

Research Data Access Pathway: Application Form v3 (read-only)

- This document provides a read-only view of the Research Data Access Pathway
- application form version 3 (released 17 March 2026)
- It is intended to help researchers prepare their answers in advance of completing the digital application form
- This document was last updated on **16 March 2026**

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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
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 <i>When a valid number is entered into the lookup, the following details will be returned:</i> ○ Accredited Researcher Name ○ Accreditation type (Provisional or Full) ○ Expiry Date What is an Accredited Researcher? Researchers will only appear in the lookup if they are listed on the UKSA Register of Accredited Researchers (Accreditations completed within the last 14 days may still be processing and not yet validated.)
Are you the principal investigator for this project?	Mandatory field, Y / N Each Application requires details of a Principal Investigator to proceed. If you are not Principal Investigator, please add these details under Your Research Team below.
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 of 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 (please specify) – None (I am not an academic)
Please select your organisation	Mandatory field, select from dropdown or select 'Other' if your organisation is not listed. Displays organisation name previously provided in Enquiry form.
What is the name of your department or school?	Mandatory field, text entry

What is your job title at this organisation?	Mandatory field, text entry
How did you hear about the Researcher Access Service?	Mandatory field, select from options: — RAS Roadshow or presentation at your institution — Conference or event — Newsletter — RDS Website — I hadn't before now — Other (please specify)

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
Email address	Mandatory field, text entry
Telephone number	Mandatory field, UK telephone number required, and must be 11 digits starting 07. This is required as part of multi-factor authentication when accessing the Scottish National Safe Haven
Organisation	Mandatory field, select from dropdown or select 'Other' if your organisation is not listed. Displays organisation name input as part of Enquiry form.
Is this team member a principal investigator for this project?	Mandatory field, Y / N
Does this researcher require access to the National Safe Haven?	Mandatory field, Y / N
Is this researcher the person with operational or day-to-day responsibility for the proposal?	Mandatory field, Y / N
What is the name of the department or school where this researcher works?	Mandatory field, text entry

What is this researcher's job title at this organisation?	Mandatory field, text entry
Accredited Researcher Number	Mandatory field, integer formatted as 5 numbers, ie, 30000 <i>When a valid number is entered into the lookup, the following details will be returned:</i> – Accredited Researcher Name – Accreditation type (Provisional or Full) – Expiry Date What is an Accredited Researcher? Researchers will only appear in the lookup if they are listed on the UKSA Register of Accredited Researchers (Accreditations completed within the last 14 days may still be processing and not yet validated.)
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

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. The title of the research project will be published on the UK Statistics Authority's register of accredited research projects if accredited under the Digital Economy Act (DEA) 2017.
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, avoiding subject-specific technical terms that the eDRIS team might not be familiar with.
Project duration	

Consider the length of time needed for your analysis and for your research results to be cleared and published. The duration of access to legally protected data should be minimised.	
Number of years of National Safe Haven access requested	Mandatory field, select from options: – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
How long do you need to access the data for?	Mandatory field, select estimated start date from calendar. Example: “This project would look at a cohort of mothers giving birth in Scotland in the years 2015-2020 who had emergency caesarean sections, comparing the short and long-term outcomes for different deprivation and urban/rural categories. The cohort would come from SMR02, and the outcomes would be linked from the following datasets: SMR02, SMR00, SMR01, NRS Deaths. The focus of the project will be to discover whether the patients’ deprivation or urban/rurality categories has an impact on outcomes. This will then inform whether additional support is needed for expectant mothers in particular locations.” Estimated end date will be auto-calculated based on start date input.

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 4000 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?
Project methods For the research project to be accredited under the Digital Economy Act 2017, the primary purpose must be to serve the public interest. We are seeking assurance that the methods proposed alongside the requested data—including the assumptions, level of granularity, geographic scope, and the outcome measures derived—are well described, robust, and capable of informing the public interest and policy makers. If there is a risk that the method(s) selected will not lead to valid conclusions and the public interest of the project not being realised, your project may require further review before an accreditation decision can be made. All relevant evidence to support your selection should be referenced. Please note that opinions offered without evidence may require further justification.	
Select all the methods you will be using:	Mandatory field, multi-select from list. 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 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 . Practical user guidance on a range of applied data ethics topics has been published by the Centre for Applied Data Ethics .
Please state how the methods selected above will be applied to the data to answer the research questions in your proposal.	Mandatory field, text entry, maximum 4000 characters
Please provide details of how the methods when used with the data you selected for access will lead to valid conclusions. If you selected 'Other methods' above, please include a description of any evidence to support this explanation.	Mandatory field, text entry, maximum 4000 characters
Please upload supporting documentation to evidence this, if available.	Accepted file extensions are: doc, docx, pdf, jpeg, jpg

