

06-11: SPSCC

SURVEY RESPONDENT PERMISSIONS AND GUARANTEES

1. At the last SPSCC meeting there was discussion around the level of data sharing between surveys and the linking of survey and administrative data. If in future, the responses from large scale surveys are combined and/or there is an increased level of linkage to administrative data then the appropriate consents will need to be in place. There is also the related matter of permissions for further follow-up surveys.
2. Survey managers were asked to provide to OCS information on the consent and undertakings provided by respondents. Responses were received from SHS, SHeS, GUS, SCVS. Where large scale surveys are National Statistics, they should follow the *Protocol on Data Access and Confidentiality*. In addition, the Scottish Executive contractors are required to follow the MRS Code of Conduct. OCS has carried out an initial review of procedures on the large scale surveys and found that different approaches are being adopted. For example, some surveys provide guarantees in introductory letters, while others include them as part of the interview itself.
3. **Members are asked for views on whether OCS should work with large scale surveys to develop a harmonised template and or guidance to inform respondents that their confidentiality will be protected, and the main uses of the survey. The template would also cover permissions for follow-up surveys; linkage to administrative sources for research purposes; and any administrative use that may be made of the information.** It is recognised that some large scale surveys would require additional permissions and a harmonised template would provide a starting point in these cases.
4. The guidance and or template would be consistent with the National Statistics *Protocol on Data Access and Confidentiality* which sets the standards for protecting confidentiality, including a guarantee that no statistics will be produced that are likely to identify an individual unless specifically agreed with them. Respondents will be informed of the main intended uses and access limitations applying to the information they provide to statistical inquiries. www.statistics.gov.uk/about/national_statistics/cop/protocols_published.asp. The Scottish Executive's contractors also conform to the MRS Code of Conduct www.mrs.org.uk/standards/codeconduct.htm.

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