An Introduction to the UK Administrative Data Research Network

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Background

• Administrative Data Taskforce set up in December 2011 to identify barriers to using administrative data for research purposes.

• Report in December 2012 Improving Access for Research and Policy

• Funding put in place in 2013 as part of ESRC Big Data Network Phase 1 [Phase 2: Business and Local Government Data, Phase 3: Third Sector and Social Media Data]
Key Challenge:
Securing access to administrative data

- lack of confidence among data owners in releasing administrative data for research
  - Legal basis for data release
  - Security of data access infrastructure
  - Consent to link/reuse

- A successful ADRN also has to minimise time lapse between application for data and data access, therefore need to increase confidence among data owners
Infrastructure

- 4 Administrative Data Research Centres (ADRCs), one in each country of the UK: England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, providing secure data access infrastructure; research support; output checking; capacity building

- Administrative Data Service (ADS) providing coordination for the ADRN in development of national standards. Also acts as first point of contact for researchers and undertakes negotiation with data owners.
Governance

• ADRN Board, chaired by UK Statistics Authority, including lay members
• Approvals Panel, independent of ADRN will assess all applications on the basis of
  – Ethical review
  – Privacy impact
  – Feasibility
  – Scientific Merit
  – Potential for public benefit
• Scientific Advisory Group
Legislation

- UK legislation discourages data sharing between government departments
- Data owners confused by legislation available to facilitate data sharing
- Traditional interpretation of legislation often prevents data sharing
- New legislation being explored as part of a bill on data-sharing.
Consent

• Expense of securing consent from administrative data subjects to reuse/link is prohibitively expensive and impractical
• ICO view that consent is generally not needed to legitimise the conversion of personal data into a non-identifiable form

However

• Strong remit on ADRN for public engagement to establish public approval for reuse of data for research.
What next?

• Continue to develop standards and procedures
• Trial period with internal projects June-September
• Open to researchers October 2014
• On-going development of standards, and pathways to data access, streamlining of processes and reduction of time between application and data access.
For more information

• ADT:  
  http://www.esrc.ac.uk/collaboration/collaborative-research/adt/index.aspx

• ADRN website:  http://www.adrn.ac.uk/

• Data sharing legislation:  
  http://datasharing.org.uk/

• Contact the ADS communications team:  
  comms@adrn.ac.uk
Thank you!
Any questions?
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