

APPROVED RESEARCHER

The Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 gives ONS the function of promoting and assisting statistical research, in particular by granting access to the information it holds.

Thus legislation does something very significant. Granting access to information for Research purposes is a legitimate public expectation of a national statistics office, and serves a public good.

The Act ensures ONS can still use the many existing legal gateways to serve this purpose. It also recognises that existing gateways are not always sufficient and provides ONS with an additional gateway - Approved Researcher.

Personal information given in confidence to a statistics office requires the highest standards of data handling. Confidentiality is a legal right enjoyed by all people and businesses that take part in our censuses and surveys. The Act provides a common legislative safeguard to ensure the confidentiality of all ONS information. This safeguard applies to information used for statistical research, and carries criminal penalties for anyone who wrongfully discloses ONS personal information.

Put simply, granting access to information can take place when the researcher is fit and proper, when the information is held securely through to publication, and when the purpose is consistent with the expectations of census and survey respondents.

Approved Researcher addresses this first component. It opens a legal gateway once it is decided that a researcher is fit and proper given the purpose of the research.

Access to personal information can be authorised once I am also assured of the security of the information and the compliance of the proposed research with respondent expectations and the Code of Practice.

This document takes researchers through the process and provides the forms, completion notes, and declaration that may have to be completed for me to grant access to ONS information for statistical research purposes.



Karen Dunnell
National Statistician

HOW TO BECOME AN APPROVED RESEARCHER

Step 1

You first need to contact ONS to explain the purpose of your statistical research and your wish to access its personal information.

To contact ONS about your research use the contact details in the following link and give us a brief indication of what data you hope to use.

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/about/who-we-are/our-services/unpublished-data/index.html>.

Step 2

We will then send you an application pack to help us decide whether we can grant the access you require. This will include a Declaration and a data access agreement for you to sign and return.

Step 3

Once we have received your completed forms, signed declaration and data access agreement we will decide whether you satisfy the published criteria to grant access to that information and whether the disclosure may be authorised.

