Researcher Access Service: Application Form 2.0 (read-only)

- This document provides a read-only view of the Researcher Access Service (RAS) application form version 2.0
- It is intended to help researchers prepare their answers in advance of completing the digital application form
- The form (2.0) is due to be released into the RAS digital application on 30 October 2025
- This document was last updated on **30 September 2025**

Contents

Safe people and organisation: Your details

Field name	Field requirements, help text
First name	Mandatory field, text entry, displays first name input as part of Enquiry form
Last name	Mandatory field, text entry, displays last name input as part of Enquiry form
What is your telephone number?	Mandatory field, UK telephone number required, must be 11 digits starting 07. This is required as part of multi-factor authentication when accessing the Scottish National Safe Haven
Accredited Researcher Number	Mandatory field, integer formatted as 5 numbers, ie, *30000* *When a valid number is entered into the lookup, the following details will be returned:* 　o　Accreditation type (Provisional or Full) 　o　Accredited Researcher Name 　o　Expiry Date Researchers will only appear in the lookup if they are listed on the UKSA Register of Accredited Researchers
Are you the principal investigator for this proposal?	Mandatory field, Y / N
Do you require access to the National Safe Haven?	Mandatory field, Y / N
Are you the person with operational or day-to-day responsibility for the proposal?	Mandatory field, Y / N
Which is the following best describes your academic status?	Mandatory field, select from options: 　• I am supervising a student on this project 　• I am a student (Phd, MSc, MA etc) on this project 　• Other 　• None
Please select your organisation	Mandatory field, select from dropdown or select 'Other' if your organisation is not listed. Displays organisation name input as part of Enquiry form.
Which department / school?	Mandatory field, text entry
What is your current job title?	Mandatory field, text entry

Safe people and organisation: Your research team

When adding each researcher in your research team, you will be asked the following questions:

Field name	Field requirements, help text
First name	Mandatory field, text entry
Last name	Mandatory field, text entry
What is this researcher's telephone number?	Mandatory field, UK telephone number required, must be 11 digits starting 07. This is required as part of multi-factor authentication when accessing the Scottish National Safe Haven

What is this researcher's Accredited Researcher Number	Mandatory field, integer formatted as 5 numbers, ie, *30000*
	
	When a valid number is entered into the lookup, the following details will be returned:
	    o Accreditation type (Provisional or Full)
	    o Accredited Researcher Name
	    o Expiry Date
	
	Researchers will only appear in the lookup if they are listed on the UKSA Register of Accredited Researchers

Is this researcher the principal investigator for this proposal?	Mandatory field, Y / N
Does this researcher require access to the National Safe Haven?	Mandatory field, Y / N
Does this researcher have operational or day-to-day responsibility for the proposal?	Mandatory field, Y / N

Which of the following best describes this researcher's academic status?	Mandatory field, select from options:
	  • I am supervising a student on this project
	  • I am a student (Phd, MSc, MA etc) on this project
	  • Other
	  • None

Please select this researcher's organisation	Mandatory field, select from dropdown or select 'Other' if your organisation is not listed. Displays organisation name input as part of Enquiry form.
Which department / school does this researcher work in?	Mandatory field, text entry

What is this researcher's current job title?	Mandatory field, text entry

Safe Project: Project details

Field	Field requirements, help text
What is your project title?	Mandatory field, text entry, maximum 255 characters (approximately 50 words) The title should identify the main area of your research so that another researcher could understand if it might be relevant to their area of study. Use full terms instead of acronyms.
Describe your project and its aims	Mandatory field, text entry, maximum 1000 characters (approximately 200 words) Describe your aims and intended outcomes. If the project is multi-national, please outline the relevance to Scotland. Where possible, please write in layperson's terms.
How long do you need to access the data for?	Mandatory field, select estimated start date from calendar. Estimated end date will automatically be added based on start date.

