided, demographic information for clients, trends over time and SCORE (outcomes) data.

Q) Is DEX helpful to the Department for defending settlement services, our value and to support consideration of future funding?

Yes, as noted above, DEX is a key component of the evidence base for the SETS program.

Q) Would it be possible for SETS providers to receive ongoing insights and feedback on DEX data, trends identified etc. from the Department? Could similar information to that which was provided in the presentation, be shared with providers on an ongoing basis by a report or insights email?

The Department will consider this request and what type of information could be usefully shared on a more regular basis with SETS providers.