

ADR UK Annual Report 2019-20

**Administrative
data is an
invaluable
resource for
public good.
*We're using it.***

Foreword



from Professor Jennifer Rubin, Executive Chair of the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and Senior Responsible Officer for ADR UK (Administrative Data Research UK)

The foundation of much excellent economic and social research is high-quality and trustworthy data that can tell us about people and behaviour, how we live, work and learn, whether and how we get along together and what to do when we do not, how our environment shapes us and how to improve outcomes where there are important disparities. Whether helping to establish a feasible furlough scheme; providing accommodation for people sleeping rough during lockdown; or making the case for tokens in place of free school meals, administrative data and economic and social research have been at the heart of addressing some of this year's most pressing concerns.

ADR UK, one of ESRC's central investments, is built on the basis that linking and providing safe access to good-quality, de-identified data held by different parts of government is key to understanding what works, to inform public policy, and to enable economic and social research that improves and saves lives.

The Covid-19 pandemic has influenced the course of much research and investment this year. Thanks to the infrastructures already in place, ADR UK and its partners not only enabled rapid research in the immediate response to the pandemic, but are also garnering insights that will be crucial to assessing its impact and to rebuilding economically, educationally and socially in the longer term.

Aside from its own direct response to the pandemic, this annual report demonstrates that data and approaches supported by ADR UK can be used to inform UK-wide data-driven change across all major policy areas; from education, through housing and communities, to economic growth and crime and justice.

The importance of the work of ADR UK has been recognised with a further year of funding, and with endorsement of the programme's five-year plan from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. Reinvestment in ADR UK aligns with the UK Government's manifesto commitments to improve the use of data and evidence to support decision making, especially in relation to *"the types of barriers different groups face, ensuring that fairness is at the heart of everything we do"*.

ADR UK has achieved a number of significant milestones this year. The Ministry of Justice Data First programme, launched in the spring, has already produced two research-ready datasets, and the first users of the data are to be funded via the new ADR UK Research Fellowship Scheme. Many projects within the devolved partners have reached maturity and continue to deliver a steady stream of data insights publications. And ADR UK funding has supported the Office for National Statistics to grow and improve its Secure Research Service, including the successful launch of its new Research Accreditation Service. I look forward to the further important research that this major investment enables.



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1. Introduction

*from Emma Gordon, Director of ADR UK
(Administrative Data Research UK)*



When we published last year's annual report, I stated that the ADR UK programme represented an extremely timely opportunity to realise some of the benefits of data-driven change – for the UK Government, devolved administrations, and society as a whole.

12 months on, the world has changed. We have been presented with exceptional unforeseen circumstances. Yet the Covid-19 pandemic has spotlighted the importance of data like nothing before, reaffirming the need for the ADR UK programme now more than ever. The opportunity has become more timely still.

Administrative data acts as a footprint of people's routine contact with public services across the country. This unrivalled breadth of understanding about lived experience, both as a whole and in relation to specific demographics, has great potential to improve lives.

In furthering our mission to enable better use of administrative data for research in the public interest, this year we saw the seeds sown across the partnership since the inception of ADR UK start to bear fruit.

We initiated new partnerships between academia and government, such as the Administrative Data | Agricultural Research Collection (AD|ARC) and EU Citizens Settled Status (EUSS) projects, being undertaken by ADR Wales; and the Homelessness Data England project, in partnership with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

We uncovered new research insights, including links between air pollution and health in Northern Ireland, and first insights into newborns in care proceedings in Wales.

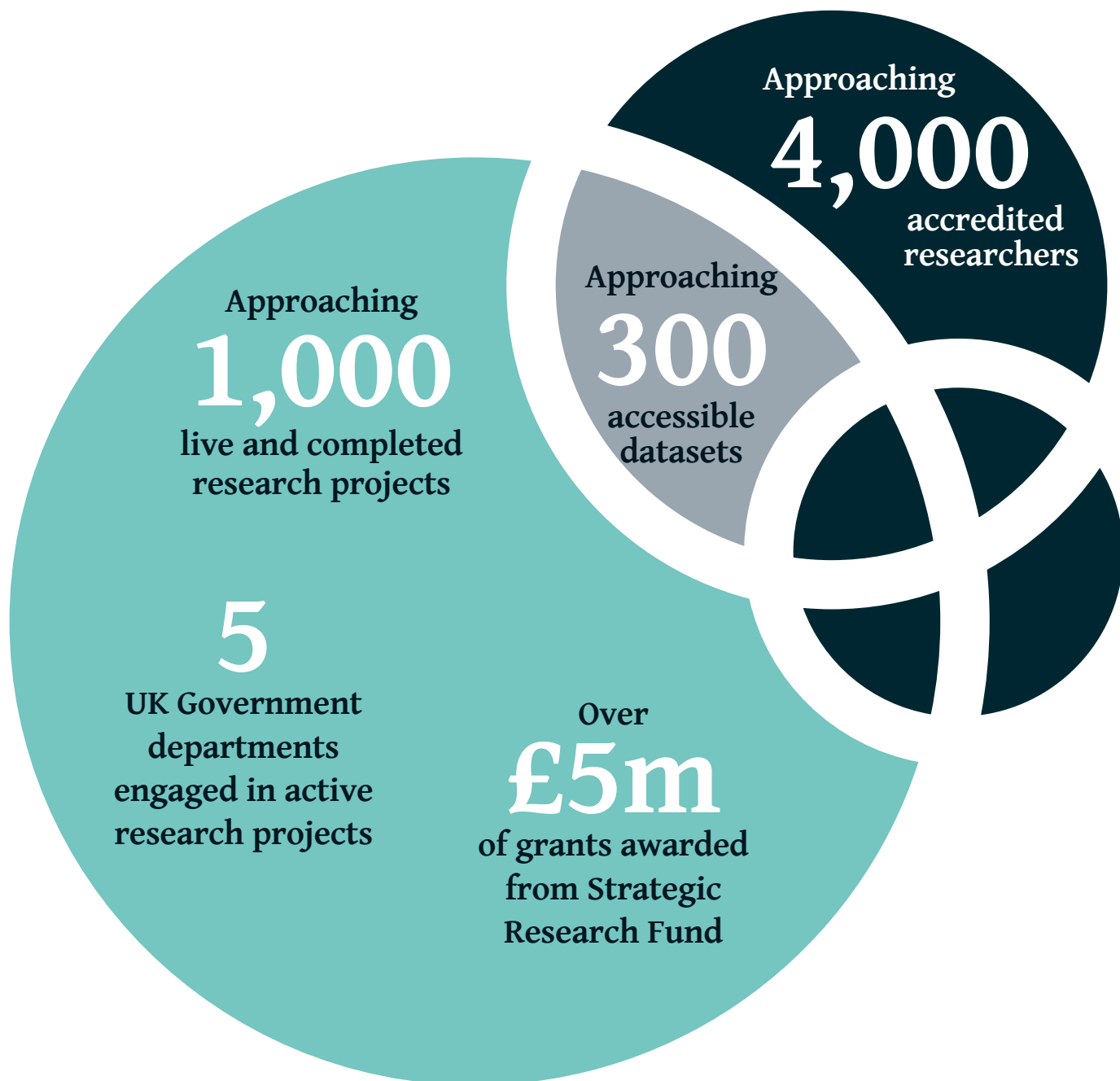
And we made important strides with existing projects, including publishing the findings of the very first analysis of the Growing Up in England dataset, and depositing two de-identified, research-ready datasets from the Ministry of Justice's Data First project in the Office for National Statistics' Secure Research Service.

But I am acutely aware that this year was unique. The Covid-19 pandemic brought to the surface significant social and economic inequalities, generated new logistical challenges, and accelerated public understanding of the role trustworthy data plays in representing people and society, and in shaping policy.

With these events in mind, reinvestment in the ADR UK programme couldn't have come at a more important time. In August, we received confirmation of a further year of funding until March 2022, and endorsement of our vision for a further five years of operation from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy – confirmation of funding for which will be dependent on the outcome of UK Research and Innovation's overall settlement in the UK Government's upcoming Comprehensive Spending Review.

Despite the unforeseen hurdles of this year, I am delighted to share the progress that has been made across the partnership in developing new datasets, strengthening our data services, and generating more impactful research. I couldn't be more excited about what's yet to come.

2. ADR UK in Numbers



3. Our Mission

Good government policy – policy that solves social and economic problems and improves lives – needs good evidence.

ADR UK’s mission is to transform the way researchers access the UK’s wealth of public sector data. By joining up the abundance of administrative data already being created by government and public bodies across the UK, and facilitating safe and secure access to this data for approved researchers, ADR UK is creating a sustainable resource that will provide valuable insights into how our society and economy function. This approach is tailored to give decision makers the answers they need to solve important policy questions, driving change that has the potential to improve lives across the UK.

“ **Our Vision**
“ADR UK’s vision for 2026 is to be the default choice to host linked administrative data from across the entirety of UK and devolved government, making it accessible to a deep pool of trained researchers to generate insights routinely used to inform policy and practice.” **”**

Our Values

ADR UK is committed to a set of values that are central to the partnership’s activities and progress, guiding how we work together with our partners and defining how we engage with stakeholders and the public. Our core values are:

Responsible and ethical data use:

ADR UK is dedicated to ensuring the data we enable access to is used ethically and responsibly for research projects with real potential to make a positive difference to society. Access to and use of data is strictly controlled and monitored, with projects assessed for ethics, feasibility, privacy, public benefit and scientific merit.

Relevance:

ADR UK is committed to ensuring that the research we enable is relevant to the needs of society. We do this by aligning our research themes with the UK’s most pressing issues and by closely reviewing all project proposals to ensure they hold potential for public good.

Independence:

ADR UK is a publicly-funded, apolitical partnership. The academic research we facilitate is driven by a desire to understand and improve society, rather than to advance specific agendas.

