To understand the current situation in Data Services, it is necessary to review some historical issues from the analysts’ point of view that have affected our body of work and direction. This is my understanding of events and timeline as I remember it:

* Summer 2017: Steven and Sophie set up Data Services as an agile department and Valtech joined to help setup the Hub & Exchange environment
* August 2018: First external hires in the Glasgow office (myself and Chris) and transfers from other departments (Bhupinder and Liz)
* Late 2019: Priority changes to stability planning for Valtech departure
* November 2019: Attempt to absorb DS into DDaT and consultants begin Service Design work with little to no interaction with DS
* Early 2020: Last of Ofgem-badged managers (Steve, Sophie, Jessica) leaves DS management
* April 2020: DS more than halved as we lose Valtech and other personnel
* June-November 2020: Third-party management of DS (Selin)

**Key Wins:**

* Many small projects and quick wins across the directorates help make our name and encourage talks on larger scale work
* Successful longer-term work (dedicated resources in spokes with the business) in Retail (tariff, price-cap, complaints process, Covid RFI) and RIIO (GD2, ED2) create major added value to both hub-ingested and non-ingested data processes

**Challenges:**

* Being the first agile department in the company working with departmental milestones
* Cross-charging (equating internal ‘cost’ of our services with that of external consultation) and wait times (due to lack of resources) affect take-up of new work
* 2020 third-party management style was confrontational both with the team and other departments affecting both business relationships and team morale
* Loss of our two excellent BAs with no replacement from the DDaT BA pool together with the above caused our new work stream to dry up somewhat
* Lack of a clear and simple development environment / stable platform

**MIO spoke:** historic trades from six energy brokers containing names of traders - work began June 2019 to assist with broker data but the sensitive nature of the data needing pseudonymisation and eventual abandoning of the architectural design caused the business to move to a third-party build within our Azure environment that still needs our internal support.

Please note that neither working from home nor Covid lockdown caused a challenge and we are still a close-knit and effective team. However, our day-to-day close connection to dev-ops and operational issues together with too many Corporate and DDaT meetings does sap up a lot of our time.

I think that the restart of Show & Tells, Dan’s discussions with the business and being in D&DI / A&A as opposed to DDaT/Operations will begin to undo the challenges of the past year. Hiring more people - allowing us to do the roles we were hired for, i.e. data analysis and visualisation - will refocus our effort back to adding value to the business instead of technical debt.

Also, bringing our image back to approachable advisors and trainers (teaching a modern approach to data work using SQL, Python and BI tools) will encourage self-service and a willingness to be more data-centric across all levels of the organisation.