

THE CHALLENGE

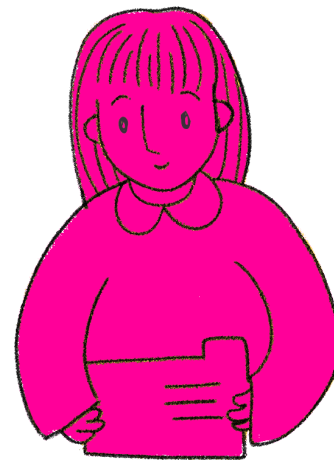
When applying to Higher Education in England and Wales, students must apply through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) whereby they must give consent for their data to be processed and if they do not, they are unable to enrol – they must agree in entirety.

This information is then shared with the Higher Education Statistics Agency Ltd who then share this with other funding bodies so that the data sits on multiple databases, often for the lifetime of the student – and long after they have graduated from their institution.

This information is stored and shared on a named basis and whilst many people would be happy with others knowing their religion or sexual orientation for example, others could be put at risk if living in homophobic or transphobic households should this information ever fall into the wrong hands through a data breach.

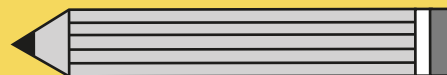
In 2019 the Department for Education (DfE) held sexual orientation data on almost 3.2 million people, and religious belief data on 3.7 million people. The records go back to 2012/13, so include both current students and those who have finished university.

When obtaining consent, organisations rely on tick boxes as a catch-all but this doesn't create informed consent. Allowing so much information to pass through various organisations and databases means increased risk of exposure. We believe that this data should only be statistics instead of a lifetime of named data stored on the National Pupil Database, added to records tracking them from childhood into adulthood, age 0-21.



In 2015, 90% of 37,000 UCAS students said in response to a survey that they only wanted their UCAS application data to be shared **“with active and informed consent”**.

”



YOUR RIGHTS

- Students have a right to access the records and information held about them by their educational institution

TAKE ACTION

- Students should object to the collection of this data as anything other than statistics and to restrict its processing by institutions such as the DfE, UCAS, HESA and other funding bodies.
- Submit a subject access request to see what information is being held about you