



# Research Fellowships 2025

## Applicant briefing

Dr Lola Brookes, Senior Research Manager  
Research commissioning team (ADR UK)

Thursday 23 October 2025



# Webinar Agenda

Our aim: **Support researchers** to understand the **requirements** of submitting a **successful application** to the RF2025 opportunity using our **ADR England flagship datasets**.

- Housekeeping
- What is ADR UK and why the fellowship programme is important to our mission
- Fundamentals of the Research Fellowship 2025 funding opportunity
  - Objectives of a Research Fellowship
  - Developing research proposal
  - Structured phases of an ADR UK Research Fellowship
  - ADR England flagship datasets – a condition of this funding opportunity
- What to consider when developing a programme of work
- Public engagement in data research
- Guidance for completing a funding application
- ADR UK's support for applicants and funded fellows
- Closing and questions



# Housekeeping

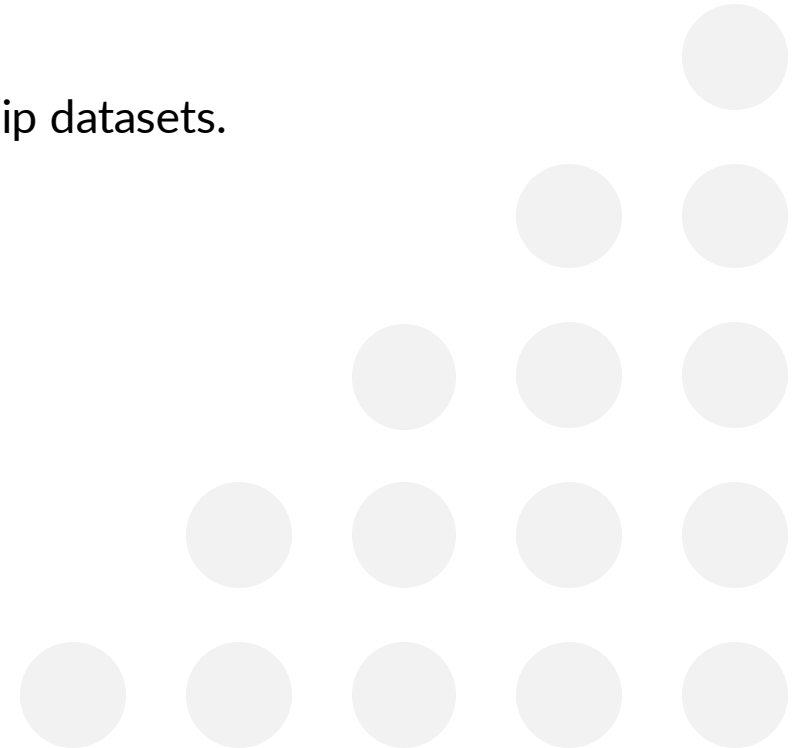
- Please submit your questions via the Q&A function.
- Please note that this meeting is being recorded. Slides and recording of the webinar, alongside a compiled FAQ will be shared on the ADR UK website after the event.



# Objectives of ADR UK Research Fellowship 2025 applicant webinar

To help prospective applicants to:

- **Be informed** about the purpose and structure of the ADR UK Research Fellowship 2025 funding opportunity.
- **Ascertain** ADR UK's research fellowship objectives, phases, and deliverables.
- **Establish** expectations around public and policy engagement.
- **Learn** how to develop and design feasible research using ADR England flagship datasets.
- **Discover** what support available to help shape an application.
- **Navigate** the application process and assessment criteria.
- Ask questions to help decide whether and how to apply.





# Purpose of ADR UK research fellowships in supporting ADR UK's mission



# What is ADR UK about?

Making linked administrative data accessible to researchers across the UK for research in the public good.

Administrative data is information created when people interact with public services, such as schools, the NHS, the courts or the tax system.

We embed public engagement in everything we do to build trustworthiness and social licence to use this data for research.



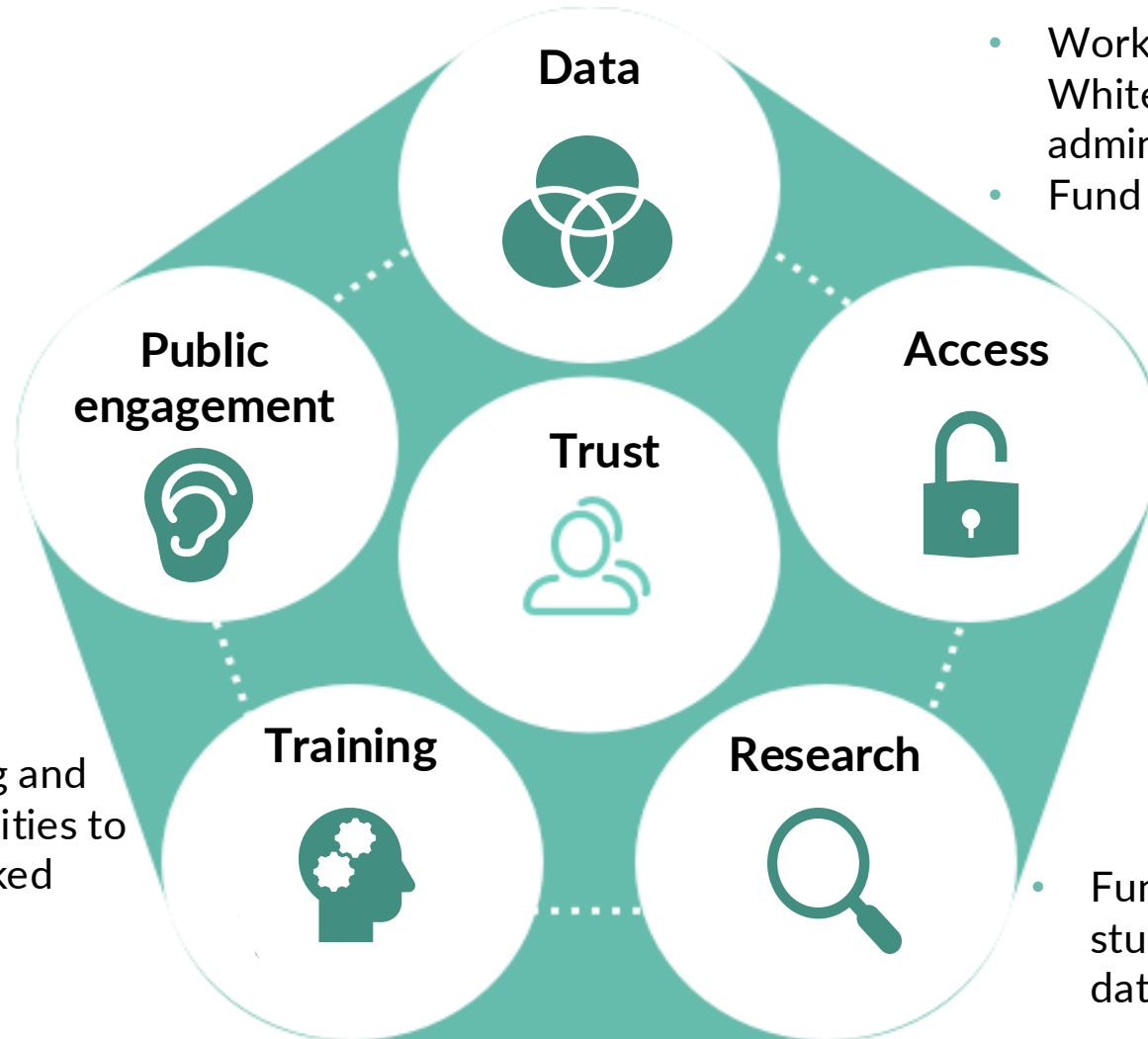
Read more in the  
ADR UK Annual  
Report 2024 - 2025



