



Scotland Talks Data Public Panel

Making a Difference

Impact report 2024



Research
Data
Scotland



SCOTTISH CENTRE FOR
ADMINISTRATIVE
DATA RESEARCH



What is the public panel?

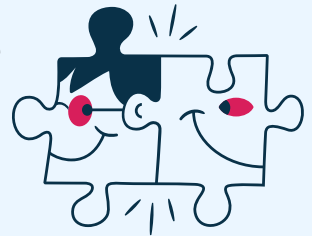
The Scotland Talks Data panel is jointly hosted by the [Scottish Centre for Administrative Data Research](#) (SCADR) and [Research Data Scotland](#) (RDS). The panel discusses a range of topics from data systems to research projects, which helps to inform research and the use of administrative data research in Scotland. The panel includes members of the public from diverse backgrounds across Scotland.

What impact has the panel had?

The panel members have helped researchers and partners better understand public viewpoints on the use of administrative data for research.

The panel has provided feedback on a range of research projects, informing:

- Language used;
- Dissemination plans;
- Groups or organisations who could be involved; and
- Future ideas for research that matters.



Take a look at some of our highlights from 2024:

Synthetic data

Panel feedback has informed [synthetic data approaches](#) and processes after it was shared at a UK-wide meeting on public engagement with synthetic data, which included ADR UK (Administrative Data Research UK) and NHS England. This feedback:

- Influenced ADR UK's call for a larger project to gather insights from the public on the use of synthetic data. Funding was [awarded to Cardiff University](#), with results to be published in Spring 2025.
- Directly informed how Research Data Scotland creates and allows access to synthetic data.



Research Data Scotland video explainers

Members of the panel provided feedback on three HDR UK (Health Data Research UK) funded video explainers about data.

The feedback on phrasing, pace and visuals shaped the final [three videos produced](#). The Synthetic Data [video](#) was subsequently used in public

dialogue sessions as part of the ADR UK-funded 'Discussing Data' project at Cardiff University, and the videos won the silver prize for 'Best Use of Animation' at the DataComms Awards 2025.

"It's a rewarding experience to be heard and seen, and it is important that I bring my perspective to research as a citizen. Thank you."

- Panel member

Researcher Access Service and private sector access

Research Data Scotland's [Researcher Access Service](#) and draft policy for private sector access to public data were reviewed by the panel. The panel were also informed about a plan to hold larger public engagement workshops on their development.

The panel approved the themes in development for the workshops, though asked for clarity on some private sector models for collaboration, which have been re-written. The panel also asked to be involved in further development, therefore two members were invited to join a steering group.



Public Engagement Fund

Two Scotland Talks Data panel members joined a funding panel to review applications to Research Data Scotland's [Public Engagement Fund](#). They helped to review the applications along with five public engagement, data, and community professionals. Their input and feedback led to five projects being funded, which will engage with a range of audiences across Scotland.

"I have enjoyed the variety of different projects and subjects that have come to us on the panel and the glimpse we've gotten into the realm of public research that you don't usually get to see much as a member of the public"

- Panel member

COVID research projects

Two pieces of research the panel provided feedback on appeared in [Covid-19 inquiries](#) in 2024, providing vital evidence and understanding of

the pandemic and helping to shape recommendations for the future. In 2024, the panel reiterated that this is still an important topic to help future pandemic planning.

Brain Health Data Pilot and SCANDAN

In April 2024, two studies were presented to the panel—one looking to permanently link brain scan information and the other aiming to develop AI to understand [dementia risk](#). Feedback suggested caution over commercialisation of the projects and the need to develop the communication. The feedback was taken onboard and panel members invited to a further optional meeting to review changes based on feedback. Their feedback led to an update to an explainer video, the development of an FAQ informed by panel queries and the continued inclusion of the public throughout the project.

Households and Unique Property Reference Numbers (UPRN)

In 2023, the panel provided feedback on an infographic about how linked datasets and household analysis can improve our communities. The feedback was taken on board and the [infographic](#) published in 2024.

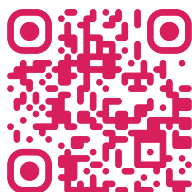
Further opportunities

Our panel have also been invited to and involved with opportunities beyond the panel including:

- [PEDRI \(Public Engagement in Data Research Initiative\) Good Practice Standards Development](#)
- [Safe Haven Federated Governance](#)
- Being named on funding bids

Find out more

This report highlights a small selection of topics discussed by the panel. To explore more of the panel's input and learn more about Scotland Talks Data, visit our website.



bit.ly/rds-public-panel



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