



**UK Statistics
Authority**

First Meeting of the
National Statistician's Data Ethics Advisory Committee

Minute, Agenda and Papers

Monday 6 July 2015

10:30 – 15:00

Board Room, UK Statistics Authority
Drummond Gate, London

National Statistician's Data Ethics Advisory Committee

Minute

Monday, 6 July 2015
Boardroom, Drummond Gate, London

Present

Board Members

Mr Ian Cope (Chair)
Mr Robert Bumpstead (Deputy Chair)
Mr Colin Godbold
Ms Annie Hitchman
Mr Neil McIvor
Ms Isabel Nisbet
Ms Marion Oswald
Mr Osama Rahman

Also in Attendance

Mr Adil Deedat
Dr Simon Whitworth
Ms Jane Naylor for item 5
Mr Peter Stokes for item 7
Ms Lucy Vickers for Item 7

Apologies

Professor Martin Severs
Mr Hetan Shah

1. Welcome and Introductions

- 1.1 In welcoming members to the inaugural meeting of the National Statistician's Data Ethics Advisory Committee (NSDEC), the Chair commented that the establishment of the NSDEC was an important and exciting development for the UK Statistics Authority.

2. Background to the UK Statistics Authority and the National Statistician's Data Ethics Advisory Committee (NSDEC)

- 2.1 The meeting received a presentation from Mr Cope and Mr Bumpstead. This outlined the background to the creation of the UK Statistics Authority and the role of the Chair of the UK Statistics Board and National Statistician. The presentation then provided the rationale for the creation of NSDEC, which would be advisory to the National Statistician.
- 2.2 The committee discussed other government ethics committees, such as the Department for Work and Pensions data access ethics committee and its role in approving data access requests.

3. Terms of reference [NSDEC(15)01]

- 3.1 The Chair presented the terms of reference for NSDEC, which he outlined would be used in conjunction with ethical principles (discussed at item 4). Together these would be owned by the National Statistician.
- 3.2 It was noted that one of the key principles of the committee would be to operate transparently. Minutes and papers would be published. Information about committee members would also be published.

ACTION: Secretariat to email members for pen pictures for the web pages.

- 3.3 The committee commented on the terms of reference and advised clarifying what is meant by accrediting policies and projects. Members also suggested including a clause which ensures the committee can provide advice to government departments as part of the National Statistician's role as head of the Government Statistical Service.
- 3.4 The Secretariat would maintain and publish a register of member's interests.

ACTION: Secretariat to email members for declarations of interest.

- 3.5 The Secretariat will amend the terms of reference and circulate to members an updated version of the terms of reference ahead of the next meeting.

ACTION: Secretariat to circulate updated terms of reference before the next meeting.

4. Ethical principles [NSDEC(15)02]

- 4.1 Mr Bumpstead introduced a paper, which set out draft ethical principles to inform NSDEC's work. The meeting heard that the principles were owned by the National Statistician and had been developed in consultation with him, following review of relevant ethical frameworks, legislation and codes of practice.
- 4.2 The committee discussed the proposed principles and advised that they be refined in order to ensure maximum clarity. This included addressing the principle on transparency to ensure specific reference to the public, ensuring that the risks of using new technologies were captured more clearly and that issues of consent were considered.
- 4.3 The ethical principles could be subject to periodic review to ensure they remain most relevant to the work of NSDEC.
- 4.4 It was agreed that the Secretariat amend the ethical principles, reflecting comments from members, circulating to members and bringing the paper back for discussion at the next meeting.

ACTION: Secretariat to incorporate comments on ethical principles and circulate a revised draft before the next board meeting.

5. Ethical issues in contemporary official statistics

- 5.1 Ms Naylor gave a presentation, which provided an overview of research in the Office for National Statistics (ONS), which would be of relevance to NSDEC. The presentation

outlined, at a high level, research relating to the use of administrative, census, registration and big data, along with the benefits and concerns each posed.

- 5.2 The meeting agreed that the range of research presented would be brought back as individual items for advice and consideration at future meetings.
- 5.3 The committee was informed about a project relating to names and ethnicity and agreed this should be re-considered as a priority.

6. The Administrative Data Research Network (ADRN)

- 6.1 Dr Whitworth gave a presentation providing an overview of the Administrative Data Research Network (ADRN). The presentation outlined the inception of the ADRN, the process by which researchers access the Network and the role of the UK Statistics Authority in providing governance for the ADRN. The ADRN was of direct relevance to NSDEC, as one of NSDEC's agreed functions would be to provide ethical consideration of government and third sector research proposals to access the Network.
- 6.2 The volume of ADRN projects is likely to be relatively low in the first instance but would increase over time. The meeting also heard that some ethical guidance had been provided by the Administrative Data Service to ethics committees within academic institutions.
- 6.3 It was agreed that this guidance be considered as part of refining NSDEC's ethical principles (discussed at item 4).
- 6.4 It was also agreed that the terms of reference should be reviewed to make sure that they included this aspect of the Committee's work.

7. Access, use and sharing of data: current practices [NSDEC(15)03]

- 7.1 The Chair introduced a paper about current practices relating to the access, use and sharing of data at ONS. This provided the committee with an overview of the work of the Microdata Release Panel (MRP) and the Administrative Sources Catalogue.
- 7.2 Mr Stokes provided the meeting with an overview of current ONS practices for releasing data to researchers. Mr Stokes also informed the committee of the role of the Virtual Microdata Laboratory (VML) in providing approved researchers access to microdata for research purposes.
- 7.3 It was suggested that the MRP ensure principles for releasing data are consistent with those used by the ADRN.
- 7.4 Ms Vickers provided the committee with an overview of the Administrative Sources Catalogue and what information is currently published. Ms Vickers also outlined an ongoing project for improving the information included in the Administrative Sources Catalogue.
- 7.5 It was suggested that the catalogue could benefit from the inclusion of information relating to the legal gateway used to gain access to the administrative dataset.

8. Any other business

- 8.1 The Secretariat informed members that there would be opportunities for training (e.g. on the work of ONS) and that dates for these would be circulated over the summer.

ACTION: **Secretariat to organise and circulate dates for training.**

National Statistician's Data Ethics Advisory Committee

Agenda

Monday, 6 July 2015

Board Room, One Drummond Gate, London

10:30am – 3:00pm (coffee from 10:00am)

Chair: Mr Ian Cope
Apologies: Professor Martin Severs
Mr Hetan Shah

(10:30am to 12:00pm)

1 10:30am	Welcome and introductions	Mr Ian Cope
2 10:40am	Background to the UK Statistics Authority and the National Statistician's Data Ethics Advisory Committee	Oral Presentation Mr Ian Cope Mr Robert Bumpstead
3 11:20am	Draft Terms of reference Register of interests	NSDEC(15)01 Mr Ian Cope
4 11:30am	Draft Ethical principles	NSDEC(15)02 Mr Robert Bumpstead

Lunch (12:00pm to 12:30pm)

(12:30pm to 3:00 pm)

5 12:30pm	Ethical issues in contemporary official statistics	Oral Presentation Ms Jane Naylor
6 1:30pm	The Administrative Data Research Network	Oral Presentation Dr Simon Whitworth
7 2:15pm	Access, use and sharing of data: current practices	NSDEC(15)03 Mr Peter Stokes Ms Lucy Vickers
8 2:45pm	Any other business	

Next Meeting: Wednesday 14 October 2015, Drummond Gate, London

Welcome and introductions

Mr Ian Cope

Background to the UK Statistics Authority and The National Statistician's Data Ethics Advisory Committee (NSDEC)

Mr Ian Cope and Mr Rob Bumpstead

UK Statistical System

- The **Office for National Statistics** the single largest producer of official statistics in the UK (approximately 20 percent), and the UK's National Statistical Institute (responsible for the Census, GDP, RPI and CPI, and statistics on the labour market, crime and well-being)
- The **Government Statistical Service** – a decentralised community spread across most UK government departments and Devolved Administrations. Headed by the National Statistician, the GSS produces approximately 80 per cent of the UK's official statistics, analysis and interpretation to improve understanding and help decision-making

UK Statistics Authority

- Established on 1 April 2008 under the *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007*, to promote and safeguard the production and publication of official statistics, for the public good
- An independent body, operating at arm's length from government as a non-ministerial department, directly accountable to Parliament
- Provisions for data sharing

Authority oversight

The Authority has three main functions:

- Oversight of the Office for National Statistics (ONS) – its executive office;
- Independent scrutiny (monitoring and assessment) of all official statistics produced in the UK; and
- Providing professional leadership across the Government Statistical Service (GSS).

Chair of the UKSA- Sir Andrew Dilnot

- Appointed by the Crown in 2012 with approval of parliament following pre-appointment hearing before House of Commons PASC
- Chairs the UK Statistics Authority Board
- Independent Board with three executive members and eight non executive members
- Authorised the establishment of NSDEC

National Statistician- John Pullinger

- Appointed by Her Majesty on advice of Prime Minister in consultation with the Deputy Prime Minister and through open competition in 2014
- The National Statistician is:
 - Head of the Government Statistical Service
 - Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority (UKSA)
 - An executive member of the Board of the UKSA
- Chairs National Statistics Executive Group which is the organisation's senior executive committee with the purpose of supporting the National Statistician in the exercise of his functions as both CEO and head of the GSS

Why set up NSDEC Now?

- Administrative Data Research Network
- Data Sharing Proposals
- Novel data and methods
- Contentious Surveys and collaborations

Administrative Data Research Network



Administrative Data Research Network

- The ADRN is UK wide partnership between universities, government departments and agencies, funders and the wider research community
- The ADRN is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and has been established to facilitate accredited researchers in accessing de-identified administrative data for the purposes social and economic research

Administrative Data Research Network

- The UKSA provides the governance for the ADRN
- Access to the Network requires ethical approval
- Barrier to entry for government and third sector researchers
- September ADRN Board meeting: National Statistician suggested that the UKSA could fulfil this function

Data Sharing



11

Existing provisions for data sharing

- S42-S45 of the SRSA contain specific clauses that allow the authority to share specific types of data with the Registrar General, Department for Health and HMRC
- These clauses are specific to particular datasets and do not cover all the functions of the authority, e.g. S45 only allows HMRC to share personal information relating to the import or export of goods

Existing provisions for data sharing

- S47 of the SRSA contains a more generic data sharing power
- This section allows the MCO to make Regulations that permit data sharing between a public body and the Authority
- These Regulations (ISOs) can amend or remove statute bars that predated the SRSA
- The Regulations are made via the Affirmative resolution process of both houses and have taken up to 2 years to obtain

Data Sharing

- Currently ONS use ISOs which are affirmed by both houses
- Process is slow and any revisions required means restarting the process
- Number of Options proposed by ONS in Cabinet Office Open Policy Making Process
 - To separate scrutiny function from regulation process
- One option to use an ethics committee

Data Sharing Cont....