# What does ADR UK do?

- User representation groups
- Public dialogue

- Programme of training and capacity building activities to support the use of linked administrative data.



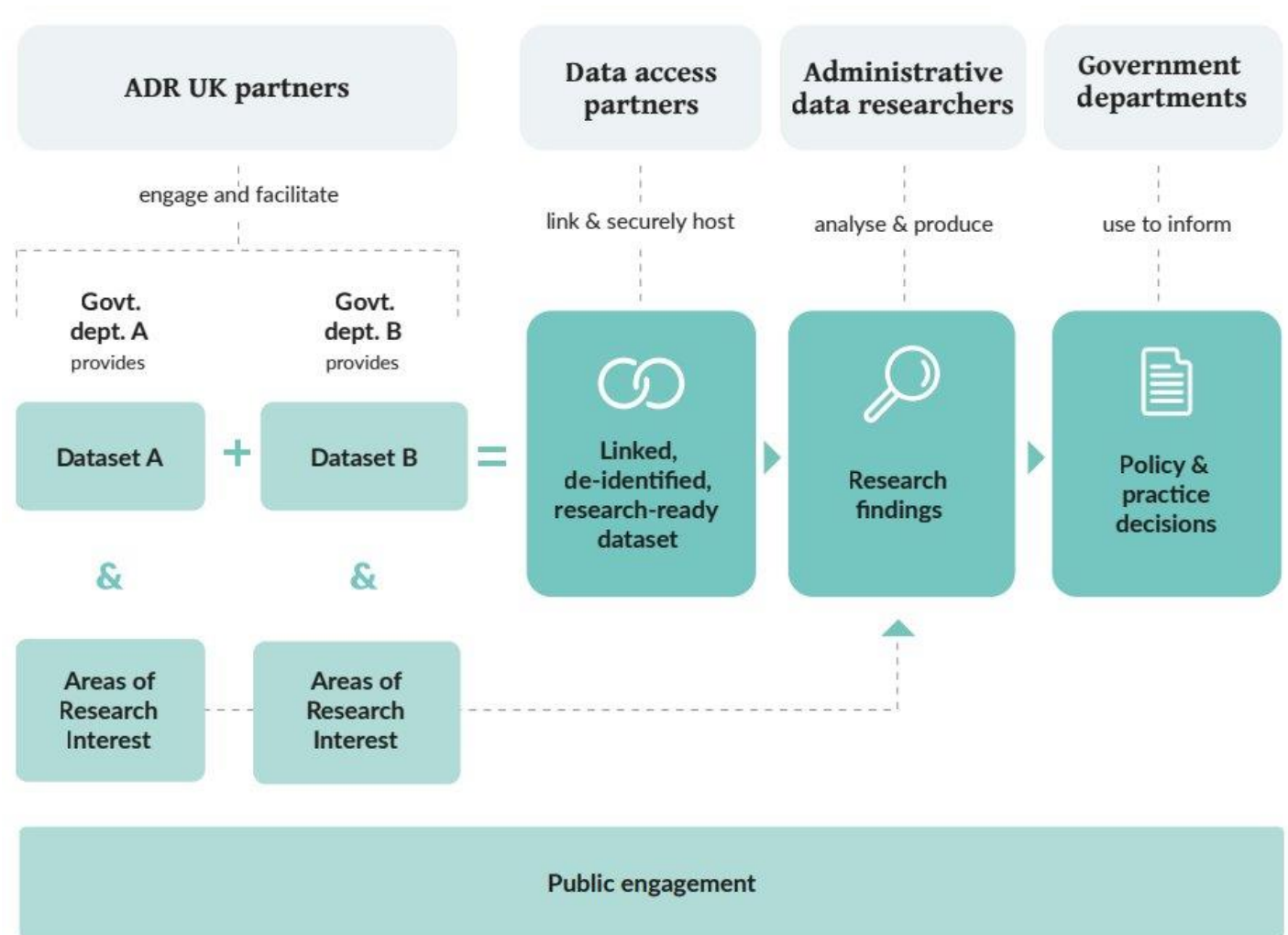
- Work with data owning government(s) and Whitehall departments to open up their administrative data for research
- Fund linkage of these datasets.