Safe Project: Biases and limitations

Field	Field requirements, help text
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 UKSA 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, and whether these could lead to unsound conclusions – 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.	
What are the biases/limitations that you have identified so far?	Mandatory field, text entry, maximum 4000 characters
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.
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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 interest 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:	– No perceived harm to anyone involved, including the public – Negligible harm to anyone involved, including the public – Identified potential harm to anyone involved that can be justified and mitigated against – 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

Field	Field requirements, help text
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. Please see Considering public views and engagement regarding the use of data for research and statistics – UK Statistics Authority for more information.	
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 - As far as I'm aware, 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 Project: Public interest

Field	Field requirements, help text
The Research Code of Practice and Accreditation Criteria requires researchers undertaking research using data provided under the Digital Economy Act to demonstrate a clear public interest for their project. To become accredited, all research projects must demonstrate that they will deliver clear benefit to the UK, using the definition set out in paragraph 33.1 of the Research Code of Practice and Accreditation Criteria. Think beyond the statistical outputs that will be produced. What impact is your research going to have on people's lives? See Considering Public Good in Research and Statistics: Ethics Guidance – UK Statistics Authority	
Select all of the public interest points your research project will accomplish:	Mandatory field, single select from list: - Provide an evidence base for public policy decision making - Provide an evidence base for public service delivery - Provide an evidence base for decisions likely to significantly benefit the UK - To replicate, validate or challenge Official Statistics and/or existing research - To significantly extend understanding of social or economic trends or events by improving knowledge or challenging widely accepted analyses

	- To improve the quality, coverage or presentation of existing research, including official or National Statistics - None of these definitions are applicable to my research
Please explain how your research will achieve each of the types of public interest you have selected above. We will use this as your 'statement of public good'. This will be published on the RDS Data Use Register, which can be read by members of the public.	Mandatory field, text entry, maximum 4000 characters This information 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. Learn more about best practice for writing the statement of public good on the RDS website and RAS guidance for applicants. If you have ticked 'None of these definitions are applicable to my research', explain why and explain how your project will deliver clear benefit to Scotland and the UK.

Safe data: Study data

Study population (cohort)

Field	Field requirements, help text
Provide a detailed description of the criteria (exclusion/inclusion criteria) and datasets that will be used to define your cohort or population of interest.	Mandatory field, text entry, maximum 4000 characters
Please select the datasets that will be used to define your study population: (see next section for linked data)	Select as many datasets as required from the cards displayed: • 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 datasets as required from the cards displayed: • 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
Data Required [per dataset]: Reason for access: Why is this dataset required?	Mandatory field, text entry, maximum 250 characters
Data Required [per dataset]: Corresponding research question	Mandatory field, select from the research questions entered above
Data Required [per dataset]: How you will use variables from the datasets you requested	Mandatory field, text entry, maximum 4000 characters
Date Variables Per dataset selected as Study Population / Cohort: Please select the date range for the variable you wish to filter the dataset by.	For each Study Population / Cohort dataset selected above, you will be prompted to select a date variable to filter the dataset by. If only one date variable is available, this will be pre-selected. You are required to select a <i>from</i> and <i>to</i> date, and a check box if you require the latest data available. There is also an optional field for any additional comments.
Variables Please select the variables to be used	For each Linked dataset selected above, you are required to select the variables you require. There is also an optional field for any codes (i.e, ICD10 or BNF), and a field to add any additional comments per variable.

Safe data: Coverage

Field	Field requirements, help text
Population coverage When considering the public interest of the project you should assess how many people would be affected. 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 disproportionately 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:	Mandatory field, single select from list: - Public interest applicable to entire population - Societal benefits might be limited to certain groups or areas - Societal benefits will be limited to certain groups or areas
Please explain why your research is likely to achieve public interest under this scale.	Mandatory field, text entry, maximum 4000 characters
Geographical coverage	
Please explain the geographical coverage of your analysis (for example local, regional, Scotland or UK), and reference it alongside the names of the datasets you're analysing.	Mandatory field, text entry, maximum 100 characters per dataset

Safe setting

Field	Field requirements, help text
Use of accredited National Safe Haven 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 will be 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
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The outcomes from your project should be made available in a way that is publicly accessible and could be reasonably expected to be permanent. We are unlikely to decide that your project will deliver public good if the findings are not made public. This might be achieved by publishing research findings on a website, in press releases or in announcements about new policy decisions.	
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
If you have selected "Other" provide further details on any other research outcomes you intend to produce.	Mandatory if Other is selected above, text entry, maximum 4000 characters
How will your research outputs be disseminated to achieve the stated public interest 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. A tiered pricing structure is operated by eDRIS 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