



MANCHESTER  
CITY COUNCIL

**Performance, Research & Intelligence**

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17 April 2018

Data Justice Lab

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Date: 17 April 2018

### **Request for Information - Reference Number: CHS/AWZBQX**

Thank you for your request for information, which was received by Manchester City Council (MCC) on 16 March 2018 and has been considered under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Your request is repeated below, along with the Council's response in respect of each element:

In terms of overall context it is important to recognise that the approach described in the Wise report isn't a single software or a commissioned solution from a development partner. The approach has been internally developed using standard software platforms and technical advice from experts to support the various elements of the system. Importantly no personal data has been shared with agencies / collaborators for the purposes of system design or analytical reporting.

In addition the approach outlined in the Wise report is predicated on empowering lead professionals to make the best use of the data they are legally able to see, and is not about replacing decision making or interpretation with system algorithms or decisions.

Therefore with this mind our responses to your questions below are designed to provide clarity on our approaches as well as details to illustrate any technical aspects as requested.

**1. Details on who produced the software for the system. If this software was produced in collaboration with a private company, we would like to see the relevant contracts, data sharing agreements, etc., and details of any other collaborations between this private company and Manchester City Council.**

The software product used to underpin the work described in the Wise Report is an IBM product called iBase, more commonly known within Manchester City Council as the 'Manchester Research & Intelligence Database'.

iBase is an off-the-shelf product from IBM's suite of products. More information can be found at: <https://www.ibm.com/uk-en/marketplace/data-management>

In summary IBM describe iBase as 'an intuitive intelligence data management application that enables collaborative teams of analysts to capture, control and analyse multi-source data in security-rich workgroup environments'.

As iBase is an 'off-the-shelf' product, there was no collaboration with IBM to produce the product itself. Therefore, there is no formal development contract in place or data sharing agreement, as no information was shared with IBM directly. The only contract in place is a standard software purchase agreement, which is commercially sensitive and unfortunately cannot be shared, however IBM may be able to share their standard contract template if approached.

Manchester City Council did commission a number of on-site consultancy days from IBM to help set-up the database schema and infrastructure required for iBase to operate. This was a standard client / supplier relationship for a software install and set up, and not collaboration on a new tool.

Manchester City Council do also have other software contracts with IBM, but as these contracts are also commercially sensitive, they unfortunately cannot be shared.

**2. Details on how the system determines that records from separate sources which are fed into the system refer to the same individual or family. Please see the first paragraph of the Appendix for more detail on this capacity of the system. The details you provide could be a design document for the software / algorithm used, or any other document that goes into sufficient detail to understand how the software arrives at its outputs.**

Data is imported from a number of internal and external systems, the data can be split into the following categories:

- Address data
- Health data
- School data
- Offending data
- Financial data
- Work & Skills data
- Social Care data

The majority of the data-sets contain details of individual people and details of the event linked to those individuals, ie offences, school absence, etc. People from the different data sets are then created in the Research & Intelligence database using their first name, surname & date of birth as the unique identifier linking any events and addresses relating to this person.

For example, the first time we load any data the unique 'first name, surname, DoB' identifier is used to create people entities; the iBase system then links any events from that file to those people; when the next file is loaded the system looks for people with the same unique 'first name, surname, DoB' identifier and appends the event to any existing people. Where an exact match isn't found within the iBase system (ie exact first name, surname & DOB) a new person record is created. This process is repeated with every new load and update.

There is a small amount of data cleansing that takes place before being imported into the system to ensure names and DOBs are in a consistent format. This involves reviewing unique person IDs in the source systems to ensure that duplicates are removed and the names & DOBs matched are consistent.

The creation of a family entity is created once a family has been referred into a service and a lead professional has completed a whole family genogram, the lead professional then adds a family number to each individual from the family which links the individuals together in the system.

**3. We would like similar information on all of the other features of the system and its software / algorithms, listed in the Appendix. This will be at least, but perhaps not limited to, the system's capacities for "decision trees", "cluster analysis", "evaluation and 'testing what works'", and "budgeting". Please refer to the corresponding sections of the Appendix for detail on the capacities of the system these headings refer to. The details you provide could be a design document for the software / algorithm used, or any other document that goes into sufficient detail to understand how the software arrives at its outputs.**

Although iBase itself comes with some basic analytic features (as described in IBM's product specification, see link in response to question 1) none of the features listed in the appendix have been produced directly from the system itself or in collaboration with the software supply.

The iBase system is used to match the data and subsequent downloads of the matched data have been extracted from the iBase system. Data is then anonymised for analytical projects, and are carried out independently from the iBase system itself using researchers/analysts who are both qualified and authorised to use the data who use relevant statistical packages such as Excel, SPSS, R and MySQL.

**4. Documents, rulebooks, codes of conduct, contracts, etc. relating to safeguarding, oversight, and accountability measures relevant to all of the capacities of the system. For example (but not limited to), what are the safeguarding, oversight, and accountability measures relating to how the system pairs up disparate sources of data to conclude that they relate to the same individual or family? That is to say, how are the system's decisions 1. checked to have been accurate, and 2. how are those decisions prevented from causing harm, inconvenience, misrepresentation, or a data breach if they turn out to have been faulty in some way?**

In relation to process for how the iBase system links up disparate sources of data please refer to the response of question 2.

The system doesn't generate any automatic decisions but rather provides a lead professional/qualified researcher with access to consistent information so that they have the best picture possible for the decisions/analysis they make.

For example, a lead professional would be presented with all the information about a case which they would review, check and use in the appropriate context. From a researcher/analyst point of view they would design any output knowing the context and structure of the data to ensure the output is accurate. In both examples the lead professional or the researcher is the decision maker and the system simply provides access to the data.

In addition and in response to the second part of this question, the system has been subject to a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) to ensure safe and appropriate use of the information. Details of which can be found on the website below

[http://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/200031/data\\_protection\\_and\\_freedom\\_of\\_information/6947/research\\_and\\_intelligence\\_database](http://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/200031/data_protection_and_freedom_of_information/6947/research_and_intelligence_database)

Please note if you are not satisfied with this response you may ask for an internal review. If you wish an internal review to be undertaken you should contact the Democratic Services Legal Team, whose address is, PO Box 532, Town Hall, Manchester, M60 2LA, email:

[informationcompliance@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:informationcompliance@manchester.gov.uk) in the first instance.

A copy of the Council's access to information complaints procedure can be downloaded from

[http://www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/download/6095/access\\_to\\_information\\_complaints\\_and\\_appeal\\_procedure](http://www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/download/6095/access_to_information_complaints_and_appeal_procedure).

If you do not have internet access and require a paper copy, please let me know.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review process, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision.

The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF  
Tel: 01625 545700  
Fax: 01625 524510  
[www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk](http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk)

If you have any queries about this letter please contact me.  
Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

Paul Holme  
Research and Intelligence Manager / Strategic Lead Research (GM)