Ambition:

ADR UK is ambitious about the game-changing societal impact that can be achieved by well-implemented administrative data research. We have a vision for a future where safe data sharing for research is routine and valued.

Areas of focus and goals

Trust & sustainability

Commitment and sustainability for admin data research:

strategic focus on addressing major societal challenges through admin data research, with support throughout government for releasing data to create a sustainable research resource.



Research for public good

Measurable public good:

demonstrable impact arising from admin data research that addresses major societal challenges.



Research access & support

Seamless researcher service:

transparent, coordinated, secure and timely access to admin data and support services for the wider research community.



Available data for research

A highly useful long-term research resource:

flow, accessibility and long term preservation of high quality, research-ready admin data, designed to address major societal challenges.



IMPACT CASE STUDY: Informing 'bounce back loans'

Analysis by the Bank of England, including data accessed via the Office for National Statistics' (ONS) Secure Research Service (SRS), supported HM Treasury in the thinking behind Chancellor Rishi Sunak's 'bounce back loan' scheme. Mr Sunak announced an offer of 100 percent guarantees on 'bounce back loans' of up to £50,000 for the smallest businesses affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. The scheme has been praised as "transformational" by Carolyn Fairbairn, Director-General of the Confederation of British Industry, and received extensive media coverage.

Similar analysis was used in the design of the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) and the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CLBILS).

"Access to secure data through the ONS SRS is enabling critical analysis to support a variety of Covid-19 policy decisions. Analysis of these data aids HM Treasury in the design of Covid-19 support schemes for businesses and the self-employed. The ONS response to Covid-19, allowing out of office access to the SRS, has also been of fundamental importance in supporting routine research supporting policy decisions. The commitment by the SRS team to go above and beyond has been critical in empowering us to continue to deliver to our stakeholders in a timely fashion."

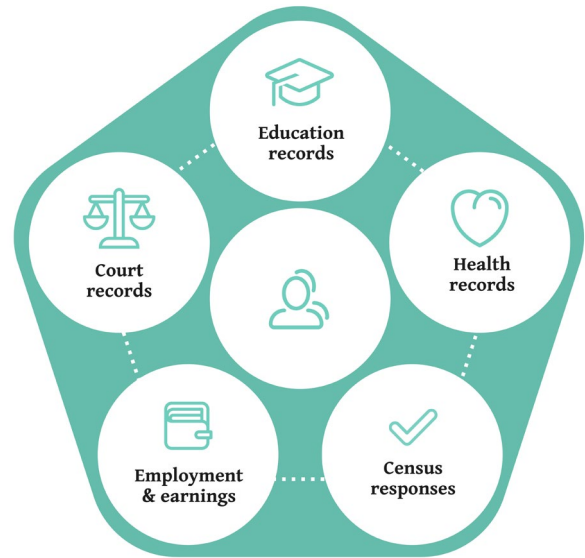
Fergus Cumming, Senior Economist, Bank of England

4. Administrative Data: *what is it and why is it valuable?*

Administrative data is information created when people interact with public services, such as schools, hospitals, the courts or the benefits system, and collated by government. Public bodies must keep records of these interactions for operational purposes: to enable them to carry out their day-to-day work, to monitor and improve their performance, and to keep providing services in an effective way.

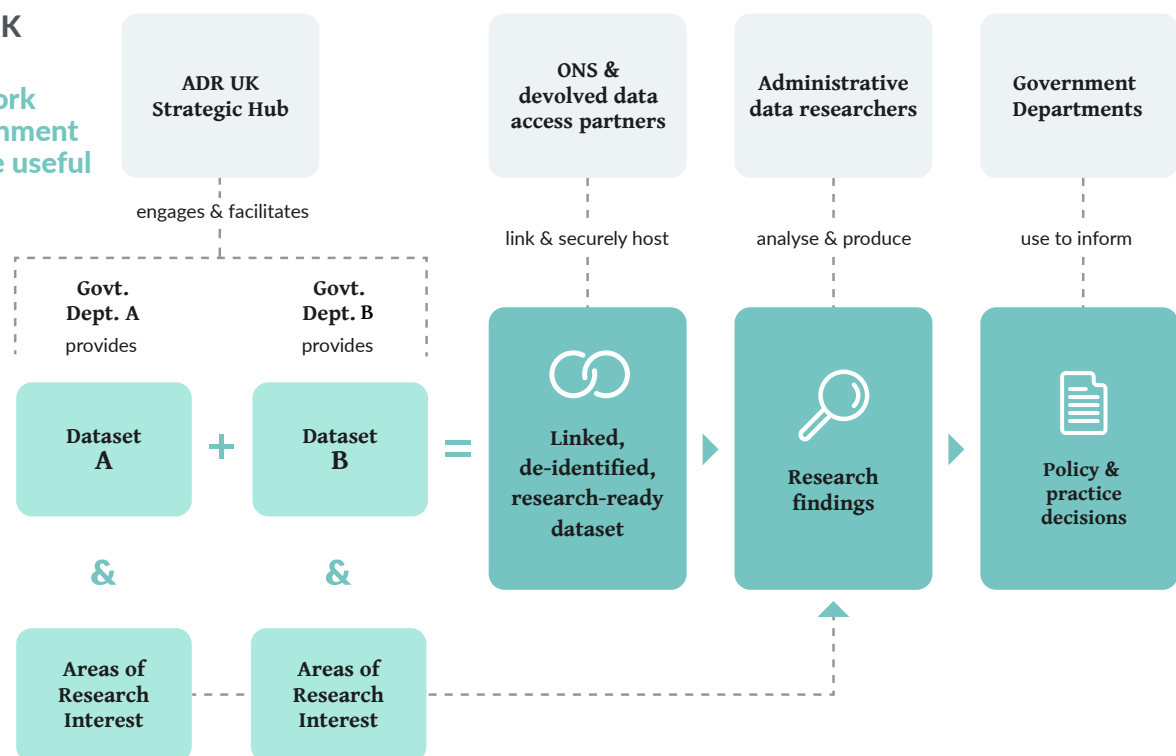
Across the UK as a whole, administrative data is currently a largely untapped, but information-rich, resource. This wealth of data – the majority of which was not originally created for research but as a by-product of government services – has the potential to create important knowledge, providing powerful insights into our society and in turn pointing to areas where change is needed.

Access to anonymised administrative data is extremely valuable to research, facilitating a far more accurate and comprehensive picture of UK society than is possible without it. Unlike survey data, for example – which is limited to those who choose to take part and can therefore mean some groups of people are underrepresented – administrative datasets include information on everyone who comes into contact with public services.



The greatest benefits from the use of administrative data for research come when data created by one government department or other public body is linked to that from others. Linking data from across the public sector is the essence of ADR UK's work. It enables researchers to study how different aspects of life interact with one another, to enhance our understanding of UK society and where change is needed to improve lives.

The ADR UK process:
How we work with government to generate useful insights



5. Our Impact

As an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) investment, ADR UK adopts the definition of impact used by ESRC and across UK Research and Innovation as a whole:



“Impact is the demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to society and the economy.”

This includes, for example, informing changes to government policy and public service provision that lead to better social and economic outcomes for people and communities. This impact can be at any geographic level: from the local, to the national and international.




We seek to maximise value from administrative data access, linking and research across ‘Five Ps’:

- **Process:** championing a lasting culture change towards closer working between academics and government to routinely share, link and use administrative data for research.
- **Policy:** influencing government or other public bodies to inform policies, strategies and standards, through understanding and insight gained from our research.
- **Practice:** influencing public sector and other professionals to change or maintain the way they deliver public services, informed by an understanding of ‘what works’ provided by our research.
- **People:** the tangible, real world improvements to the outcomes and quality of life of individuals and communities that may stem from the changes to policy and practice our research stimulates.
- **Potential:** our work creates both sustainable linked administrative datasets, and sustainable understanding of the data and what it can tell us. These can be accessed by other researchers in future, enabling them to create further impact on policy, practice and people.

Across ADR UK, our partners have a range of strategies to maximise impact across our ‘Five Ps’. Common approaches include:

- Partnering with government.
- Aligning with national strategies and departmental Areas of Research Interest.
- Dual publication in formats that are easily digestible and usable by different stakeholders.
- Engaging with stakeholders, communities and the public.
- The public interest test, with ADR UK research projects being approved by the UK Statistics Authority’s Research Accreditation Panel. This is fundamental to enabling research that has a positive impact on people’s lives.
- Making datasets available for further use by accredited researchers.

Case studies of ADR UK projects that have made an impact this year are scattered throughout this report.

-  ADR UK partner safe settings
-  ESRC SafePod network (planned)
-  Assured Organisational Connections



6. Our Data Services

Each ADR UK national partnership, as well as the Office for National Statistics (ONS), has a dedicated secure service through which approved researchers can access de-identified administrative data.

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, as part of ADR Northern Ireland, allows researchers safe access to project specific de-identified data in a secure environment to carry out secondary data analysis.

ADR Scotland currently offers a wide range of de-identified administrative datasets held in the National Safe Haven for research through the electronic Data Research and Innovation Service (eDRIS). By bringing together expertise, resource and capabilities from a range of existing data-led programmes across the public sector, a Covid-19 Research Data Service has also been established to ensure that requests for data for Covid-19-related research come through a single point of contact in order to maintain a secure and coordinated response.

The SAIL Databank, as part of ADR Wales, gives researchers secure remote access to datasets with billions of anonymised person-based population, health and social care data records. SAIL utilises the services of a Trusted Third Party to facilitate data linkage via personal identifiers. SAIL has been at the heart of data analysis and intelligence generation in response to Covid-19 in Wales. Using SAIL, the impact of a wide range of exposures and outcomes on the entire population using robustly de-identified data could be monitored. The scale, scope and cadence of data flows into SAIL has increased, with health and administrative data sources needed for Covid-19 analysis now benefitting from daily, weekly and monthly refreshes.