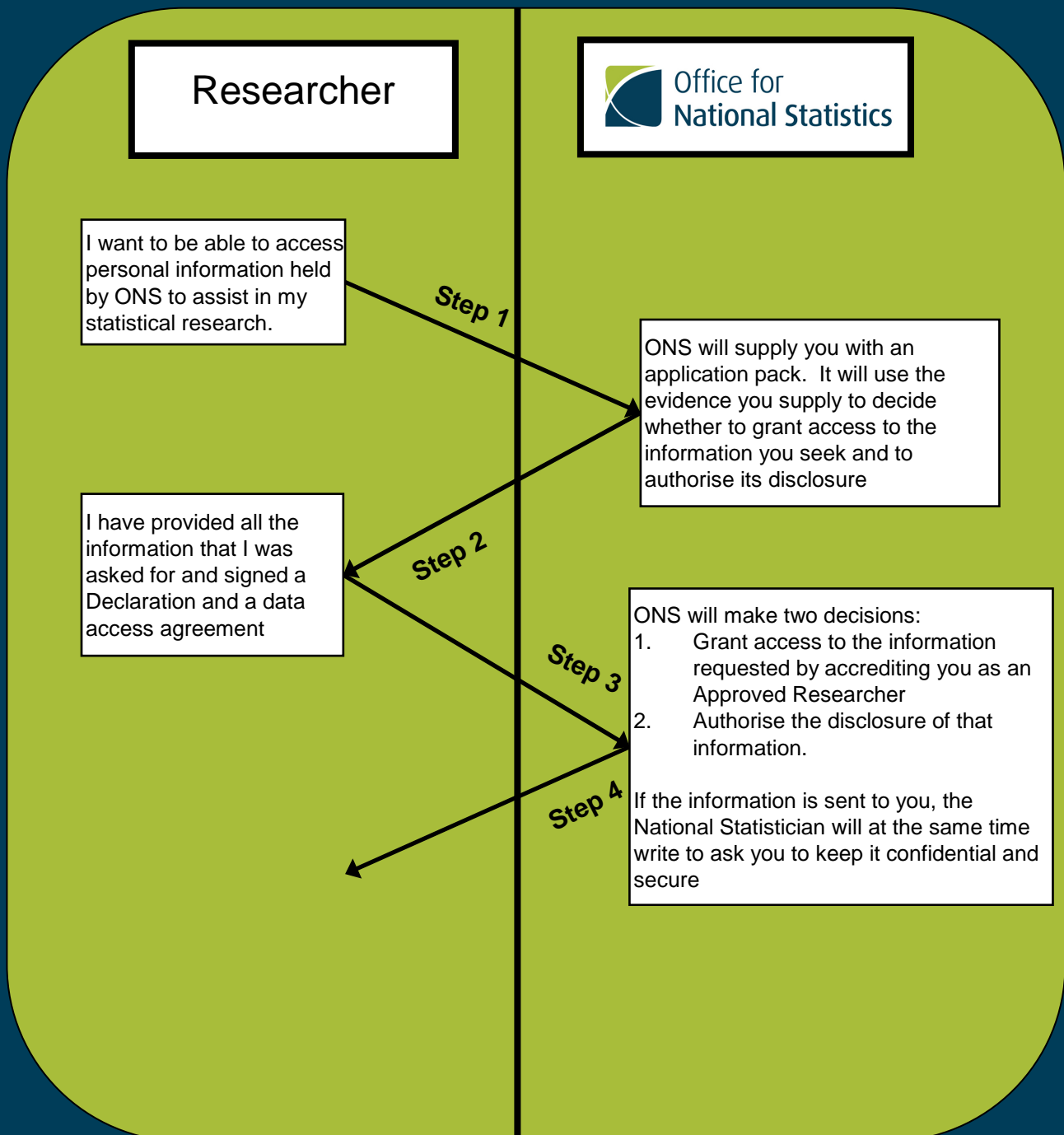
Step 4

ONS will notify you of the outcome of its decision. If it is necessary to refuse your application then the reasons will be included in a letter.

When you are granted access to the personal information you will also receive a letter from the National Statistician explaining your responsibilities for the security of that information.

ONS aims to process applications to be accredited as an Approved Researcher as quickly as possible and, usually, within three weeks.

HOW TO BECOME AN APPROVED RESEARCHER



Application for Accreditation as an Approved Researcher

The information you provide on this form will be used to consider whether you meet the criteria needed to be accredited as an Approved Researcher under the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007.

An assessment will only be made in relation to a purpose that, in the opinion of the National Statistician, is statistical research that serves the public good.

Criteria against which each application will be considered

A researcher is deemed 'Fit and Proper' when....

The researcher is able to demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the National Statistician, that he/she:

- 1. Has the appropriate knowledge and experience necessary for handling potentially disclosive personal information;**
- 2. Has provided satisfactory evidence supporting their application that illustrates their professionalism and technical competence to carry out the research proposal;**
- 3. Demonstrates a commitment to protecting and maintaining the confidentiality of the data during the creation of outputs and publications that arise during the proposal.**

A research project is deemed suitable when....

The research, in the opinion of the National Statistician, serves one of the following public benefits :

- 1. Supporting the formulation and development of public policy or public service delivery.**
- 2. Forms part of the programme of research covered by the National Data Strategy or otherwise supported directly or indirectly by the Economic and Social Research Council.**
- 3. Supports an obligation of public law (e.g. Local Development Plans)**
- 4. Explores new statistical methods that can be used to produce statistics that serve the public good.**

1. Your Details

Your Name	
Institution or Organisation	
Address	
Telephone No	
Email	

2. Describe briefly (in approx. 100 words) the purpose of the proposed research.**3. Please State the period for which access to personal information is required.**

Period for which access to personal information is required	From (dd/mm/yy)	To (dd/mm/yy)
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4. Experience :**Outline your experience of research that has involved handling potentially disclosive personal information.**

Information and its source	
Research title and date	
Your specific involvement	
Statistical use of the information	
Measures used for disclosure control and information security	
Other relevant information	

Include any other information you feel would help to demonstrate your experience in handling potentially disclosive personal information.)

5. Professionalism : Provide membership details of professional bodies.

A.

B.

C.

Provide examples of your contribution towards public
policy or journal publications.

A.

B.

C.

Include any other information you feel would help to demonstrate your professional
competence.



Office for
National Statistics

Approved Researcher Access

APPLICATION FORM

Office Use

Continuation
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Any other information for consideration :

DECLARATION

Access to personal information as an Approved Researcher is conditional upon signing this Declaration.

By signing this Declaration, you are confirming

- (i) the accuracy of any information you provide to support your application,
- (ii) your understanding of the conditions specified below,
- (iii) you will abide by any other requirements communicated to you by the National Statistician relating to this use of potentially disclosive personal information.

DECLARATION:

I declare that the personal information provided to me shall be kept secure and confidential according to the terms of any agreements with the Office for National Statistics.

I understand that :

Personal information means information which relates to and identifies a particular person (including a body corporate). Information identifies a particular person if the identity of that person is specified in the information; can be deduced from the information itself; or can be deduced from the information taken with any other published information;

UK Statistics Authority reserves the right to scrutinise any products or publications for disclosure control purposes before publication;

I may be liable to criminal prosecution under the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 if I disclose this personal information to any other person without the written authority of the National Statistician or other Member of the UK Statistics Authority;

My lawful use of this information is only for the purposes of statistical research that will serve the public good as agreed in writing with the National Statistician;

I am required to bring directly to the attention of the National Statistician any matters or events that may affect my obligations under this declaration, my Approved Researcher accreditation, or any other matter in the written agreements relating to this use of personal information.

I am authorised to access this personal information only when I receive from the National Statistician or other Member of the UK Statistics Authority a written and signed confirmation, and only until the end date in that written confirmation.