- Fund a network of trusted research environments:
  - ONS Secure Research Service (England)
  - SAIL (Wales)
  - NISRA (NI)
  - eDRIS (Scotland)

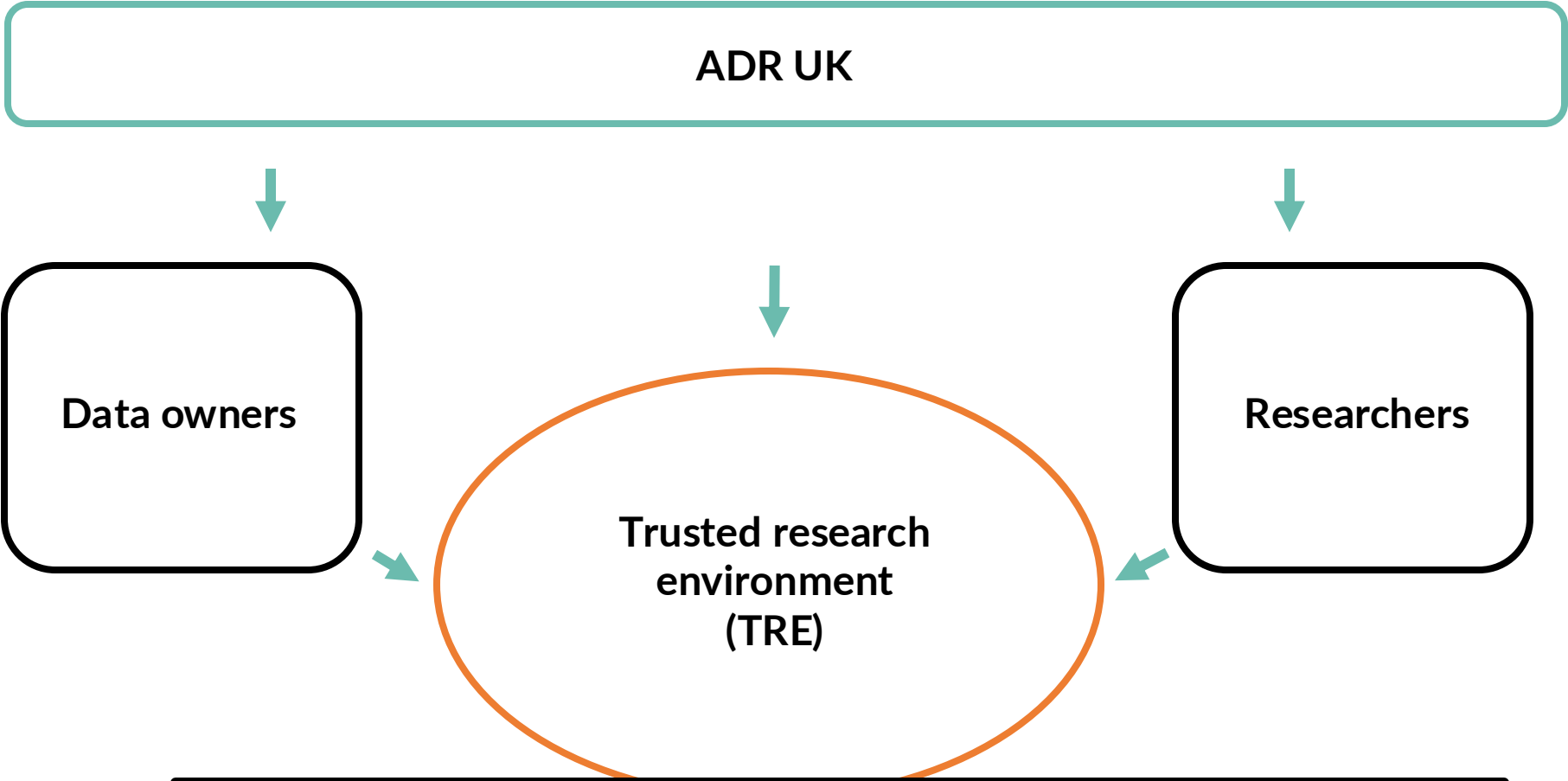
- Fund research fellows & PhD students to use newly linked datasets.

# How the process works

The essence and greatest potential of our work lies in **linking together data** held by different areas of government and the wider public sector.



# ADR UK support's the entire administrative data ecosystem



ADR UK's [Data Catalogue](#)



ADR UK's [Learning Hub](#)

For every [£1 invested in ADR UK, there's a benefit of over £5](#)



# ADR UK research fellowship 2025 funding opportunity



Karen Powell



Lola Brookes



Steve Friend



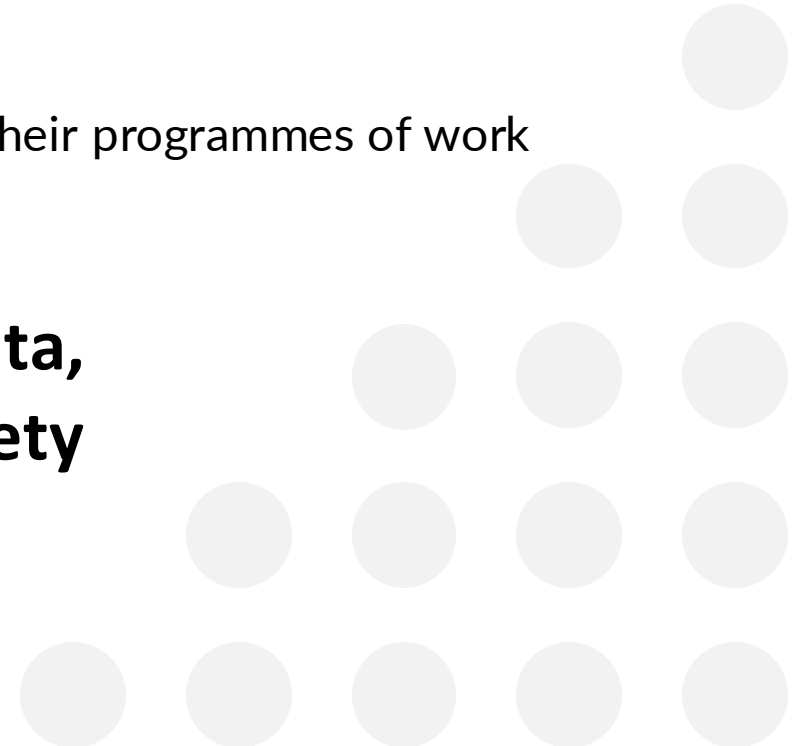
# ADR UK Research Fellowship 2025 fundamentals