- Drive to improve Office's accessibility to administrative and commercial data
- Proposals for changes to data sharing legislation for powers for additional powers statistical and research
- Improved transparency around shares by other departments

Novel use of data and methods



Novel use of data and methods

- Since 2010, greater drive for efficiencies
- Make use of existing Government Administrative Data e.g. HSCIC, DWP, DfE
 - Reduce costs and respondent burden and
 - Produce more statistics more frequently
- Beyond 2011- Investigation of alternatives to Census
- Research ongoing as part of Census Transformation Programme

Novel use of data and methods cont.....

- Big and Commercial Data:
 - Use of social media and location data- Internal Migration
 - Use of telecommunications data
 - Web scraping- Prices
- Need for an ethics committee:
 - Ensure transparency around access and use of data
 - Provide advice on appropriateness of use

Other research

- Contentious surveys- Commissioned surveys
e.g. Survey of stillborns
- Collaborative projects- UCL ethnicity from names using Census

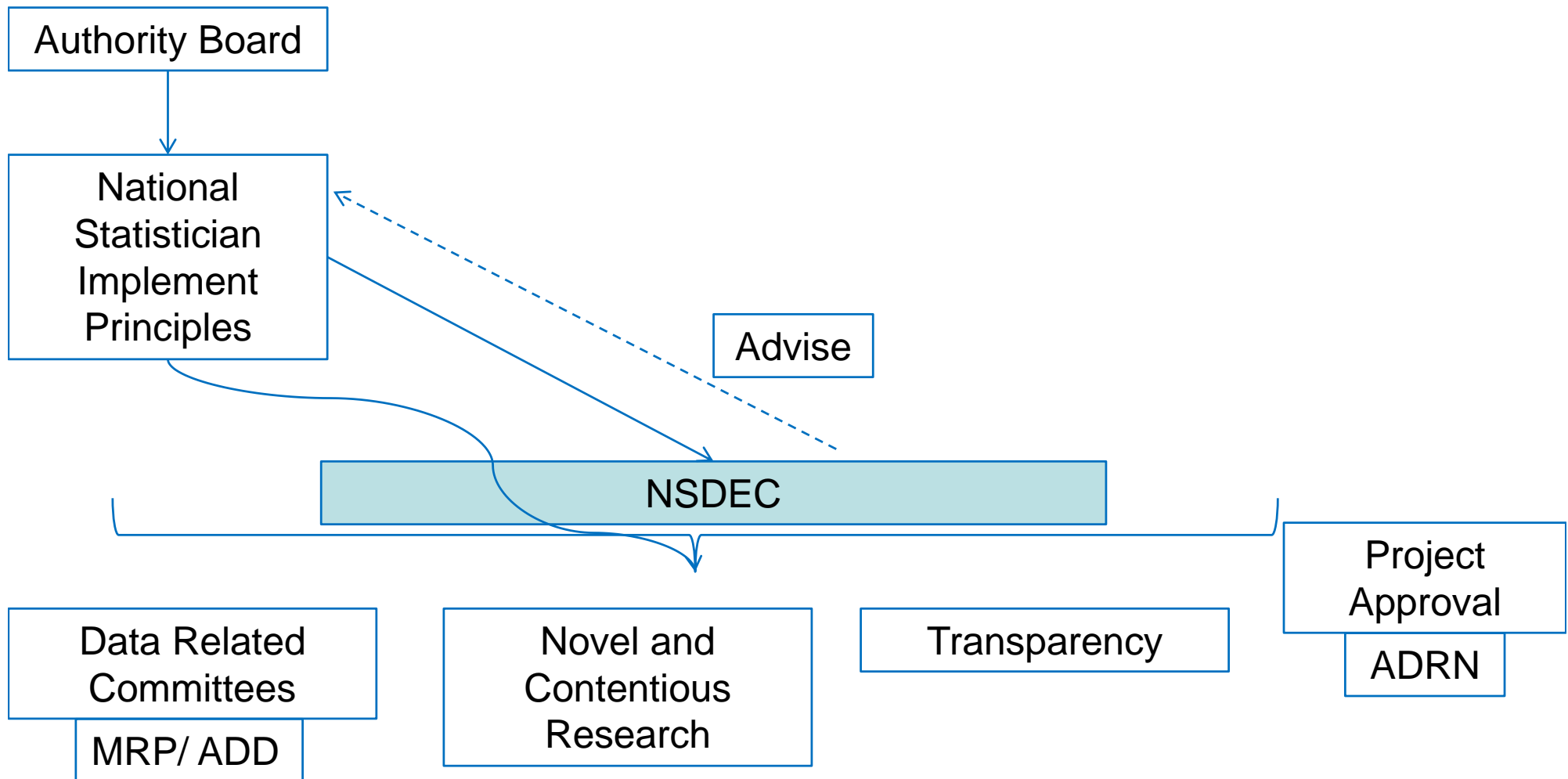
Authority Board-November 2014

- Authority Board agreed to an ethics committee to report to National Statistician and:
 - provide ethical consideration of proposals to access, share and use data
 - ensure transparency around data shares
 - provide oversight of data access and sharing as the office explores more data sources
 - accredit individual policies and projects
 - provide robust scrutiny of data shares to improve cross government consistency
 - ADRN: Government and third sector projects

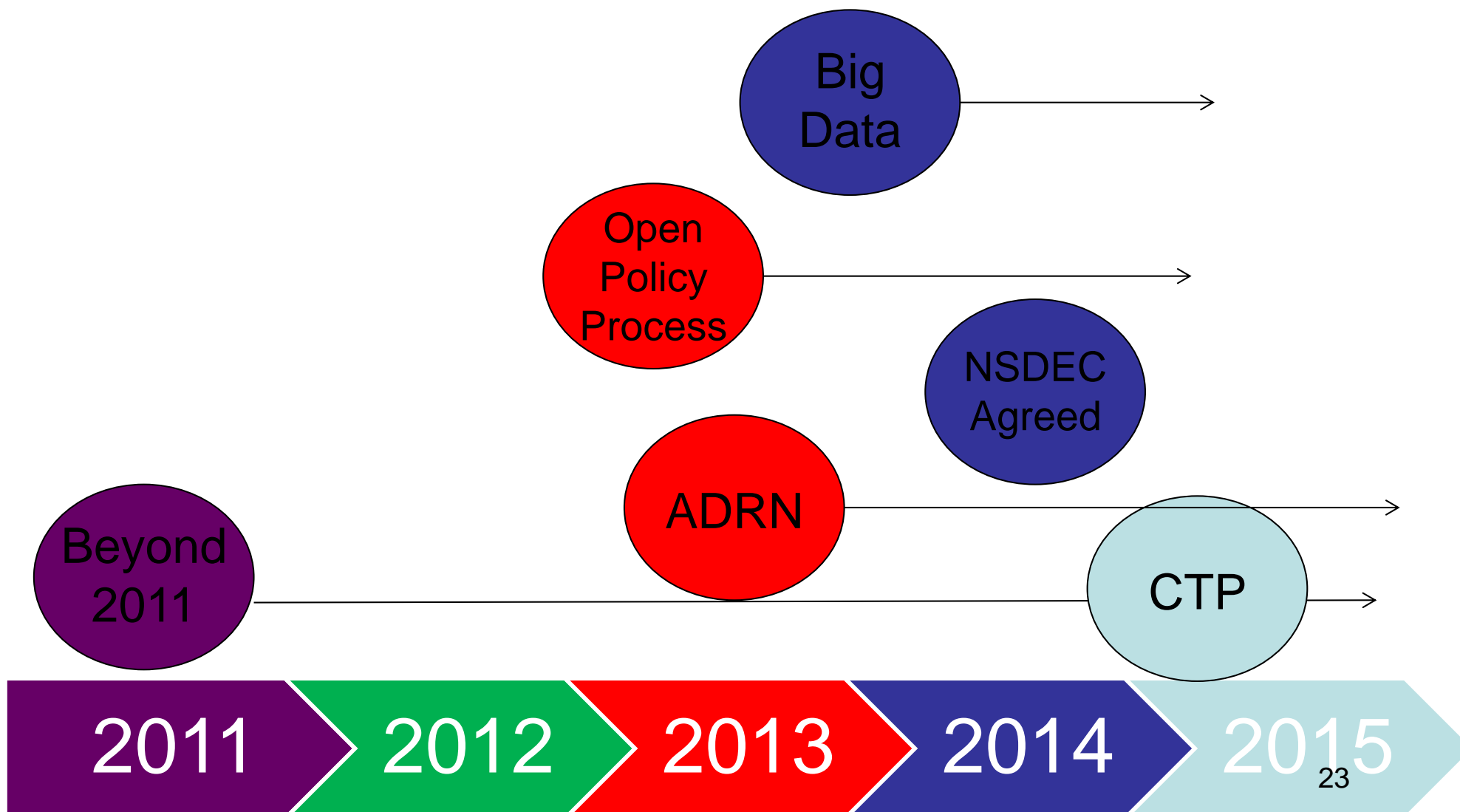
Overarching Aim

To provide assurance to the National Statistician and the public that the access, use and sharing of their data is ethical and in the public good

Functions and mechanism for action



Timeline



Draft Terms of Reference
Will be published in due course
Mr Ian Cope

Draft Ethical Principles

Will be published in due course

Mr Robert Bumpstead

Ethical issues in contemporary official statistics

Jane Naylor
Office for National Statistics

ONS research – ethical issues

- Big Data - Twitter, Smart meter, Mobile phone
- Address Register – use of addresses for Census and surveys
- Methodology – deriving ethnicity from names
- Census and Beyond – matching admin data
- Registration data – use as a sampling frame

Definitions

- Surveys – eg of businesses and households
- Census – every 10 years
- Administrative data – by-product of Government process
- Big Data:

‘Data that is difficult to collect, store or process within the conventional systems of statistical organizations. Either, their volume, velocity, structure or variety requires the adoption of new statistical software processing techniques and/or IT infrastructure to enable cost-effective insights to be made.’

