

How can linking my data help Understanding Society?



By linking your survey data with data from DWP, there are many research opportunities to explore.

- We can look at how changes in the benefits system affects people's mental health.
- We can find out who takes up benefits and who doesn't.
- We can see how benefit changes affect family life.



What is this leaflet about?

With your permission, we would like to link your Understanding Society survey answers with your economic data from The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

What economic information would be added?

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) keeps a record of everybody's benefit claims and any periods that people spend on employment programmes. Understanding Society would like to add these records to the responses you have given to the survey. If you give your permission, we will be able to better analyse who is claiming benefits and how they can best be helped.

What will happen if I give permission?

To make the link between DWP records and your survey responses Understanding Society will give the DWP your name, address, sex and date of birth. The DWP will use these details to identify the correct records it holds about you.

The DWP will then securely send across your DWP records. The DWP will not keep any of the personal information passed on to them.

The DWP records will be added to your study responses. Your personal information (name and address) will be removed before any research is done.

What if I have concerns?

If you have any questions or concerns, please call our **Freephone number 0800 252 853**

or write to

**Freepost RRXX-KEKJ-JGKS,
Understanding Society,
University of Essex,
Wivenhoe Park,
Colchester, CO4 3SQ.**

Or you can contact **Michaela Benzeval**,
the Director of Understanding Society

☎ 01206 873 983 ✉ mbenzeval@essex.ac.uk

Paul Clarke, the Research Director of ISER

☎ 01206 873 760 ✉ pclarke@essex.ac.uk

Mantalena Sotiriadou, the Research Governance
and Planning Manager at the University of Essex

☎ 01206 876 320 ✉ ms21994@essex.ac.uk

Linking your survey data with your economic records



Who will use it?

Like your survey responses, the additional information would be used by academic and social policy researchers for non-profit use. It will not be used for sales or marketing research. Any sensitive information would only be made available to these researchers under restricted access arrangements, so the information is used responsibly and safely. Names and addresses are never included in the results and no individual can be identified from the research.

What are the benefits of me giving consent?



Shorter surveys:

If we can link your survey answers with your DWP records, we don't have to ask you about these in the survey and the interview can be shorter.



Help improve social security services:

Linking to DWP data means researchers can look at the benefits structure in the UK. In the future, this might help improve the current system.



Lots of research has already been carried out with the benefit of data linkage, please see our publications library: www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/research/publications

If we can link your survey answers with your DWP records, your survey can be shorter

What does my permission cover?

Information can only be released with your permission. To make the link between DWP records and your survey responses, we would need to pass on personal information to the DWP.

These personal details will only be used to identify your information. Before the DWP send any information back to us, your name and other personal details will be removed. None of your survey answers will be shared with the DWP and your current or future dealings with this organisation will not change.

Like the answers you have given us in the survey, the DWP information will be treated in confidence and in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

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How long does my consent last?

We would like to add information relating to your present, past and future circumstances. We are not putting an expiry date to this consent as we do not know exactly when we will obtain and add the information.

We will remind you regularly of the permissions you have given, and you are free to withdraw your consent at any time. If you do choose to withdraw your consent, we will no longer link your records to your survey responses going forward. However, we will retain data which has been previously linked if you gave us permission.

What about data security?

Your survey answers and DWP records will be anonymised and will only be used for research and statistics. We are extremely security conscious, and all our systems are password protected and only accessed by a small number of authorised staff.

The information we need to exchange with the government departments will be sent via secure transfer systems. We follow the most up-to-date data security protocols and procedures and are compliant with the standards of the ISO 27001 data security protocols and procedures. Your personal details such as your name, contact details and date of birth will be secure at all times.



Are there any risks involved in giving permission?

There are no risks associated with linking your records to your survey responses.

Do I have to let you link my data?

No, linking your data, like the rest of Understanding Society is completely voluntary.

Has the study been reviewed and approved by an Ethics Committee?

Yes. In this case, the study has been approved by the NHS Health Research Authority, East of England – Essex Research Ethics Committee, reference: 22/EE/0260.

What if I change my mind?

If you wish to withdraw your permission at any point in the future, please write to:

**FREEPOST RRXX-KEKJ-JGKS,
Understanding Society, University of Essex,
Wivenhoe Park, Colchester, CO4 3SQ.**

Please sign and date your letter.