## Overview

- To enable policy relevant research using our ADR UK flagship dataset
  - data underpinned by the ADR UK flagship framework
- To facilitate, inform and support new users of our ADR UK flagship dataset
  - our programme is open to all accredited researchers
- To build on previous and successful ADR UK's research fellowships and their programmes of work

**Inspire the use of ADR UK flagship data,  
and drive research that benefits society**



# ADR UK Research Fellowship 2025 fundamentals



- Must use an **ADR England** flagship dataset:
  - can include supplementary data where available and if applicable permitted in the SRS (e.g., additional ADR UK data, survey data and other data if justified).
- Must start **September 2026**.
- ADR UK funds up to **80% full economic costs**.
- Proposals are welcome from all researchers **eligible** to receive **ESRC funding**.
  - fixed-term or permanent contracts.
- Funding is subject to data owner approval.
- Up to **18 months** in duration:
  - 0-3 months: planning, securing data access, training, stakeholder working group (applicant reduced time on the grant).
  - 3-18 months: working with flagship data (approximately 70-80% of this is data wrangling, cleaning and analyzing, inclusive of securing ONS clearance).

# ADR UK Research Fellowship 2025 fundamentals



Applicants should propose research projects which incorporate:

- **Data cleaning and exploration**
- **Policy and public engagement**
- **Easily digestible publications and academic peer-reviewed articles**

Applicants need to include **4 objectives** into the design of a research proposal

1. Complete **useful research**
2. **Inform** further **data use** and data **enhancements**
3. **Foster useful engagement** to enable project delivery
4. **Community Building**

# ADR UK Research Fellowship objectives



## Breaking down the four research objectives

### Objective 1: Complete useful research

- Demonstrate the potential of administrative data research for public policy impact.

### Objective 2: Inform further data use and data enhancements

- Ensure the individual and collective efforts of the fellows enhance the research value of the linked datasets for the benefit of others, including future researchers and data owners.

### Objective 3: Foster useful engagement to enable project delivery

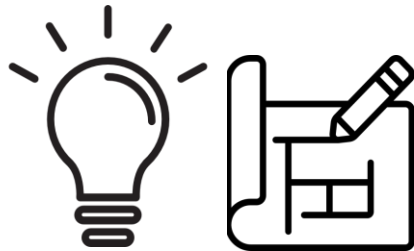
- Engage with government and the public to shape proposed programmes of work to deliver impact and maintain public acceptance for the use of data for research purposes.

### Objective 4: Community Building

- Actively participate in, and collectively contribute to communities of practice, whether pre-established or developed by the research fellow.

# Key parties that could help with the development of a research proposal

- Universities – academic leads and research officers.
- Charities, voluntary communities and other relevant bodies.
- Data owning government departments and ADR England flagship dataset academic leads.
- Past fellows and ADR UK members of staff.

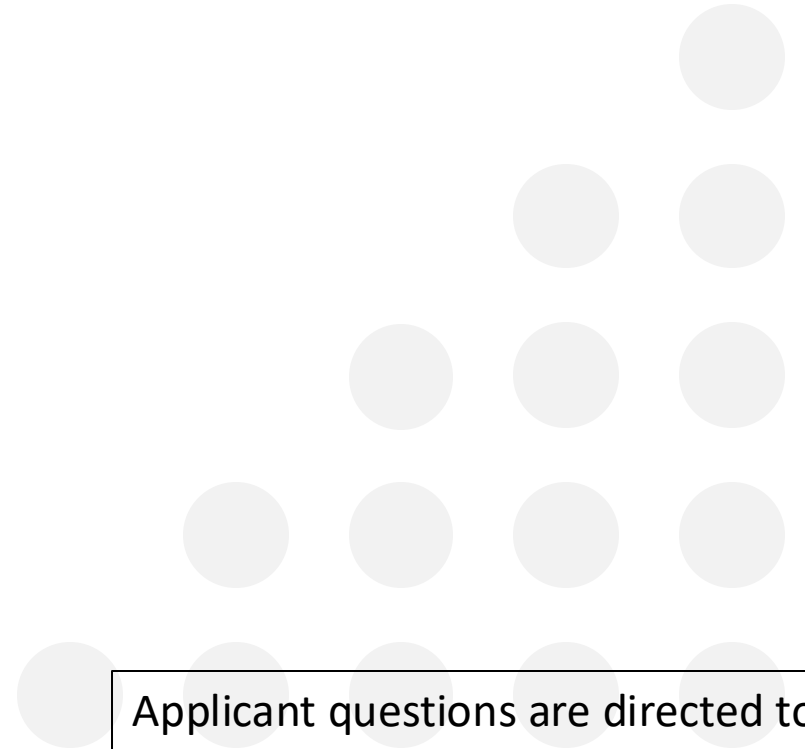


Development of  
research ideas

# Fellowship structure and phases



Breaking down the two stages of a fellowship



Economic  
and Social  
Research Council

Applicant questions are directed to  
[adrfellows@esrc.ukri.org](mailto:adrfellows@esrc.ukri.org)

# Fellowship structure and phases overview



## Stage 1

### Preparing for research – 3 month

- 3 months in duration
- Planning for data access and developing research project methods:
  - training
  - applying for project approval within a TRE
  - developing methods (e.g., with synthetic data where available)
  - development of a project board or stakeholder working group
  - scoping project deliverables (project page, data explained, data insight and another of choice)
- Maximum of 0.4 full-time equivalent