Definitions

- Data linkage – eg survey data to admin data, one admin data set to another
- Address register – eg AddressBase
- Sampling frame – eg Postcode Address File

Big Data

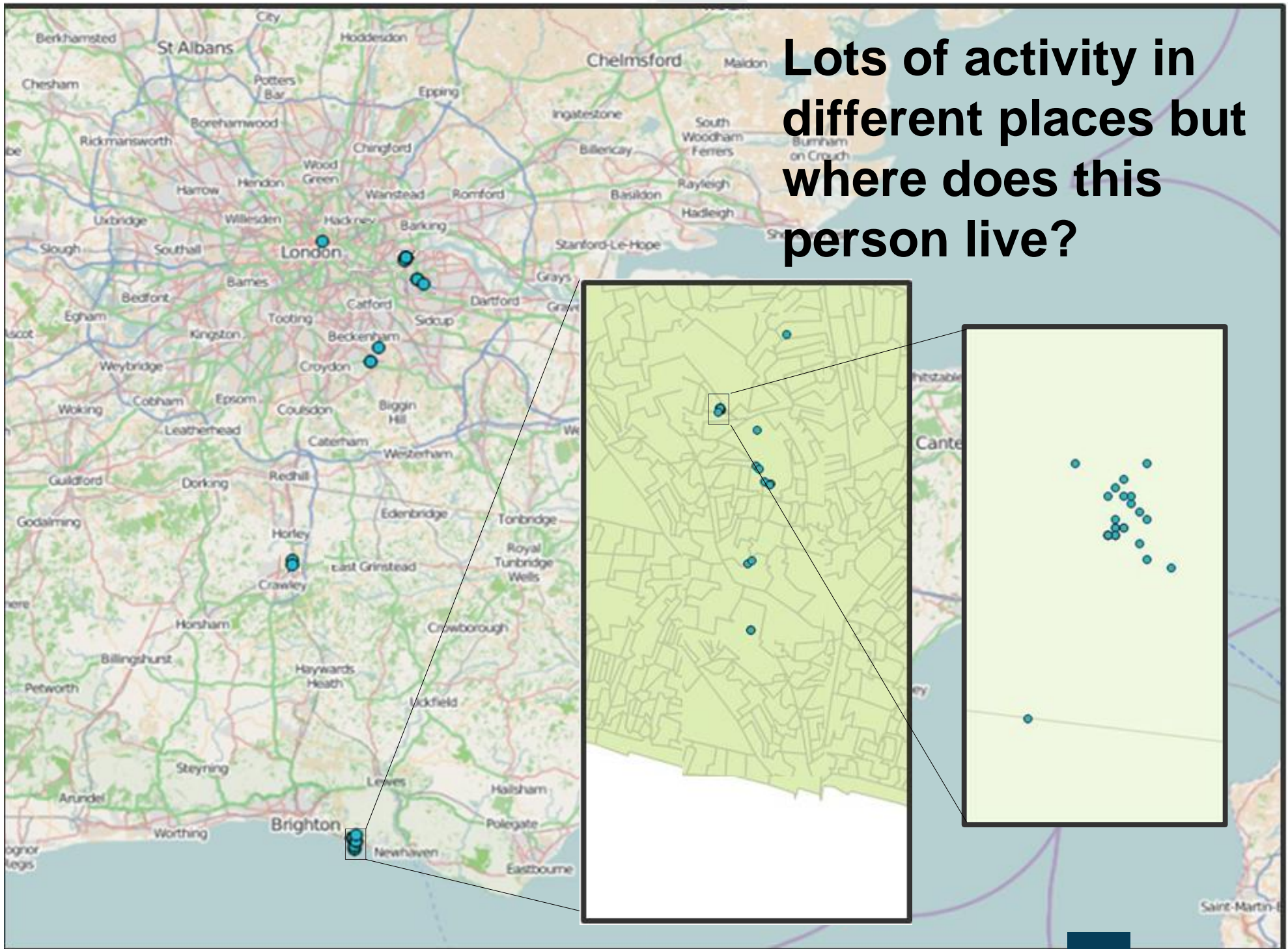
ONS Big Data Project

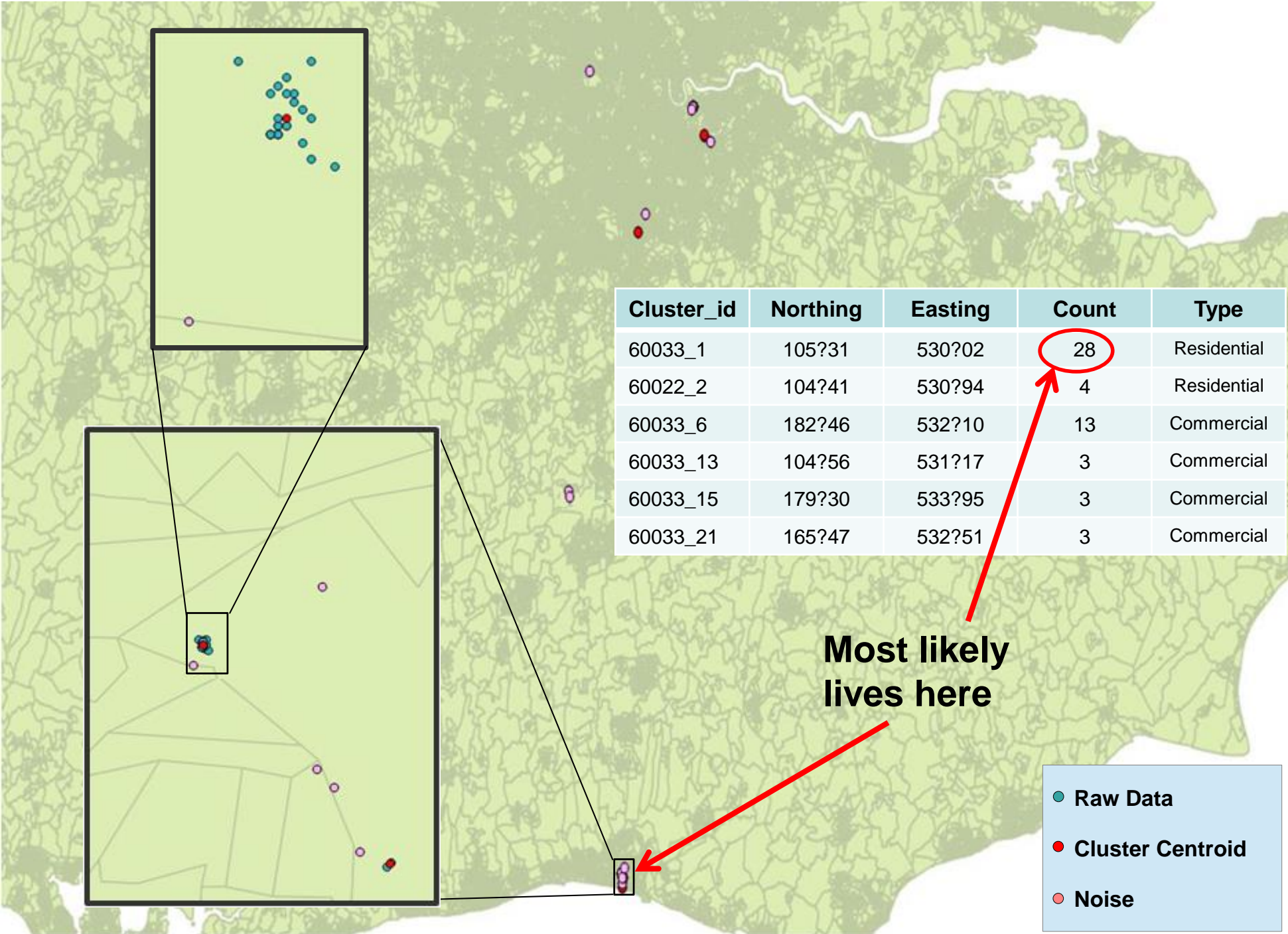
Aims:

1. Investigate the potential for big data in official statistics while understanding the challenges
2. Establish an ONS policy and longer term strategy which incorporates ONS's position within Government and internationally in this field
3. Recommend next steps to support the strategy going forward

Approach: Collaborative working/partnerships and practical pilots: Twitter, Smartmeter, Mobile Phones, Prices

