



Administrative Data  
Research Network

An ESRC Data  
Investment

# Like a kid in a sweetshop

Lessons in managing  
researcher expectations

John Sanderson, Sabrina Iavarone,  
Rowan Lawrance

Better Knowledge

Better Society

# This presentation

- ▶ The ADRN model and context
- ▶ Challenges
- ▶ Solutions
  - ▷ Data & Communications
  - ▷ User Services



- 1) Sabrina - why the ADRN model was adopted - Orange
- 2) Rowan - how it was useful in the context of the service - Purple

*Sabrina to draft:*

- 2) the challenges that became apparent when ADRN began to operate and the difficulties that were experienced because of the working model and - Pink

*Rowan to draft:* Metadata/User experience of website etc. What we have/want/blue sky/middle ground – Blue

*Sabrina to draft:* What User Services provide/strategies/how researcher need is met by service - Yellow

- 3) the solutions that the service put in place to enable effective user support and management in a highly challenging environment (as well as some of the blue-sky thinking that we've done about the ideal solutions for the future).



# THE ADRN MODEL



# About the Network

- ▶ Administrative Data Service - University of Essex
- ▶ 4 Administrative Data Research Centres
  - ▶ England – University of Southampton
  - ▶ Northern Ireland – Queens University Belfast
  - ▶ Scotland – University of Edinburgh
  - ▶ Wales – Swansea University



# How It Works

## Project Development

**Contact us**  
& find out if ADRN is right for your research project

**Discuss & develop**  
your project idea with User Services to explore possibilities

**Complete**  
the **project proposal form**, which will be presented to the Approvals Panel

**Complete**  
the **researcher application form** to tell us more about your team and show your institution's support

## Approval & Data Negotiation

**The Approvals Panel** decides if the project is feasible and if it can progress

**Data Negotiation**  
the Network negotiates on your behalf with data custodians

**Data Linkage**  
the Network matches and links the data via a trusted third party and prepares your bespoke dataset

## Start your analysis

**Be trained**  
in the safe use of de-identified data (for all researchers who access data)

**Access data**  
in one of our Administrative Data Research Centres

## Finalise your research

**Statistical Disclosure Control**  
before your results can be released

**Disseminate**  
your findings to the public and make an impact on society with your research

# THE CONTEXT



# Dialogue on Data

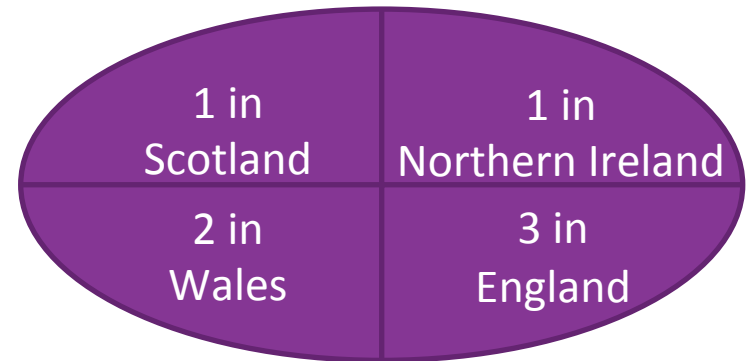
- ▶ Public Engagement research commissioned by ESRC & ONS
- ▶ Conducted by Ipsos MORI
- ▶ Purpose:
  - ▷ Public opinions on potential revisions to UK Census methodology
  - ▷ Public attitude towards the use of government administrative data linking for research purposes





# Dialogue on Data

- ▶ 7 groups of 18-20 participants



- ▶ Group quotas ensured participants were broadly of local population
- ▶ Network representative ('Expert') to answer questions at each workshop

# Dialogue on Data: Conclusions

- ▶ Low awareness and understanding of value of social research
- ▶ Social benefits necessary (purely academic work valued less)
  - ▷ But no clear definition of 'social benefit'
- ▶ Very familiar with importance of data in modern society
  - ▷ But very worried about data security
  - ▷ Not feeling in control of personal data



# Dialogue on Data: on ADRN

- ▶ Why necessary?
  - ▷ People thought data sharing and linkage already happened widely within gov't
- ▶ Concerns about de-identification and the possibility of re-identification
- ▶ Concerns about security and who can access linked datasets
- ▶ Concerns about cost