The ONS Secure Research Service (SRS) gives approved researchers secure access to de-identified, unpublished data for research projects in the public interest. The SRS is an access point for all data held within ONS for statistical purposes, where there is also agreement to share the data for research (some datasets are UK-wide, other are GB, England and Wales or England only).

At the outset of the ADR UK programme, most researchers using the SRS did so by visiting one of the five safe-settings at ONS sites in London, Titchfield and Newport, and externally hosted sites in Belfast and Glasgow. Only a handful of organisations were able to access the SRS from their own premises by having a Assured Organisational Connectivity (AOC) agreement in place. Now, thanks to ADR UK investment, as well as the impetus provided by Covid-19 restrictions, ONS have AOC agreements in place with over 50 organisations from a range of sectors.

Secure access will also be provided through a growing network of SafePods – small, prefabricated safe settings installed at participating institutions throughout the UK. The SafePod Network, directed by Professor Chris Dibben of ADR Scotland, will create more localised access and reduce geographical barriers to administrative data research.

7. Key Developments Across the Partnership

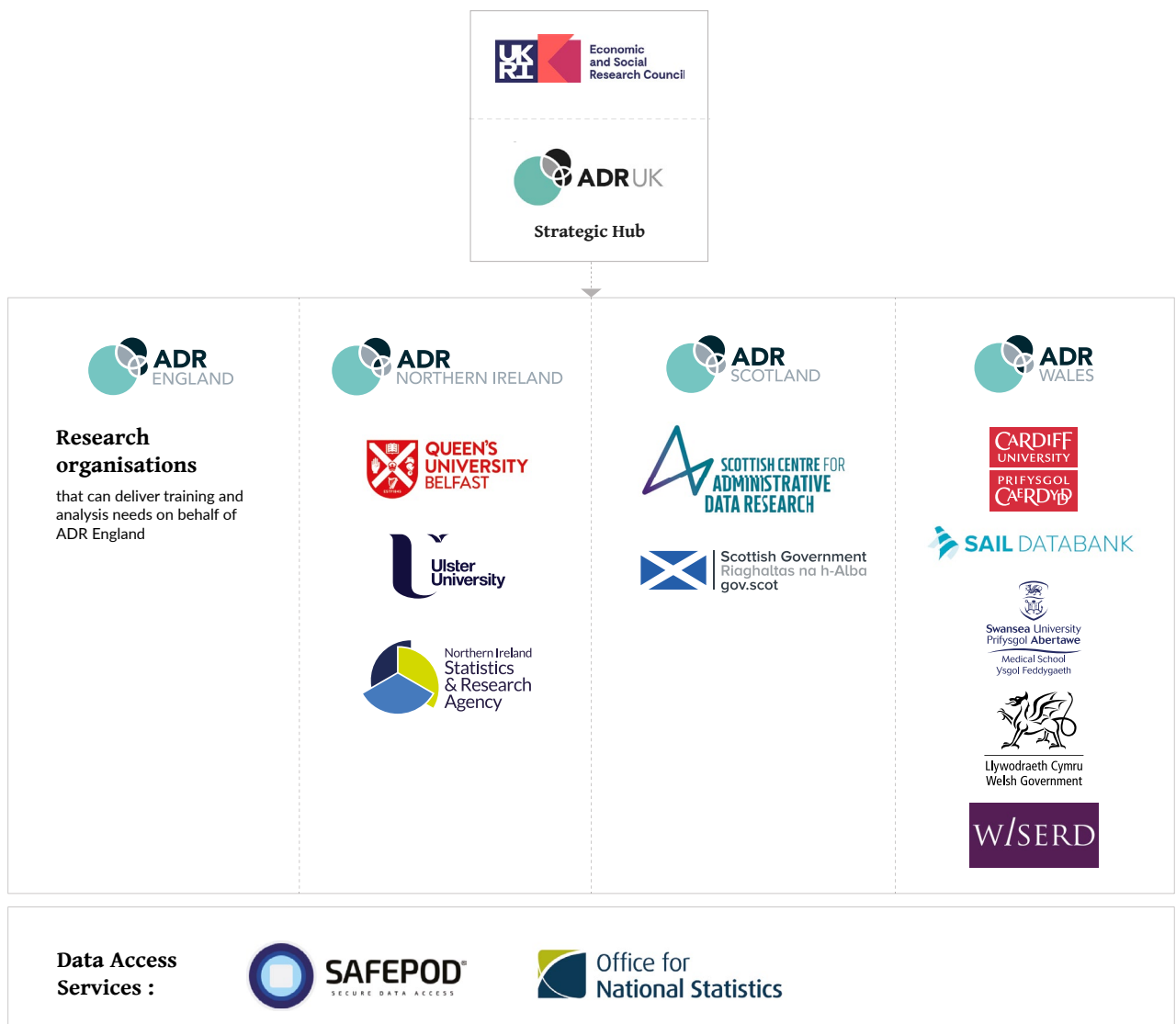
ADR UK is currently made up of three national partnerships – ADR Scotland, ADR Wales and ADR Northern Ireland – and the Office for National Statistics (ONS), and is coordinated by a UK-wide Strategic Hub. This structure allows each of the UK nations to have a dedicated secure research centre and research expertise, focusing in on its individual policy needs while also enabling UK-wide research.

Each ADR UK partner works closely with expert researchers from academic institutions and other research bodies, as well as government data holders and policymakers, to ensure the best evidence possible is available to inform policy and practice.

The growing body of knowledge being created by ADR UK research represents a valuable resource for anyone seeking to understand and improve UK

society, from government policymakers to universities, voluntary and community organisations. ADR UK has increased understanding of the benefits of providing access to administrative data more widely, evidenced by the increase in government departments engaging with the programme over the past year. ADR UK works closely with both UK Government departments and the devolved administrations to fund research to fill key evidence gaps, directly informing and influencing policy and service planning.

In the next phase of the ADR UK programme, it is planned that the partnership will grow with the addition of an ADR England, made up of research organisations commissioned and coordinated by the Strategic Hub.



7.1. The Strategic Hub

The ADR UK partnership is coordinated by a Strategic Hub embedded at the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), with staff in London and Swindon. Headed by Dr Emma Gordon as Director, the Hub is a small core team which provides strategic leadership to facilitate effective data acquisition, promote impact and create wider recognition of the potential benefits of research using administrative data.

The Strategic Research Fund

The Strategic Hub manages a dedicated fund for commissioning projects using administrative data in line with ADR UK's mission to enable better informed policy and practice that improves lives. From May 2019 to May 2020, the Strategic Research Fund supported invitation-only bids to build new research datasets and carry out innovative research of importance to key public policy areas. As a result of this process, we now have a flow of new de-identified, research-ready datasets that we are keen to widen approved researcher access to.

Early examples include the magistrates' court defendant case level dataset and the Crown Court defendant case level dataset, both deposited in summer 2020 into the ONS Secure Research Service as a result of our Data First programme with the Ministry of Justice. A linking dataset allowing analysis of relationships between the two is expected to follow in September/October 2020.*

Initial analysis of the Growing Up in England (GUIE) dataset, newly linked and curated by ONS, was also published in August, demonstrating the feasibility of the GUIE dataset for providing valuable new insights into the lives of children and young people on a wide scale. Further details of these and other ADR UK-enabled datasets can be found in the 'New and Emerging Datasets' section of this annual report.

From August 2020, our key focus is now to fund research using these new datasets through competitive open calls – particularly through our Research Fellowship Scheme. The scheme – developed in collaboration with respective data owners – will fund the first users of this data, ensuring early research is scientifically valuable and policy relevant. The first Research Fellowship call, funding analysis of the magistrates' and Crown Court datasets, was launched in August. Additional calls promoting new data will be launched over the next 12 months.

We are also working with our colleagues at the ESRC to fund Methods Development Grants to address methodological challenges of research using administrative data. These opportunities invite proposals for research which aims to support the social science community to work collaboratively across sectors and disciplines to address common methodological challenges.

However, we will also remain alert to further opportunities to create new linked datasets with potential to enable important research and improve lives outside of the scope of our open funding calls.

*Dates as expected at time of publication.

7.2. ADR Northern Ireland

ADR Northern Ireland (ADR NI) is a partnership between the Administrative Data Research Centre Northern Ireland (ADRC NI, comprising Queen's University Belfast and Ulster University), and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA), which is an accredited processor under the Digital Economy Act (DEA). Together, ADRC NI and NISRA support the acquisition, linking and analysis of administrative datasets, developing cutting-edge research to improve knowledge, policymaking and public service delivery.

The ADR NI partnership has been key to continuing the momentum of administrative data research in Northern Ireland. With the support of data owners who also have an interest in developing the best possible evidence for policymaking, ADR NI researchers have been highly successful in generating new datasets for research purposes over the past year. Work by ADRC NI researchers using the self-harm register and social services data relating to children known to social services are key examples of this. Research into self-harm and suicide ideation, a pressing societal and policy issue for Northern Ireland, has enhanced and extended the Self-Harm Register, providing new knowledge of those most at risk.

Key to the transformation of the state of administrative data research in Northern Ireland has been the people within ADR NI. The recent restoration of the Northern Ireland devolved Assembly at Stormont in January 2020 presents new opportunities for co-production of research that speaks directly to policy priorities and is supported by civil society, who will also be collaborators in the production of knowledge for public benefit. Central to this is building large multi-purpose linked datasets which can answer a wide array of questions for researchers, policymakers, and civil society.



Professor Dermot O'Reilly,
 Director, ADRC NI



“This has been a tough year for ADRC NI. But despite the numerous challenges we have been extraordinarily resilient, continuing to make great progress and lay strong foundations on which to build into the future. Our research continues to demonstrate the tremendous power of linked administrative data not only for public knowledge, but for public benefit as the evidence we develop guides and impacts services and policy at the highest levels to support and transform Northern Irish society.”

