



Research and analysis

Statement on confidentiality and data access

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1. Introduction

Principle T6 of the [UK Statistics Authority Code of Practice for Statistics](#) describes effective data governance. This includes effective control over data access and protection of confidential information.

Ofsted's Head of Profession for Statistics is responsible for all of the official statistics we produce and for making sure they are governed by Ofsted's data protection policy.

2. Confidentiality

Ofsted holds and processes data that is confidential because it is personal or commercially sensitive. Most of it comes from administrative sources and management information systems.

Principle T6 (Data Governance) of the Code of Practice for Statistics states:

“ Organisations should look after people's information securely and manage data in ways that are consistent with relevant legislation and serve the public good.”

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) places obligations to process

personal information fairly and with transparency, putting individuals in control of how their information is processed.

Ofsted maintains the confidentiality of the data it receives, stores and processes. Staff who work with data receive criminal record checks and training in protecting and managing information.

We publish [privacy notices](#) for the different types of personal information it collects, stores and processes.

2.1 Physical security

All Ofsted staff and visitors are required to wear a pass and use it to access and move around premises. Physical access is strictly controlled in line with Ofsted policy and there is no public access to any part of the organisation where confidential statistical data may be held.

2.2 Technical security

We control access to information through password protections and other role-based access controls.

Where necessary, we use transport-level encryption to reduce the risk of unauthorised interception. Rarely, where there are specific additional information risks, we add other measures to protect information.

3. Organisational security

Ofsted has an information management team responsible for policy, guidance and advice on data protection, information access, assurance and management.

Business Information Risk Owners and Information Asset Managers are responsible for the day-to-day implementation of the policy. They make sure data resources are managed in accordance with:

- the Code of Practice and its supporting protocols
- this compliance statement
- Ofsted's statutory obligations

Responsible statisticians are also accountable for:

- compiling and maintaining metadata for the life cycle of each statistical resource

- guarding the integrity and security of their data holdings in accordance with Ofsted's policies on security and business continuity
- archiving their resources in line with Ofsted's policy on data retention, preservation, and destruction

Responsible statisticians' duties will evolve to match the development of each of the systems and policies described above.

4. Statistical disclosure control

Ofsted uses statistical disclosure control (SDC) to ensure that individuals or groups can't be identified from statistical data. This means that:

- confidential information about a person or unit (such as a household or business) is not made available
- different outputs from the same source, or outputs from different sources, can't be combined to reveal information about a person or a group of people

4.1 Suppression and rounding of data

Ofsted uses suppression and rounding of data for disclosure control. For example, suppression of data, so that the cell value in a table (which may be disclosive where, for instance, the value is small) is not given.

Secondary suppression of cells, where at least one other value in the row or column is also not given, ensures that suppressed values cannot be deduced through subtraction. Values of 0 and 100% may also be suppressed, for example, where all pupils in a school are eligible for free school meals.

Rounding of cells to a multiple of a set base, such as 5, (where, for example, a true value of 3, 4 or 6 would be shown as 5) adds uncertainty to the true values of small cells and helps avoid disclosure.

5. Access to data

Data access, data sharing or service-level agreements must be established before named third parties are given access to sensitive/personal information. This includes data-sharing with other government departments. These agreements are written documents and specify:

- the legal basis for the supply of information

- the precise data to be provided
- that they will be used for
- who may access and process them
- how long they will be retained

Jason Bradbury
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 Ofsted
 August 2018

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