

Celebrating success at the Analysis in Government Awards 2020

The virtual awards ceremony for the first Analysis in Government Awards took place on Tuesday 8 December.

Hosted by David Wood (Head of the Government Geography Profession), the Awards celebrated the excellent work being done across the Government Analysis Function. Despite the ceremony being virtual this year, the 150 people that attended made the most of it by congratulating one another on all that analysts have achieved throughout the year. National Statistician Sir Ian Diamond provided an introduction which highlighted the rapid pace at which analysts across government have delivered new analysis to support the pandemic response whilst still delivering analysis in other priority areas.

A recording of the event is available to view at [YouTube/GovernmentAnalysisFunction](#).

Collaboration Award

The first award to be presented was the Collaboration Award which recognises collaboration between teams, departments, other professions and/or external partners to deliver a piece of analysis or analytical project. The joint winners were the COVID-19 Infection Survey Team at the Office for National Statistics for delivering the COVID-19 Infection Survey and the Population Health Analysis and Public Health Data Science teams at Public Health England for their work on excess mortality in England.

The [COVID-19 Infection Survey](#) provides estimates of the number of current COVID-19 infections within the community population in the UK and has been a key source of evidence for informing the UK response to the COVID-19 pandemic with user feedback describing it as the “jewel in the crown of the UK response to COVID-19”. The judges were impressed with the range of partners that ONS collaborated with to deliver at rapid pace with the first analytical results provided within a week. The results of the survey have informed key government lockdown decisions impacting every citizen in the UK.

[Excess mortality in England](#) provides a weekly measure of excess mortality by date of death registration in different subgroups of the population (for example age, sex or region). This allows decision makers to make accurate and informed decisions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Judges were impressed with the collaboration efforts shown as well as the innovative use of [Reproducible Analytical Pipelines](#) to deliver vital analysis to help understand the effect of ethnicity and deprivation on excess deaths.

Details of the other shortlisted nominations in this category can be found on the [Analysis in Government Award shortlist page](#).

Innovation in Methods Award

The next award to be presented was the Innovation in Methods Award which recognises innovation in methods of analysis. The winner was the Internal Data Linking Team in the Data and Analytical Services Directorate at the Ministry of Justice for developing a piece of record linkage software (Splink) for probabilistic data linkage at scale.

[Splink](#) can be used to link up to around 100 million records with greatly improved accuracy. The software is open source and has been downloaded over 100,000 times. Splink is being used across government and beyond. It featured in [ONS's cross-government review of data linkage](#), and is now part of their core methods library. The judges felt that this is an impressive tool that will be greatly beneficial across government for large data linking. It has been peer reviewed by academics and methodology experts at ONS and adopted by other departments. It has improved efficiency in MoJ by replacing existing data linking projects.

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Communication Award

The next award to be presented was the Communication Award which recognises clear and successful presentation and dissemination of analysis using commentary, visualisations, interactives or social media. The winner was the Analytical Products Team in Product Management, Design and Delivery at NHS England and NHS Improvement for their COVID-19 Situational Operational Dashboard.

Since the start of the pandemic, the Analytical Products Team have worked tirelessly to produce an unprecedented 100+ analytical COVID-focused dashboards easily accessible via a single [HUB](#). The work involved an unparalleled level of communication across the entire NHS sector, helping leaders across the NHS make better decisions in response to the pandemic. Judges were impressed by the scale of work which is very innovative due to several inputs and outputs. The dashboard was designed for a wide range of users with user-friendly and interactive visualisation. Feedback from experts was sought and the data is turned around very quickly (updated daily in some cases).

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Impact Award

The penultimate award to be presented was the Impact Award which recognises analysis which has been impactful through use, influenced decision-making and/or has contributed to the public debate. The winner was COVID-19 Statistical Reporting Team at the Department of Health Northern Ireland for their COVID-19 Dashboard.

The [Department of Health's COVID-19 Dashboard](#) is the primary source of a wide range of COVID-19 information and analysis which has been fully utilised by the media, Government and public alike, inspiring policy changes at all levels and providing the information necessary for sound public debate. Judges felt this work demonstrated significant impact with the dashboard used by large audiences. It was achieved from scratch as the data was not previously collected by the Department of Health. The dashboard is updated at pace (almost daily) by a small team which shows commitment and hard work. Producers sought feedback to improve the dashboard and key policy decisions rely on it, including decisions on local lockdowns.

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Investment in People Award

The last award to be presented was the Investment in People Award which recognises achievements in the development of our people and the building of an inclusive culture across the Government Analysis Function. The winner was the Data Services Team at the Ministry of Defence for their Happiness Index.

The Happiness Index is a tool that assesses, monitors and improves people's wellbeing. Different views were sought to develop the tool and make it inclusive for a range of people. It's helping to promote an inclusive work environment. The impact is also considerable with the tool starting as a small one team initiative but now being rolled out to 12,000 staff.

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Next steps

We'll be hearing more about the shortlisted work (as well as all the other nominated work) at the first ever [Analysis in Government Month](#) being held in Spring 2021 as well as through a programme of sharing webinars that will soon be rolled out across the Government Analysis Function. Further details will be shared in due course.