



Department  
for Work &  
Pensions

# Challenges & Developments in Data Sharing & Linking

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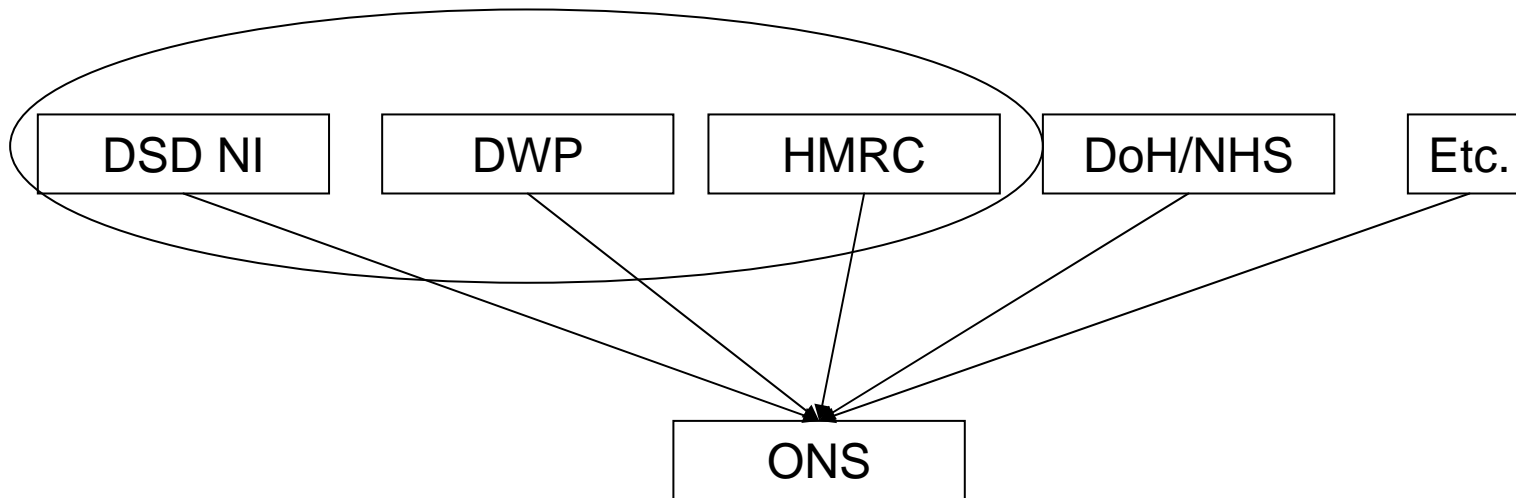
# Barriers to data sharing

- Explicit legislation to limit data sharing and impose penalties, e.g. section 123 of the Social Security Administration Act 1998.
- Complexity of legislation
  - Statutory departments e.g. HMRC
  - hundreds of gateways
  - Direction of share matters
  - HMRC and DWP both “difficult” but can share with each other “easily”
  - Uses can be tightly defined, policy, data items...
  - common law
  - Takes a lot of resource to get a Yes, No or Maybe
- Risk aversion
  - Security
  - Personal accountability if things go wrong
  - Negligible personal gain if things go right
- Resources
  - Staff
  - IT
  - Data quality

## Example 1 – Sharing Family Resources Survey data

- End User Licence
  - Limited variables – non-personal
  - Deposited at the UK Data Service
- Special Licence
  - Detailed characteristics – if published high risk of identification – personal
  - DWP has no legal basis to share personal data via UK Data Service
  - Reviewed whether security makes data non-personal (re ICO code of practice on anonymisation)
  - Withdrew data pending solution
- Restricted
  - Identified security & governance needed to make data non-personal
  - Identified additional data that could be included
  - Deposited in Essex safe room
  - Established small pilot
- Lessons could be re-used for other equally sensitive data, but it took two years to learn them

