

Session 1 Worksheet

Finding and Accessing data to explore Housing Benefit changes

In this session you will use the handout "How to find and access data in the UK Data Service" to undertake some data search tasks.

Throughout the day you will be exploring aspects of housing benefit receipt and we will have by now started to think about the sort of research questions we might be able to tackle with secondary analysis.

As this is an introductory day you should think about research questions that can be answered using data from a single point of time.

Task 1: Deciding what to look for

Within the group complete Column 1 of the following answer grid.

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
Ideal dataset	What are the features of the real dataset?	
	Dataset 1: Name	Dataset 2: Name
Time period		
Unit of analysis		
Geographical coverage		
Topics contained		
Sample requirements (large? Representative?)		
What documentation is available?		

Task 2: Looking for datasets

You might find it helpful to work in a group to explore different strategies and/or to look at more than one dataset in detail.

Using your "How to find and access data in the UK Data Service" guide identify one or two datasets which could be used to explore housing benefit receipt in England.

To complete this task you can use the following options to find candidate datasets;

- Use Discover to search for data by keyword, country, time period, unit of analysis etc.
- Look at the key data list (under *Get data*) to find see whether any of the major datasets appears to cover the right content
- Consult a theme guide (in *Get data*, *Data by theme*) to identify some key surveys for exploring housing and the local environment
- Search the variable search to find a dataset which contains variables on housing benefit, area and household type.

Once you have found a couple of potential datasets you should inspect the catalogue record and use this information to complete a column in the answer grid for each dataset.



Which dataset looks most hopeful for exploring the research questions identified?



Which search tools did you find most useful?

Task 3: Documentation

For as long as the time allows, explore the documentation for your preferred dataset(s)

- Questionnaires will allow you to confirm how key questions were asked and to whom. Questionnaires in .pdf format can be searched in the usual way (use Control-F).
- There is usually some information about how the data were collected



What questions were asked about housing benefit?

Overall questions



What is good about the data for this type of research?



What are the drawbacks of the data you are considering?