Signed:

Print Name:

Date:

COMPLETION NOTES

General

Accreditation as an Approved Researcher provides a temporary lawful authority under the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 (the Act) which allows the use of a particular set of personal information held by the UK Statistics Authority for a stated piece of statistical research. You should note that you will also have to satisfy other requirements (such as the suitability of your processing environment) before you will be authorised by the National Statistician to receive any information.

When completing the forms, you should focus on providing evidence that will enable the National Statistician to reach a decision that the Approved Researcher criteria have been met and that access to the information should be provided for the purpose specified.

You are not compelled to complete every section of the form as long as the evidence you provide is sufficient to demonstrate that you are a fit and proper person under the Act.

If the evidence you provide is found to be insufficient we will give you the opportunity to add to it. If you are still unsuccessful you will be provided with details of a review process to which you may apply. Your declaration will be considered void if your application is not successful.

The completed form, and any other information used by the National Statistician, may be made public, if, for example, to do so is necessary to assure the public or Parliament about the safeguarding of personal information. Any personal information you send us about yourself will only be used in connection with this application.

1. Your details

These details will be used to enable ONS to contact you. If you are working as part of an organisation, such as a business, university or charity, please complete the details of that organisation. If you are researcher not affiliated to any particular employer the details are likely to be your personal ones and you should write 'None' next to Institution. Contractors should apply as individuals in their own right.

2. Describe briefly (in approx. 100 words) the purpose of the proposed research.

The purpose for which the data are required must be statistical, and should be the focus of the research and resultant analysis. The prime focus for accessing the data should not be for the purpose of personal or commercial gain. The purpose should be one that serves the 'public good'.

3. Please State the period for which access to personal information is required.

Under the Act access can only be given for a specified period of time. Please ensure that you state an appropriate period of time as any access outside these dates may be a breach of the Act making you liable to prosecution. In the event of unforeseen circumstances the National Statistician may extend the period at a later date.

4. Experience :

You should outline your experience of research that has involved handling potentially disclosive personal information.

Any details you provide should focus on relevant experience and should illustrate your suitability to use personal information.

5. Professionalism :

Provide membership details of professional bodies

Membership of professional bodies can include associations or societies. Current details are of more interest but you may provide details of past memberships where you consider them appropriate.

Provide examples of your contribution towards public policy or journal publications.

Include details of publications that provide evidence of your meeting the published criteria. Electronic links would be helpful.

6. Any further information for consideration.

If you fear that your application is insufficient when matched against one or more criteria then use this space to add any extra evidence you feel is relevant. If you have only limited evidence you should provide the name of a suitable referee. You must include any evidence which is relevant in any way. Remember there is a more detailed written agreement where the details and benefits of the research can be set out.

Glossary of Terms

<u>TERM</u>	<u>DEFINITION</u>
1 Personal information	'personal information' is defined in section 39(2) of the 2007 Act as 'information which relates to and identifies a particular person (including a body corporate);' [See point 3 below]
2 Fit and proper person	<p>A fit and proper person is one who is able to demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the UKSA, that he/she:</p> <p>1.1 has the appropriate knowledge and experience necessary for handling confidential personal information.</p> <p>1.2 has provided satisfactory evidence to support their application that adequately illustrates their professionalism and technical competence to use the data requested in the research proposal</p> <p>1.3 is committed to protecting and maintaining the confidentiality of the data and their technical and physical security, during their use of the data and the creation of outputs and publications arising from their analyses.</p>
3 Confidential	<p>Confidential 'personal information' is information</p> <p>3.1 that specifies the identity of a particular person (including a body corporate)</p> <p>3.2 from which the identity of a particular person can be deduced, or</p> <p>3.3 from which the identity of a particular person can be deduced when taken together with other published information</p>

Glossary of Terms - Continued

<u>TERM</u>	<u>DEFINITION</u>
4 Public good	<p>Research that informs 'the public about social and economic matters, and assists in the development and evaluation of public policy' (section 7 of the 2007 Act).</p> <p>It is research that:</p> <p>1.1 produces statistics that describe as accurately as possible the developments in the economic, social, environmental and cultural spheres (Commission of the European Communities)</p> <p>1.2 builds the information capacity required to sustain strategic objectives and the underlying policies and supporting instruments (Commission of the European Communities)</p> <p>1.3 informs debate, decision making and research both within government and by the wider community (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Conference of European Statisticians: Managing Statistical Confidentiality & Microdata: Principles and Guidelines of Good Practice)</p> <p>1.4 provides an objective perspective of the changes taking place in national life and allow comparisons between periods of time and geographical areas (UNECE: Principles and Guidelines of Good Practice)</p> <p>1.5 'offers a window on the work and performance of government itself, showing the scale of government activity in every area of public policy and allowing the impact of public policies and actions to be assessed' (UNECE: Principles and Guidelines of Good Practice)</p> <p>1.6 assists the Government in its work</p>