**Lots of activity in
different places but
where does this
person live?**





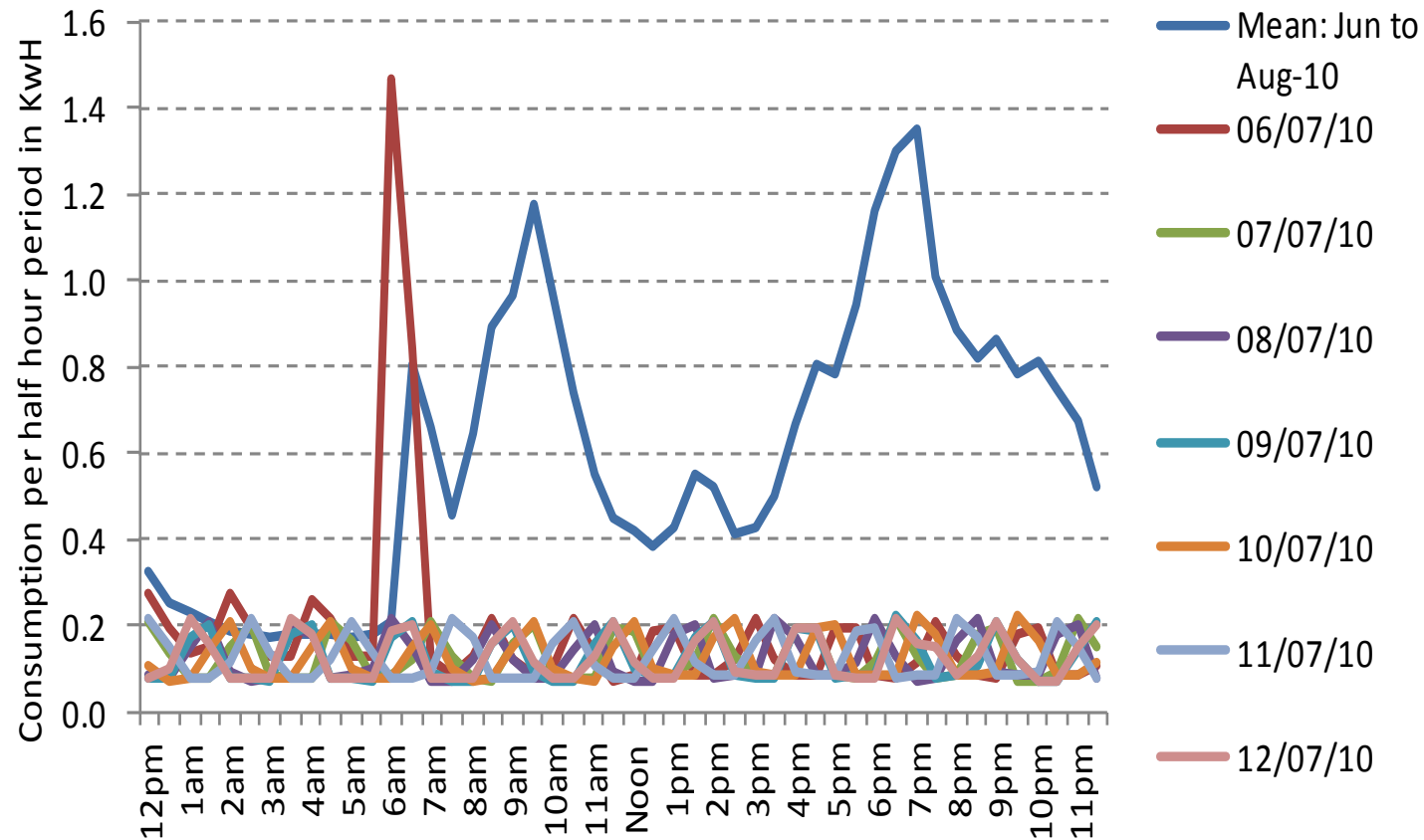
Tab 5 Ethical issues in contemporary official statistics

Big Data – Twitter

- Do Twitter users know that their geo-located tweets are effectively public? ie informed consent
- Inferring personal data, eg home/work location, demographics
- Lack of clarity around Twitter developer ‘rules of the road’
- Can ONS collaborate with those who are potentially in breach of these rules?

Big Data - Smart-type meters

Electricity consumption in half hour periods during 7 consecutive low consumption days (comparing against 3 month average)



Big Data – Smart-type meters

- Data has the potential to reveal when households are more or less likely to be occupied
- Data can be used to infer household type/no. occupants
- Only interested in estimates at an area level, would not consider use of data in real time
- Focus is for statistical purposes only

Big Data – Use of mobile phone data

Benefits and Issues

Benefits:

- Understand commuting patterns
- Determine home and work locations

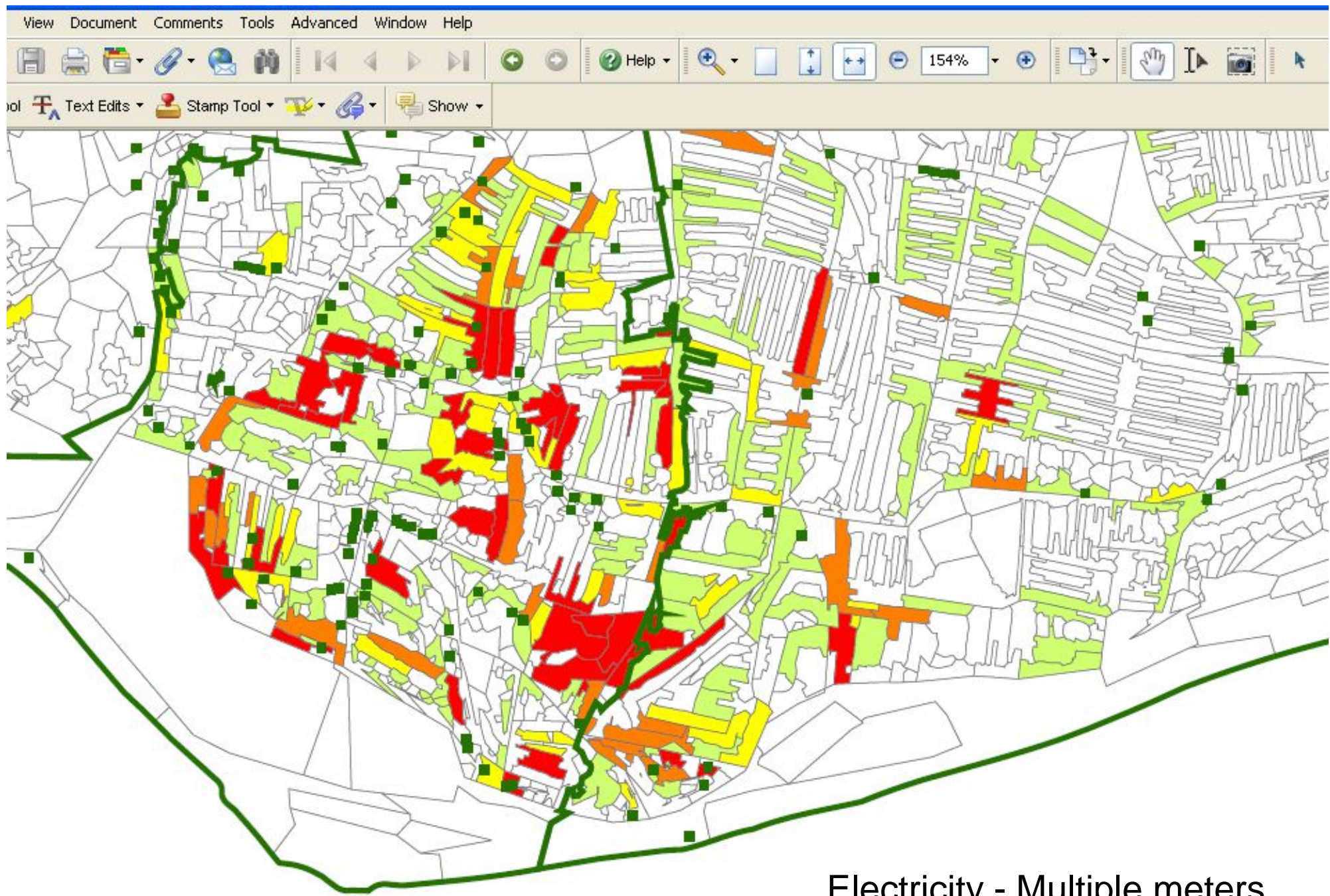
Statistical and other Issues:

- Variability in mobile network operator approach to disclosure/opt out
- Individuals with two phones
- Promotion of keeping mobiles switched on whilst driving
- Likely to only be aggregate data

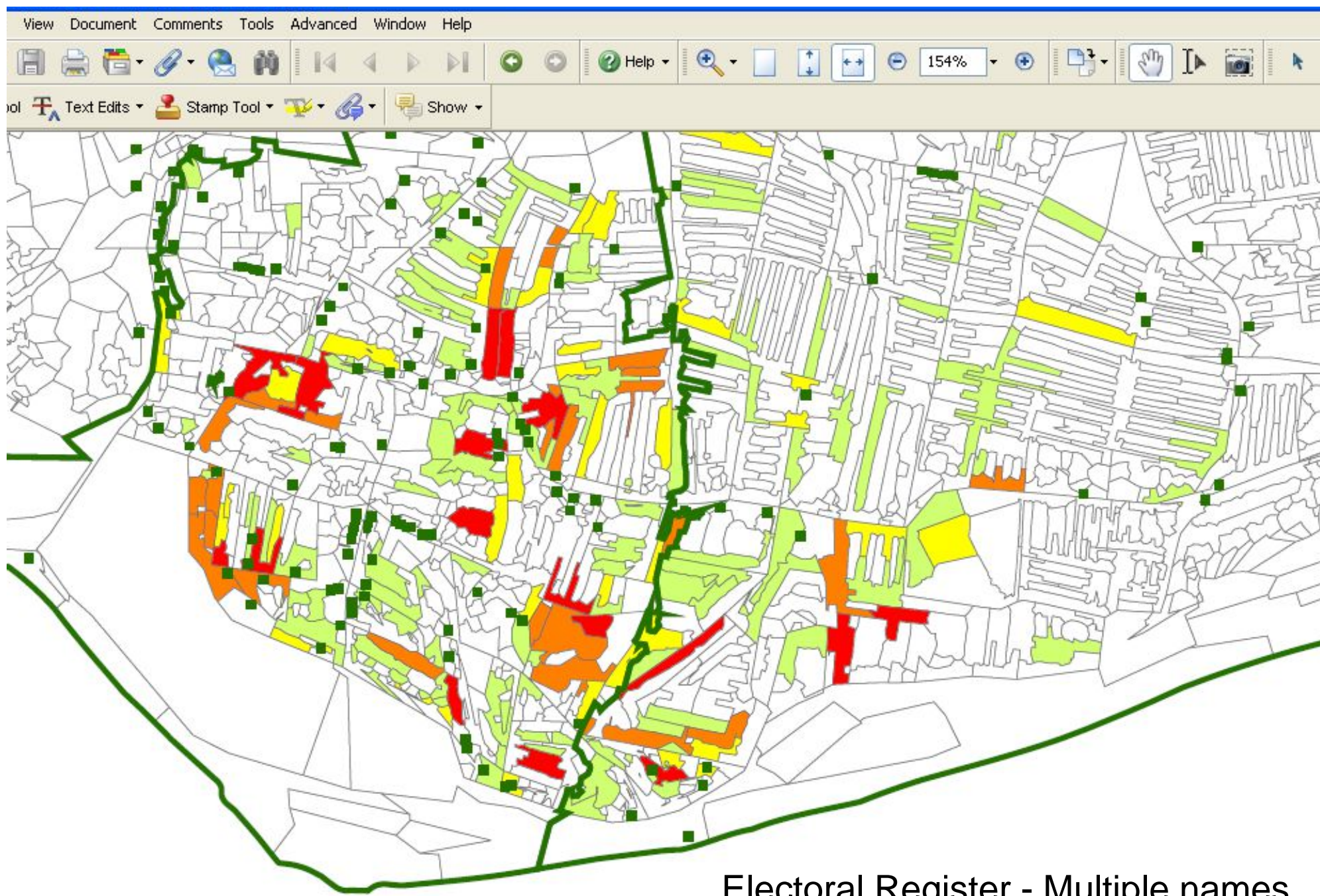
Concerns

- Privacy- Acceptable to track location?
- Informed consent
- Public perception and acceptability

Address Register



Tab 5 Ethical issues in contemporary official statistics



Address Register – observations in the field

- When ONS field staff find errors in the address list – is it appropriate that they report them back to improve the national list ?
- What are the criteria?

