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**
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public Good</td>
<td>The use of data has clear benefits for users and serves the public good.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Confidentiality, data security</td>
<td>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.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Methods and Quality</td>
<td>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.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Legal Compliance</td>
<td>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.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public views &amp; engagement</td>
<td>The views of the public are considered in light of the data used and the perceived benefits of the research.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transparency</td>
<td>The access, use and sharing of data is transparent, and is communicated clearly and accessibly to the public.</td>
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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

Identifying needs
- Engagement with analytical community
- Internal metrics to identify areas of need

Co-creating guidance
- Collaborating with users and other interested parties in creation
- Iterative development

Release of open early drafts
- Feedback from wider user community
- Capturing early engagement and use
### Case example: Geospatial ethics guidance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identifying need</td>
<td>- Raised by internal colleagues</td>
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<tr>
<td>Co-creation</td>
<td>- Extensive collaboration and iteration with internal colleagues</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- External engagement with multiple organisations working in the</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>geospatial sector</td>
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<tr>
<td>Open early draft</td>
<td>- Published 18th May as open draft for wider comment</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Proactive targeted engagement with user community for feedback</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Further iterative development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moving forward</td>
<td>- Review approach and lessons learnt for future guidance topic</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>development</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Evaluation of use and application over time</td>
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## 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/