UK Data Service

Applying for data under the Digital Economy Act

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Introduction

- Various pieces of legislation will come into play when you are provided access to personal data or personal information

- Which legislation will apply specifically in each case will depend on who is providing access to the data

- Most data protection legislation supports the responsible use of data for research purposes

- Today we are going to look specifically at some of the data made available through the Digital Economy Act (DEA)

Digital Economy Act (Research) 2017

- Recent legislation provides certainty and clarity for public authorities and researchers on data available for research

- The Bill (Act) creates a gateway for public authorities to access data in the public interest

- Aims to provide a single gateway for secure data access

- Uses a trusted third party model where:
  - an **accredited processor** links, de-identifies, and makes securely availably
  - to an **accredited researcher**
  - for an **accredited project**

The Digital Economy Act (DEA) 2017

- Gained Royal Assent on the 27th April 2017

- Makes substantial amendments to the Statistics and Registration Service Act (SRSA) 2007

- Codes of Practice and Accreditation Criteria (Research)
  - Governing principles on disclosure of data
    - Legal, Accreditation, Data security/confidentiality, Public interest, Ethical, Proportionality, Retention, Transparency

  - Accreditation Criteria
    - Processors, Projects and Researchers

Supporting UK Research

- UK Statistics Authority (UKSA) as the Accreditor (Section 61 of the Act)

  - Accredited Data Processors
    - Data linking/matching/preparation; and/or
    - Provision of secure research facility
    - UK Data Archive became an Accredited processor in March 2020
  - Accredited Projects and Researchers
    - Broadly consistent with existing ONS Approved Researcher scheme
    - However, ethical approval now sought under Accredited Researchers

The Application Process

- Multi-stage process

- Must be based in the UK

- Need to become an **Accredited Researcher**

  - Have to meet the data owners criteria

  - Need to attend a short training course

- Need to submit a **research proposal**

  - Valid statistical purpose

  - Must be feasible

Accredited Researchers (AR)

- You need to submit an application form

- Need to meet the Accreditation criteria

- UKSA manages the accreditation process

- AR status last for 5 years.

- Can be used across all accredited DEA Processors

- As an AR, you need to agree to your name being added to the UKSA site

The Accredited Researcher Criteria

- have an undergraduate degree (or higher) including a significant proportion of maths or statistics

or

- be able to demonstrate at least 3 years quantitative research experience

and

- have successfully completed the Safe Researcher Training course
- agree to their inclusion in a list of all accredited researchers, published on the ONS website
- agree to publish the results of all research projects completed through the Approved Researcher Scheme
- sign and adhere to a formal Accredited Researcher Declaration

Safe Researcher Training

- Using sensitive/controlled data is largely common sense
- BUT researchers will require some specific knowledge about disclosure risk and how to mitigate it
- This is why we train our researchers!

- Short course which covers:
- The wider context: understanding Data Access
  - The Five Safes framework
  - How might things go wrong?
  - Safe people and the Research Community
  - Technical knowledge: statistical disclosure control (SDC)
  - Basic principles
  - SDC applied to research

- Attendees need to take and pass an online test

Accredited research projects

- Project applications will require approval by data owner(s) AND the independent Research Accreditation Panel (RAP)

- Project applications must be thoroughly completed.
- Pay close attention to:
  - How you are meeting the public good
  - Evidence of ethical approval, that needs to be submitted
    - Most academic projects will have gained ethical approval
    - Project proposals requiring additional ethical scrutiny will be reviewed by the NSDEC

Ethics Self-Assessment of research proposals

- Easy-to-use framework to review the ethics of your projects

- Helps identify & mitigate any ethical issues

- 6 main principles

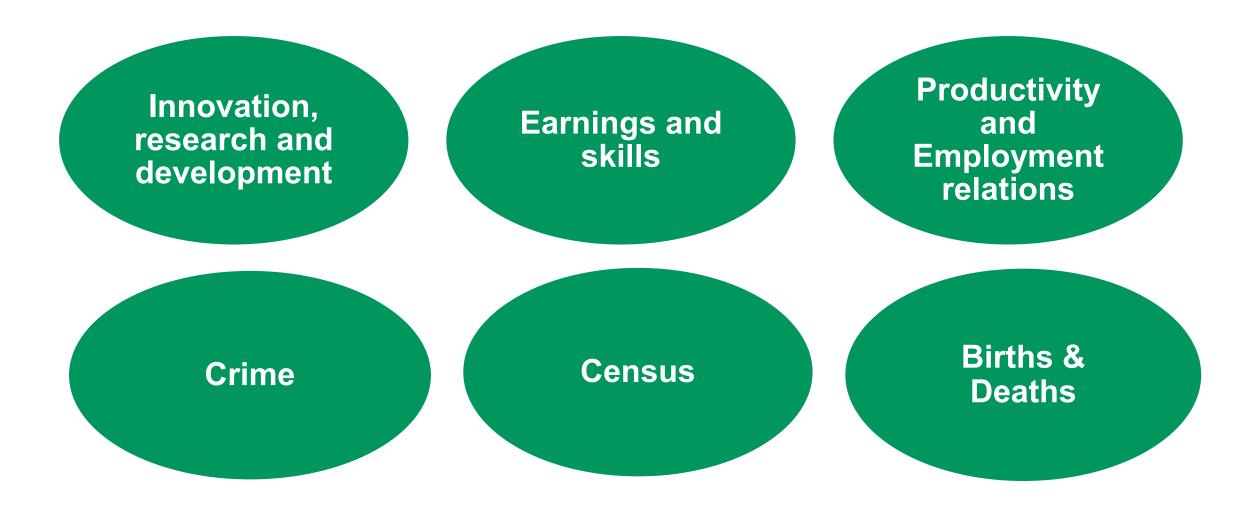- Each principle split into a number of items