# Fellowship structure and phases overview



## Stage 2

### Active Research – up to 15 months

- With data access, explore and clean data
- Address research objectives
- Communicate research outcome through various forms of dissemination
  - includes ADR UK Research Fellowship deliverables
- Attend quarterly cohort meetings,
- Engage with, and feedback on the ADR England flagship dataset use
- Minimum of 0.6 full-time equivalent

# ADR England flagship data





## Fellowship datasets for RF2025

- [Administrative Data | Agricultural Research Collection - England](#) AD ARC 2011
- [Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings \(ASHE\) linked to 2011 Census - England and Wales](#) ASHE-Census2011
- [ASHE linked to PAYE and Self-Assessment data - England, Scotland and Wales](#) ASHE-PAYE
- [Data First: Cross-Justice System - England and Wales](#) Cross-Justice
- [Data First: Family Court linked to Cafcass and Census 2021 - England and Wales](#) [Read the priority research questions for this dataset](#) Cafcass -Census 2021
- [Ministry of Justice & Department for Education linked dataset - England](#) MoJ-DfE linked dataset
- [Education and Child Health Insights from Linked Data - England](#) ECHILD
- [Grading and Admissions Data for England](#) GRADE
- [Longitudinal Education Outcomes - England](#) LEO
- [ASHE linked to Migrant Workers Scan - England](#) ASHE-Migrant Workers Scan
- [Nursing and Midwifery Council Register linked to Census 2021 - England and Wales](#) NMC-Census
- [RAPID: Population interactions with employment, benefits and pensions - UK](#) RAPID

# What to consider when developing a programme of work



# Areas included in our assessment of each application

- Vision
- Approach
- Applicant capability to deliver
- Career development
- Host organisation support
- Resources and cost justification
- Data management and sharing
- Facilities
- Ethics and responsible research and innovation
- Feasibility data requirements
- Requirements for an ADR UK flagship dataset mentor

We strongly recommend that for each specific flagship dataset documentation and data access requirements are thoroughly checked.

**AND**

If you have questions, please reach out to the relevant parties.

# What are your research objectives?

How to identify and validate research questions to fulfil ADR UK **Objective 1 – useful research.**

- Government Missions.
- Government department areas of research interests inclusive of key dataset specific owners
  - Research objectives for specific use of each ADR England flagship can be found on the ADR UK webpage.
- Evidence gaps – ADR UK’s Community Catalysts.
- Objectives co-developed with project partners.
- Strong evidence that objectives are issues society need answering.
- Evaluation of policy changes, interventions and programmes.

**Feasible** = what’s possible with an ADR England flagship dataset and what can be completed within the timings of a fellowship.

**Webinar on “Writing a good funding application”**

# Key outputs and expectations of an ADR UK Research Fellow

Version updated 22/10/205



Our programme is dual-focused

Excellent, robust and relevant research

Feedback into the use of our flagship data

- To raise awareness of a fellow's programme → **A Project page on the ADR UK website**
- Objective 2 **Inform further data use and data enhancements** → **Data Explained**
- To help foster communications for Objectives **1, 3 and 4** → **Data Insight**
- In addition - at least one other deliverable a fellow choses
- A public engagement event
- Stakeholder engagement – project steering group
- Support good research practice and publish open access code.
- Peer reviewed publication(s) – please note data access needs to be planned around this.



# Public engagement in data research



**Shayda Kashef**

Senior Public Engagement Manager,  
ADR UK Strategic Hub

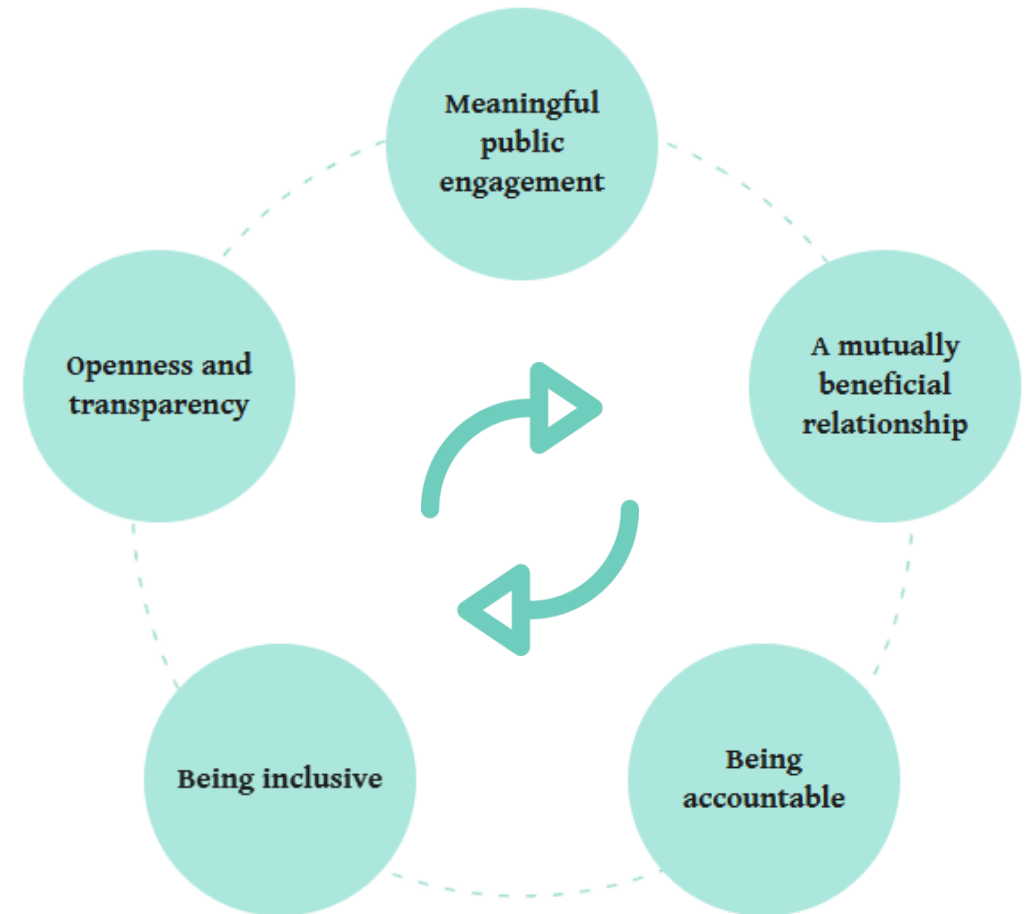
[Shayda.Kashef@esrc.ukri.org](mailto:Shayda.Kashef@esrc.ukri.org)



# Public engagement is embedded at the heart of the ADR UK programme

Shaping research to address the public's needs and concerns is essential for maximising the public benefit of our work.