Safe Project: Purpose and methods

Field	Field requirements, help text
Please provide details of the background to the research	Mandatory field, text entry, maximum 4000 characters (approximately 800 words) This should include an overview of your research proposal. Please provide a level of detail that would enable someone not familiar with the project to understand the background of the research.
Is the research part of a larger programme?	Mandatory field, Y / N If Y, please provide details
Give details of the hypothesis being addressed	Mandatory field, text entry, maximum 4000 characters
What are your research questions? Please add each question in a separate text field.	Mandatory field, minimum one research question, text entry, maximum 255 characters

+ Add another research question	If required
Please provide information why access to unpublished data is required	Mandatory field, text entry, maximum 4000 characters This should include specific details of other publicly available data you considered. Why were these unsuitable for use in this project?
What are your planned research methods?	Mandatory field, multi-select from list. For a research project to be accredited under the Digital Economy Act (DEA) 2017, it must serve the public interest which is a legal requirement set out in the DEA Code of Practice and Accreditation Criteria. We need information on your planned research methods to ensure they are valid when used with the data and can achieve the stated public good of the research project. If there is a risk that the method(s) selected will not lead to valid conclusions and the public good of the project not being realised, your project may require further review before an accreditation decision can be made. List items: - Automated Methods - Machine Learning - Time Series Analysis - Statistical Theory and Methods of Inference - Spatial Data Analysis - Small Area Estimation - Regression Models - Q Methodology - Non-Parametric Approaches - Multilevel Models - Microdata Methods - Latent Variable Models - Event History Analysis - Econometrics - Descriptive Statistics - Data Mining - Simulation - Longitudinal Data Analysis - AI - Other methods Guidance on project methods - According to the Code of Practice for Statistics, methods should be based on national or international good practice, scientific principles, or established professional consensus. The list of methods was taken from the National Centre for Research Methods.

Safe Project: Risk mitigation

Field	Field requirements, help text
What are the biases/limitations that you have identified so far?	Mandatory field, text entry, maximum 4000 characters You must show that you have thought about the limitations of your methods and have put plans in place to mitigate any risk. This is a requirement from the Code of Practice for Statistics. Limitations include a weakness in the quality of statistics, data or statistical methods that should be understood to ensure their appropriate use and interpretation. Identifying and managing bias and limitations is essential in research and, to ensure its integrity, it is important that you consider the: - data sources used and how these are produced - effect of researcher or observation bias throughout the lifecycle of the project - methods and algorithms used, their assumptions and constraints - outcomes of your research and how your research is presented - It is equally vital that you provide mitigations for any identified bias. As bias could also be identified later in the research process, it is important to stay aware of this and provide mitigations when appropriate.
Select the extent of mitigations you have in place to address the identified bias or limitations	Mandatory field, single select from list: - I can mitigate the biases or limitations - I am unsure about the mitigation for my bias or limitations - I could not find a mitigation for the bias or limitation in my work
Please explain your selection	Mandatory field, text entry, maximum 4000 characters If you have identified that there is bias and that you can mitigate this, outline these steps. Please also include how likely you imagine these biases are to occur.
How do you plan to mitigate against the risk of this project impacting on individual's protected characteristics and/or potential harm?	Mandatory field, text entry, maximum 4000 characters

Safe Project: Research sensitivity

Field	Field requirements, help text
Protected characteristics and sensitive data include age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, political opinions, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data to uniquely identify a natural person, health data, race or ethnic origin, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, as per the Equality Act 2010 and GDPR.	

Additional guidance relating to inclusivity of data for research can be found in the UKSA Centre for Applied Data Ethics (CADE) webpage [Ethical considerations related to the inclusivity of data for research and statistics – UK Statistics Authority]().	
Will any part of your project focus on protected characteristic or sensitive data?	Mandatory field, Y / N

Potential harm, including outputs	You should consider whether the project could cause any potential negative consequences to the public, and whether these are proportionate to the proposed public benefits of the project. Where appropriate, you should also consider whether the activities involved with conducting the research project could cause potential harm or distress to any of the individuals involved, including the research participants, the research team, or the research facilitators.
	