Address Register - Targeting data collection

- Is it ok for us to target data collection?
 - for small areas? How small?
 - for postcodes?
 - for individual addresses? Why ? How do we decide ?
- What criteria are Ok to use in targeting?
 - Characteristics of the building ? Of the people?

Methodology

Ethnicity from names

Background

- Collaboration with University College London
- Tool has been developed using electoral roll which uses name to derive ethnicity
- Use of Census data to:
 - Assess the accuracy of the tool
 - To refine the tool

Benefits and Engagement

- **Benefits**
 - Ethnic group can be added to databases or surveys containing names e.g. Health registers
 - Target initiatives, service monitoring, equality evaluation
- **Engagement**
 - consulting diversity advisory groups
 - engage and gain feedback from particular groups

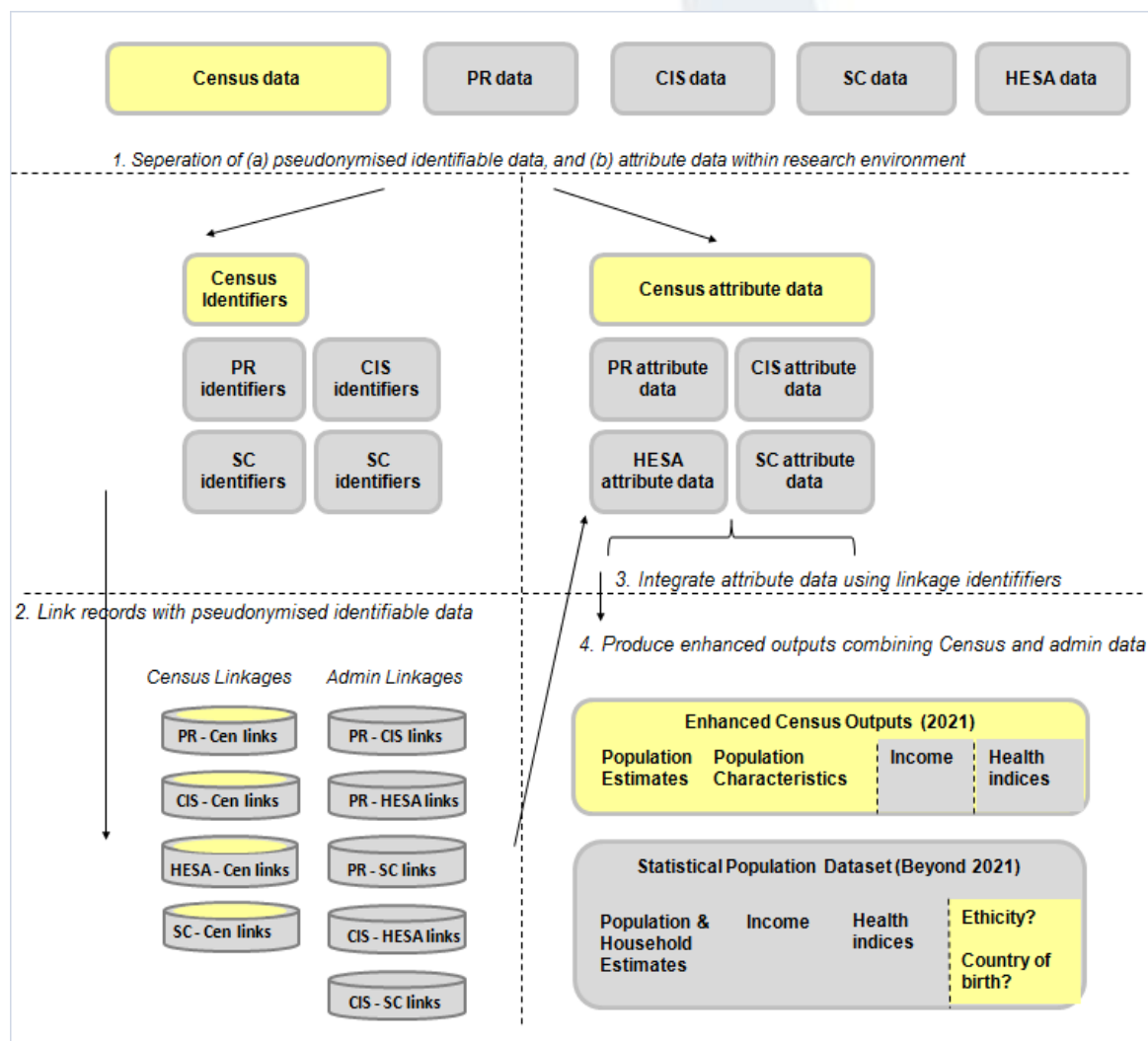
Concerns

- Concerns
 - Should we be doing this at all
 - Should we be using Census data to assess and improve this tool
 - Could raise concerns from particular communities
- Quality issues
 - Whilst the existing tool can be used, its accuracy is unknown – thus poor decisions (or poor information) may be based on this

Census and Beyond

Matching administrative data

Managing data from multiple sources

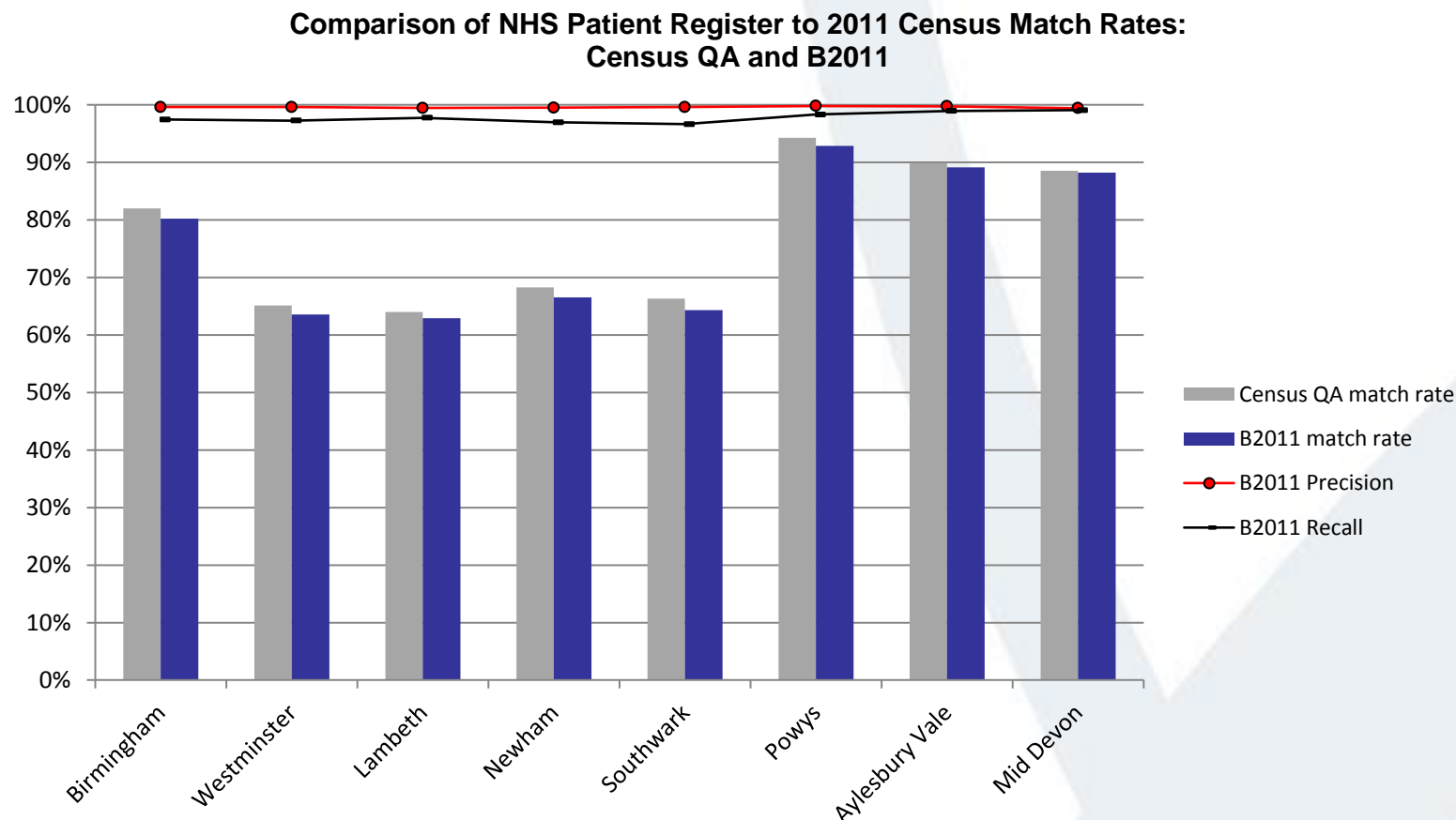


Tab 5 Ethical issues in contemporary official statistics

Managing data from multiple sources- Concerns

- What are the privacy issues and how can they be managed?
- What is publicly acceptable?
- What are the technical issues to address privacy concerns?
- How long should data be held after linkage?