Public engagement is a purposeful set of activities designed to promote an ongoing dialogue with the public about administrative data research, driven by active listening and responding.

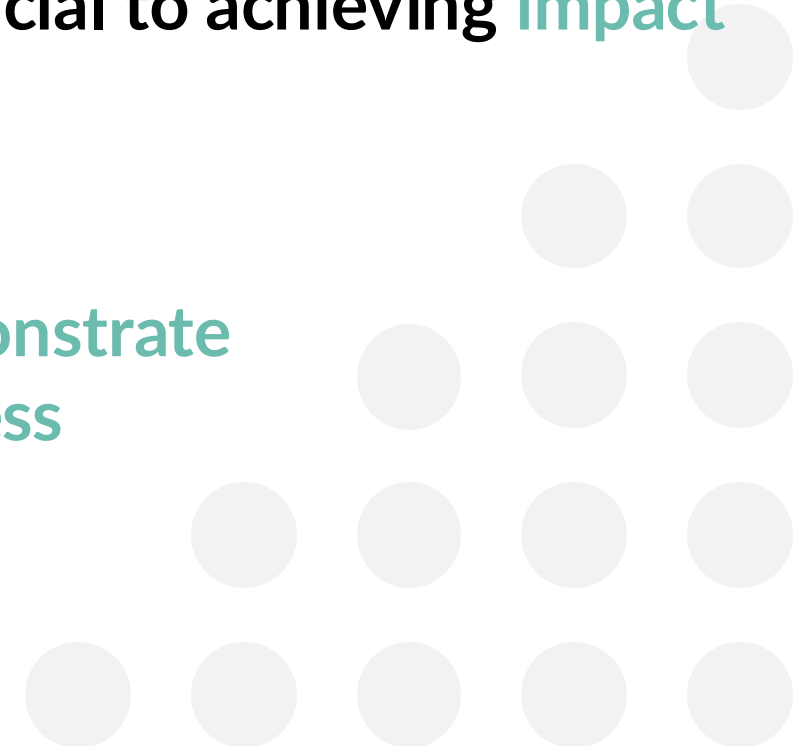


# Why public engagement is important:

1. It's the **right thing** to do

2. It's crucial to achieving **impact**

3. It can **demonstrate trustworthiness**



## Methods of good public engagement

Across the partnership, ADR UK's public engagement activities will involve various methods, each of which can be characterised as either '**inclusion**' (actively involving and/or engaging people in shaping an endeavour) or '**dialogue**' (asking people their views, sometimes in a formal process).



Some methods of inclusive or dialogic engagement include:

- Public, community or advisory panels
- Public events
- Workshops/focus groups



## Addressing common challenges

**When to engage...**As early as possible and across your project lifecycle.

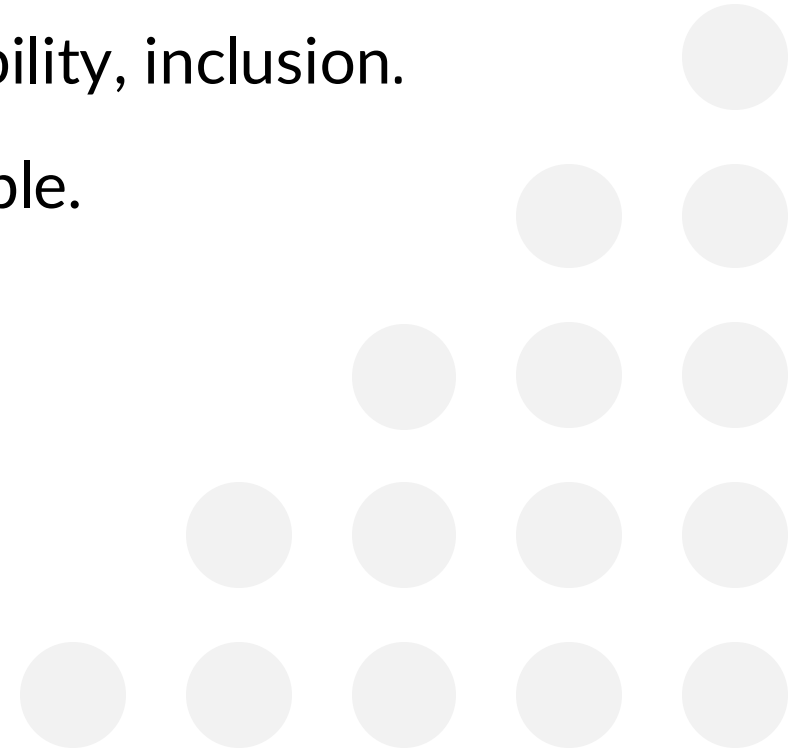
**Why engage...**What do you want to learn? What impact do you hope to achieve?

**Who to engage...**Who do you need to speak to? How do you reach them?

**How to engage...**What do you want to achieve? Accessibility, inclusion.

**How to do it well...**Be purposeful, transparent, accountable.

**Who is 'the public'...**Not academics or policymakers.



# Support is available:

For practical advice and case studies, see the ADR UK Learning Hub:



You will receive support upon starting your fellowship, but it works best when you come with a plan.

If you're based at a university, they will likely have a public engagement team who can also support you.

For guidance and other resources, see the PEDRI Good Practice Standards for Public Involvement and Engagement:



## Case studies:

### Consulting a pre-existing advisory group about a research project on ethnicity data

Dr Alice Wickersham investigated similarities and differences in how ethnicity was recorded in the Police National Computer (PNC) and the National Pupil Database (NPD). In 2022, Alice consulted with an advisory group on the emerging findings.