# Dialogue on Data

- ▶ Full research and methodology available online

<https://adrn.ac.uk/media/1245/sri-dialogue-on-data-2014.pdf>

<https://adrn.ac.uk/media/1244/sri-dialogue-on-data-2014-annexe.pdf>



# THE CHALLENGES



# Implementations in the Network

- ▶ Ipsos MORI report made several recommendations
- ▶ Implemented in policies and culture of the Network



# What we learned

- ▶ Transparency is key
  - ▽ Policies and procedures online
  - ▽ Approvals Panel minutes online
  - ▽ Board minutes online
- ▶ Independence is paramount
  - ▽ Universities lead on the project
  - ▽ No government interference (other than funding via ESRC)



# What we learned

- ▶ De-identification & linkage are very important
  - ▽ Public needs to be reassured information is properly de-identified and kept safe at all times
  - ▽ De-identification and linkage process are very complex but also very safe
- ▶ Strong opposition to commercial usage
  - ▽ So no commercial access to administrative data via the Network





# What we learned

- ▶ Public benefit must be clear
  - ▽ Public benefit statement in application and on the website in the list of approved projects
- ▶ Understandable accurate messages needed
  - ▽ Avoid jargon
  - ▽ Communication tailored to the general public



# THE SOLUTIONS: DATA & COMMUNICATIONS



# Implementation of lessons learned

- ▶ Public involved in decision making
  - ▽ Lay member on ADRN Board
  - ▽ Two lay members on Approvals Panel
  - ▽ Citizens Panels (in development)
- ▶ Consultation, not fait accompli
  - ▽ Organisation keeps growing and adapting
- ▶ Create understandable materials
  - ▽ Such as our metadata catalogue/animations



# THE SOLUTIONS: USER SERVICES



# Implementation of lessons learned

- ▶ Researchers must prove they cannot get data elsewhere
  - ▽ Such as UK Data Service
- ▶ Restrictions on who can access data
  - ▽ Researchers must be trained
  - ▽ Researchers can only access data in Centres

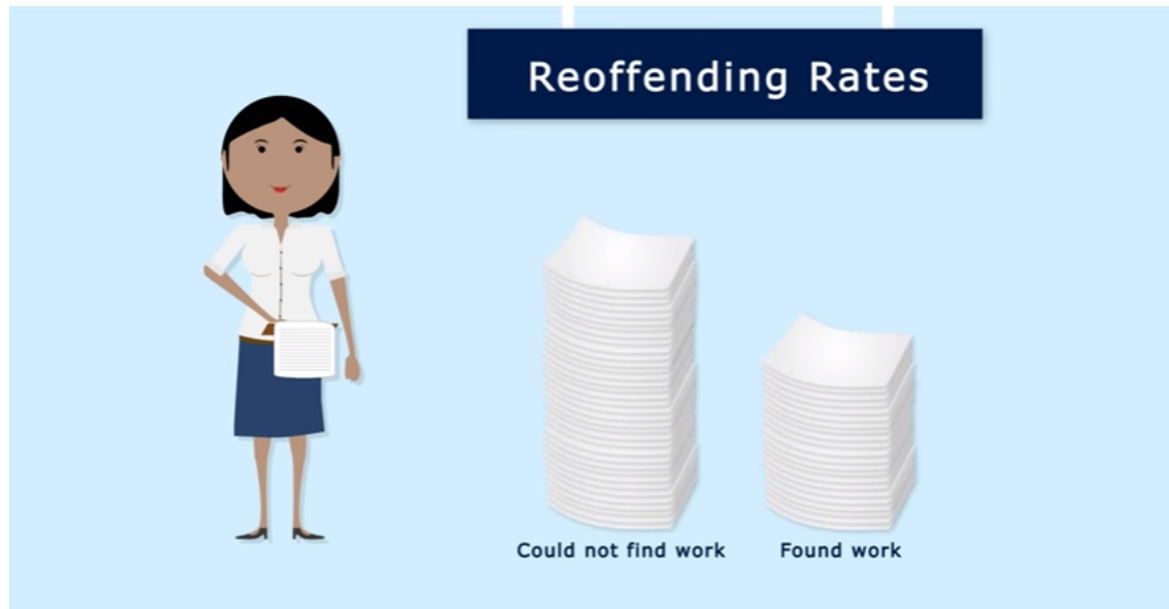


# Implementation of lessons learned

- ▶ No plans for massive linked database
  - ▽ Linked datasets are destroyed after research (and appropriate time for peer review)
- ▶ Personal data is never seen by researchers
  - ▽ Researchers must be trained
  - ▽ Researchers can only access data in Centres



# Protecting privacy: an animation



Thank you.

Questions?

