
UK Statistics Authority's Centre for Applied Data Ethics

Applying data ethics within a statistical context

Data Ethics Team

[UK Statistics Authority Centre for Applied Data Ethics](#)

11 November 2021

Our ambition

- The UK Statistics Authority launched its Centre for Applied Data Ethics in February 2021
 - This builds on the existing work of the UK Statistics Authority's Data Ethics team
 - Our ambition is to be recognised thought-leaders in the practical application of data ethics for **statistics** and **research**
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Where do we fit in the data ethics landscape?

- There are multiple ethical frameworks and approaches in the UK and internationally
- We share similar ethical principles to these - but what else?
- We focus on providing an **applied support and guidance service** to the research and statistical community, empowering and supporting people to apply ethical principles to their work

UK Statistics Authority ethical principles

Public Good

The use of data has clear benefits for users and serves the public good.



Confidentiality, data security

The data subject's identity (whether person or organisation) is protected, information is kept confidential and secure, and the issue of consent is considered appropriately.



Methods and Quality

The risks and limits of new technologies are considered and there is sufficient human oversight so that methods employed are consistent with recognised standards of integrity and quality.



Legal Compliance

Data used and methods employed are consistent with legal requirements such as Data Protection Legislation, the Human Rights Act 1998, the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007, public equalities duty and the common law duty of confidence.



Public views & engagement

The views of the public are considered in light of the data used and the perceived benefits of the research.



Transparency

The access, use and sharing of data is **transparent**, and is communicated clearly and accessibly to the public.



Applying ethical principles



Ethics Self-Assessment Tool

National Statistician's Data Ethics Advisory Committee

The Centre builds on this foundation...



Continued development of **ethics self-assessment tool** and **associated ethics services**



Publish **new guidance on cross cutting ethical issues** in research and statistics



Provide an **ethics advisory and support service** to projects across government

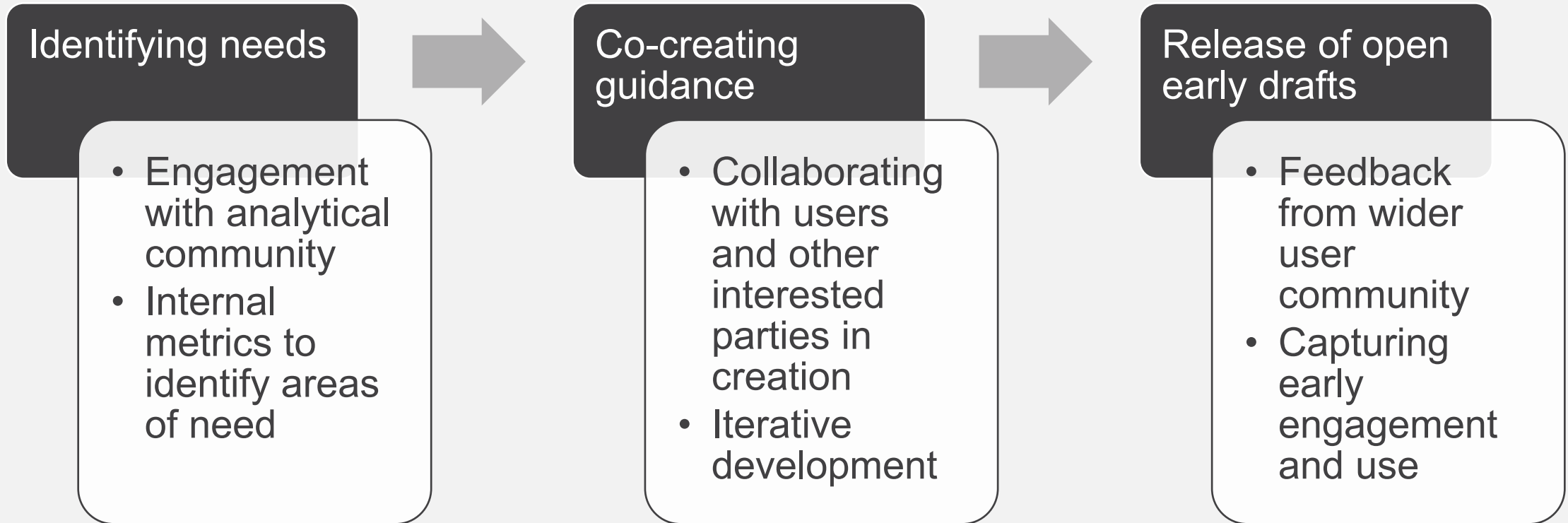


Engage our user community and other stakeholders when developing our approach



International engagement and collaboration in the practical application of data ethics

Developing guidance



Case example: Geospatial ethics guidance

Process	
Identifying need	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Raised by internal colleagues
Co-creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Extensive collaboration and iteration with internal geospatial colleagues- External engagement with multiple organisations working in the geospatial sector
Open early draft	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Published 18th May as open draft for wider comment- Proactive targeted engagement with user community for feedback- Further iterative development
Moving forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Review approach and lessons learnt for future guidance topic development- Evaluation of use and application over time

Key outputs to date

Activities

- Launch of [Centre](#) & [Centre strategy](#)
- [User review](#) of ethics self-assessment tool
- Leading UNECE ML2021 ethics [workstream](#)
- Launch of [independent Advisory Committee](#)
- International engagement & collaboration, including [initial theme meeting](#) and resulting deep dive programme

Guidance & Publications

- Publication of [landscape review](#)
- [Roundtable](#) and accompanying discussion note
- [Geospatial ethics guidance](#)
- [Public good](#) ethics guidance
- [Public views and engagement](#) ethics guidance
- Ethical considerations in [use of data from third-parties](#)
- [Machine learning](#) ethics guidance

These activities are delivered by the **UK Statistics Authority data ethics team** and guided by:

- ✓ An **independent** Advisory Committee
- ✓ Engagement with **international** and **domestic stakeholders**
- ✓ Engagement with **research and statistical community**

What does this mean for the statistical community?

Support

- We focus on providing targeted, in-depth, practical support to enable people to address data ethics issues in their work.

Guidance

- We provide practical, user-friendly guidance that addresses current and emerging needs in relation to data ethics.

Engagement

- We emphasise the importance of being responsive to feedback and co-create guidance topics and activities so they are as useful as possible to the analytical community.

Contact us: **Data.ethics@statistics.gov.uk**

Or visit our website:

<https://uksa.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/data-ethics/>
