## TEI data trial project

In 2017 FACS conducted a data trial project to help determine the most fit-for-purpose data collection system and requirements for the new TEI program.

The project involved researching a range of data systems; included a sample of TEI service providers testing the DSS Data Exchange system (DEX); and consultation with TEI peak organisations.

A number of factors were also considered including existing data systems within the sector; other FACS programs and reforms, and development of the TEI Outcome Framework.

Based on all these findings the DEX emerged as the most fit-for-purpose data system for the TEI program. Work has commenced with DSS to configure the DEX for the TEI program, and will continue to be improved based on feedback from service providers and other stakeholders.

## The Data Exchange

The Data Exchange commenced on 1 July 2014 as the Department of Social Services’ new approach to program performance reporting. The Data Exchange has since been extended to a number of other Federal and state government agencies.

The name ‘Data Exchange’ reflects the two-way partnership of information sharing between funding agencies and service providers, enabling both to find smarter and more efficient ways of improving service delivery and the overall outcomes achieved for individuals, families and communities. Most importantly, the focus of Data Exchange is on capturing outcome information.

The following three principles of the Data Exchange align well with the TEI program reform:

**1. Service providers will spend less time reporting administrative data and more time helping clients** - The Data Exchange collects far fewer data items than previous performance reporting requirements and provides flexible ways to submit this information through new IT system capabilities.

**2. Data collection will focus on client outcomes** - Instead of focusing on pure numbers, the Data Exchange has been designed to capture outcome information. We are mindful of the challenges of measuring client outcomes in ways that are relevant, proportionate and rigorous—recognising that service providers are not funded to be specialist researchers or to spend disproportionate amounts of time measuring client outcomes.

**3. Client personal information and privacy will be protected** - Administrative data provided by funded services is de-identified using a Statistical Linkage Key (SLK) algorithm so that no personal client information will be accessed by DSS. This means that funding agencies will never be able to match a submitted data record back to an individual client. The SLK algorithm will enable client outcome data to be matched over time and across programs—without ever disclosing the identity of the individual client.

Service providers can transmit their data to the Data Exchange in one of three ways; system-to-system transfer, XML bulk uploads, or manual entry into the web-based portal.

Service providers will have access to their own set of reports which reflect the information submitted by their organisation. The ability to access the data and run reports will reflect the level of user access within the organisation.

## What data will be collected?

As detailed in the [TEI Outcomes Framework](https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/about/reforms/children-families/tei-inform/latest-issue/chapters/outcomes-framework-message-from-the-ed), a range of data will be submitted into the DEX by TEI service providers, including:

* Client demographics and needs and groups
* Service provider activity data
* Client satisfaction and experience
* Short term outcome data

Long term client outcome indicators will also be available to service providers to use, including data from FACS, NSW Health, Justice, and the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

We are currently exploring client feedback collected in a narrative format being collated into a regular report to assist local decision-making.

## Will there be DEX training and support?

At present almost half of all TEI funded services access the DEX, however to better understand each service provider’s training and support needs a survey will soon be distributed.

A training package and schedule will then be developed in partnership with the DSS using their established [training resources](https://dex.dss.gov.au/training-resources/) and supports, including their Helpdesk to respond to calls and emails.

A webinar providing an overview of the DEX will be published in November 2018, and face-to-face DEX training will be rolled out between December 2018 and March 2019.

## When will TEI data collection commence using the DEX?

Once service providers have completed the DEX training, and agreed on their service delivery with Districts, they may begin using the DEX and cease using the TEI legacy systems.

We strongly encourage all TEI service providers to become registered as soon as possible with an [AUSkey](https://dex.dss.gov.au/auskeys-and-the-data-exchange/), which allows you to access and send business information to government online. An **Administrator AUSkey** gives access to more government online services and sensitive information about the business you represent. **Standard AUSkeys** are sufficient for most people to access most government online services – see [How to register for an AUSkey](https://abr.gov.au/AUSkey/Registering-for-AUSkey/Register-for-an-AUSkey/).

## More information

For more information contact your District Commissioning & Planning team, email the TEI Reform Mailbox at TEIReform@facs.nsw.gov.au, or refer to the following resources:

* [What is the Data Exchange?](https://dex.dss.gov.au/about/what-is-the-data-exchange/)
* [Data Exchange Protocols](https://dex.dss.gov.au/data-exchange-protocols/)
* [DEX quick start guide](https://dex.dss.gov.au/data_exchange_quick_start_guide/)
* [User access request form](https://dex.dss.gov.au/dss_data_exchange_system_user_request_form-v1-0/)
* [AUSkeys & the Data Exchange](https://dex.dss.gov.au/auskeys-and-the-data-exchange/)
* [DSS training resources](https://dex.dss.gov.au/training-resources/)
* [FAQs for technical questions](https://dex.dss.gov.au/frequently_asked_technical_questions_nov_2016-2/)
* [TEI Outcomes Framework](https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/about/reforms/children-families/tei-inform/latest-issue/chapters/outcomes-framework-message-from-the-ed)