



Department  
for Education

# **Longitudinal Education Outcomes study: how we use and share personal data**

**December 2017**

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## Summary

This publication provides non-statutory guidance from the Department for Education. It has been produced to describe how we use and share education, employment and benefit claims information for research and statistical purposes as part of the Longitudinal Education Outcomes study.

## Expiry or review date

This guidance will be reviewed before December 2018.

## How we use information about education, employment and any benefit claims

The Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) study involves five government departments working together and acting as joint data controllers:

- [The Department for Education](#)
- [The Education and Skills Department for Wales](#)
- [The Department for Work and Pensions](#)
- [Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs](#)
- [The Scottish Government](#)

The data is used to compare students' levels of education to their levels of employment and earnings in later life. To do this, we link personal information relating to their education, employment and benefit claims in order to:

- Enable comparisons of the performances of schools, colleges and universities
- provide statistical information to support education and career decisions
- evaluate and monitor the impact of education or training on outcomes
- support government decision making which improve services

We link information about students, such as:

- personal characteristics including gender and ethnic group
- if the young person had special education needs during their education
- household income
- if the young person qualified for free school meals
- schools attended, courses taken and qualifications achieved
- any benefits claimed
- any careers advice and training offered by the government
- employment and income

We only link the information relating to students who completed their education in 1995 or after, which is the earliest available education information.

## How we will use the information

The Small Business, Employment and Enterprise Act 2015 and sections 87 - 91 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 lawfully allow us to link education and tax data to chart the transition of learners from education into the workplace. These legal powers only allow this information to be used to make decisions about education and training policy from summary information, for example, the average income students have achieved after taking a course. For more information about the legislation that allows this sharing, [see](#)

[section 78 of the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015](#) and [sections 87 - 91 of the Education and Skills Act 2008](#).

Once the information is linked, it is only accessible to government employees at the above named departments or organisations working on their behalf. This access is provided under strict contractual conditions and is only for the purposes of research and analysis.

Access to the names, dates of birth and addresses of students is restricted to relevant government employees (and contractors working on their behalf) who need access to it in order to link their information. Before making the linked information available to others (for research purposes only), we take great care to anonymise it by removing all names, dates of birth and addresses before it is shared.

Any attempts to identify individuals from the linked information by third parties being given access to it (for research purposes) is strictly against the terms and conditions to which they must agree before being provided with it. We carefully monitor the use of linked information and if users fail to follow these terms and conditions, access will be removed and we will consider further action.

We only allow data from the linked information to be published in summary form, such as the proportion of students in employment. We take care to ensure that this summary information is anonymised so that individuals cannot be identified from any published information.

Personal information is not used for marketing purposes, or to make decisions that will affect individuals, but we may contact individuals to ask them if they would like to take part in further relevant research we undertake (such as surveys).

## **Sharing linked information with other organisations**

We will provide access to anonymised linked information to third parties (e.g. universities) for specific research purposes and, when we do so, we will make sure there are secure arrangements in place for handling the linked information. Decisions on whether this linked information will be made available to third parties is subject to a robust approval process based on a detailed assessment of who requests the data, the purpose for which it is required and the level and sensitivity of data requested. We will publish a list of approved organisations with access to the information and summarise the approved research proposals on [Gov.UK](#).

An independent panel will assess research proposals from third parties identified as new users. The panel will consider issues of privacy, the benefits of the proposal and compliance with data protection legislation. The panel will include representatives from across government and independent members and the outcomes of their considerations will be published on [Gov.UK](#).

## Requesting access to your information

We will consider requests from you for copies of your information used for the purpose of the LEO study, but please be aware this information may be exempt from release under [section 33 of the Data Protection Act \(1998\)](#) because it is being processed exclusively for research and statistical purposes. If you wish to request particular elements of your data, please contact the government department responsible for the relevant data collection.

[The Department for Education](#) can be contacted at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education/about/personal-information-charter>

[The Welsh Government](#) can be contacted at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/office-of-the-secretary-of-state-for-wales/about/personal-information-charter>

[The Department for Work and Pensions](#) can be contacted at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dwp-request-for-personal-information>

[Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs](#) can be contacted at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/hmrc-subject-access-request>

[The Scottish Government](#) can be contacted at:

<http://www.gov.scot/Contacts>

## Reviewing the information

We will review the data annually and delete any information not needed. If you have any concerns about the processing of your personal data, you can raise these with [the Information Commissioner's Office](#) (ICO) at: <https://ico.org.uk/concerns/>



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Reference: DFE-00144-2016



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