## Example 2. Sharing with ONS for population statistics



Not originally permitted because of section SSAA 123 and equivalents

Required legislation passed in Westminster and Stormont

Took 18 months to pass legislation

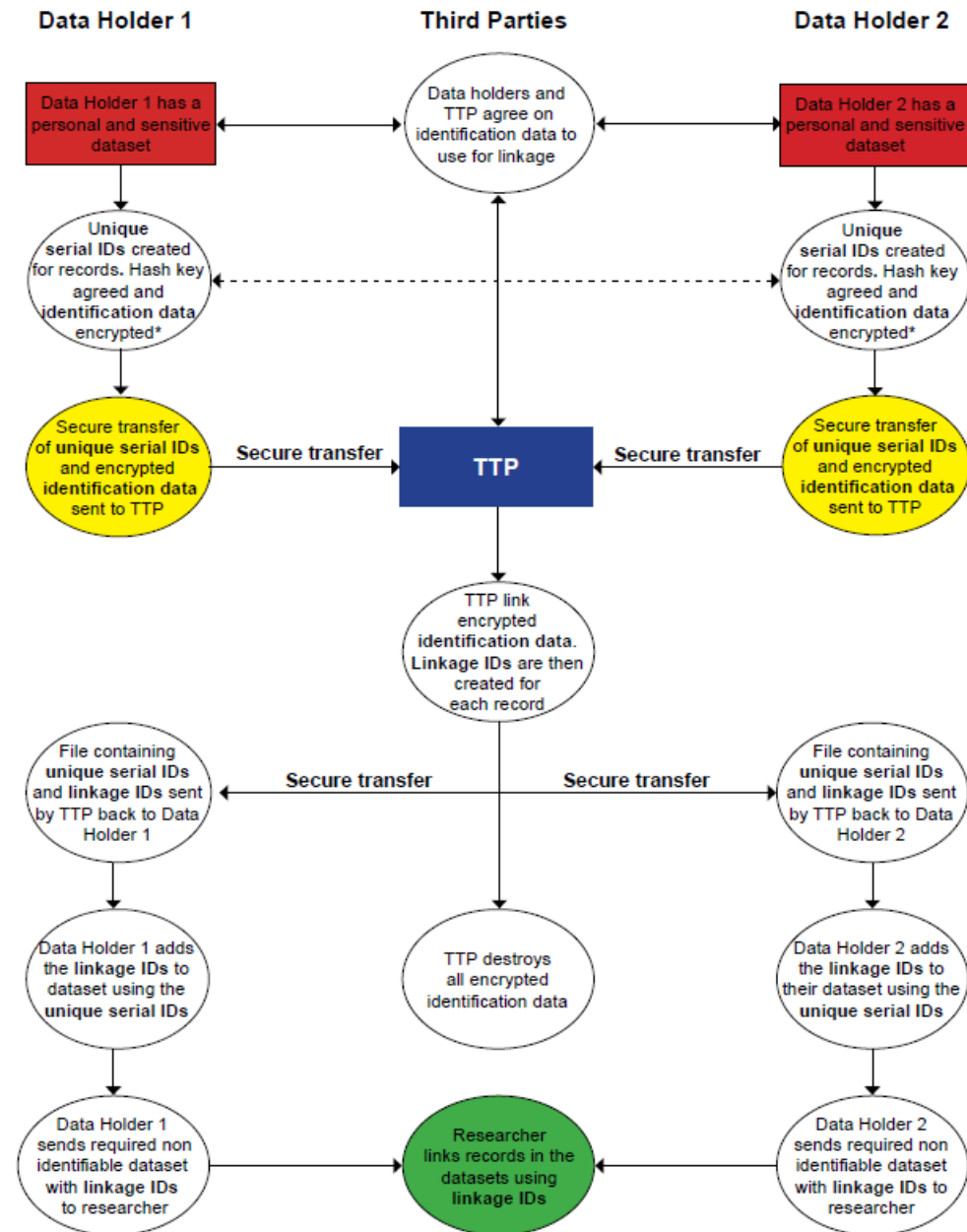
Very specific, would need more legislation to go beyond feasibility

# Cabinet Office led Information & Open Data policies

- Promoting greater awareness of data
  - Data.gov.uk
  - National information infrastructure
- Legislative proposals
  - Current policy development [www.datasharing.org.uk](http://www.datasharing.org.uk)
  - Full sharing with ONS
  - Non-ONS public sector
    - Use of independent indexers/linkers
    - Safe settings
    - Limits on longitudinal data (unless linked by ONS)
    - Limits on linking to external pilot or survey data (e.g. indexer may not allow a proportionate solution)

Trusted Third Party data linking model (for illustration, details are being worked through)

## Privacy preserving linkage



# Administrative Data Research Network

- Outcome of Admin Data Taskforce
  - Key recommendation, along with legislation
- Admin Data Research Centres
  - One per country (but some have three locations)
  - Supplemented by “safe-pods”
- Admin Data Service
  - A place to provide advice, deal with requests, manage consistency
  - Establishing processes, independent approvals panel
- Trusted Third Party Indexers
  - Link data – identifiers only
  - Security standard
- Governance
  - ADRN Board - Oversight from UK Stats Authority
  - DWP represented on ADRN Board

# Implications for secure dissemination and Open Data

- Secure dissemination of single data sources (or linked data from single controllers)
  - “anonymised data”
  - Legal clarity
  - Establishing safe settings (ADRCs and safe pods)
  - Funding via BIS/ESRC
  - Academia first, but also government & third sector
- Creation and secure dissemination of linked data from two or more controllers
  - As above plus....
  - Explicitly personal data with third party indexers
  - More possible than now
  - Linked data is more than the sum of its parts
- Potential to create less detailed non-personal data for fully open release
  - Could this be mandated (re EAGDA report)



# All sorted?

- Still limits
  - Legislation plans are for post-election
  - ADRN being developed
  - Still resource constraints in Departments
  - Outside public sector may still need consent to link data
  - TTP approach may leave cases that would be disproportionate and not achievable
  - TTP approach may not allow new longitudinal data sources
- But we now have several solid steps forward planned