Let’s meet in the middle
facilitating access to administrative data in the UK

Administrative data in the UK

- are collected by government departments and other organisations
- are collected for the purposes of registration, transaction and record keeping, usually while delivering a service or for day-to-day operations - not research
- cover the whole of the UK population
- give us a detailed picture, leading to greater understanding of our society and better informed government policy

In the UK

- different levels of legislative, administrative & budgetary autonomy for each country (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) mean administrative records are collected differently
- acquiring them requires coordination and negotiation with multiple data custodians
- their use for research in the UK involves different legal pathways
- time-consuming, resource intensive to get
- data retention policies vary

The Administrative Data Research Network (ADRN) builds on the Administrative Data Liaison Service and the Administrative Data Taskforce, and has established a UK-wide network to facilitate access to administrative data.

About the ADRN

We help academic, government and third sector researchers carry out social and economic research on (linked) de-identified administrative data.

We facilitate ground-breaking research which improves our understanding of society – and which can help governments, councils and charities shape policies and target their work in ways which will benefit society.

The Network is coordinated by the Administrative Data Service, led by the University of Essex and has four Administrative Data Research Centres

- England, led by the University of Southampton
- Northern Ireland, led by Queen’s University Belfast
- Wales, led by Swansea University
- Scotland, led by University of Edinburgh

Work we do

- Identifying and developing pathways to access
- Negotiating access to data on behalf of researchers
- Providing a secure linkage service via Trusted Third Parties
- Implementing a secure national infrastructure to enable data analysis to be carried out with the minimum risk of disclosure

Working to facilitate access to linked administrative data for socio-economic research with potential public benefit

Researcher support

- Defining exact dataset
- Identifying the legal gateway
- Agreeing access conditions
- Establishing data sharing agreements
- The final say rests with the data guardians

Key to the ADRN model

- The 5 Safes Principle
  - Safe projects: only approved projects with a clear potential public benefit and scientific merit
  - Safe researchers: only researchers who received specialised training to safely handle de-identified data
  - Safe environments: only access to data in a secure facility
  - Safe outputs: only released after statistical disclosure control
  - Safe access to data: This set of safeguards allows us to provide safe access to sensitive, de-identified data

Model implementation and inclusivity

- Public involvement in decision making
- Ongoing consultation
- Animations to develop understandable messages
- Researchers must prove they cannot get data elsewhere (e.g. via UK Data Service)
- Trained researchers accessing data secure centres
- De-identified data only
- No massive linked database...

Who are our partners

Not just about data meeting in the middle, it's primarily about people.

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Contact us via help@adrn.ac.uk
Better Knowledge Better Society