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Improving practice around use of linked equalities data in Scotland

Siân Robson¹, Katie Oldfield¹, and Rosie Seaman¹

¹Research Data Scotland, Edinburgh, United Kingdom

Objectives

This project aims to bring together information from research, practice and public views to make recommendations about safeguarding and use of equalities data from administrative sources in Scotland. The work was prompted by the need to consider safeguarding of the Equalities Protected Characteristics Dataset, but could apply more broadly.

ties in Scotland. The impact will be to ultimately improve evidence generated from data, and therefore better inform decision-making about policy and practice relating to all protected characteristics.

Methods

Information on the risks of misuse of equalities data and on good practice in appropriate use of equalities data is being gathered through desk-based research, attendance of events, and discussions with researchers and policy-makers. Options for sharing this information will be discussed with stakeholders involved with generating good practice guidance and with using the data. Methods for safeguarding data will be discussed with stakeholders involved with delivering access to data. Engagement with relevant communities will be conducted to seek views on collection and use of this data. Experts on use of specific protected characteristics data will be consulted throughout the project.

Results

Resources on good practice in use of equalities data will be produced and communicated through Research Data Scotland (RDS) and partners' channels. Recommendations will be made for how RDS's approval panel should consider applications to use equalities data available within the RDS Researcher Access Service (RAS), particularly the Equalities Protected Characteristics Dataset, which includes over six million records collated from three datasets and covers all protected characteristics other than sexual orientation and gender re-assignment. Consideration will be given to whether consistent safeguarding processes can be applied across other data providers in Scotland.

Conclusion

This project will provide evidence and resources to enhance the safe and effective use of administrative data on equali-

