# *I need to provide data to the SSB Linkage Team.*

### *What format should I use?*

Text based files are preferred such as .csv or .txt.  Microsoft Excel files are also acceptable. If you have any questions, please check with the Data Linkage Team (DLQ@health.qld.gov.au).

Data files containing patient details must always be password protected when they are being provided to the Data Linkage Team.  If we receive patient details that are not password protected, we consider these files not secured and the files will be deleted.

### *What should the dataset contain for successful linkage?*

Linkage will be more efficient if the dataset has a full complement of linking variables with complete and valid data for all relevant fields.

<u>Variables necessary for linkage</u>

- Study ID
- First name
- Last name
- Date of birth
- Sex

<u>Additional variables (if available) that will improve linkage success and quality</u>

- Unit Record (UR) number
- Facility ID
- Street Address
- Suburb
- Postcode
- Key date/s for project in DDMMYYYY* format eg:
    o Admission/discharge date
    o Date of consent
    o Date of vaccination

*DDMMYYYY = Day, Month, Year (e.g. 01.01.2000)

### *Factors that will reduce linkage success and quality*

- Incomplete/incorrect information
- Empty cells that should contain information
- Incorrect spelling
- Providing a cohort file in the non-preferred format. For example, data items (such as first and last name) being combined into one cell rather than the preferred format of separate cells.

### *Should I include content data?*

The Linkage Team only needs to receive identifiers for linkage purposes.  Content data used for analysis are not required for linkage to occur.  *If* content data are provided, the project ID in the linkage data must be consistent with the project ID in the content data to enable matching.

### *How should I transfer the data?*

There are different options for clients depending on whether you are internal or external to Queensland Health (QH).  Please note that data needs to be password protected before any transfer occurs regardless of the method of data transfer.

**Internal QH** clients may use QH network pathways for sending and receiving data such as e-mail, Skype and OneDrive. Kiteworks is also available for use by QH internal clients (if the client requesting data has purchased a Kiteworks licence or of the party can nominate a non-QH e-mail address).

SSB's preferred option for **external QH** clients is to send and receive data via the QH secure portal Kiteworks.  The Data Linkage team can email a link to the client to allow upload to or download from Kiteworks.  External clients can also use email and if no other options are available then secure physical media such as portable hard drives or disks may be used.

### *What about other linked datasets for my project?*

Not all linkage datasets can be provided to the Data Linkage Team by the researcher or client.  Some approved datasets must be provided by the relevant Data Custodian directly to the Data Linkage Team.  It is the *responsibility of the researcher* to follow up *all* datasets required for their project, including those provided by other Data Custodians.
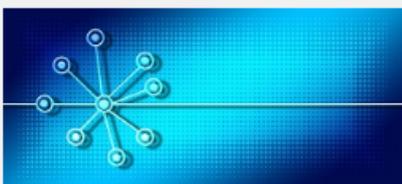
### *What about data in SURE?*

If your project involves the linkage of Commonwealth data such as the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) or the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) then it is likely that you will be required to use SURE. Please note that there are costs associated with using SURE.

The Data Linkage Team can upload approved datasets into SURE for your project.  To allow this to happen you will need to:

1. Provide to SURE the email address and name of the Data Linkage Team staff member who will be uploading your approved data to the SURE workspace; and
2. Provide the SURE Workspace name to the Data Linkage Team (DLQ@health.qld.gov.au).

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You may also be interested in the Data Linkage Training Resources | Queensland Health.

## Data Linkage Training Resources



These resources are provided by the Statistical Analysis and Linkage Unit, Queensland Health for researchers and users of linked data.