

UK ADMINISTRATIVE DATA RESEARCH NETWORK (ADRN) BOARD

Terms of Reference

Introduction

1. An Administrative Data Task Force was formed in December 2011 with the aim of improving access to and linkage between government administrative data for research and policy purposes. The Task Force reported in December 2012 and recommended the establishment of an Administrative Data Research Network.
2. The Government responded to the Task Force in June 2013, accepting the report's recommendations and committing to an initial investment via the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) within the current Government spending review period. The Government noted that the UK Statistics Authority would make its own response to the report in respect of the recommendation that "[a] governing board will report on an annual basis to a body responsible to the UK Parliament which will monitor progress. We recommend that the UK Statistics Authority or another similar body fulfils this role".
3. The Board of UK Statistics Authority agreed at its meeting of 3 October 2013 in principle to accept the recommendation of the Task Force. The Chair of the Authority replied to the Task Force report on 6 November 2013 to confirm and announce publicly that this was the Authority's intention. The UK Statistics Authority will be the reporting body to the UK Parliament for the ADRN and will seek assurance for the robust performance and governance of the Network from an ADRN Board established for this purpose.

Objective

4. The ADRN Board will promote and safeguard the linkage of administrative data for research purposes that serve the public good. It will provide assurance to the legislatures in Belfast, Cardiff, Edinburgh and Westminster, and the public, through the Board of the UK Statistics Authority, about achievement of the Network's core aim: to facilitate linkage of routinely collected administrative data, thereby stimulating opportunities for innovative research and policy making.

Role and responsibilities

5. The ADRN Board will guide the strategic direction for the Network and will report and provide assurance to the Board of the UK Statistics Authority. The ADRN Board is responsible for providing independent assurance that the Network is delivering against its core objectives and is being developed, managed and maintained in a way that maximises its benefit to researchers and policy makers, taking account of the project scope and resources. It will also provide advice to the ESRC on these matters.
6. The ESRC is accountable for the infrastructure and management of the Network. The ESRC Chief Executive Officer is the Accounting Officer for the Network and holds executive responsibility for it. A Senior Responsible Owner at the ESRC is advised by an ADRN Management Committee on the overall management of the Network.
7. The ADRN Board may request such advice and information from the ESRC and the Network as it requires in order to fulfil its responsibilities consistent with these terms of reference.

8. Specifically, to discharge its responsibilities, the ADRN Board will:
- i. *Guide the strategic direction of the Network* and oversee its development to provide assurance that the infrastructure is established and maintained in ways that serve the public good, and, that the Network functions as a coherent whole;
 - ii. *Agree the principles and policies for access to the Network*, identifying and resolving any high-level issues which inhibit access to the Network;
 - iii. *Provide oversight of standards and performance of the Network*, including reviewing the progress, usage, quality and performance of the infrastructure, the strategic risks to meeting the Network's objectives and the actions to mitigate these risks;
 - iv. *Provide oversight of the Network's public engagement and communications strategy, advice on engaging with data owners* and related infrastructure investments, and advice on opportunities to *engage with other administrative data infrastructures or investments* in the UK and internationally;
 - v. Provide advice on opportunities for *sustainability and future development of the Network*, including extensions to scope and resources within and beyond current funding commitments;
 - vi. *Formally review the operation of the Network* after two years of its operation and make recommendations to the ESRC and the UK Statistics Authority;
 - vii. *Provide a report to the Board of the UK Statistics Authority* after the end of each financial year describing what the ADRN Board has done during the year, what it has found during the year, and what it intends to do in the next financial year. It will also provide advice to the ESRC.
9. The ADRN Board may establish committees for the purposes of exercising the functions of the ADRN Board or giving advice to the ADRN Board.

Chair and Membership

10. The Chair of the ADRN Board will be appointed by the Board of the UK Statistics Authority, in consultation with the ESRC. The Chair of the ADRN will be a non-executive director of the Authority. The Chair will be appointed for a term of five years.
11. The Deputy Chair of the ADRN will be appointed by the ESRC, in consultation with the Chair of the ADRN Board.
12. The ADRN Board will include the following members.
- i. Chair ADRN Board
 - ii. Deputy Chair ADRN Board
 - iii. One senior official each from the UK Statistics Authority and the ESRC (two members)
 - iv. One member each from the national statistical agencies in Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and from the Office for National Statistics (4 members)
 - v. Officials from data owning government departments (2 members)
 - vi. The Director of the Administrative Data Service, *ex officio*, on behalf of the ADRN directors (1 member)
 - vii. Lay members (at least 1)
 - viii. Other members as the Chair may wish to appoint (3 or more members).
13. Members of the ADRN Board who are not members in a representative capacity will be appointed by open competition. An appointment panel will include the ADRN Chair, and one senior official each from the Authority and the ESRC. Periods of appointment will be between two, three and four years. Collectively the ADRN Board will aim to have members with the following skills and expertise:

- i. relevant social science research expertise;
- ii. relevant data security expertise;
- iii. experience of managing or linking data;
- iv. research ethics, governance and legal expertise;
- v. management of major scientific infrastructure or resources; and
- vi. international expertise in data infrastructure.

Secretariat

14. Secretariat of the ADRN Board will be provided by the UK Statistics Authority. The Secretariat will work closely with officials at the ESRC. Agenda items for discussion will be agreed by the Chair and the Secretariat. Agendas and papers will be circulated one week in advance of meetings.

Meetings

15. The ADRN Board will meet at least quarterly in its first two years. Substitutes will not be permitted to attend Board meetings unless with the express invitation from the Chair of the ADRN Board. The ADRN Board will be considered quorate when a majority of members are present, including the Chair or the Chair's delegated nominee.

Transparency

16. The ADRN Board will operate transparently. Meeting agendas, papers and minutes will be made publicly available.

Review

17. The ADRN Board will conduct an annual self-assessment of its performance.