Author: Alice Wickersham, ADR UK Research Fellow, King's College London

### A creative approach: Engaging young people in research about educational risk factors related to re-offending

In a creative theatre-based workshop, we sought to explore young people's attitudes towards the use of administrative data.

Author: Dr Hannah Dickson

### Engaging with an established young person's advisory group on adolescent mental health and schools

We gathered children and young people's views on using the Education and Child Health Insights from Linked Data - England (ECHILD) dataset to understand stress and mental health in secondary schools in England.

Author: Ruth Blackburn

### Creating an advisory board to support research on immigration, integration and labour market outcomes

I created a project advisory board of stakeholders from the voluntary and community sector, as well as representatives from think tanks, research organisations, and trade unions, at the start of my fellowship to maximise the public benefit of my findings. I fostered relationships based on transparency and openness to their feedback where possible; as a result, the advisory board has been instrumental in supporting efforts to generate real-world impact from my research findings.

Author: Dr Ezgi Kaya, Senior Lecturer (Associate Professor) in Economics at Cardiff Business School and ADR UK Research Fellow

# Guidance for completing a funding application

## Key dates:

<u>Opportunity opens</u>	<u>13 November 2025</u>
<u>Opportunity closes</u>	<u>26 February 2026</u>
<u>Expert review</u>	<u>March 2026</u>
<u>Panel</u>	<u>April 2026</u>
<u>Funding notification</u>	<u>May 2026</u>
<u>Project start dates</u>	<u>September 2026</u>

All applications will need to be submitted through [The Funding Service](#)



# Vision

Explain what your envisaged fellowship is about. What your specific objectives will address, and why they are important.

Guidance on how to complete this section can be found on the application form, and you can refer to the [ADR UK Research Fellowships General Specification](#) and the [Communications & Engagement Expectations for ADR UK Research Fellowship grant holders](#).

## Top tips

- This section firmly aligns with our objective 1 to fund **useful research**.
- Identify why your research objective(s) address advertised research priorities using a specific ADR England flagship datasets.
- Ensure your proposal is feasible and achievable given the flagship dataset and timings of a fellowship.
- Explain how it benefits public good in an innovative way.

1. Complete **useful research**
2. **Inform** further data use and data enhancements
3. **Foster** useful engagement to enable project delivery
4. **Community Building**

# Approach

How you are going to undertake a project to ensure our funding objectives are achieved.

Guidance on how to complete this section can be found on the application form, and you can refer to the [ADR UK Research Fellowships General Specification](#) and the [Communications & Engagement Expectations for ADR UK Research Fellowship grant holders](#).

## Top tips:

- Outline how you will action your vision to address ADR UK's objectives for funding.
- If a proposal outlines supplementary data, explain how it will be used and identify what steps are needed to make this possible.
- Explain how you will meaningfully include the public, data owners, and broader stakeholders in a programme of work.

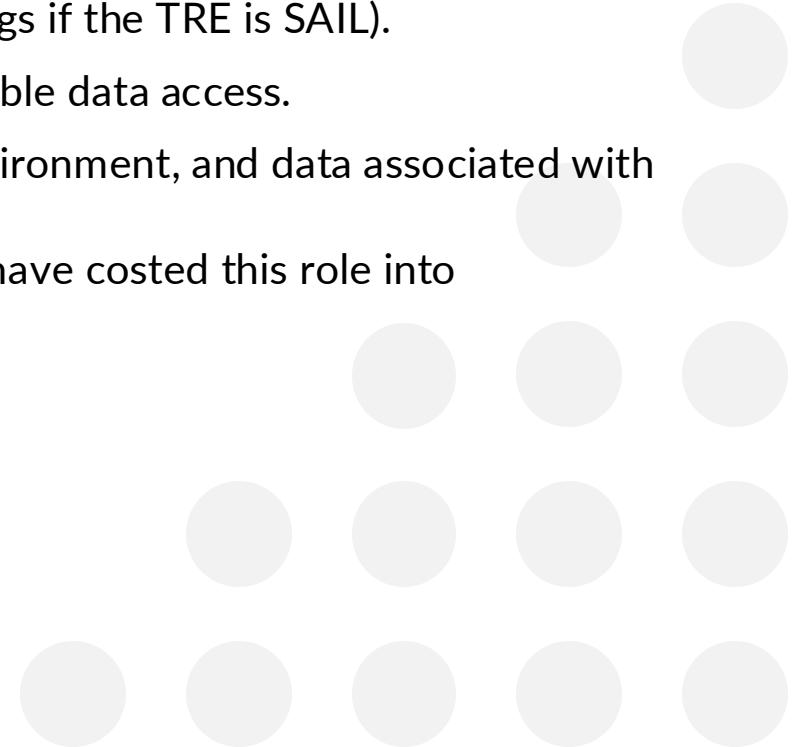
1. Complete **useful research**
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4. **Community Building**

# Host organisation support, Career development, Resources and cost justification and Facilities

Guidance on how to complete these sections can be found on the application form.

## Top tips:

- Ensure you have identified the correct data access requirements (including costings if the TRE is SAIL).
- Identify that data access provisions are in place or specify what is required to enable data access.
- ADR UK past fellows have stressed the value of mentors that understand the environment, and data associated with our programme.
  - If you want the support of an ADR UK flagship dataset mentor, ensure you have costed this role into “Resources and cost justification”.



# Feasibility

**\*New to our research fellowship funding opportunities\***

- A feasibility specific question.
- Developed following our review of previous research commissioning
- Introduced to improve alignment between proposals and data realities.

## What is it?

A review by data owners and ONS to confirm

- The data is available, appropriate, and proportionate to your aims.
- Any linkage or access conditions can be met.

## Why it matters?

“As applications involve access to administrative data, a feasibility check will be undertaken by the relevant data owner(s) and the Office for National Statistics (ONS). This process assesses whether the requested data is available, appropriate, and proportionate to the research aims, and whether any data linkage or access conditions can be met. The outcome of this check may inform the final funding decision.”