Linkage quality: pseudonymisation approach



- ONS pseudonymised approach to record linkage still being developed:
 - May be new privacy preserving methods in future to improve quality
- False negatives consistently measured to be between 2-3%
 - Clerical matching with Census/CCS data known to reduce false negatives to <0.25%

Using Civil Registration Data for Surveys

ONS Registration Data

- ONS hold registration data – births, deaths, marriages
- This data is shared with ONS by the General Register Office
- In the past we have undertaken work for other Gov bodies to use registration data as a sampling frame
- Examples
 - Use of deaths for survey of end of life care
 - Use of births for survey of stillborns

Benefits

- End of life care
 - Understanding current end of life care
 - How related services, whether they be care or hospital based may, improved for the future
 - Understanding end of life needs
- Survey of Stillborns
 - Understanding awareness of available services
 - How accessibility and services generally can be improved for mothers

Concerns

- Both examples are contentious and sensitive in nature
- Such surveys can cause harm to those sampled as reliving events can be:
 - Distressing
 - Intrusive
 - Impact on the individual's health and wellbeing
- Other issues
 - Responsibilities where a response indicates respondent needs medical help

Any questions?

Initial views on any of these topics?

Administrative Data Research Network



Dr Simon Whitworth

What is the ADRN?

- UK wide partnership between universities, government departments and agencies, funders and the wider research community
- The ADRN is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and has been established to facilitate accredited researchers in accessing de-identified administrative data for the purposes social and economic research

Background

- In 2006 the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) started to consider plans for improved access to administrative data
- The ESRC funded the Administrative Data Liaison Service in 2008
- In May 2011 the ESRC, Medical Research Council and Wellcome Trust organised a meeting to take stock of progress on research access to administrative data
- The Administrative Data Taskforce was formed in December 2011, reported in December 2012

Inception of the ADRN

- In December 2011 the Department for Business Innovation and Skills committed to a range of policies for stimulating innovation and growth and improving the competitiveness of UK research
- The recommendations of the Administrative Data Taskforce were accepted by government and funding committed in the Chancellor's Autumn statement in 2012

Recommendations

- Administrative Data Taskforce Report (Dec 2012)
 - Administrative Data Research Centres in each country of UK;
 - UK-wide researcher training & accreditation process;
 - strategy for engaging with the public;
 - a governing board.

Proposed Benefits of the ADRN

By unlocking the research potential of administrative data the ADRN can:

- Improve knowledge and understanding of the action required to tackle a range of social, environmental, health and security issues
- Promote and develop new approaches to the development, implementation and evaluation of policy across government
- Reinforce the leading reputation of UK academic and research institutes

Policy and Evaluation

Benefits to policy and evaluation include the ability to:

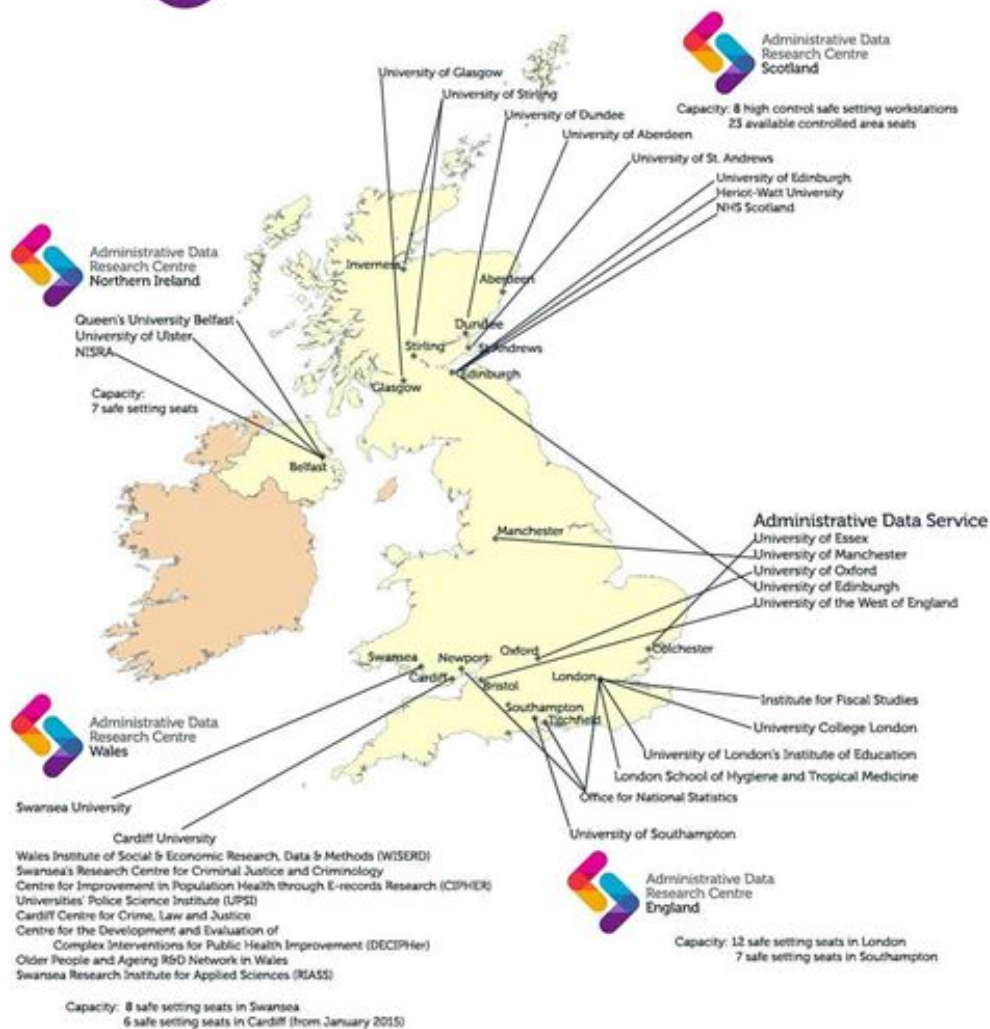
- Asses the impact of policy changes, by analysing data before and after a change in policy
- Track changes over time, uncovering trends which require early action
- Make more efficient and cost effective use of under used resources
- Produce timely policy relevant research
- Reduce the burden on those who respond to surveys
- Improve the quality of existing data collections and extend the information they provide
- Produce more up to date research informing government policy

The Administrative Data Research Network (ADRN)

- Administrative Data Service
 - Based at the University of Essex
 - First point of contact for researchers
 - Help prepare researcher projects for Approvals Panel Assessment
 - Negotiate data access with data custodians
 - Coordinates the Network
- Four Centres
 - England: led by the University of Southampton
 - Northern Ireland: led by Queens University Belfast
 - Scotland: led by the University of Edinburgh
 - Wales: led by the Swansea University



Administrative Data Research Network



Tab 6 The Administrative Data Research Network

Aim of ADRN

The Administrative Data Research Network will give trusted researchers access to linked, de-identified administrative data in a secure environment

Role of UK Statistics Authority in the ADRN

- UK Statistics Authority will be the reporting body to the UK Parliament for the ADRN (as recommended by the ADTF)
- Through the ADRN Board, the UK Statistics Authority will:
 - Seek assurance for the robust performance of the ADRN; and
 - Seek assurance for the robust governance of the ADRN

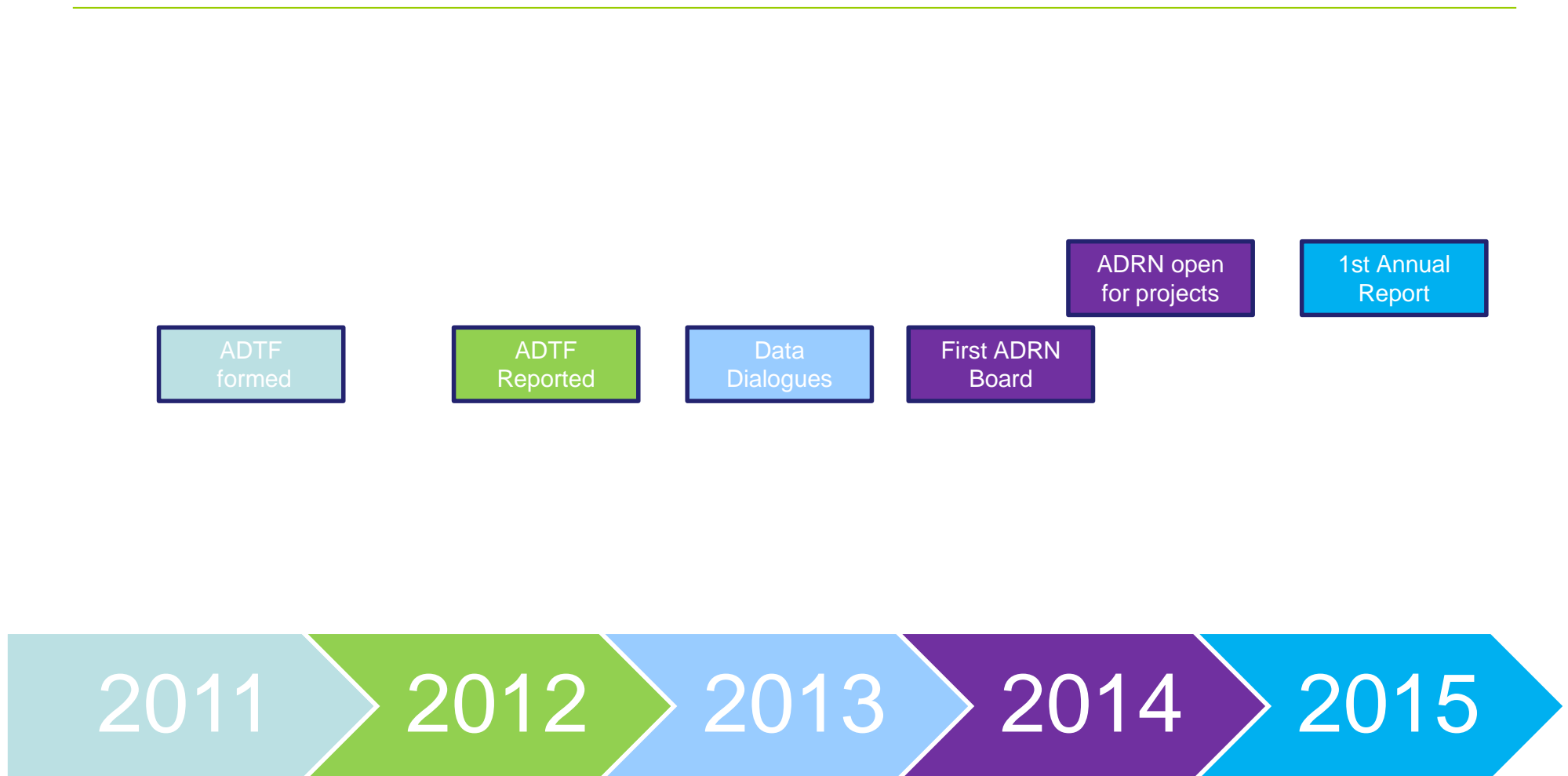
Key Functions of the Governing Board

- Leadership
 - Guidance on ethical standards, international experience, methodology, security, legal aspects, etc
- Enablement
 - Project approvals panel includes a Board member
 - Appeals panel will consist of Board members
- Collaboration
 - Encourage collaboration across the ADRCs
- Reporting
 - Report annually to UKSA
 - Formal review of Network after 2 years