Siobhan Carey, Registrar General
 and Chief Executive, NISRA



“This had been a challenging year for ADR NI, but the foundations established have yielded opportunities to put evidence right at the heart of decision making. The collaborative efforts between analysts and policymakers have delivered research that has made a difference, assisting policy development that will ultimately benefit the people of Northern Ireland.”



IMPACT CASE STUDY: Impact through collaboration: health inequalities and the migrant population

In October 2019 the Administrative Data Research Centre Northern Ireland (ADRC NI) collaborated with Stronger Together, a network for racial equality in Northern Ireland, to deliver a policy forum which brought together academic researchers, policymakers, service providers and community organisations to share best practice and evidence in the fields of health and racial inequality.

This was an opportunity to showcase several of ADRC NI's research programmes that impact on health inequalities and the migrant population in Northern Ireland, including mental health and psychotropic drug use, access to orthodontic services, and uptake of disability benefits among migrants.

Partnering with Stronger Together facilitated new relationships with key organisations, particularly the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI) and the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA). ECNI has indicated that in future they will build ADRC NI findings and statistics into their equality monitoring and reporting. A research brief from the study on migrants and mental health was prepared for NILGA, who brought it to a coordinating group including the UK Home Office with the purpose of developing new protocols for vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers in Northern Ireland.

Engaging directly with stakeholders and folding their expertise into data-driven research not only adds value to research but creates clear pathways to impact. As the valuable insights gained are made clear, these experts, who have been given a genuine seat at the table, become advocates for our approach. They help not only to maintain positive public opinion around the use of data for research, but to demonstrate to government the viability of such research and engagement in developing better policy and better services that truly support marginalised communities.

IMPACT CASE STUDY: Impact through collaboration: policing data in Scotland

Throughout this investment, ADR Scotland have engaged with stakeholders across the policing community in Scotland around secure data sharing and linkage.

Led by Professor Susan McVie, we have organised and participated in a range of events to promote the value and potential of administrative data research including:

- A joint event with Police Scotland to discuss data-informed approaches and identify data priorities for policing in Scotland. A focus of the day was highlighting the challenges associated with accessing and linking police data and finding ways of working across organisations to reduce barriers.
- Participation in two roundtable events held by the Scottish Police Authority on research evidence and police action, and policing data, statistics and public discourse.
- Hosting Professor Betsy Stanko to share her experiences from her work as Head of Evidence and Insight at the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime in London.

In April 2020, Susan was invited to join the Independent Advisory Group (IAG) on Police Use of Temporary Powers Related to the Coronavirus Crisis in Scotland. Her role has involved harnessing the power of existing and new datasets and providing a data-driven approach to scrutiny.

Susan has produced several reports for the IAG, including a series of internal-facing data briefings and two external-facing published reports - an initial data report looking at patterns of use of the police powers in early lockdown, followed by a second data report focusing on police use of Fixed Penalty Notices in Scotland and their impact on different demographic groups and communities.

Collectively, this work has provided insight for Police Scotland into the temporal and spatial patterning of the use of the temporary powers during lockdown and influenced the ongoing development of police strategy and operational guidance in relation to Covid-19. It has also influenced the culture for data sharing and data use not only within policing but within the wider context of criminal justice in Scotland, with the latest work in the IAG showcasing the value of administrative data to inform understanding in a crisis.

"It is a privilege to work closely with Police Scotland and provide real-time data analysis to help inform organisational learning and add value to operational response at a critical moment in history. I hope that a longer term outcome of this work will include greater data sharing for research purposes."

Professor Susan McVie,
Safer Communities Lead at the Scottish Centre for Administrative Data Research

"We will use the experience of this in terms of our ability to collate data and use it to make sure our practice is evidence based moving forward."

Iain Livingstone, Chief Constable, Police Scotland

7.3. ADR Scotland

ADR Scotland is a partnership combining specialists in the Scottish Government's Data Sharing and Linkage Unit with the expertise of academic researchers at the Scottish Centre for Administrative Data Research (SCADR). Together they are transforming how public sector data in Scotland is curated, accessed and explored, so that it can deliver its full potential for policymakers and the public.

ADR Scotland is exploring a range of critical issues including health and social care, poverty and fair work and building safer communities. Working closely with government, public and third sector colleagues, they have built strong stakeholder networks to maximise uptake and impact. ADR Scotland has also undertaken responsive research, such as bringing data expertise and analysis to scrutinize temporary coronavirus police powers in Scotland as part of an independent advisory group.

In the ADR UK investment, ADR Scotland has developed a new infrastructure to enable faster, more efficient data access for research for the public good. The enhanced data linkage infrastructure minimises burden on data controllers while supporting secure use of data for research. ADR Scotland has also made progress in securing data holdings that will support answering both policy and research questions that are broadly aligned to Scotland's National Outcomes and will include Children, Health and Wellbeing, and Education destinations.

During the pandemic, ADR Scotland's capabilities and resources were crucial in bringing together key datasets in a secure computing environment for Covid-19 response, analysis and research. Both ADR Scotland directors used their deep understanding of existing administrative data systems, in collaboration with experts across organisations, to ascertain novel ways of identifying key indicators and societal structures to help address emerging Covid-19 questions. Their involvement with the Scottish Covid-19 Data and Intelligence Network continues to develop approaches to better understanding the impact of Covid-19 and inform future planning, using robust and responsive evidence.



Professor Chris Dibben,
Co-Director of ADR Scotland,
Director of SCADR, and
Chair of Geography at the
University of Edinburgh



“The Covid-19 pandemic has seen an increased demand for timely and spatially fine information. Our understanding of administrative data systems has allowed us to respond to this demand and rapidly develop novel data structures, filling some of the informational gaps.”

Roger Halliday, Co-Director,
ADR Scotland, and Scottish
Government Chief Statistician



“By reducing the time and effort required by researchers to access data for research projects, ADR Scotland is opening up new opportunities for research using administrative data that is in the public good and has the potential to improve lives across Scotland.”

7.4. ADR Wales

ADR Wales unites specialists from Swansea University Medical School and the Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research, Data and Methods (WISERD) at Cardiff University with statisticians, economists and social researchers from Welsh Government.

The cutting-edge data analysis techniques and research excellence developed, along with the world-renowned SAIL Databank – which is now an accredited processor under the DEA – allow for the delivery of robust, secure and informative research.

In the last year, ADR Wales has significantly enhanced the range of data available to be anonymously linked in the SAIL Databank, with notable data acquisitions since the start of the ADR UK programme including Looked After Children, Children Receiving Care and Support Censuses, the Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Count, and Higher Education Statistics Agency data. Over the course of the remaining investment period, much of the groundwork will have been completed to enable linkable ONS and Whitehall data to be provided to ADR Wales. This will mean that in future such data acquisitions will occur at a greater frequency.

ADR Wales has been at the heart of the response to Covid-19 in Wales (see Section 9 of this report), but beyond that work, new research and data from ADR Wales has informed several research themes observed as part of ADR Wales alignment with the Welsh Government’s identified target areas outlined in the national strategy for Wales, Prosperity For All.

This year saw ADR Wales researchers publish papers across a range of key areas including homelessness and education, several analyses of the Covid-19 Shielded Patients List, and a regularly increasing catalogue of Data Insights exploring housing, homelessness and education, with many more to follow in the coming months. In addition, a report published by the Nuffield Family Justice Observatory using data acquired by ADR Wales revealed that pregnant women in Wales at risk of their babies being taken into care in the first year of life are more likely to have had mental health problems compared to other pregnant women.

ADR Wales researchers have also been successful in securing funding from the ADR UK Strategic Research Fund for two large scale projects looking at areas where newly linked administrative data can have a considerable impact on knowledge generation in Wales. The projects, AD|ARC (Administrative Data Agricultural Research Collection) and EUSS (EU Citizens Settled Status), will begin analysis later this year (see Section 8 of this report).



David Ford, Co-Director, ADR Wales, Co-Director of SAIL Databank and Professor of Informatics at Swansea University



“ADR Wales has built on its already strong foundations to drive forward a number of exciting, and often ground-breaking, changes to how data driven knowledge is used for policy formation in Wales. Our team has made great strides to acquire data from new and existing providers that will be pivotal to future knowledge generation, while building on these good relationships to demonstrate to data providers how the data they hold can make a significant contribution to policies in the best interest of the people in Wales.”



STAY SAFE AND KEEP YOUR DISTANCE

IMPACT CASE STUDY: The 'One Wales' Vision informing decisions during Covid-19

As the emergence of Covid-19 in Wales brought with it uncertainty for every aspect of society, questions quickly surfaced. It was at this point the 'One Wales' approach to Covid-19 was formed.

Quickly a team was assembled that would draw on the necessary expertise to guide decision making. Bringing together colleagues from across Wales including, ADR Wales, SAIL Databank, HDR UK (Health Data Research UK), Adolescent Data Platform (ADP), BREATHE, Welsh Government, Public Health Wales and the NHS Wales Informatics Service (NWIS) has resulted in an agile and responsive approach to tackling data analysis and intelligence generation based on both the constant and newly developing priorities for tackling Covid-19 in Wales.

Using SAIL, the One Wales team can monitor the impact of a wide range of exposures and outcomes on the entire population using robustly de-identified data. It is possible to track the development of health conditions in individuals and nested in households and school populations, monitor the development and spread of diseases and evaluate the impact of exposures and the effects of treatments on outcomes.

The insight delivered to the Welsh Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and the UK Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) has added to understanding and helped to shape decisions on lockdown guidance and policies in Wales.

Thanks to the efforts of all involved, new data is being deposited within the SAIL Databank to aid this timely and relevant analysis. The scale, scope and cadence of data flows into SAIL has increased with health and administrative data sources needed for Covid-19 analysis now benefitting from daily, weekly and monthly refreshes.

