



The National Minimum Data Set for Social Care (NMDS-SC)

Q: Why do we need the National Insurance Number (NINO)?

A: So that we can distinguish – but not identify – individual workers.

The main tasks of the NMDS-SC include measuring how many people work at different care providers at the same time, and how workers move into, within and out of the social care workforce.

To do this the NMDS-SC needs to be able to **distinguish between individual workers**. This is achieved by creating a *unique reference number* for each worker, using their NINO and date of birth. (Using the NINO alone may not be unique - a few national insurance numbers are duplicated).

However, the NMDS-SC does not need to know the identity of these workers, and their names and addresses are consequently **not** collected.

The distinction between **distinguishing** between workers and **identifying** them is important, and it should be emphasised that the NMDS-SC is not designed to do the latter.

Skills for Care has permission from the Department of Work & Pensions NINO Board to collect and use the NINO for this purpose and this purpose only, on the condition that the NINO is **not** used to directly identify individuals.

All analysis, reporting and output of worker data from the NMDS-SC is done on aggregated data using the *unique reference number* (**not** the NINO), thus ensuring the anonymity of workers and confidentiality of all information. The NINO (together with all other personal or commercially sensitive data) is held securely by Skills for Care in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. Access to such data is only given to: 1) the establishment which has submitted the data, 2) the parent employer (if applicable, and if permission has been given by the establishment), and 3) a small number of key Skills for Care support staff who are responsible for assisting establishments and maintaining the NMDS-SC.