

How has linking my education data helped Understanding Society?

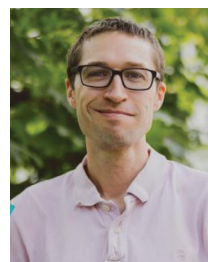


The latest research using linked educational data has found that if school meals are free for all children, it reduces obesity for primary age children.

Dr Angus Holford from the University of Essex used Understanding Society's linked data to explore the impact of free school meals on children's body weight.

Dr Holford and the team found that primary-age Universal Free School Meals introduced in Newham, Islington, Southwark and Tower Hamlets since 2009 reduced obesity prevalence among Reception and Year 6 children. It also led to a small improvement in reading scores by the end of primary school.

The research team have since hosted an event with the Department of Education to discuss their findings. Dr Holford said at the event, *"We hope policymakers and campaigners will go away informed, as well as us researchers."*



Without the linking of data, this research would not have been possible. Thanks again for your support.

Dr Angus Holford
University of Essex

What is this leaflet about?

With your permission, we would like to link your Understanding Society survey data with your educational data.

What information would be added?



Education Records including:

- National tests and formal assessments, for example SATS and GCSEs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and Standard Grades and Highers in Scotland
- Basic information on pupils like demographic characteristics (including ethnicity), special educational needs, attendance and eligibility for free school meals
- Further education courses taken, grades and funding
- Pre-school attended



From:

- **In England**, the Department for Education or agencies working on their behalf (as applicable)
- **In Wales**, the Welsh Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills.
- **In Scotland**, the Scottish Government Learning Directorate.
- **In Northern Ireland**, the Department of Education and the Education and Skills Authority.

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.

What if I have concerns?

If you have any concerns about any aspect of the study, or if you have a complaint, in the first instance please contact our Participant Communications Team on Freephone **0800 252 853** or by email: **contact@understanding.ac.uk**. They will pass the information onto the principal investigator of the project, Professor Michaela Benzeval.

If are still concerned, or if you think your complaint has not been addressed to your satisfaction, or you feel that you cannot approach the principal investigator, please contact the departmental Director of Research in the department responsible for this project, Professor Paul Clarke, **pclarke@essex.ac.uk**.

If you are still not satisfied, please contact the University's Research Governance and Planning Manager, Mantalena Sotiriadou **ms21994@essex.ac.uk**.

Linking your survey data with your education 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 education records, we don't have to ask you about these in the survey and the interview can be much shorter.



Help improve education services:

Linking education data means researchers can look closer at the educational 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 education records, your survey can be much shorter.

What does my permission cover?

Information can only be released with your permission. To make the link between education records and your survey responses, we would need to pass on personal information to the government departments and agencies holding the records. They can then add your/your child's education records to your survey responses. The necessary personal details include full name, full address, gender, date of birth and school name, where applicable.

These personal details will only be used to identify your information. Before the departments and agencies send any information, you have authorised back to us, your name and other personal details will be removed. None of your survey answers will be shared with these government departments and agencies and your current or future dealings with these organisations will not change.

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

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 my children's information?

We would like to add information on your child(ren) from birth up to age 16. We need to seek parental consent to add information on your children aged under 16. We understand that some children would be able to make this decision on their own behalf. You could discuss this with your child and make the decision that best represents their wishes. Once your child is aged 16+ we will ask them directly when we next speak to them.

Your information will be treated in confidence and in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

What about data security?



Your survey answers and linked education 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 education records to your survey responses.

Do I have to let you link my data?

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