

# ONLINE SURVEY OF PARENTS' VIEWS OF JOINING UP SETS OF RECORDS HELD ON PARENTS AND CHILDREN:

## OUTLINE OF RESULTS

*Rosalind Edwards (University of Southampton) and Val Gillies (University of Westminster)*

We asked parents who lived in the UK and had children aged 16 or under to participate in our survey of their views on linking sets of records held on parents and children.

The survey was posted online via Mumsnet, Netmums, family and parenting jisc mail lists, and promoted via Twitter. This means that the people who responded to the survey are a self-selecting group, rather than representative of parents generally.

### Who completed the survey?

385 parents completed the online survey:

- mainly mothers (77%),
- mainly White (71%)
- and of those who responded about their household income level (66%), affluent (annual household income of £31,200 or above: 46% of the total sample).

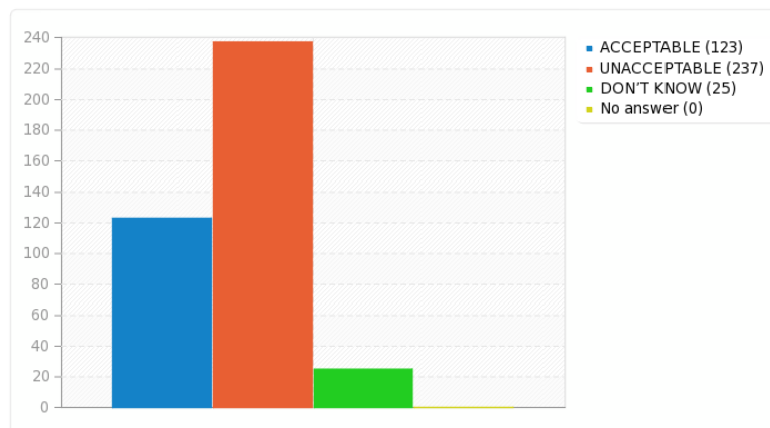
So it is a particular group of parents who form our sample – those who perhaps might be thought to feel more secure about linkage and use of records about them and their children, and trustful of institutions.

Half of these parents said that they had heard about 'data linkage' as government joining together different records or commissioning companies to do that for them, but the other half had not.

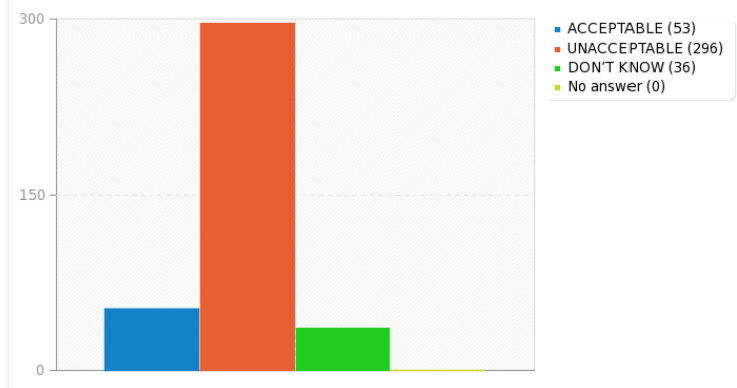
### What did parents think about the acceptability of reasons why government might want to link different sets of information about parents and children together?

Overall there was no acceptance of government linking data about parents and children for any of the following reasons:

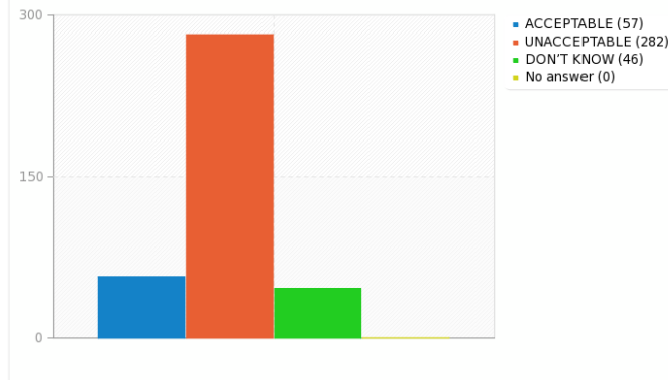
Provide accurate up-to-date evidence about family circumstances to improve the planning and delivery of family support services:



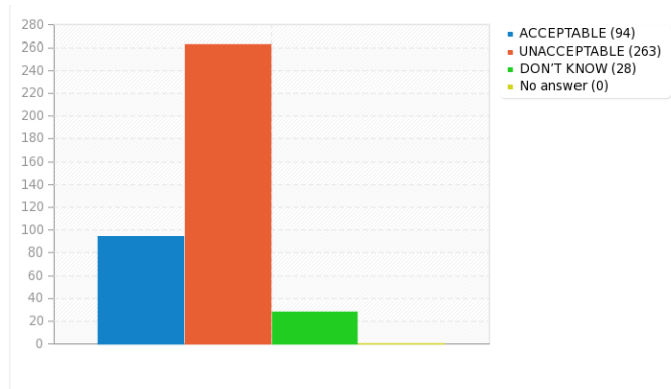
Services can identify specific families who might need professional intervention but haven't asked for support:



