



## **Analysing Income and Family Characteristics - how we share and use personal data**

### **Summary**

This publication provides non-statutory guidance from the Department for Education. It has been produced to describe how we share and use education, employment and benefit claim information for research and statistical purposes.

### **Expiry or review date**

This guidance will be reviewed before November 2018.

### **How we use information about education, employment and benefit claims**

We<sup>1</sup> have undertaken a feasibility study to find out if it is possible to link personal information relating to children currently in education with employment and benefit claims information on their parents/guardians. The purpose of this research is to understand how educational attainment varies with income, and the challenges faced by those pupils in families which are not currently identified as disadvantaged.

The information we are attempting to link includes (but is not limited to):

- personal characteristics of the pupils including: Age, Gender, Ethnicity, primary language, location (LSOA as most precise grouping), Key Stage, school level information, attainment and progress measures
- Tax credit information via Child benefits claimed by guardians
- Employee tax data on guardian income
- Housing benefits
- Other benefits

The linking has been carried out by DWP who hold these details. DfE do not have data on individual parents earnings but have been provided with aggregate figures for the family by different source of income after equalisation.

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<sup>1</sup> Three government departments are working together to link this data. Education information up to age 18 is obtained from Department for Education. This information is combined with benefit claim information collected by Department for Work and Pensions and employment information collected by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs.

We are linking information relating to students who were in the education system during the academic year 2015/16.

## **How we will use the information**

There are specific legal powers which allow us to link information relating to education, employment, and benefit claims. These powers only allow this information to be used to make decisions about education and training policy from summary information, for example, the average income students have achieved after taking a course. For more information see section 78 of the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015 and sections 87 - 91 of the Education and Skills Act 2008.

The above linked information is only made available to government employees or organisations working on our behalf under strict contractual conditions for research and analysis purposes. Before providing access to the above linked information for research, we remove names, date of births and addresses. Access to names, date of births and addresses is restricted to government employees and contractors who need access in order to link together the information. Identifying individuals from the linked information is against our terms and conditions.

All government employees and contractors must agree to our terms and conditions before accessing the linked information for research purposes. We will monitor use of the linked information and if users fail to meet these conditions, access will be removed and we may consider further action.

We only allow data to be published from the linked information in summary form, such as the proportion of pupils that fall into certain income ranges. We take care to ensure that this summary information is anonymised so individuals cannot be identified from the published information.

Personal information is not used for marketing purposes or to make decisions that will affect individuals.

This dataset will not be shared with third party organisations outside of the three Government Departments who collectively created the dataset.

## **Requesting access to your information**

We will consider requests from you for copies of your information, but the release of information may be exempt under section 33 of the Data Protection Act (1998) as the above linked information is used exclusively for research and statistical purposes. If you wish to request particular elements of your data, please contact the government department responsible for the relevant data collection.<sup>2</sup>

## **Reviewing the information**

We will review the data annually and delete any information not needed.

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<sup>2</sup> The Data Protection Act (DPA) enables individuals to request access to personal data held by organisations. However, section 33 of the Data Protection Act 1998 exempts organisations from providing this data in cases where this information is being used exclusively for research, historical or statistical purposes.

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