7.5. Office for National Statistics

ONS plays a crucial role in sourcing, linking and curating public sector data for ADR UK, ensuring that all data is accessed by researchers in a safe and secure form. To support the ADR UK partnership, ONS continues to expand and improve its established and award-winning Secure Research Service (SRS) – the organisation’s facility for providing secure access to de-identified public sector data for research, as an accredited processor under the DEA – and significantly increase the range of administrative data available.

Over the past year, ONS has focused on increasing data reuse to deliver efficiencies to government departments (who only need to provide data once), and maximising the use of this data by identifying shared priorities and objectives.

Engagement with these departments and with other key stakeholders is being enhanced with the introduction of allocated relationship managers, as already provided for other ADR UK partners. An SRS advisory group has also been established to help develop the service, and ONS continues to demonstrate its considerable impact through case studies, researcher presentations and the ONS Research Excellence Awards.

In April, ONS launched its new Research Accreditation Service, an online one-stop-shop for researchers to submit and track their accreditation applications and manage their projects. Almost 300 researchers have now completed their accreditation using the new service, with researcher and project applications now being considered by the UK Statistics Authority’s independently chaired Research Accreditation Panel.

As a result of ADR UK investment, the SRS is better able to meet the needs of Whitehall data users, including government and academic researchers. Changes made to the SRS have made it possible for ONS to respond quickly to increases in demand for the service.

They have also made it possible to respond quickly to unexpected changes to priorities and requirements, as has been demonstrated during the Covid-19 pandemic. Within a week of being advised to work from home, ONS was able to make changes to its technology and put new agreements in place with research organisations to enable safe and secure home access to the SRS. This rapid response has enabled a significant range and volume of research to continue, including vital analysis by the Bank of England, and research projects being delivered by other ESRC investments such as the Institute for Fiscal Studies.

Last but not least, ONS has continued to play a pivotal role in curating a number of the landmark ADR UK datasets emerging this year, such as Growing Up in England, Homelessness Data England, and Wage and Employment Dynamics. These datasets are explored in detail in Section 8.



Bill South, Head of SRS Data and Governance, ONS

“The investment from ADR UK enabled the SRS team to respond quickly at the start of the pandemic so that researchers could continue their important work. We have also been able to bring in new datasets that have underpinned research vital to the Government’s response to the Covid-19 pandemic.”





8. New and Emerging Datasets



Administrative Data | Agricultural Research Collection

The UK's exit from the EU is a watershed event for agriculture, and for farming households across the country. With policy no longer delivered through the Common Agricultural Policy, this means new and increased responsibilities for all four UK nations, as agriculture is a devolved matter. New policy directions are already being established, with the aim of improving business productivity, enhancing environmental sustainability, and strengthening business and personal resilience. There is a pressing need for robust data to inform this.

The AD|ARC (Administrative Data Agricultural Research Collection) project aims to bring together teams from ADR Wales, other members of the ADR UK family, and several government departments such as the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), to link data on farms across the UK. It intends to bring the human dimension to statistics about farming activities, to better understand the demographic, health, education and economic characteristics of farm households associated with different types and sizes of farm businesses. This will provide the insight needed for decision-makers to improve future policies and enhance the wellbeing of farmers and their families.

The core data sources for the project are:

- EU Farm Structure Survey 2010.
- June Agricultural Census for agricultural and land use data.
- Socio-demographic data for farmers, members of the farmer's household and farm workers.

These existing data sources provide a resource with a high level of consistency across the UK. The project will also seek to acquire data about farm subsidy payments, farm turnover, farm family health and educational attainment – the source of which may vary by country and may depend on the level of policy interest.

The project work streams will be coordinated across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales in order that as much analysis as possible can be conducted at a UK level.

AD|ARC aims to provide evidence that will help government better understand and support farmers, their households and their communities. The team will work in partnership with the farming community in the development of research questions and dissemination of findings. Outputs will inform future policy decision making, potentially leading to better responses to challenges such as improving productivity, responding to environmental pressures, generating better health outcomes and improving farm household income.

In addition, the AD|ARC project plans to make the data resource available after the project ends, subject to information governance and data controllers' permissions, creating the potential to expand in a number of directions and enabling the generation of new evidence to support farming, farmers and farming households for years to come.





Data First

In March this year we announced the funding of the Data First programme, led by the Ministry of Justice. This £3 million data linking project will bring together de-identified datasets from across the civil, family, and criminal courts in England and Wales. This will allow researchers to address key evidence gaps, such as characteristics related to frequent use of the justice system, and how it is associated with use of other public services.

Some of the key questions Data First aims to address are:

- Are there any links between those who use the civil courts and those who enter the criminal justice system?
- What, if any, are the shared characteristics of 'repeat users' of the civil justice system – i.e. those who return multiple times to the civil justice courts to resolve issues such as housing, debt or employment?
- What are the links between educational outcomes and offending?
- What proportion of people facing criminal charges of domestic abuse are also involved, at the same time, in a family court case to make contact arrangements for their children?

Following the project announcement, the Data First team hit the ground running. We welcomed our expert academic advisers in May, and proceeded to release the first two outputs: de-identified, research-ready magistrates' and Crown Court defendant case level datasets.

The magistrates' court dataset was deposited into the Office for National Statistics' (ONS) Secure Research Service (SRS) at the end of June, providing data on magistrates' court use between 2011 and 2019, while the Crown Court dataset was deposited shortly after in mid-August, containing data from 2013 to 2019. These datasets will generate insights into the magistrates' and Crown Court user populations, including the nature and extent of repeat use. They will enable, for the first time, researchers to establish whether a defendant has entered the courts on more than one occasion, and will drive better policy decisions to reduce frequent use of the courts. As of October, a linking dataset allowing analysis of relationships between the two court datasets is expected to be available in the SRS.

The Data First court datasets have also become the subject of first ADR UK Research Fellowship call, launched in mid-August. These Fellowships will fund the first users of the data, to demonstrate its research potential and develop it as a useful resource for future users.



Sir Andrew McFarlane, President of the Family Division of the judiciary in England and Wales

“The Data First project is likely to be the most significant step forward in the provision of hard and reliable information about the family justice system for a generation... Its advent could not be more welcome.”



The Effect of Exposure to Air Pollution on Health and Mortality

Ambient air pollution is the biggest environmental risk factor worldwide and a leading environmental cause of early death in the UK. Research suggests that the breathing of polluted air is associated with the development and exacerbation of various health conditions, and the cost of treating such conditions is substantial.

This ADR Northern Ireland (ADR NI) research project exploits individual-level longitudinal data to investigate, for the first time in Northern Ireland, the link between health outcomes (including mortality) and long-term exposure to ambient pollution between 2001 and 2018.

To understand how far reductions in air pollution can improve public health, it is first necessary to quantify their relationship. Although this relationship has been studied elsewhere, there exists no evidence for Northern Ireland, and thus no appropriate evidence base for policymakers. By linking individual-level administrative data from the Northern Ireland Longitudinal Study (NILS) to annual modelled 1x1 km grid square air pollution data, this project aims to provide the first large-scale statistical evidence on the health impacts of air-pollution in Northern Ireland. It will also provide unique evidence on whether air pollution increases the risk of developing less commonly studied health problems, including dementia and diabetes.

In the preliminary stages of the project, researchers have already begun to assess how air pollution levels in Northern Ireland have varied across space, time, and population sub-groups. This analysis reveals a downward trend in the level of air pollution between 2001 and 2016. Address records in the NILS have enabled researchers to obtain unique estimates of population-weighted levels of exposure at various geographies (Assembly Areas, Local Government District, Super Output Area). These estimates show where health burdens linked to pollution are likely to be greatest. To broaden the reach of these outputs, researchers are developing an online interactive dashboard which will allow users to explore the level of air pollution in their local area, potentially informing peoples' decisions on where to live and work.

In the next stage of the project, the data will be used to explore the statistical relationships between air pollution exposure and mortality, and air pollution exposure and receipt of medicinal prescriptions for medications prescribed to treat diabetes, dementia, Parkinson's disease, respiratory-related illnesses, and cardiovascular-related illnesses.

While the specific dataset being used is unique to this project, the NILS, from which it is extracted, is available to other ADR NI researchers. The pollution data being used is new to the NILS, and can be accessed along with other datasets within the NILS.

EU Settlement Scheme Data Linking Project

The EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) Data Linking Project is an ADR Wales initiative born out of the need to improve the evidence base on EU citizens in Wales who are part of the EU Settlement Scheme. It aims to anonymously link Home Office data with other data already held within the SAIL Databank, enabling researchers and policymakers to better understand the experiences of EU citizens with Settled Status, and therefore to develop better informed policy and services that address the needs of this potentially vulnerable population.

A crucial element of understanding the experiences of EU citizens with Settled Status in Wales is understanding how their experiences differ from those of the rest of the population. The wealth of data in the SAIL Databank provides the opportunity to develop a closely matched control group of British citizens with similar characteristics. This could help identify whether or not EU citizens with Settled Status have different experiences to British citizens.

There are many elements researchers within this project aim to explore, including:

- Health (including mental health) of EU citizens in Wales. This data linkage will, for instance, provide an opportunity to compare the health experiences of EU citizens with the rest of the population in Wales.
- Housing conditions of EU citizens in Wales. NGOs in Wales have identified housing as an area where EU citizens are starting to face some issues. Housing quality is linked to many other outcomes, such as health and employment, which can affect wellbeing. Being able to link EU citizen data to housing data would provide an opportunity to compare the housing experiences of EU citizens with the rest of the population in Wales.
- EU citizens' involvement in the workforce. Understanding trends in the workforce is crucial to help maintain and improve the health of the economy. This research will investigate the experiences of EU citizens in the workforce.
- Educational experiences of EU citizens. As education attainment is such an important predictor of other outcomes, an understanding of the educational experiences of EU citizens would be invaluable for supporting them in the future.