	Please select one of the following;
	
	• Type: single select dropdown:
	    o Negligible harm to anyone involved, including the public
	    o Identified potential harm to anyone involved that can be justified and mitigated against
	    o Identified potential harm that cannot be mitigated against

How do you plan to mitigate against the risk of this project impacting on individual's protected characteristics and/or potential harm?	Mandatory field, text entry, maximum 4000 characters

Safe Project: Public acceptability testing

Field	Field requirements, help text
[The Research Code of Practice and Accreditation Criteria]() requires researchers undertaking research using the data provided under the Digital Economy Act to provide a clear public good for their project. Further guidance on public acceptability testing: - Research does not happen in isolation, so the wider environment in which researchers operate should always be considered. - This does not mean that the public's views must be sought for every project, as this would be time and resource consuming, but an overall awareness of public acceptability must be considered. - Information from engagement events for similar projects, government initiatives, public polls and literature reviews are reasonable alternatives to large public consultations, focus and expert groups.	

Is there evidence that this research is publicly acceptable?	Mandatory field, single select from list: - Yes, there is evidence that this research is publicly acceptable - No, but there is evidence that similar research is publicly acceptable - There is no evidence that this research is publicly acceptable
Provide a justification that supports your statement	Mandatory field, text entry, maximum 4000 characters This should explain why this is an appropriate use of the dataset that you are requesting access to. Cite and list relevant supporting evidence. If you are undertaking any public engagement, please mention it here.

Safe data: Study data

Field	Field requirements, help text
Study population (cohort)	Mandatory field, text entry, maximum 4000 characters Provide a detailed description of the criteria (exclusion/inclusion criteria) and datasets that will be used to define your cohort or population of interest.
Please select the datasets you require for your study population:	Select as many as required from dropdown: • Scottish Morbidity Records (SMR) 00 – Outpatients • Scottish Morbidity Records (SMR) 01 – Inpatients • Scottish Morbidity Records (SMR) 02 – Maternity • Scottish Morbidity Records (SMR) 04 – Mental Health Inpatients • Prescribing • Scottish Morbidity Records (SMR) 06 – Cancer Registry • Accident and Emergency (A&E) • National Records of Scotland (NRS) – Deaths • National Records of Scotland (NRS) – Births
Linked Data	Please select the datasets you require for your linked data. Select as many as required from dropdown: • Scottish Morbidity Records (SMR) 00 – Outpatients • Scottish Morbidity Records (SMR) 01 – Inpatients • Scottish Morbidity Records (SMR) 02 – Maternity • Scottish Morbidity Records (SMR) 04 – Mental Health Inpatients • Prescribing • Scottish Morbidity Records (SMR) 06 – Cancer Registry • Accident and Emergency (A&E) • National Records of Scotland (NRS) – Deaths • National Records of Scotland (NRS) – Births
Please select the variables to be used as linked data for the [selected] dataset.	Select the variables you require for each chosen dataset

Per dataset: Reason for access: Why is this dataset required?	Mandatory field, text entry
Per dataset: Corresponding research question	Mandatory field, select from the research questions you entered above
How you will use variables from the datasets you requested	Mandatory field, text entry, maximum 4000 characters

Safe data: Coverage

Field	Field requirements, help text
Data required	Mandatory field, text entry, maximum 100 characters per dataset Please explain the geographical coverage of your analysis (for example local, regional, Scotland or UK) per dataset.

Safe data: Public good

Field	Field requirements, help text
Please summarise how your research project will deliver public good	Mandatory field, text entry, maximum 4000 characters Public good means that there should be some 'net good' accruing to the public; it has both a benefit aspect and a public aspect. The benefit aspect requires the achievement of good, not outweighed by any associated risk. Learn more about research for public good on the RDS website This information will be considered as the 'statement of public good' for the project. It will help us assess whether your proposal is feasible, will deliver clear public good and is an appropriate use of unpublished data. When completing this section please provide a level of detail that would enable someone not familiar with the project to understand the aims and how your project is being undertaken. There is further guidance on what to include in RAS guidance for applicants
When considering the public benefit of the project how many people would be affected?	Mandatory field, single select from list: - Public good applicable to entire population - Societal benefits might be limited to certain groups or areas - Societal benefits will be limited to certain groups or areas