Save time and public money by preventing family problems or catching them early:



The more we know about families the more that the nation's health, education, and social and economic wellbeing can be improved:

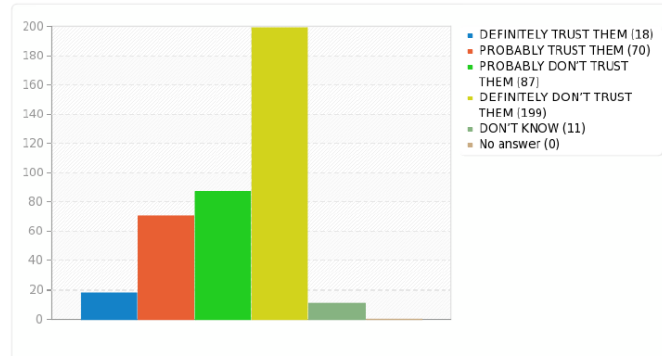


The majority of parents in the survey said that they would not themselves consent to government joining up different sources of information about them and their children (68%) although some (22%) felt that it depended on circumstances.

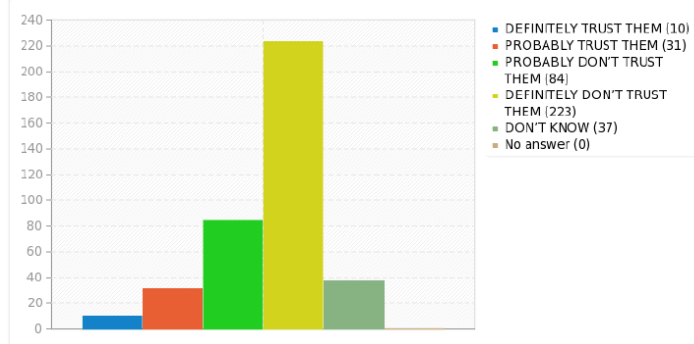
**How much trust do parents have in different organisations that might link together sources of information in order to identify particular families who might need intervention?**

Overall the parents in our sample had little trust in any organisations that might link data together for this reason, but private companies were subject to particularly high levels of distrust.

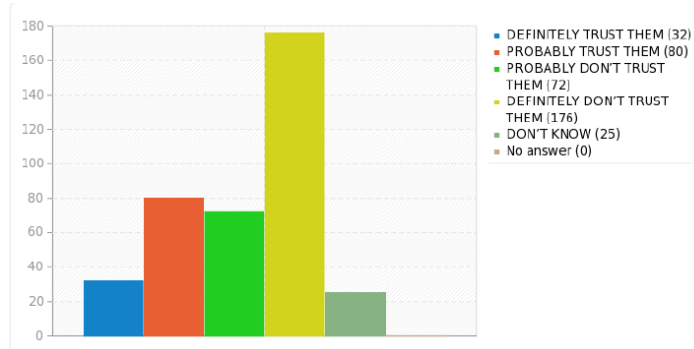
Local council children's social care services



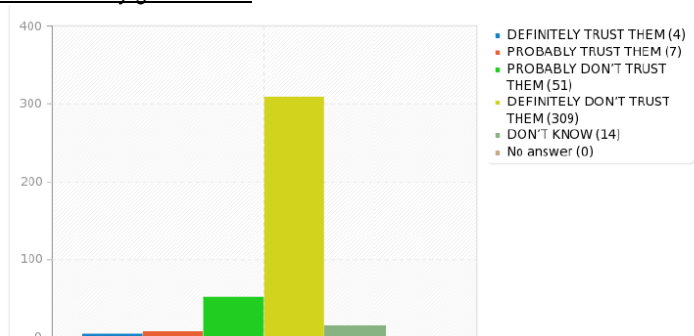
Immigration services



Your child's school

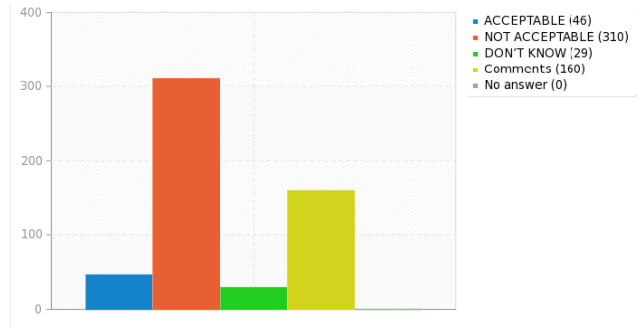


A private company commissioned by government

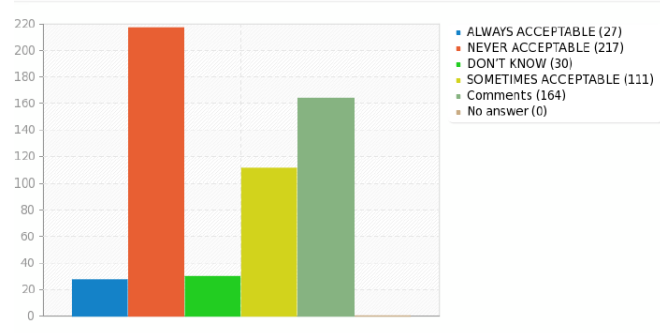


We provided parents with a vignette about specific data linkage to ask about acceptability. The situation was judged to be unacceptable:

- A local council joins up medical records and police records to identify parents who have mental health illnesses and who have been in trouble with the policy, and then link these to their children's school attendance records. This helps the council to identify families and risk and intervene to make sure that these parents bring up their children well. Is this acceptable?

