Welcome to the January edition of Local Connects, Local Directgov’s e-newsletter.

In this month’s newsletter:

Urgent: service links update. Please see the last sentence as we need your response

There are fewer LA links on GOV.UK than on Directgov. This means that there isn’t really a need to update service links that are no longer in use on GOV.UK. With SOCITM’s *Better Connected* report coming up and GOV.UK being established, we feel that now’s the time to do some (early) links spring cleaning. And, the good news is, we’re happy to undertake this on your behalf.

For reference, see the [Directgov list of LA services](http://www.localgovcalendar.com/newsletter/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Copy-of-whats-in-and-not-v2.xlsx). There is a column indicating which services have made the transition from Directgov onto GOV.UK. There are also a small number of services with a question mark – this is where a service isn’t currently included on GOV.UK but we have requested that it should be.

We are currently not dealing with the licensing links, as we do not think they will change.

We know that a small number of you use some of our links independently of Directgov/GOV.UK. The last thing we want to do is delete those links as part of this exercise, so please contact us if this is the case.

The only thing we need you to do is email us at localdirectgov@communities.gsi.gov.uk saying you are fine with us deleting links that haven’t made the transition to GOV.UK.

New local service links

As previously mentioned, we have been spring cleaning your links as part of the transition to GOV.UK. Although some links didn’t make the transition, new ones are being identified.

The first is ‘LGSL/IL 56/0: Contact the council about your business rates bill’ (sending page on GOV.UK: https://www.gov.uk/contact-your-local-council-about-business-rates). This service interaction is included in the [Directgov list of LA services](http://www.localgovcalendar.com/newsletter/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Copy-of-whats-in-and-not-v2.xlsx), which we also  we sent out as part of the spring cleaning exercise.

What you need to do now:

Can you ensure that you update the LDG Admin system with the relevant URL from your website, please?

If you have any questions or comments about the new links, email us at localdirectgov@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Really Useful Day: ‘Social Media for Local Councils’, February 8th

Our next Really Useful Day is coming up on 8th February in Birmingham – and the theme is social media. It’s a chance to learn how other councils use social media, and to work on improving the way you use it.

The event is free and will be a mixture of presentations, practical sessions (we’ll be getting you to work on an emergency flooding scenario) and opportunities to network with other local authorities.

We’ve got some great speakers lined up:

* Alison Hook ([@allyhook](http://twitter.com/#!/@allyhook)) from Coventry Council
* Geoff Coleman ([@colebagski](http://twitter.com/#!/@colebagski)) from Birmingham City Council
* and, Maz Nadjm ([@Mazi](http://twitter.com/#!/@Mazi)), founder of SoMazi Social Media consultancy.

You can find more details on the [event webpage](http://reallyusefulday6.eventbrite.co.uk/" \t "_blank). To register, email us at localdirectgov@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Vote and submit ideas for our Really Useful events

Our [Really Useful ideas](http://ruthemes.ideascale.com/" \t "_blank)page is now live! You can submit ideas, vote on existing ideas, or add comments about our Really Useful events. We value all feedback, so please vote!

Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) on Twitter on Twitter

Follow [@CommunitiesUK](http://www.twitter.com/communitiesuk" \t "_blank) to keep up to date with DCLG’s latest news. Twitter is sometimes the first place DCLG shares information, even before it appears in mainstream media.

The Department uses Twitter to:

* highlight new announcements and new information on their website and also to share campaign messages
* inform you about new blog posts
* correct factually inaccurate information in the mainstream media
* communicate information in real time in our events

Don’t miss out. Follow [DCLG on Twitter](https://www.twitter.com/CommunitiesUK" \t "_blank).

Inside Government update

There are now six ministerial departments live on Gov.uk/Inside Government, including the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (BIS) and the Ministry of Defence (MOD).

The other 18 ministerial departments are due to follow onto the single domain later this year, along with a number of ‘other departments and public bodies’. For more information see [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government" \t "_blank).

You can also visit the Inside Government blog:[Inside Inside Government](http://www.inside-inside-gov.tumblr.com/" \t "_blank), which talks about the changes that are happening on the site, and what’s planned for the future.

Right to Buy video on YouTube

You may have information about Right to Buy on your website, but did you know there’s also a YouTube video?

The Right to Buy scheme offers a discount of up to £75,000 to council or housing association tenants wishing to buy their home. Tenants can check if they’re eligible and find out more information on the [Right to Buy website](http://www.communities.gov.uk/righttobuy" \t "_blank).

Please share the video on on your website. Here’s the embed code:

<iframe width=”560″ height=”315″ src=”http://www.youtube.com/embed/AX-pZm3nx98″ frameborder=”0″ allowfullscreen></iframe>

Do feel free to forward the link to this newsletter to colleagues you think might be interested, or even better, encourage them to register by emailing Local Directgov at localdirectgov@communities.gsi.gov.uk and they will automatically get the next edition in their inbox.

Don’t forget, we’re also on Twitter.

* [@localdirectgov](http://www.twitter.com/localdirectgov" \t "_blank)
* [@info4local](http://www.twitter.com/info4local" \t "_blank)
* [@communitiesUK](http://www.twitter.com/CommunitiesUK" \t "_blank)

Follow us!