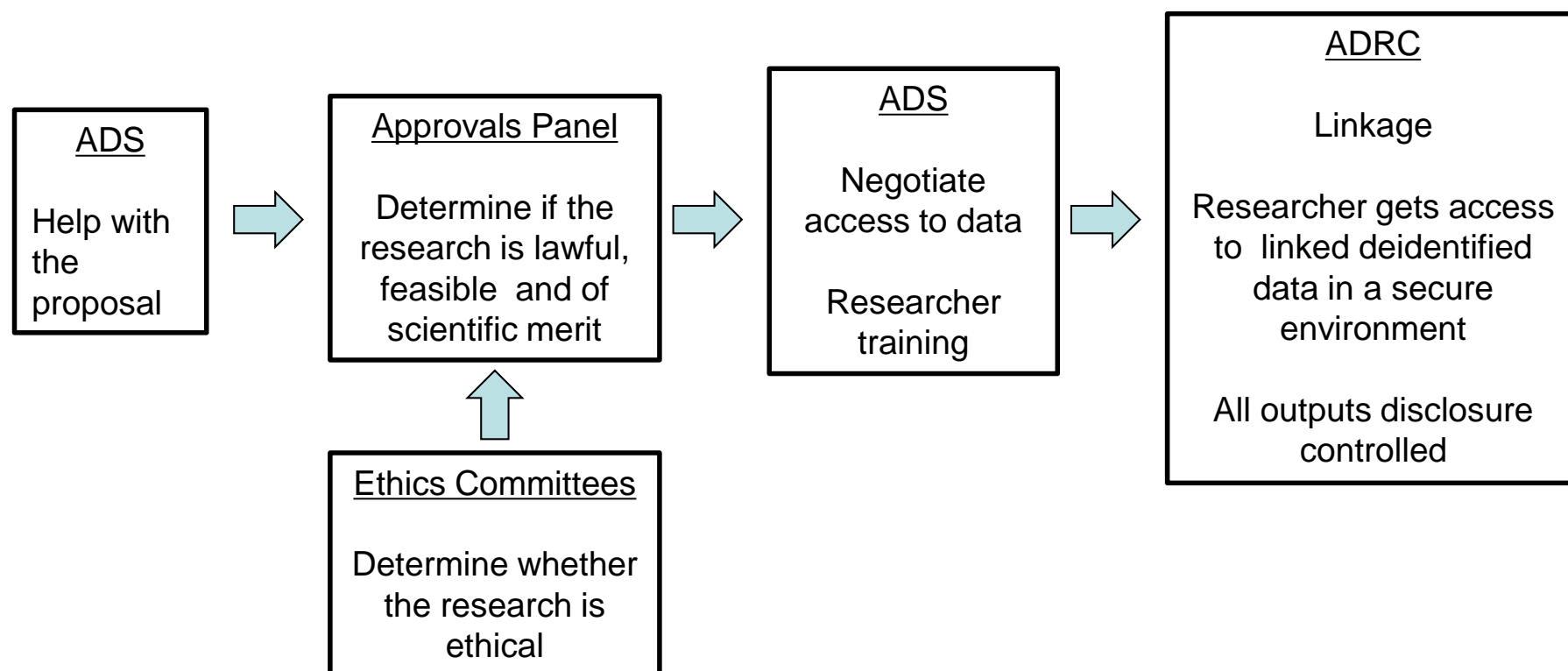
ADRN Board Key Responsibilities

- Guide strategic direction
- Provide oversight of its development to provide assurance that the infrastructure is established and maintained in ways that serve the public good
- Agree principles and policies for accessing Network
- Resolve any high level issues which inhibit access to the Network
- Oversight of standards and performance of the Network
- Oversight of strategic risks in meeting the Network's objectives and the actions to mitigate these risks
- Oversight of public engagement and communications strategy
- Advise on opportunities for sustainability and future development
- Formal review of the Network after two years and make recommendations to the ESRC and UK Statistics Authority
- Annual report to the Board of the UK Statistics Authority at the end of the financial year (what ADRN board has done and what it intends to do)

Progress of the Network



Access to the Network



Examples of Approved Projects

- An Investigation into the Impact of Disability on Employment in Wales
- Public Policy and 'Peace' Walls in Belfast: Establishing Baseline Indicators
- Factors associated with decreased representation in higher education
- Evaluating linkage between children's health, education and social care data - pre-term birth sub-study

The ADRN and NSDEC

- ADRN Board September-Ethics approval identified as a potential barrier to entry for government and third sector researchers
- John Pullinger, Board member, suggested that the UKSA could facilitate government and third sector access to the Network through NSDEC
- Agreed by the Authority Board to be a function of NSDEC

Accommodating the ADRN

- Process by which projects will be considered requires development
- ADRN is in its early stages, the volume of projects originating from government and the third sector is likely to be low in the first instance
- Demand, would be expected to increase over time

UK Statistics Authority

National Statistician's Data Ethics Advisory Committee

NSDEC(15)03

Access, use and sharing of data: current practices

Purpose

1. This paper outlines current practice and governance in Office for National Statistics (ONS) relating to sharing and accessing data.

Recommendations

2. Members of the committee are invited to consider and comment on the existing arrangements and consider any further information that they require, with a view to forming advice on any improvements that might be made.

Background

3. At the UK Statistics Authority Board meeting on 6 November 2014, the Authority Board agreed to the functions of NSDEC. These functions include providing ethical consideration of proposals to access, use and share data and to ensure transparency around data shares.

Data Shares

4. The Microdata Release Panel is responsible for overseeing the release of microdata (micro level and disclosive aggregate data) by ONS.
5. It acts with the delegated authority of the National Statistician and its purpose is to ensure that the ONS releases data in a consistent and safe manner.
6. The MRP consists solely of ONS executive members.
7. At present the MRP does not publish information around the data it shares. More information about the MRP can be found at **Annex A**.

Data Access

8. The Administrative Data Division in ONS is responsible for producing an Administrative Sources Catalogue (ASC). The aim of the ASC is to record specific information about all administrative sources used and/or stored within ONS.
9. At present the Administrative Data Division currently updates this catalogue twice annually. The catalogue currently provides brief information relating to the administrative sources which ONS stores or uses. At present there are 438 sources listed.
10. The catalogue, whilst published online (<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/the-national-statistics-standard/code-of-practice/statement-of-administrative-sources/index.html>) has also been the subject of Freedom of Information requests. This suggests that the information published may not be accessible or comprehensive enough.
11. An extract of the type of information which is currently published can be found at **Annex B**.
12. **Annex B** also provides further background to the Administrative Sources Catalogue the Administrative Data Division's plans for upgrading this catalogue to better meet user needs and improve overall transparency.

Adil Deedat, NSDEC Secretariat, Central Policy Secretariat, 26 June 2015

List of Annexes

Annex A	The Mircodata Release Panel, Martin Stringfellow, MRP Secretariat, ONS
Annex B	The Administrative Sources Catalogue, Glen Doubleday, Administrative Data Division , ONS

Annex A The Microdata Release Panel

Introduction

1. The Microdata Release Panel (MRP) was established in 2002 by the then National Statistician, Len Cook.
2. The purpose of the panel is to ensure that the Office for National Statistics (ONS) releases data in a consistent and safe manner, adhering to the both the law and its own policies. It is a fundamental part of ONS's risk management of disclosure of individual characteristics.
3. The MRP acts with the delegated authority of the National Statistician reporting to him annually. It acts as a centre of expertise for interpreting legal, ethical and business obligations of ONS micro-level and disclosive data.

Membership

4. The MRP is chaired by Guy Goodwin Executive Director of Analysis and Dissemination in the Office for National Statistics.
5. The Panel includes representatives from other ONS business areas whose data is most often disclosed by ONS. This includes representatives from the Administrative Data Division, Business Statistics, Life events and population sources, Statistical Disclosure control and Information Assurance.
6. Information Asset Owners are also invited to attend whenever data for which they are responsible are being considered.

Responsibilities

7. The primary responsibility of the Microdata Release Panel, which is consistent with their terms of reference, is to provide assurance to the National Statistician that:
 - i. the confidentiality of data is safeguarded and the risk of inadvertent disclosure is minimised;
 - ii. ONS practices for the release of Micro level and disclosive aggregate data are compliant with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics; and
 - iii. micro-level and disclosive aggregate data released or accessed will only be used for statistical research purposes.
8. The primary responsibility is achieved by ensuring that the MRP:
 - i. approves all ONS data access arrangements;
 - ii. considers all third party access to micro-level and disclosive aggregate data and approves them when the required criteria are met;
 - iii. records its decisions in order to provide a definitive source of the location of ONS micro-level and disclosive aggregate data;
 - iv. records its precedent forming decisions in order to build a resource for ONS and a reference point for future decisions of the Panel;
 - v. manages the risk in data access through the operation of the ONS audit procedure through the operation of the ONS audit procedure and maintains an audit trail for each release of disclosive data;
 - vi. provides a forum for discussion, decision and interpretation on issues relating to current and future practices for the release of micro-level and disclosive aggregate data; and

- vii. foster a tendency towards consistency in approach and practice across all business areas in data access.
9. MRP decisions may set precedents for Information Asset Owners to follow in assessing new requests for micro-data release The Panel will provide a clear and reasoned authority for release (or the withholding of authority for release) that will be available as a reference resource.
 10. Although access will only be granted for statistical research purposes, the products of statistical research can be used for any further purpose, for example to inform policy and monitor change.