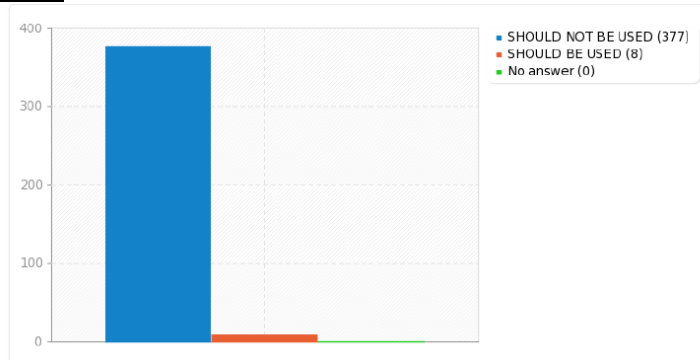


There were more equivocal views about whether or not it was acceptable to join up sources of information in an attempt to identify whether or not child abuse might take place in a particular family:

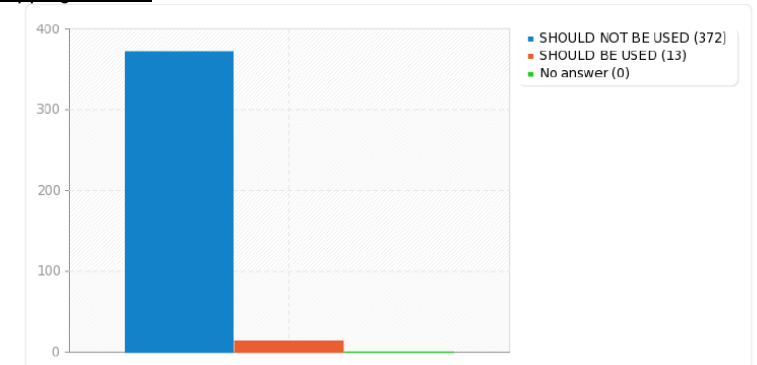


**What information do parents think should or should not be accessed and linked to the information that government and services hold about parents and children?**

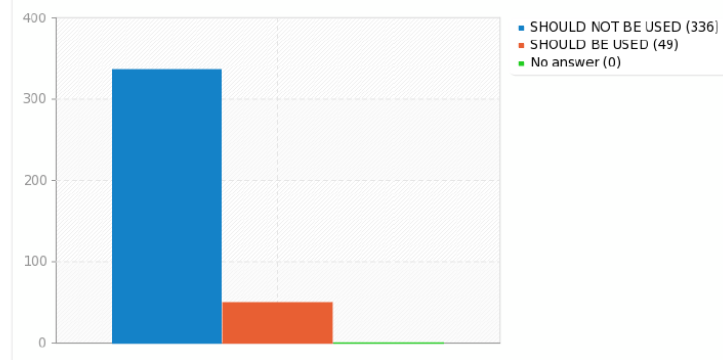
Bank details and credit cards



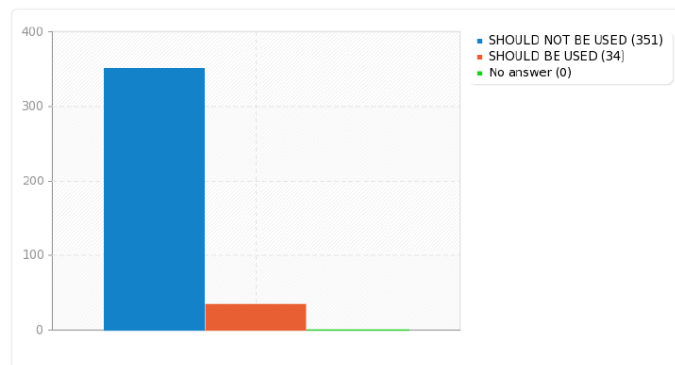
Supermarket food shopping records



### CCTV footage



### Social media posts



### **So ...**

There is a substantial lack of acceptance of and trust in data linkage amongst the self-selecting group of parents who responded to our survey.

It is important to:

- Build on this survey to investigate with a larger and representative sample of parents.
- Look into the reasons that parents have for finding data linkage unacceptable and lacking trust in organisations.

### **Note:**

Parents completing the survey also provided us with written comments, which we intend to look at in more detail.