Combining EU Settlement Scheme data with other datasets will help us gain a better understanding of the experiences and outcomes of EU citizens in Wales. We hope this research can be expanded to the rest of the UK, and help inform all four countries about the particular needs of EU citizens post-Brexit.



Growing Up in England

There is currently a need for research to better understand the barriers and gateways to social mobility, to inform public policy targeted at disadvantaged children and young people. ADR UK, ONS and the Department for Education (DfE) are continuing to work together to make better use of existing data about children and young people in England to address this research gap.

The Growing up in England (GUIE) dataset, which includes 2011 Census records linked to a bespoke extract of attainment data called the All Education Dataset for England (AEDE), will enable a more comprehensive understanding of how factors such as family background, school type and geography shape outcomes. This will allow researchers to shine light on what does and doesn't work in supporting children and young people to thrive, and give policymakers valuable evidence for developing services that work better for all.

In July of this year, the findings of the very first analysis using the newly linked, de-identified GUIE dataset were released. The study, conducted by the ONS Centre for Equalities and Inclusion, tested the use of the data for providing insights on children and young people's personal characteristics, educational attainment, household characteristics, vulnerable groups and geography.

The report showed that a high proportion of records were linked between the 2011 Census and AEDE datasets, the majority of which were made on strong 'matchkeys', giving confidence that those links are correct. This successfully demonstrated the feasibility of using the GUIE dataset to provide valuable new insights into the lives of children and young people on a wide scale.

The Children's Commissioner for England's 2017 review of childhood vulnerability identified an evidence gap in information about the lives of vulnerable children. The findings from the feasibility study show that the GUIE dataset can help address this gap by enabling researchers to investigate how a child's circumstances and characteristics, and those of others in their household, influence educational attainment. No other data source has this level of insight on children who are vulnerable or of concern by virtue of their circumstances; for example, children caring for others, children with a disability or ill-health and children from workless families.

The GUIE dataset will soon be available to approved external researchers via the ONS SRS.



Homelessness Data England

This project, a collaboration with ONS and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, aims to create a linked dataset of information about homelessness in England to improve our understanding of its causes and impacts. This will allow decision makers to develop more effective policies to reduce homelessness and improve the lives of people across the country.

Specifically, the Homelessness Data England (HDE) project will involve linking Homelessness Case Level Information Collection (H-CLIC) data from across local authorities in England, and to other administrative datasets. H-CLIC data records local authorities' actions under the 2017 Homelessness Reduction Act, which significantly reformed England's homelessness legislation by placing duties on local authorities to intervene at earlier stages to prevent and reduce homelessness.

The project has three elements, some of which will be phased:

1. The first aims to use the linked H-CLIC data from across local authorities to develop a better understanding of whether homelessness is resolved in the long-term, particularly across local authority boundaries. This will help to establish what works to prevent homelessness, and which elements of the Homelessness Reduction Act are most effective.
2. The second aims to match together H-CLIC data and the Rough Sleeping Evaluation Questionnaire to identify how effectively interventions have prevented homelessness and improved other outcomes in the longer term. MHCLG already have rough sleeping evaluations in progress that would benefit from this work.
3. Finally, the third element aims to match the H-CLIC data to data gathered from other government departments/health agencies to determine the wider circumstances and outcomes of people who have experienced homelessness, such as educational outcomes, employment, benefits and health. This will enable us to identify the wider impacts and longer-term outcomes, and estimate the costs of homelessness.

Ultimately, the project will provide central government departments, local public services and delivery partners with valuable information about the cycle of homelessness and its impact on the lives of those it affects, as well as the impact and cost-benefit of interventions and services targeted at reducing homelessness. The information should be useful to inform future service design and reform and investment decisions.

A deidentified version of the HDE dataset will be made available to accredited researchers through the ONS SRS in due course.



Understanding Children's Lives and Outcomes in Scotland

This programme of work will provide crucial new insights essential to the delivery of the best possible outcomes for Scotland's children, building an evidence base which can help improve their health, wellbeing and attainment. It will utilise datasets brought together for the first time by Roger Halliday and his team in Scottish Government and demonstrate how they can help us better understand children's lives and outcomes.

Scotland has high quality data about children, though it is currently not organised in a way that would allow research on a range of outcomes and how they vary across Scottish society. ADR Scotland is working to provide information about the data and enable access with the potential for it to be linked together.

This will include; pupil census data for Scotland, Scottish Government data on looked after children, children's health, births and deaths, the 2001/2011 national census, attendance, absence and exclusion from school, child protection, secure care for children, exam qualifications, school leaver destinations, and child wellbeing.

Exemplar projects underway to demonstrate the use of this data, led by our Children's Research Leads, Professor Morag Treanor and Fiona Mitchell, include:

- Exploring context, factors and approaches to educational exclusions and absence.
- Growing up in kinship care – increasing knowledge of the needs, circumstances and outcomes of children in formal kinship care.

Working closely with policy colleagues, our public panel and a new advisory group, this programme aims to:

- Inform policy and practice, in line with key developments including the implementation of 'The Promise' following the Independent Care Review and initiatives such as the Scottish Attainment challenge.
- Maximise synergies and collaboration with UK research in this area.
- Promote the use and re-use of this data for the future.



Wage and Employment Dynamics

In May 2020 we announced the Wage and Employment Dynamics (WED) project, a partnership led by researchers at the University of the West of England (UWE) to explore trends in wages and employment in Britain. Data on hours, earnings and businesses held by ONS will be linked to better understand how pay progresses in different groups in society, and how wage inequality occurs.

The WED project aims to address key questions related to wage and career progression, the urgency of which have been heightened by the Covid-19 pandemic, such as:

- How do people's earnings progress through their career?
- How does this differ depending on characteristics such as gender, disability, or ethnicity?
- Who does and does not progress out of low pay employment?
- What is the relationship between migration and the labour market?
- What role do employers play in wage inequality?

Evidence generated by the WED project could help policymakers in government and other agencies support and improve people's wage and career progression, from their first job until retirement.

This could help tackle inequalities in the labour market, such as the gender pay gap and address social challenges such as in-work poverty: according to a 2019 report published by the Institute for Fiscal Studies, almost three in five people (58%) in relative poverty in the UK live in a working household. With the impact of Covid-19 on the economy likely to worsen these figures further, research is needed to address these issues now more than ever.

The data being linked includes data on earnings from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), data on UK businesses from the Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR), and the 2011 Census. The data will be linked with support from ONS, and made available to external researchers in de-identified form via the SRS.

As well as UWE, the project team includes researchers from UCL, City University, and the National Institute of Economic and Social Research.



**Tim Butcher, Chief Economist,
Low Pay Commission**

“This project addresses weaknesses in our evidence base – improving the quality of longitudinal earnings data and extending coverage to a broader range of characteristics – that should enable researchers to give new and innovative insights into the wage and employment dynamics of the lowest paid.”





9. Response to Covid-19

The Covid-19 pandemic has spotlighted data unlike anything else in recent history, with researchers, policymakers, public health officials, and members of the public actively seeking access to good data in order to make smart and effective decisions. ADR UK partners continue to play an important role in enabling vital research and analysis to aid this decision-making, including:

- Analysis of Covid-19 deaths by researchers from ADR Northern Ireland.
- A Covid-19 data task force and data service informed by ADR Scotland.
- An impact assessment on the Welsh population led by ADR Wales.
- New datasets for analysis of social and economic impacts made available by ONS.

The impact of the crisis means the need for timely access to administrative data to support high quality research and government decision-making on social and economic issues is greater than ever.

ADR Northern Ireland

Research in a post-Covid world will likely focus on how the most vulnerable have been affected. Administrative Data Research Centre Northern Ireland (ADRC NI) researchers within Queen's University Belfast are linked to research teams throughout the UK – including the Northern Ireland Cohort for the Longitudinal Study of Ageing (NICOLA), HDR UK (Health Data Research UK), and a national black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) consortium of researchers and organisations – to create large, linked administrative datasets to facilitate a better quantification of the risks of Covid-19 and its disproportionate effects on certain groups.

ADRC NI are also engaged in a pilot project commissioned by the NI Department of Health, and funded via HDR UK to enable remote access to the NI Health and Social Care Honest Broker Service. The platform, developed on the Secure eResearch Platform (SeRP) infrastructure, will enable UK researchers to access rich data held within the Health and Social Care data warehouse, allowing the inclusion of Northern Ireland data in key UK-wide Covid-19 research initiatives.

ADR Scotland

In response to the pandemic, ADR Scotland worked with a range of government and data stakeholders to play a key role in helping to develop data infrastructure, access and research in Scotland including:

- Supporting the development of a Covid-19 data research service that provides secure and timely access to data to help provide answers to key analytical and research questions about the nature of spread, risks and effects of Covid-19.
- Contributing to a data taskforce and subsequent data and intelligence network for Covid-19 to identify, prioritise, and develop data requirements and products which address key challenges, support policy and improve lives.
- Undertaking a range of responsive research projects including; exploring community-based Covid-19 mortality, identifying socio-economic, household and environmental risk factors for Covid-19, and developing a method for identifying households.

ADR Wales

ADR Wales has been at the heart of the response to Covid-19 in Wales. At the start of the pandemic, ADR Wales quickly formed a cross-institutional team, coined 'One Wales', to provide data driven insight to the Welsh Government and Chief Medical Officer for Wales, with intelligence presented at the Welsh Government Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and UK Scientific Advisory Group (SAGE) to aid understanding and help shape decisions on lockdown guidance and policies in Wales.

ADR Wales supported the acquisition of 18 new datasets into the SAIL Databank for immediate, rapid response Covid analysis and beyond, with a significant number of existing datasets newly negotiated to benefit from more regular refreshes.