Research Accreditation Panels

- Review and approve applications

- Aim to provide transparency and fairness

- Meet periodically – often monthly

- Is this an appropriate use of the data?
  - Is it legal?
  - Is it ethical?
  - Is it feasible?

Research Accreditation Panel

- Materials for the panel:
  - Project application, ethics assessments and other supporting materials

- Outcomes include:
  - Full or conditional approval (with amendments)
  - Rejection

- The UKDS triage all applications before they go to the RAP

Broad areas

Innovation, research and development

Earnings and skills

Productivity and Employment relations

Crime

Census

Births & Deaths

UKIS: UK Innovation Survey, 1994-2018

- Europe-wide Community Innovation Survey
- Main source of information on business innovation in the UK looking at:

  - General business information
  - Goods, services and process innovation
  - Context for innovation

- Based on firms with more than 10 employees
- Approx. 16,000 enterprises

UKIS based research topics

- ***Is Money All? Financing Versus Knowledge and Demand Constraints to Innovation*** by Pellegrino, G. and Savona, M., 2013

- ***Universities as Sources of Information: Comparing the Role of 'Open Innovation' and Companies' Motivations*** by Volpi, M., 2014

- ***Private and External Benefits from Investment in Intangible Assets*** by Giovanetti, E. and Piga, C., 2014

Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 1997-2020 (ASHE)

- 1% sample of individuals (140,000 – 185,000) from NI records

- Can construct panel dataset

- Employer completes so more accurate than some surveys (e.g. Labour Force Survey)

- Data on the wages, paid hours of work, age, pensions arrangements, occupation, industrial classification and more

ASHE based research topics

- ***Driving up Wages: The Effects of Road Construction in Great Britain*** by Sanchis-Guarner, R., 2012

- ***Incentive Pay: How Important is it and Does it Work?*** by Bryson, A. *et al*, 2012

- ***Productivity, Investment and Profits During the Great Recession: Evidence from UK Firms and Workers*** by Crawford,C. et al, 2013

Workplace and Employment Relations Survey, 1998-2011 (WERS)

- Cross-Section Survey of Managers

- Cross-Section Survey of Employee Representatives

- Cross-Section Survey of Employees

WERS based research topics

- *Two perspectives on multiskilling and product-market volatility*, by DeVaro J, 2011

- *Disability and earnings: are employer characteristics important?* , by Jones M and Latreille P, 2010

- *Workplace Performance, Worker Commitment and Loyalty*, by Brown S, McHardy J, McNabb R and Taylor K, 2011

- *Understanding the Gender Pay Gap: What's Competition Got to Do with It?*, by Manning A and Saidi F, 2010

Crime Survey for England and Wales 1996-2018

- Started in 1981

- Asks whether has been a victim of a crime in the previous 12 months.

- Since 2009, the survey extended to children aged 10-15 years old

- The first set of children's data held separately under SN 6601.

- From 2009-2010, the children's data are included with the main dataset.

- *Secure Access datasets*:

- adult self-completion modules on drinking behaviour, drug use, stolen goods,

- children's self-completion modules and sexual identity

- low-level geography variables

- hate crime variables from the victim form

- the interpersonal violence (IPV) data (comprising the modules on domestic violence, sexual victimisation and stalking)

CENSUS 2021

census 2021

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The census is here

Census Day was Sunday 21 March, but it's not too late to take part

What is the census?
- The census is a survey that happens every 10 years
- All the people and households in England and Wales.

- Helps organisations make decisions on planning and funding public services

- including transport, education and healthcare.

- Sample of anonymized records

- SN 8275 1961 9% sample

- SN 8271 1971 9% sample

- SN 8248 1981 9% sample

Contact Details

help@ukdataservice.ac.uk

https://www.ukdataservice.ac.uk/help/get-in-touch.aspx

Legislation and breaches

- It is important to ensure data are not disclosed to those that they should not be and that the rules of the data controller and data access provider are followed

- Disclosing the identity or identifying information to someone who should not have access is a breach of the law

- Breaching the rules of an access provider is a breach of procedure, but may also – depending on how and what is disclosed – be a breach of the law

- There are civil as well as criminal sanctions for breaches

Top tips for a successful project application

- Detail, detail, detail!
- Make sure you have clear research questions or aims
- Methodology – you may not have worked out all the details but have a plan
- Make sure you've included details of ALL data you need
- Meeting the public good criteria – don't over promise!
- Allow enough time!
- Take time over your ethics forms!