

Ethics Triage

Who should complete this?



The **Ethics Triage** is an **online self-assessment tool**. It should be completed on **all** data analytics projects before development of a tool begins.

It should take no more than 20 minutes to complete.

Answering the questions in the Triage can help you understand the 'riskiness' of the data analytics tool you are developing, and inform how you respond to mitigate the risks. It will also help you to identify the right governance processes which are proportionate to the data analytics project you are designing.

The Triage should be completed as a team, including with:

- **Developers** - internal or external **third party provider** (where procuring tools or services)
- An **Information Governance** representative
- A **Project Manager**

An * next to an answer indicates that it is likely to be **more risky** than the other options. The online self- assessment tool calculates a rough 'risk' score, by summing the number of responses you've given which have an * against them.

To complete the Triage, you should:

- Consider the questions below
- Mark which answer/s are most relevant to the data analytics tool you are developing.

Novelty

1. Which type of data analytics best matches your proposed analytics tool?
 - a. Descriptive analytics to help understand what has happened
 - b. Diagnostic analytics to help understand why things are happening
 - c. *Predictive analytics to help estimate what is likely to happen
2. Do you have experience of deploying tools using this type of data analytics in the past?
 - a. Yes, we developed and deployed tools
 - b. Yes, we deployed tools - but a third party developed them for us
 - c. *No
3. Is there good evidence the tools were effective? (E.g. were they accurate, lead to better outcomes for children and families, and/ or improve decision-making)
 - a. Yes, strong evidence that the tool was effective
 - b. Yes, some evidence that the tool was effective
 - c. *No, little evidence that the tool was effectiveness
 - d. Don't know
4. Are you aware of local authorities who have developed or used a similar data analytics tool that you want to develop?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't know
5. Is there good evidence that similar tools - that were developed or used by other local authorities - were effective?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't know
6. When similar tools have been deployed in the past - by you or another local authority - have they provoked controversy or concern? *(This could have been externally, drawing criticism from the public, media, civil society groups, or independent researchers; or internally, drawing criticism from child or family practitioners, information governance teams, or senior management)*
 - a. *Yes, externally and internally
 - b. *Yes, externally only
 - c. *Yes, internally only
 - d. No

Data

1. Do you have a good understanding of the quality of the data that will be used to develop the tool? This includes data held by the LA, and data provided by external partners.
 - a. Yes
 - b. *No

- c. Don't know
2. Are you confident that the data quality is sufficient for the tool to perform as expected?
 - a. Yes (and/ or that there are some data quality issues, but these can be fixed or improved)
 - b. *No
 - c. Don't know
 3. Will the (input) data used by the tool include personal information about children and families?
 - a. *Yes
 - b. No
 4. Will the (input) data used by the tool include sensitive information about children and families?
 - a. *Yes
 - b. No
 5. Will the (input) data include: [Choose one]
 - a. *All/ majority of children in England
 - b. *All children/ families in the local authority area
 - c. Children/ families in the geographic area for which data indicates they may be vulnerable
 - d. Children/ families in the local authority area for which data indicates they may be vulnerable
 - e. Only children / families currently supported by children's social care
 - f. Other:
 6. Will insights (output) identify individual children and families or will data be de-identified and/ or aggregated? [Choose one]
 - a. *Identify individual children and families
 - b. De-identified/ aggregated
 - c. Other:
 7. Where tools using this type of data analytics have been used before, were they assessed for algorithmic bias? (I.e. was the accuracy and performance of the tool assessed and compared for different demographic groups?)
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't know
 8. Where an assessment was done, did it indicate that the tool adversely impacted or discriminated against certain groups?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

- c. Don't know

Users

9. What is your data maturity? [Choose one]
 - a. *Nascent
 - b. *Basic
 - c. *Intermediate
 - d. Advanced
 - e. Expert
10. Do the intended users of the tool have experience using and interpreting similar tools?
 - a. Yes
 - b. *No
11. How many people will use/ receive insights from the tool? [Highlight all that apply]
 - a. *Social care practitioners within the LA
 - b. *Social care managers within the LA
 - c. *Senior leaders within the LA
 - d. *Practitioners and managers working in external partners and agencies (e.g. outside the LA)
 - e. Data analysts within the LA
12. How regularly will they use it? [Choose one]
 - a. Once/ one off
 - b. *Once a month
 - c. *Once a week
 - d. *Integrated into daily practice
13. Will insights be shared outside of the local authority?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
14. What type of action/ outcome will the tool support: [Choose one]
 - a. *Identifying individual children who require early help/ support to children in the community
 - b. *Front-door, in informing the referral of a child to social care
 - c. *Risk assessment stage, to help assess the safety of a child or the safety of a child to remain at home
 - d. Performance reporting/ benchmarking
 - e. Informing resourcing or funding allocation/ prioritisation
 - f. Supporting project/ programme evaluation
 - g. Conducting research which informs wider policy and practice
15. At what stage of children's social care will the tool be used:
 - a. Early help

- b. Referral stage
- c. Assessment stage
- d. When a child is on a Child Protection Plan
- e. When a child is in care
- f. None of the above

Impact

1. Which groups will be directly affected by the tool? [Choose one]
 - a. *All children or families in the local authority area
 - b. *Only children or families that are known to and/ or are currently supported by safeguarding partners and/ or Children's Services
 - c. *Children or families previously in the care system
 - d. Child and family practitioners and others working in Children's Services

2. Are you intending for the tool to be scaled? [Highlight all that apply]
 - a. Yes, expanded to include:
 - i. *Further areas/ geographies,
 - ii. *Collect further datasets,
 - iii. *Include a larger number of the population,
 - iv. *Use more advanced analytics,
 - v. *Sharing with further external partners
 - b. No

3. Does your tool include either of the following: [Highlight all that apply]
 - a. *A tool that provides little opportunity for a practitioner or user to reach their own conclusions. For example, a tool which automatically refers children for assessment, without a professional considering the evidence
 - b. *A tool which makes predictions related to individual children or families

***= higher risk, and more robust governance required**

How should you use your result?

1. Record the risks identified in the Ethics Triage in your DPIA, outlining how you will address or mitigate them.
2. Read the Explainers that have been flagged for particular attention.
3. Put appropriate governance in place if your tool is 'high risk'. This can include:
 - a. Making sure that you have the right level of technical experts in the development and testing of the tool to support robustness.
 - b. Input from child and family practitioners throughout the process to support trust
 - c. Establishing an oversight/ Ethics group to provide input and challenge at the design, development and implementation stages
 - d. Thorough training for users, particularly where users are child and family practitioners and are responsible for interpreting the results/ insights
 - e. Independent evaluation to make sure that the tool is effective, and regular monitoring
 - f. Consider whether any part of your proposed solution could be adapted to reduce risk.