Process

11. The Microdata Release Unit (MRU), in ONS is the Secretariat and administrative unit of the MRP.
12. There are a number of stages before data is released.
 - i. A customer approaches the MRU or an ONS business area with a request for data, stating their purpose.
 - ii. The business area considers whether the data requested are suitable for the stated purpose. If business area thinks there might be an issue with the request they may approach the MRU and/or Legal Services for clarification.
 - iii. The business area creates an MRP request in the MRP database and, if Approved Researcher¹ is the appropriate legal gateway, then an Approved Researcher database request is completed too.
 - iv. Other legal gateways for access to the data also exist. For example the Secretary of state for Health has the legal authority to access data. Other government departments may also gain access to data, for example, through consent obtained from surveys which allows use for statistical purposes.
 - v. Even with a legal gateway as outlined in (iii) and (iv) ONS MRP must still agree to releasing the data.
 - vi. The business area forwards the request to the MRU for review.
 - vii. The MRU ensures that the request comes under a legal gateway and meets current ONS policy.
 - viii. The Panel Members review and comment on the application.
 - ix. The Chair makes the final decision.
 - x. The Panel and Information Asset Owner agree whether or not this decision sets a precedent which the MRU can apply to future applications.
 - xi. If approved a Data Access Agreement is signed by ONS and the customer
 - xii. Depending on the assurance level that ONS requires for the data,
 - a. the business area encrypts and supplies the data; or
 - b. VML or the Secure Data Service arranges access for customer; or
 - c. the UK Data Service supplies a Special Licence dataset.
 - xiii. When the request expiry date is reached, the business area is reminded to check with the customer that the data has been deleted and, if it has, the request is marked as ended on the MRP database.
 - xiv. All approvals are reported annually to the National Statistician.

Martin Stringfellow, MRP Secretariat, 25 June 2015

¹ Under the SRSA 2007 “approved researcher” means an individual to whom the Board has granted access, for the purposes of statistical research, to personal information held by it.

Annex B- Administrative Sources Catalogue

Table B1 shows an extract of the 438 sources currently published on the ONS website.

Dataset Title	External Supplier	Geographic Coverage	Dataset Title	External Supplier
Annual Electoral Registers	LA - Local Authority	Great Britain	Annual Electoral Registers	LA - Local Authority
Annual Electoral Registers	LA - Local Authority		Annual Electoral Registers	LA - Local Authority
Electoral Register 2011 Updated Dataset	Electoral Commission	England and Wales	Electoral Register 2011 Updated Dataset	Electoral Commission
Conceptions/Education	DfE - Department for Education	England	Conceptions/Education	DfE - Department for Education
Abortions Notified to DH	DH - Department of Health	England & Wales	Abortions Notified to DH	DH - Department of Health
Accident and health income and outgoing. Property claims data.	Association of British Insurers	United Kingdom - (England, Wales, Scotland, NI)	Accident and health income and outgoing. Property claims data.	Association of British Insurers
ACORN	CACI Ltd	United Kingdom - (England, Wales, Scotland, NI)	ACORN	CACI Ltd
Adoptions data extract (Adopted Children Register)	GRO - General Register Office	England and Wales	Adoptions data extract (Adopted Children Register)	GRO - General Register Office
Adult social care: goods and service inputs	DH - Department of Health	England	Adult social care: goods and service inputs	DH - Department of Health
Adult social care: labour inputs	DH - Department of Health	England	Adult social care: labour inputs	DH - Department of Health
Agricultural Price Index	DEFRA - Department for the Environment Food and Rural Affairs	United Kingdom - (England, Wales, Scotland, NI)	Agricultural Price Index	DEFRA - Department for the Environment Food and Rural Affairs
Air and Surface mail expenditure and receipt	Royal Mail Group	United Kingdom - (England, Wales, Scotland, NI)	Air and Surface mail expenditure and receipt	Royal Mail Group
Air emissions (based on National Air Emissions Inventory)	AEA Technology	United Kingdom - (England, Wales, Scotland, NI)	Air emissions (based on National Air Emissions Inventory)	AEA Technology
Air Freight Arrivals	CAA - Civil	United Kingdom	Air Freight Arrivals	CAA - Civil

	Aviation Authority	- (England, Wales, Scotland, NI)		Aviation Authority
Air traffic control charges	National Air Traffic Services (NATs)	United Kingdom - (England, Wales, Scotland, NI)	Air traffic control charges	National Air Traffic Services (NATs)
Airline services, passenger-kilometres travelled, freight and mail tonne-kilometres (CAA)	CAA - Civil Aviation Authority	England and Wales	Airline services, passenger-kilometres travelled, freight and mail tonne-kilometres (CAA)	CAA - Civil Aviation Authority
Airport services, terminal passengers, cargo tonnes, chargeable weights and service units (CAA)	CAA - Civil Aviation Authority	England & Wales	Airport services, terminal passengers, cargo tonnes, chargeable weights and service units (CAA)	CAA - Civil Aviation Authority
Analysis of licences issued (Financial Statistical Return)	DVLA - Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency	United Kingdom - (England, Wales, Scotland, NI)	Analysis of licences issued (Financial Statistical Return)	DVLA - Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency
Annual Current price data for Horticulture & other crops (which comprises oats, rye, other cereals & other crops)	DEFRA - Department for the Environment Food and Rural Affairs	United Kingdom - (England, Wales, Scotland, NI)	Annual Current price data for Horticulture & other crops (which comprises oats, rye, other cereals & other crops)	DEFRA - Department for the Environment Food and Rural Affairs
Annual data on freight transport by ferries	DFT - Department for Transport	United Kingdom - (England, Wales, Scotland, NI)	Annual data on freight transport by ferries	DFT - Department for Transport
Annual data on the number of day and boarding pupils	Independent Schools Information Service	United Kingdom - (England, Wales, Scotland, NI)	Annual data on the number of day and boarding pupils	Independent Schools Information Service
Annual data on the number of trade union members	BIS - Department for Business	United Kingdom - (England, Wales, Scotland, NI)	Annual data on the number of trade union members	BIS - Department for Business
Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings sample	HMRC - HM Revenue and Customs	United Kingdom - (England, Wales, Scotland, NI)	Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings sample	HMRC - HM Revenue and Customs
Annual UK airline revenue and expenditure	CAA - Civil Aviation Authority	United Kingdom - (England, Wales, Scotland, NI)	Annual UK airline revenue and expenditure	CAA - Civil Aviation Authority

Administrative Sources Catalogue (ASC)- Project Background

1. The general aim of the ASC is to record specific information about all administrative sources (both individual level and aggregated) used and/or stored within ONS and relates to the following requirements:
 - The UK Statistics Authority Code of Practice (Protocol 3, Practice 5) requires all government organisations to produce a list of all the administrative sources they hold. A subset of the ASC is used by ONS in the production of a Statement of Administrative Sources.
 - A reference is required for users and potential users of administrative data within ONS and other government departments to provide information about the statistical usage of administrative sources and other administrative sources with the potential to be used for statistical purposes.
2. The Administrative Data Division (ADD) have identified that a complete and high quality ASC is essential for delivery of the end to end data access and usage improvements. As ADD increases the quantity of data that is shared with ONS greater assurance will be required by data owners along with requirements to improve transparency and enhance preparation for public scrutiny.
3. The objectives of the project are as follows:
 - i. Engage with stakeholders and business areas to explain the value of a complete and accurate ASC and highlight the importance of them providing accurate, complete and prompt information about the admin sources they use and/or hold.
 - ii. Collect information about the administrative sources used and/or held by all ONS business areas.
 - iii. Information captured to be used to review the completeness and accuracy of the Administrative Sources Catalogue (ASC).
 - iv. Produce a revised version of the ASC that accurately reflects admin sources stored and used by ONS business areas.
 - v. The new version of the ASC will be used as an example of best practice across the Government Statistical Service (GSS).

Scope of administrative sources for inclusion in the ASC

4. All holdings must be included even if only a single figure is received and other details such as the number of variables included in an administrative source and the associated level of aggregation do not affect the need for it to be listed in the ASC. The catalogue states statistical products derived from each dataset but does not currently state other reasons for holding administrative data sources, which could include:
 - i. when ONS processes or publishes data on behalf of another organisation;
 - ii. data not currently used within a statistical publication but may be used in the future; and
 - iii. where data has been used indirectly for a statistical publication such as quality assurance.
5. Information is required covering all administrative sources held and/or used within ONS and should include the following (list is not exhaustive):
 - i. administrative data received by ONS regardless of whether it is sent by another Government Department, public body or private sector body;
 - ii. any administrative data owned by another organisation and held on ONS systems;
 - iii. administrative data received directly from an organisation that is not publicly available;
 - iv. administrative data received directly from an organisation but also published elsewhere;

- v. administrative data extracted from a public website (e.g. lists of specific organisational locations for use in the development of an address register);
- vi. management information collected within ONS; and
- vii. administrative survey data (mixture of data not collected for statistical purposes and survey data).

Details of administrative sources to be included in ASC

6. Based on responses received from an administrative data user engagement survey completed by ONS staff in June 2015, the aim will be to include the following details about all the administrative sources saved and/or used by ONS:
 - administrative data source title, supplier information, geographic coverage, data type, time periods covered, population covered, what it's used for within ONS and by who; and
 - other aspects of administrative data that may be covered (where information is available): data quality, what it's used for outside of ONS and by who, data access rules and conditions.

7. Project milestones

- i. Clarify user requirements - June 2015
- ii. Specify information for collection - August 2015
- iii. Collect and quality assure information - October/November 2015
- iv. Produce new and improved version of the ASC and publish via the ONS website - April 2016

Glen Doubleday, Administrative Data Division, 26 June 2015

Any other business

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