Terms of Reference: Administrative Data Research Scotland Public Panel

1. Background and context

There is an increasing realisation of opportunity in relation to research using administrative data in Scotland. Administrative data are data collected in the running of key national services, usually by the public sector, such as census data, health data, crime data and data from other similar parts of public life. Research in this area involves de-identifying the data and linking data sets to each other in new ways, in order to provide evidence which can inform public policy and government decision-making, for the public good.

The Administrative Data Research Scotland Public Panel exists to ensure that members of the public are involved in and consulted about administrative data research taking place in Scotland, to build public interest and trust, to test assumptions about public perceptions regarding research of this nature, and to involve members of the public in determining what 'public good' means in this context.

2. Role and function of the panel

The panel will take on the following roles for ADR Scotland, the Scottish Centre for Administrative Data Research and other administrative data research actors in Scotland:
- Act as an advisory and consultative panel on issues relating to administrative data research from the perspective of the general public, civil society and those with lived experience of relevant issues
- Provide a forum for continuing dialogue with communities in Scotland about administrative data research and data linkage, and a sounding board for potential new approaches, methodologies and research ideas
- Discuss proposed, current and completed administrative data research projects and provide views and feedback from the public perspective, ensuring that we conduct research that is truly valuable to the public and maximize its potential for public benefit
- Advise on efforts to build public trust and acceptance of administrative data research for the public good, and engage the public meaningfully with this research and surrounding issues
- Review and provide feedback on public engagement plans, materials and presentations

3. Role of individual group members

- Attend meetings as required and actively and constructively participate in work of the panel
- Provide personal views on research proposals etc
- Represent the interests of members of the public, particularly in relation to any areas of civil society they may be on the panel to represent or relevant lived experience they bring
- Bring a genuine interest in research, evidence-led improvements to Scotland's society, and public involvement and engagement in this work
- Provide feedback and ideas about improving public engagement and communication about administrative data research in Scotland

4. Membership

There will be between 8 and 16 members of the panel. Membership will last for a period of two years, with the option to renew once. The panel must be as widely representative and diverse as possible. Members may include:

- Members of the general public, with no current or past involvement in academic data research
- Representatives with lived experience of and/or from civil society organisations representing people with lived experience of key themes or issues being researched in Scotland (i.e. current Strategic Impact Programme themes for Administrative Data Research Scotland).

The chair of the group will hold the role for a period of two years. Secretariat support for the panel will be provided by the Scottish Centre for Administrative Data Research. Other relevant people may be invited to present to the panel or be granted permission to observe where appropriate.

Members will be recruited in an open and transparent way. Potential members will be invited to complete a simple form and will be interviewed by staff from the Scottish Centre for Administrative Data Research, in order to determine their suitability, according to basic criteria. Detail about the application process will be made available publicly.

5. Agenda items, minutes and papers

Members may send proposed agenda items to scadr@ed.ac.uk up to two weeks ahead of a meeting. Suggested agenda items will be prepared by the secretariat and presented to the chair for approval two weeks before the meeting. Final agenda and papers will be circulated to all panel members not less than one week before the meeting. Papers will be provided in alternative formats to best suit the needs of panel members.

The minutes of each meeting will be prepared by the Scottish Centre for Administrative Data Research. Full copies of the minutes, including attachments, will be provided to all group members no later than five working days following each meeting.

6. Frequency of meetings, proxies to meetings and quorum

The group will meet between two and six times a year. Ability to join or contribute remotely will be available wherever possible. Other opportunities to participate, in terms of events, online contributions or conferences may arise on an optional basis.

Members of the group may not send a proxy to represent them should they be unable to attend the meeting. A quorum would be a third of the regular membership.

7. Review

The panel format and activities will be reviewed on an ongoing basis with evaluation after each meeting and formal review of panel effectiveness and membership annually.