Open data: who needs it?
Open data

• In theory, open data
  o meets user needs
  o cannot guarantee confidentiality
  o can be provided at a known level of risk

• In practice,
  o we don’t know user needs
  o no legal requirement to protect confidentiality in all circumstances
  o no idea whether non-confidential data will remain so
  o no meaningful measure of risk or utility

• Decisions are judgment calls

• How do we embrace risk?
Approach 1: data-centred

- data confidentiality is paramount, so
- establish legal basis
- review risks
- devise solution to minimise risks

- default-closed: don’t do unless you know you can
Approach 2: user-centred

- identify need
- identify solution
- identify context-specific evidence-based risk
- meet need if financially viable

- default-open: do unless managing confidentiality is not feasible
Resources

• We have
  o 50 years experience of identifying meaningful risk
  o 50 years experience of identifying meaningless risk
  o 15 years experience of evaluating alternative effective control measures
  o new techniques (e.g., synthetic data, differential privacy, safe tabulators) offering inventive solutions
So....

Future facilities
- Would remote access in an international context be a better option?
- Do we see legal barriers?
- Do we see challenges to meet user requests?
- Can we think out of the box?

- Feasible, but practical problems. Ask the users to trade-off quality and timing of access
- None at all. Lawyers and laws are your friends. There are practical barriers.
- Only if the box is labelled “SDC”. Otherwise just think.
- Biggest challenge: identifying user need and willingness of someone to pay for it.