Office for National Statistics (ONS)

The ONS Secure Research Service (SRS) team responded quickly to maintain a service to researchers when the lockdown led to the closure of the ONS office and the SRS Safe Rooms. Internal technology changes enabled all support functions to be performed by staff working from home. ONS then introduced policy to allow researchers to access the SRS from home, provided specific conditions were met, including a requirement for the researcher to be working for an organisation with an Assured Organisational Connectivity agreement in place (see Section 6 of this report). Regular panel meetings were set up to review requests for home-working, and about 100 projects have now been approved for this.

Shortened researcher training material that could be delivered online was developed, enabling continued accreditation of new researchers. The service has kept running, and high priority work has continued as a result, with very positive feedback from researchers.

New datasets relating to Covid-19 have been loaded into the SRS:

- Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain (OPN Covid-19 module).
- Business Impact of Covid-19 Survey (BICS).
- 2011 Census Household structure for Covid-19 models dataset (safeguarded).
- Monthly mortality data.

More will be added in the coming months.

The SRS has also played a key role in ONS's contribution to the Government's Covid-19 research. The Serology Study (survey and swab/blood test) is linked in ONS's internal system and then, once de-identified, deposited into the SRS for analysis by academic modelling experts. The results have informed Government strategy in response to the pandemic. The first data was deposited at the end of April, with the first results announced in early May.

David Ford, Co-Director, ADR Wales, Co-Director of SAIL Databank and Professor of Informatics, Swansea University

“We couldn't have predicted how society has had to adapt in recent months, but thanks to our strong relationships, robust technical infrastructure and the expertise within the ADR Wales community, we have been able to act at pace to provide intelligence to guide Wales through the pandemic. The One Wales approach, bringing together experts from across Wales to help inform the national response to Covid, has demonstrated the trusted relationships, common goals and collegiate approach that we have to data driven research here in Wales. The significant benefit that anonymised data driven research can provide to society has been truly tested and realised.”

10. Public Engagement

ADR UK is driven by a mission to enable research that enhances our understanding of UK society, and has the power to bring about meaningful change. People lie at the heart of this work, so we are committed to engaging with members of the public from all walks of life.

All ADR UK's national partnerships have their own public engagement initiatives, while the Strategic Hub oversees public engagement activities at a UK level. These activities aid us in developing and maintaining public understanding of the benefits associated with the use of administrative data for research, and ensuring it is conducted in a way the public is comfortable with.

Public attitudes towards administrative data research

A clear understanding of the public's attitudes to administrative data research is important for this work to be sustainable and maximise its impact. As highlighted in our recently published literature review, *'Trust, Security and Public Interest: Striking the Balance'*, previous studies exploring public views have shown that the public is broadly supportive of the use of administrative data for research as long as three core conditions are met.

ADR UK's structure and approach is designed to ensure these conditions are at the heart of everything we do.

Three core conditions of public support for sharing administrative data for research

Public interest

Research using administrative data must be in the public interest and demonstrate real potential for public good.

Privacy and security

Data shared for research must be de-identified, with protections in place to prevent it being re-identified or misused.

Trust and transparency

Trust in those holding and using data is paramount; and transparency around how data is held and used is essential.

Our approach to public engagement

ADR UK's public engagement focuses on exploring the interests and concerns of those whose lives may be impacted by specific areas of research, to build upon the findings of the broader public attitudes work done previously.

This involves engaging with the sub-sectors of society that each of our projects hopes to benefit, or with a cross-section of society on a particular aspect of the use of administrative data. This may be either directly or via relevant community representatives – for example, charities, NGOs and community groups. This enables a greater focus on the issues important to the people who may be directly affected by research conducted using their data, in a specific context.

We will also continue to monitor and respond to any changes to public attitudes that may be identified by other, broader attitudinal work going forward, and adapt our approach in light of these where necessary.

Public panels

Public panels are a growing element of ADR UK's public engagement work, providing a platform for members of the public and third sector organisations to offer valuable feedback about our work. ADR Scotland and ADR Wales both maintain public panels to advise, scrutinise and steer their work in line with public interests.

ADR Wales' Consumer Panel for Data Linkage Research was established in 2011 and acts as a public voice in the partnership's work, inputting on governance systems, public engagement plans and research practices. The Panel allows ADR Wales to explore the public's perspective on data linkage research and provides opportunities for lay representatives to join research study teams. The Panel currently has 16 members, with ongoing recruitment.

ADR Scotland's Public Panel, whose latest membership was established in 2019, ensures that members of the public are consulted on and involved in the administrative data research taking place. Made up of members of the public from across Scotland, the panel provide a forum for continuing dialogue about administrative data research and data linkage, public trust and acceptability, and how we can maximise public benefit.

Working with the third sector

Engaging with Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises (VCSEs), NGOs and other relevant third sector organisations as both consumers and drivers of administrative data research allows ADR UK to understand the research needs of specific communities and sub-sectors of society. It also empowers these groups by offering the opportunity to influence the direction and outcome of research.

The Administrative Data Research Centre Northern Ireland (ADRC NI) holds a Data Workshop Series around themes of interest to both researchers and local organisations with a focus on: raising awareness among VCSE groups about the power and potential of data in their own work; how complex questions can be answered using data; raising public acceptability and demand for the sharing of data for research purposes; and establishing and embedding positive working relationships with the VCSE sector.

By bringing key stakeholders onto steering committees for each of its projects, ADRC NI also maximises engagement with people and organisations with differing expertise and knowledge of the issues researchers are exploring; and gains buy-in and ownership from people and organisations who can turn research findings into policy and societal change.

ADR Scotland also conducts project-specific dialogue involving engagement with third sector organisations, community groups and other representative groups able to speak on behalf of the publics and communities relevant to each of ADR Scotland's projects.

Meanwhile, ADR Wales holds stakeholder workshops with devolved and local government and third sector organisations, to get feedback on work already done and gain input on future work. The workshops provide an opportunity to tap into others' expertise and receive valuable insight on projects using administrative data.

The Strategic Hub is currently working with a number of Hub-funded project teams to form panels of third sector representatives to facilitate engagement with relevant communities for these projects. The first of these will be the Data First User Representation Panel, which will comprise representatives from criminal, civil and family justice organisations that work with, and on behalf of, system users (such as defendants, prisoners, claimants in civil disputes, or parties to family law cases) to reflect the range of users included within the project's scope.

11. Governance and Funding

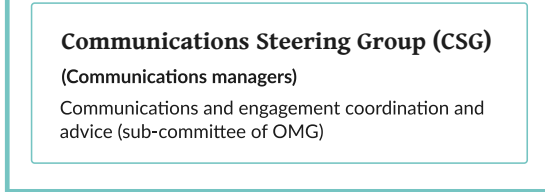
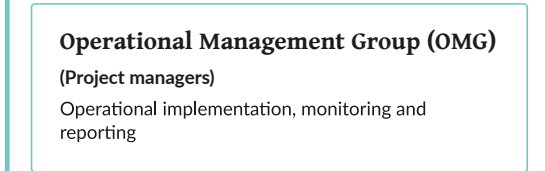
UKRI/ESRC



ADR UK



Independent research advice and peer review panels



ADR UK's governance structures have been designed to be robust, flexible and responsive, to help ensure we are on track to meet our objectives and to guide good practice across the partnership.

The Programme Delivery Board (PDB) oversees overall delivery of the strategic objectives of ADR UK, including the development of an effective partnership. The PDB provides programme assurance to the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) through its oversight of the strategic development of ADR UK, scrutiny of its plans and milestones, and monitoring of its delivery performance.

The Leadership Committee (LC) brings together the accountable leads from ADR UK's partners to develop and agree the strategic direction of ADR UK, and to develop the policies necessary for successful delivery. It is responsible for approving the evidence collected by the Operational Management Group (OMG) to support self-assessment across the partnership.

The Operational Management Group (OMG) is the forum for monitoring and reporting of all operational matters of ADR UK. It also takes actions arising from the ADR UK Performance Management Framework, and is responsible for gathering evidence to support self-assessment across the partnership.

The Communications Steering Group (CSG) acts as a central point of contact between ADR UK's core partners for the purpose of shaping ADR UK's communications and engagement strategy, and coordinating these activities across the partnership.

Performance management, scrutiny and assurance

ADR UK has developed clear and specific targets, as well as a Performance Management Framework (PMF) that allows us to accurately and fairly assess progress across the partnership.

The PMF provides assurance about the outcomes of the investment as a whole, and is based on a 'maturity model' approach. A maturity model is a way of considering performance against an agreed set of graded indicators where targets can be set for each ADR UK objective. Achieving or exceeding target levels of maturity becomes a measure of success for the programme. The PMF is built around five levels of performance for 15 core objectives.

Alongside the PMF, programme assurance comes in the form of Key Performance Indicators and other obligations outlined in grant agreements, and shared management documents.

In May 2020, ADR UK underwent a coordinated Project Assessment Review (PAR) by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), which provided evidence of the progress made with the new ADR UK model, and justifying investment in ADR UK longer-term. As articulated in the review report:

Funding

ADR UK is initially a three-year investment from July 2018 to July 2021, with the Strategic Hub funded until March 2022. The partnership is supported by £44 million drawn from the National Productivity Investment Fund, via the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI).

In the months following the PAR, ADR UK secured a further year of confirmed funding to continue the programme as a whole until March 2022. This ensures policy-relevant data linking and research projects across the UK can continue with no loss of vital skills, infrastructure and momentum. BEIS also endorsed ADR UK's vision for a further five years of operation. Final confirmation of continued funding until March 2026 will be managed through UKRI's overall funding settlement as part of the UK Government's upcoming Comprehensive Spending Review.

