Making The Most Of The NPD: Improving Linkages

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Overview

NPD has huge breadth

- **7m pupil records per year of census information**
- **Attendance and absence**
- **Attainment information at ages 5,7,11 and 16**
- **Links to FE and HE**
- **Longitudinal linkage back to 2002 or earlier**

But very little depth (eg very little family background)

Longitudinal and other research datasets have more depth

- **Hundreds of background variables**
- **Wider range of outcomes**
- **Different sources of data**

But may not have the breadth of NPD

- **Timespan**
- **Frequency**
- **In-depth qualifications information**
- **School characteristics**

How can we maximise their combined potential?

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Who we are

- **Statisticians in "Education Standards STatistical Analysis and Rapid-response Team" (ESSTART)**

- **Part of Educational Standards Directorate in the Department for Education**

- **Also part of DfE's "Analytical community"**

- **Our remit includes gathering and analysing a broader range of data than is included in the National Pupil Database**

- **Includes both pupil and school level datasets**
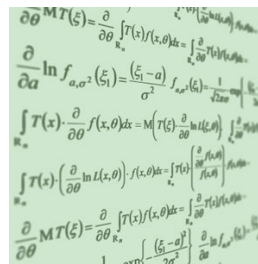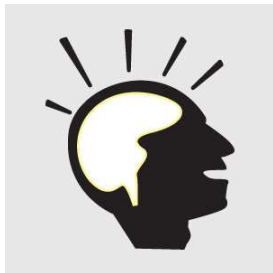
# Our observations after a couple of years of looking at datasets

- **Files we receive from studies being funded by the Department come in incomplete – missing fields (eg KS1 levels) from NPD**

- **Data is sometimes collected from schools when it is on NPD**

- **Little advantage being taken of newer NPD information eg absence records**

- **Missed opportunities to ask for historic records (eg prior attainment at KS3 but not KS2)**

- **Datasets which are publicly available seem to take longer than necessary to appear with the latest data from NPD**

We know this is only one side of the story…

Two way session: What should we be striving to achieve, and what can we all do to overcome any barriers?

Looking for views from

- **Those who haven't thought to link to NPD**

- **Those who've tried and given up**

- **Those still trying**

- **Those who have succeeded!**

- **Others who might have useful suggestions & insights**

NPD Team

'NPD Users'   **ESSTART**

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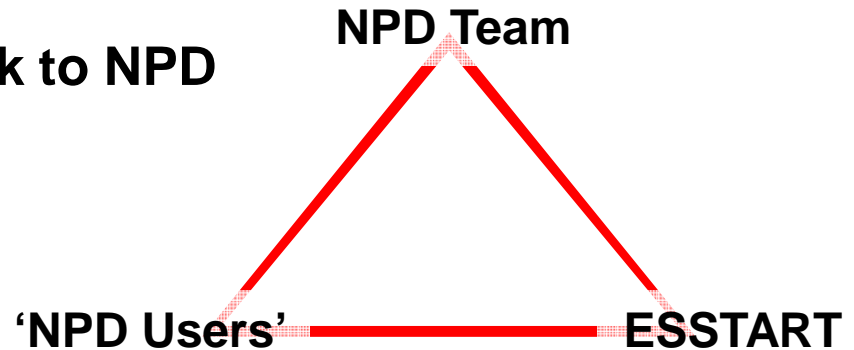
How can linking help your studies?

- **Comparability of your findings with those from other sources**

- **Removing some items from your collections would make more space to ask other things**

- **'Good will' towards those providing you with data**

- **Track study populations forward at minimal cost – look for persistent effects**

- **Increased breadth of information held about your samples**

- **Attainment, pupil characteristics, absence, exclusions, post 16, school level information, travel to school, etc…**

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Wider benefits of better linkages

- **Consistent measures make it easier to compare findings from different studies**

- **Can show how effects change over time (between cohorts)**

- **Enhance study datasets by adding breadth of NPD historic information**

- **Reduce data collection burdens by collecting once, using many times rather than starting new study**

- **Increasing data transparency**

- **Maximise future usefulness: we don't know what future questions will be, so makes sense to gather and link what's readily available**

- **Linkages can be made most easily at the time rather than retrospectively**

Why doesn't this happen already?

- We suspect that it could be one of a number of reasons

- Some ideas:

  - Lack of awareness?

  - Ethics/data protection/confidentiality?

  - Form is too complicated?

  - Applications being rejected?

  - Duration of matching process?

  - Too much data makes it hard to decide what to use?

  - Only covers England?

  - Perceived lack of information about independent schools or post 16?

DISCUSSION

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

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What are the solutions to those problems?

ESSTART

- **working with some of those receiving Departmental funding**

- **Advising on what is available and how it can be obtained**

- **Trial: working with EPPSE on their application form**

DISCUSSION

WHAT ELSE CAN WE DO?

WHAT CAN THE NPD TEAM DO?

WHAT CAN PLUG DO?

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

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