

All aboard the (delayed) dashboard express...

Last week I was speaking about Pensions Dashboard at an industry event...and on my way there it dawned on me that commuters are a fantastic visualisation of the data conundrum for dashboard...

There are the seasoned commuters - well prepared with their flat shoes, water bottles and rucksacks. They clearly travel regularly, know where they are going, how to get there and how long it will take them – they barely break step to cross the road and arrive at their destination effortlessly, having completed level 847 on their Sudoku App.

Some pension schemes are like this - experts at keeping on top of their data. They know what they have available, where to find it and how to use it to their advantage. And they understand what they don't have and how to avoid that causing them a problem.

Then there are those commuters who can get a certain distance, their mainline station for example, without trouble, but for whom the underground is an unfamiliar challenge. They hesitate, they take decisions on gut-feel rather than insight, take the Circle when they really wanted District, and often end up in a different place than they expected (without tapping out). Some schemes have a reasonable understanding of their data for everyday needs, but can't join the dots between legacy platforms, have different data formats and risk falling over the data hurdles once something non-standard comes along.

Of course there's also those that just don't go into town anymore –it's changed so much since they last went and the fear of the unknown scares them (they don't always admit this). These might be closed schemes, who haven't properly reviewed their data accuracy or controls for years, and for whom a data improvement strategy consists of updating the system when a member is reported deceased.

Schemes' journeys towards dashboard will begin in different places. Some will get there quicker than others and each will encounter challenges along the way...but is that a problem? Even if the journey is delayed, we need a dashboard that gets all schemes aboard to provide best value to members.

The dashboard debate continued for many hours on Wednesday, everyone can appreciate the many challenges, but there are also opportunities. Yes, we need to make sure that data is secure. Yes we need the industry to debate less. Yes we need to deliver solutions.

You might get from the city to the West End in 15 minutes, or you might go via the o2, but if you get on board – your journey will have started.

Over 13,000 people a week are reaching State Pension Age*...each likely to have had on average 11 jobs. The longer we delay, the greater the number of lost pots, the bigger the loss to members.

Less talk. Just do it.

*ONS figures

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