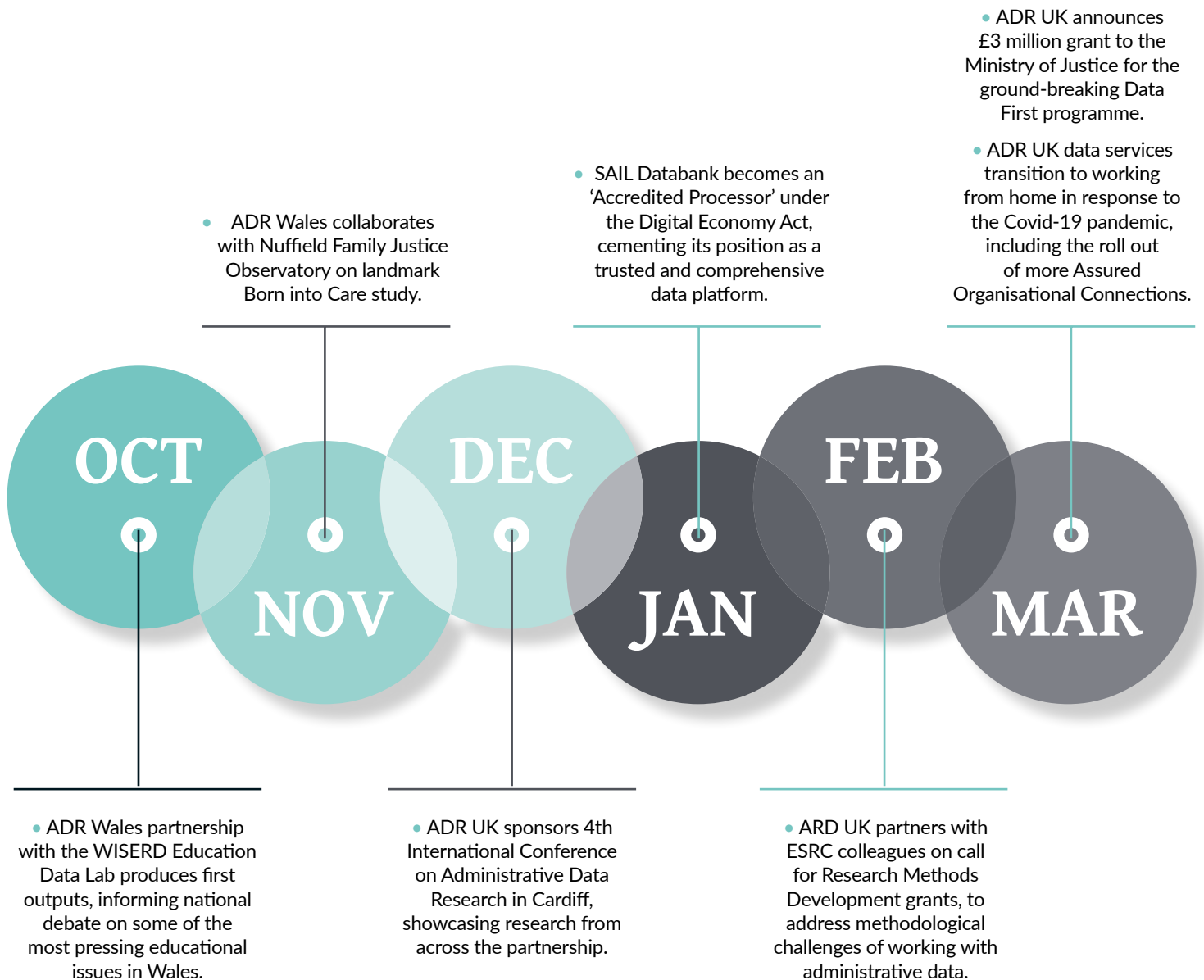
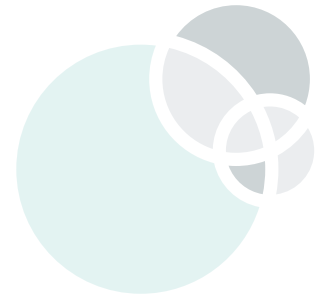


ADR UK Project Assessment Review, May 2020

“From the comments we received, we recognise that the programme has gathered momentum over the last year and there is a clear business need for the further investment to build on the early success. In addition, many of those we interviewed emphasised that in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, the demand for access to new and emerging research-ready datasets is likely to grow exponentially over the coming months and years as departments and policymakers address unprecedented economic and societal challenges.”

12. Achievements and Milestones

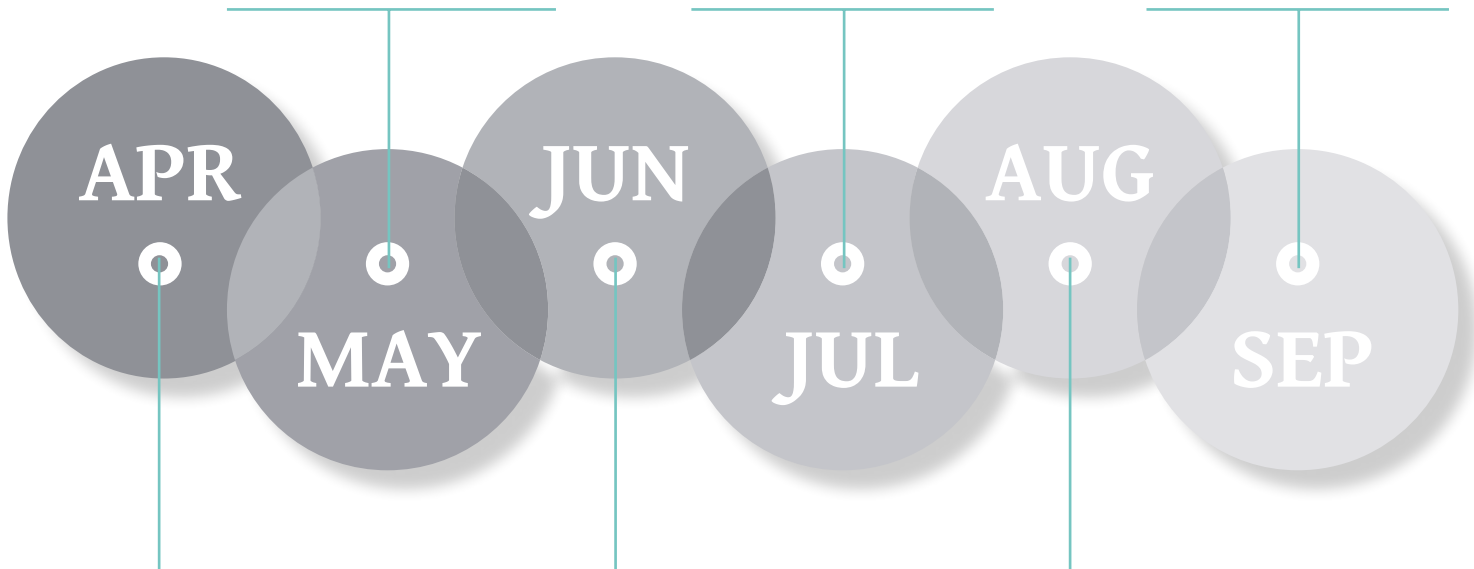
OCT 2019 – SEPT 2020



- ADR UK investment receives positive amber/green rating from BEIS Project Assessment Review.
- ADR UK publishes Trust, Security and Public Interest: Striking the Balance, our review of public attitudes to administrative data research.
- ADR UK announces funding of the Wage and Employment Dynamics project.
- Research Accreditation Panel approves use of 2011 Census in SAIL as part of 'One Wales' Covid-19 response, and for further use subject to project-by-project approval.

- ONS publishes findings of the first analysis of the Growing Up in England dataset.
- SAIL Databank completes NHS Data Security and Protection Toolkit assessment, showing performance against National Data Guardian's 10 data security standards.

- The NISRA safe setting in Northern Ireland reopens, allowing researchers to once again access data in a Covid-secure environment.
- Funding of the Administrative Data | Agricultural Research Collection project is announced, the first ADR UK project bringing in data from all four UK nations.



- ONS launches its new Research Accreditation Service.
- ADR Wales and SAIL Databank create a secure, anonymised data pipeline from a new Covid-19 symptom tracking app to the NHS across England and Wales.
- ADR Wales begins work as part of 'One Wales' Covid-19 response, supplying insights to Welsh Government Technical Advisory Group and UK Scientific Advisory Group.

- The 'magistrates' court defendant case level dataset' becomes the first output from Data First available for accredited researchers in the Secure Research Service.
- ADR Scotland supports development of the Covid-19 Data Research Service to inform pandemic response.

- The 'Crown Court defendant case level dataset' from Data First becomes the second output from Data First available in the Secure Research Service.
- ADR UK launches first Research Fellowship call, to analyse justice data from Data First.
- ADR UK secures further year of funding to continue the programme until March 2022.

13. Looking Forwards

In September, we announced that a further year of funding has been secured from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to continue the ADR UK programme until March 2022. This brings the funding of all ADR UK partners into line, ensuring policy-relevant data linking and research projects across the UK can continue with no loss of vital skills, infrastructure and momentum.

BEIS also endorsed our vision for a further five years of operation, but confirmation of funding for this period will be dependent on the overall funding settlement for UK Research and Innovation as part of the UK Government's upcoming Comprehensive Spending Review.

Developments and additions to the ADR UK programme to look forward to include the establishment of an ADR England, which will represent the body of knowledge that has built up under the current investment between universities, the Office for National Statistics, and Whitehall departments through ADR UK-supported research. We also plan to establish a Centre for Doctoral Training, which will train doctoral students to use administrative data to address significant public policy and public service challenges, and ensure ESRC-funded PhD students and their supervisors are trained to make best use of ADR UK datasets.



Dr Emma Gordon, Director,
ADR UK



“This further year of funding, as well as the endorsement of our five-year vision, is testament to the expertise and hard work of colleagues across the ADR UK partnership. It demonstrates that we now have a tried-and-tested model that works, and which is on track to deliver tangible benefits for both public policy and the wider research community.”





ADR UK (Administrative Data Research UK) is a partnership transforming the way researchers access the UK's wealth of public sector data, to enable better informed policy decisions that improve people's lives.

To find out more, visit adruk.org

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ISBN no. xxxxxxxxxxxx