### Top tip

Use dataset documentation, webinars, and the ADR UK metadata catalogue to validate your plans before applying.

# Feasibility

**\*New to our research fellowship funding opportunities\***

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**Our funding decision is dependent on whether a proposed project is feasible given the data available and the time allocated to the undertaking of a fellowship.**

## What

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- The data is available, appropriate, and proportionate to your aims.
- Any linkage or access conditions can be met.

## Why it matters?

“As applications involve access to administrative data, a feasibility check will be undertaken by the relevant data owner(s) and the Office for National Statistics (ONS). This process assesses whether the requested data is available, appropriate, and proportionate to the research aims, and whether any data linkage or access conditions can be met. The outcome of this check may inform the final funding decision.”

### Top tip

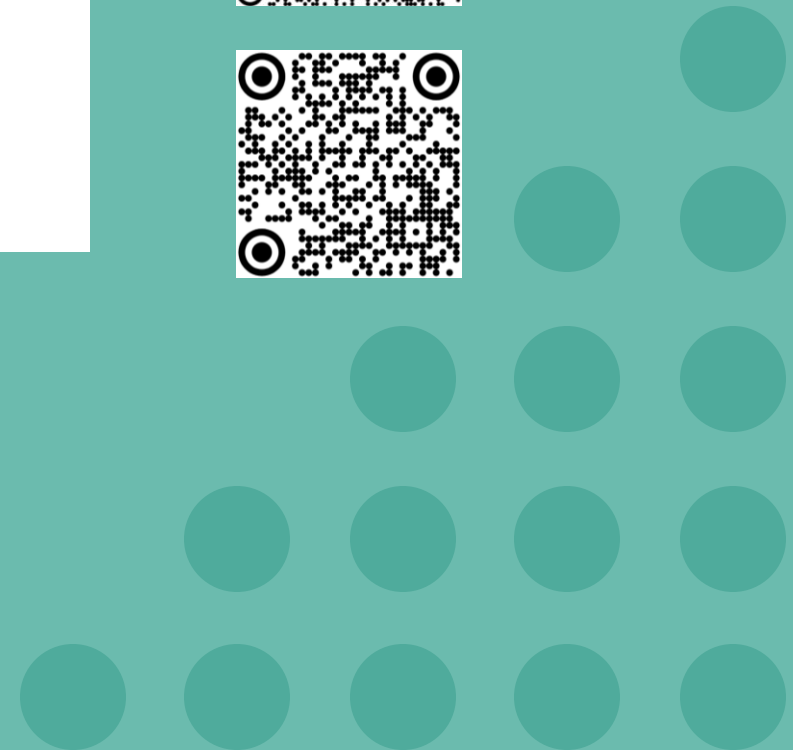
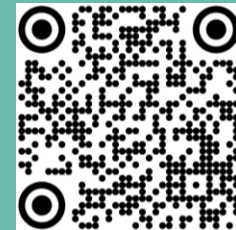
Use dataset documentation, webinars, and the ADR UK metadata catalogue to validate your plans before applying.



# ADR UK support

ADR UK has supported 45 research fellowships between 2021 and 2026, enabling researchers to use linked administrative data for projects in the public interest. You can [browse past and current projects](#).

You can also [read impact case studies](#) to see how ADR UK and partners have influenced policy and practice.



# ADR UK's support for prospective applicants

- [ADR UK flagship dataset](#) webinars.
- Trusted Research Environment information (recorded information can be found on webpage).
- Support with writing a good funding application “[How to write a good funding application](#)” webinar.
- ADR UK Community Catalysts.
- [Peer-to-Peer support](#) for applicants.
- Option to join the [ADR UK Flagship Dataset Mentoring programme](#) (successful applicants).

There is time to sign up for future webinars, or you can watch past dataset briefings on our YouTube Channel



# ADR UK's support for prospective applicants

## Peer-to-peer support

Gain insights into our fellowship programme from our current ADR UK Research Fellows.

- Our supported consultations can be used:
  - when an applicant is seeking guidance on a specific flagship dataset, or regarding the development of a specific research question,
  - to gain insights into the benefits of stakeholder engagement,
  - to gain insights into the development of research objectives based on completed fellowships, or
  - to seek advice or guidance to support completion of an ADR UK Research Fellowship application.
- If you are a prospective applicant and are interested in this form of support, please email [ADRFellowships@esrc.ukri.org](mailto:ADRFellowships@esrc.ukri.org), and we will get back to you.

# Important documents and links

## Key documentation and resources

[Key information on RF2025](#)

[ADR UK Research Specification](#)

[ADR UK Communications & Engagement Expectations for ADR UK Research Fellowship grant holders](#)

[ADR UK Research Fellowships 2025 pre-announcement](#)

## Application Guidance

[UKRI Applying for funding guidance](#)

How applicants use [The UKRI Funding Service](#)

Sign in or create an account on [The UKRI Funding Service](#)

## ADR UK resources

[Public engagement in practice - ADR UK](#)

[Learning Hub](#)

[ADR England flagship datasets](#)

[England Community Catalysts Youth Transitions and Children and Risk of Poor Outcomes](#)

## Partner and external resources

[Our Standards - PEDRI](#)

[ARI Database](#)

[Plan for Change - GOV.UK](#)

[ONS's Secure Research Service](#)

How to become an [Accredited Researcher](#)

[Project Accreditation Service for the SRS](#)

[SAIL Databank](#) and their [contact form](#)



# Important documents and links

- [Administrative Data | Agricultural Research Collection - England](#). [Read the priority research questions for this dataset](#)
- [Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings \(ASHE\) linked to 2011 Census - England and Wales](#). [Read the priority research questions for this dataset](#)
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Administrative data is an invaluable resource  
for public good.

*Let's use it.*

# Thank you!

## Questions?



[Lola.brookes@esrc.ukri.org](mailto:Lola.brookes@esrc.ukri.org)



[adrfellowship@esrc.ukri.org](mailto:adrfellowship@esrc.ukri.org)



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[www.youtube.com/@adruk2614/featured](https://www.youtube.com/@adruk2614/featured)