	- Not applicable – scope of research specifically targets a particular group For example, are the benefits focused on a particular group within society, or will they impact the whole population? If the study is focused on a small proportion of the population, or a particular group, then: - the research might disproportionally benefit or disadvantage a group - the societal impacts of the research might be limited - the risk of breaching confidentiality via re-identification increases You should justify why the research is focused on that group, and whether this, or other groups, might be adversely affected by this research. Select who you think will benefit from the outputs of this research.
Please explain why your research is likely to achieve a public good under this scale.	Mandatory field, text entry, maximum 4000 characters f you select "Not applicable" you should justify why the research is focused on that group, and whether this, or other groups, might be adversely affected by this research.
Please provide details of how the methods when used with the data you selected for access will lead to valid conclusions and achieve the public good.	Mandatory field, text entry, maximum 4000 characters
Are any methods being used that could lead to unsound or experimental conclusions, resulting in the public good not being fully realised? Please include how you will mitigate this	Mandatory field, text entry, maximum 4000 characters
Please upload supporting documentation to evidence this, if available:	Optional document upload, accepted file extensions are: doc, docx, pdf, jpeg, jpg

Safe setting

Field	Field requirements, help text
The datasets you've selected can only be accessed in the National Safe Haven. If approved, each member of your research team will need to complete and sign a User Agreement before their National Safe Haven user account is created.	

Please be aware, you must only access the National Safe Haven from the eDRIS base location, a SafePod, or workstations managed by your Affiliated Organisation. You must not login, or attempt to login to the National Safe Haven by any other route. Full details can be found in the User Agreement. If you have questions about your mode of access, please discuss further with a Research Coordinator.	
Please tick the box to confirm you understand these conditions.	Mandatory tick box

Safe outputs

Field	Field requirements, help text
What is your best estimate of when you expect to publish your final results?	Mandatory calendar picker We understand this may be dependent on other factors so please give the best estimate you can.
What research outputs do you intend to produce to make your research available to the public? Please select from the following:	Mandatory selection from dropdown list: • Refereed journal publication • Report for government department or funder • Internal report or working paper • Book chapter or book • Published presentation (conference, workshop, seminar etc) • Research dissertation/thesis (PhD/ MSc/ MA etc.) • Published news piece, blog post, audio interview • Other The outcomes from your project should be made available in a way that is publicly accessible and could be reasonably expected to be permanent. This might be achieved by publishing research findings on a website, in press releases or in announcements about new policy decisions.
If you have selected "Other" provide further details on any other research outcomes you intend to produce.	Mandatory field, text entry, maximum 4000 characters
How will your research outputs be disseminated to achieve the stated public good of your project?	Mandatory field, text entry, maximum 4000 characters What to include in your answer:

	- Which specific journals, websites or reports do you intend to use to publish this research? - Which stakeholders do you plan to engage with to publicise your findings? - How will your findings be disseminated to relevant stakeholders? - Will the methods and tools you used in the National Safe Haven be part of your publication?

Funding

Field	Field requirements, help text
Researchers must have funding in place to receive research coordination support from eDRIS, the electronic Data Research and Innovation Service within Public Health Scotland. The cost to use this service covers eDRIS Research Coordinator assistance through the data access process, including information governance support and data linkage services. eDRIS operate a tiered pricing structure based on the type of organisation you are applying from (e.g academic institution, charity, public sector organisation, private sector organisation). Costs are also based on the complexity of the project and the amount of support required.	
You will not be able to submit your application until you have funding in place for your project. Please confirm you understand this by ticking this box.	Mandatory tick box
Name of the lead funding organisation or body	Mandatory selection from dropdown list
Funding end date	Mandatory input from calendar picker

Declaration

- Researchers must have funding in place to receive support from Research Data Scotland and eDRIS (the electronic Data Research and Innovation Service within Public Health Scotland).
- The cost to use the Researcher Access Service covers eDRIS assistance through the data access process, including information governance support and data linkage services.
- The Researcher Access Service operates a tiered pricing structure based on the type of organisation you are applying from (e.g academic institution, charity, public sector organisation, private sector organisation). Costs are also based on the complexity of the project and the amount of support required.

I confirm that I accept the cost estimate provided and have funding arranged to cover this. I declare that this application is accurate and consent for the project details to be included on a public Data Use Register.

Please type in your name to complete this declaration and submit your application.	Mandatory field, text entry, maximum 255 characters