

FAQs: Nursing and Midwifery Council Register linked to Census 2021 dataset briefing

ADR UK Research Fellowships 2025 funding opportunity

The following frequently asked questions were compiled from questions raised during a dataset briefing webinar on the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) Register linked to Census 2021 – England and Wales dataset, which was held to support the applications for the 2025 round of ADR UK Research Fellowships.

- [Find out more about the ADR UK Research Fellowships funding opportunity](#) – open for applications until 26 February 2026.
- [Find out more about the NMC Register linked to Census 2021 dataset.](#)
- Watch the [recorded webinar](#) about the dataset and access the [slide deck](#).

Dataset Content & Structure

- 1. What geographical information is available (e.g. place of residence or employment)? What level of granularity can researchers access (postcode, local authority district [LAD], Lower layer Super Output Area [LSOA])?**
 - **Residence geography:** Available as Office for National Statistics (ONS) Census Output Areas (OA) for 2001, 2011, and 2021 (Residenceoa01, Residenceoa11, Residenceoa21). These are very granular small areas.
 - **Employment geography:** Available as OA for 2001, 2011, and 2021 (Employeroa01, Employeroa11, Employeroa21) but only where employment details were captured at revalidation.
 - **Postcodes:** The NMC-side extract includes a full residence postcode field (ResidencePostcode) and employer postcode fields (for example EmployerPostcode as first part). However, in the linked flagship dataset context, you should assume direct postcode access is restricted or not provided and OA-based geography is the usable spatial level.
 - **LSOA/LAD:** Not listed as native fields, but OA can be aggregated to LSOA/LAD within the trusted research environment (TRE) using standard ONS lookups (subject to disclosure controls).
- 2. Does the dataset include the date of initial joining the NMC register and, for those who have left, the reason for leaving (e.g. retirement, career change)?**
 - **Joining:** Yes, RegistrationDate (date of first registration to the NMC).
 - **Leaving:** Yes, LeavingDate exists, but only in the leavers table.
 - **Reason for leaving:** No explicit “reason for leaving” field is listed. The closest related field is MeetsRevalidationRequirements which is only available for a subset (those who decided not to revalidate when due and indicated a reason linked to not meeting requirements). It is not a general leaving-reason variable.

3. Assuming the dataset includes registration and de-registration dates, can NMC registration be considered equivalent to employment in the NHS or private practice?

No. Registration indicates eligibility to practise, not employment status, employer sector, or actual hours worked. The dataset includes employment declarations at revalidation (for those who have revalidated), such as EmploymentType, EmployerName, WorkSetting, ScopeOfPractice, and employer location fields, but these are not equivalent to continuous employment data and are not complete for all registrants.

4. Are employment bands (e.g. Band 5, Band 6) and dates of promotion included in the dataset?

No. There are no variables for Agenda for Change banding, grade, pay band, or promotions, as not all NMC registrants work within the NHS.

5. Does the dataset include indicators of disability or long-term health conditions?

Yes. There is a binary Disability variable from the NMC register side. This is also present in the Census.

Linkage & Integration

6. Are there any links available to data on domestic violence or crime statistics? Could this dataset be combined with justice-related flagship datasets?

Not as part of the flagship dataset itself. There is no justice or crime content in the NMC-Census extract itself. Combining with justice-related datasets would require a separate linkage pathway and approvals (data owner permissions, legal gateway, feasibility, and TRE governance).

7. Is it possible to use supplementary data (e.g. survey data) alongside this dataset within the ONS Secure Research Service (SRS)?

Potentially yes, but only if the supplementary data can be approved for import/use in the TRE and meets governance, security, and disclosure requirements. Practically, this is feasible for well-governed datasets (and sometimes for derived, non-disclosive extracts), but it is not automatic.

Access & Feasibility

8. What steps should researchers take to access the dataset?

- Complete researcher accreditation/training required for TRE access. [Find out more.](#)
- Secure project approval from ADR UK and data owners (including public benefit case, feasibility, and safe outputs plan). [Find out more.](#)
- Obtain ONS SRS access for the approved project and work within disclosure controls. [Find out more.](#)

9. Are there any special considerations for researchers with accessibility needs when working in the trusted research environment (TRE)?

Yes. Accessibility adjustments are typically handled through the TRE service desk and project onboarding (assistive technologies, interface adjustments, and practical accommodations). The key operational point is to flag needs early so the TRE environment can be configured appropriately, but for example SafePods are designed with accessibility in mind, including wheelchair access, and visual aids if necessary. And you can let the coordinator know of any other adjustments needed.

Technical Requirements

10. How complex is the process of linking tables and developing code for analysis within the TRE?

If confident in statistical ability, joining is straightforward conceptually because there is a variable that is the crosswalk key that enables the NMC tables to be joined to Census. You should expect multiple tables (for example a main registrant table and a leavers table). Some fields are only populated for subsets (notably revalidation-derived fields), so you need careful cohort definition and missingness handling.

11. What practical advice can help researchers prepare for working in the ONS SRS (e.g. time planning, error checking, disclosure checks)?

Researchers should plan for the end-to-end timelines and controls of the ONS SRS, which materially shape how analysis is conducted:

- **Build in time for onboarding and approvals:** Access to the SRS requires successful completion of accreditation, project approval, and account setup. These steps can take several weeks and should be factored into project plans, particularly for time-limited fellowships.
- **Plan analysis in blocks, not iteratively:** The SRS environment is designed for secure analysis rather than rapid trial-and-error. Researchers should aim to develop and test code on synthetic or public data before entering the SRS, then run well-structured scripts to minimise repeated sessions.
- **Allow sufficient time for disclosure checking:** All outputs leaving the SRS must pass statistical disclosure control. Disclosure checks are not instantaneous and can take several working days, especially for complex tables or novel outputs. Researchers should schedule disclosure submissions well ahead of deadlines and avoid last-minute output requests.
- **Design outputs with disclosure in mind:** Use aggregation, banding, and suppression strategies from the outset to reduce the risk of small cells or residual disclosure. Geography should generally be aggregated above very small areas unless there is a strong justification.
- **Expect iteration with disclosure reviewers:** Some outputs may require revision following disclosure feedback. Time should be reserved for responding to comments, adjusting code, and resubmitting outputs.

Research Opportunities

12. What policy-relevant topics could be explored using this dataset beyond workforce planning (e.g., retention, migration, unpaid care, ageing workforce)?

Any of these could be done.

13. How can researchers use census variables creatively to address questions about nurses' and midwives' social and economic circumstances?

This is dependent on interests and what you could use in the census.