



Annual Report

ADR UK Annual Report

2025 - 2026

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This annual report was developed as a digital microsite. The PDF version you are viewing has reduced functionality and content. To view the full ADR UK Annual Report 2025-26 online, visit: reports.adruk.org/annual-report-2025-2026.

Introduction



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

This year saw the start of an exciting new chapter for ADR UK, as six months ago we entered our new five-year investment period (2026-2031). This new funding sent a clear signal of the sector's and government's continued confidence in the use of administrative data research to improve lives and drive economic growth.

We've used this momentum to grow. Our portfolio of data has expanded, as has our team in priority areas, allowing us to extend our reach and increase our impact across our UK-wide partnership.

The evidence of what administrative data research can achieve continues to build. This year has brought further proof of its power to improve lives, from building our understanding of routes to homelessness in Northern Ireland and Wales, to informing areas of research interest in Scotland and identifying new approaches to tackling regional inequalities across England and the UK – tangible examples of how our work translates into better outcomes for people across the four nations. See these stories and more in the impact section of this report.

To further grow our impact, this year a new senior lead for policy engagement has joined the ADR UK Strategic Hub to embed our data-led evidence into decision-making through a new policy engagement strategy. One highlight so far would be attending Evidence Week in UK Parliament where ADR UK Fellow, Dr Vickie Barrett, brought new youth justice policy recommendations directly to MPs, Peers and Parliamentary staff. We'll be following the outcome of this work closely in the coming months.

We've also continued to bring our work to new audiences to support transparency and knowledge building with the public; the ultimate owners of the data we use. Our participation in the Pint of Science events brought our research into UK pubs, while presenting at How the Light Gets In took administrative data into the festival space. New episodes of our Connecting Society podcast – now available in video format – have brought fresh expertise from across the data world into the conversation.

Our influence has grown on the international stage too. We've strengthened our work with global partners, including through our attendance at the IPDLN (International Population Data Linkage Network) conference in Rotterdam, and look forward to taking a leading role in shaping a standardised approaches to AI use among international data linkage teams. This will include partnering with DARE UK on a public dialogue to ensure the views of the public support and inform our direction. Find out more about all our events and engagement work this year in the special feature in this report.

Closer to home, we've made significant early progress against a key objective: safely opening up economic data for research to support the government's growth agenda. Our new flagship dataset, RAPID: Population interactions with employment, benefits and pensions – UK, links data from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) for the first time. Now available for project approvals, its launch marks real momentum in this area of research with high impact potential, especially as this is our first UK-wide dataset. This year has also seen the secure release of Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) data for Scotland and Northern Ireland, along with enhancements to the LEO data for England.

To support the use of our datasets, we have funded two new ADR UK Academic Leads focused on Better Economic Data and the Ministry of Justice Data First programme. These projects support ADR UK's key government partners with academic expertise, to enhance the administrative data available for research and maximise the public good potential of our flagship datasets.

A further step change has seen our partnership with the training provider Datacise Open Learning grow this year, allowing us to expand our training offer, ensuring we have a pipeline of skilled researchers using administrative data now and in the future. Training available to researchers this year has included an 'Introduction to Government, Policy and Impact' course, to build researchers' capabilities to engage with policymakers for the benefit of the public. This work forms part of ADR UK's wider training and capacity building strategy for the next five years.

This is a genuinely exciting time for ADR UK. This annual report celebrates everything we've achieved this year, while also looking ahead to our plans for this new funding period – and the difference we intend to make with it.

Foreword



Stian Westlake, Executive Chair of the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)

This year, UKRI's new strategy has set out clear ambitions: advance knowledge, improve lives, and drive growth. I'm delighted that as a key ESRC-led programme, ADR UK sits right at the heart of this.

By linking government data securely and at scale, the programme is powering the research that turns knowledge into impact – for people, for public services, and for the economy.

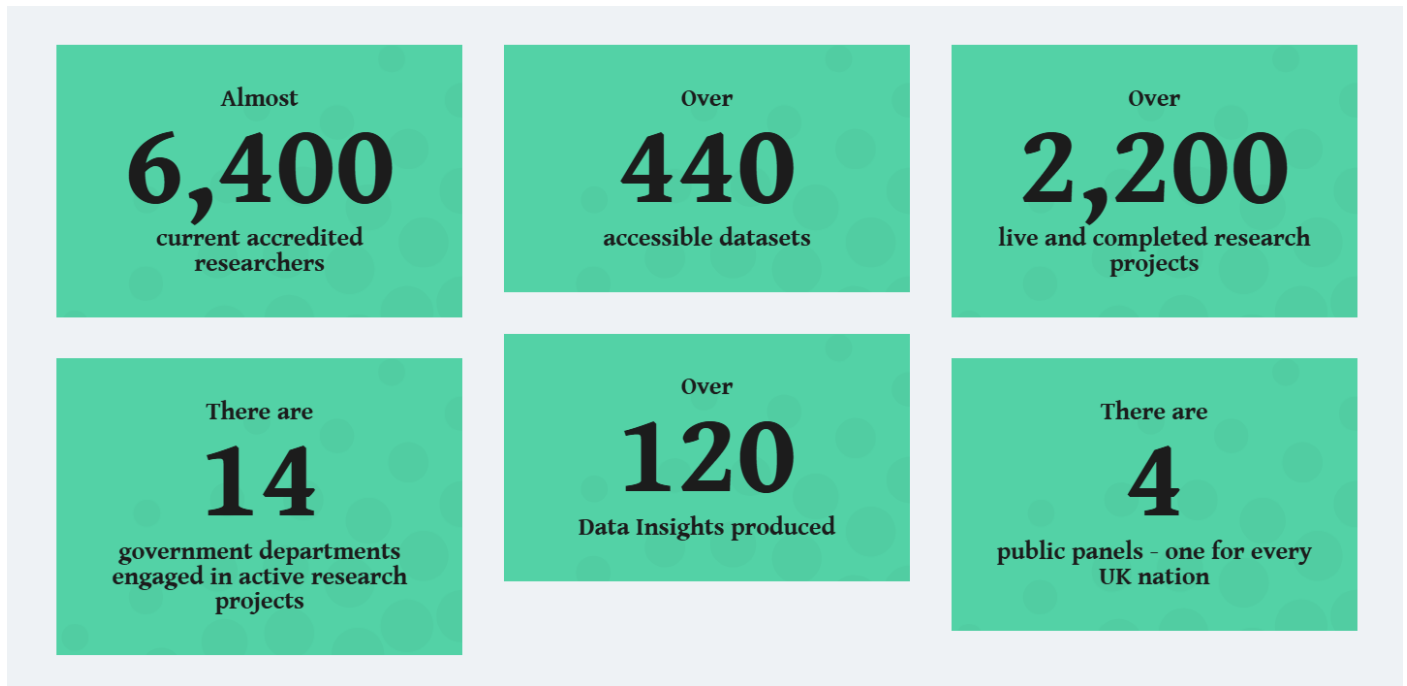
This year's progress shows that mission in action. The five-year funding settlement represents a strong vote of confidence in what ADR UK delivers. And with new datasets like RAPID (Population interactions with employment, benefits and pensions) opening up economic data for research, the team are directly supporting the growth agenda that sits at the core of UKRI's strategy.

Administrative data doesn't just inform research – it improves lives. From health to education to the economy, ADR UK-enabled research is helping build the evidence base for better decisions, delivered at the scale and pace the moment demands.

I'm proud of what ADR UK has achieved this year as part of the ESRC portfolio, and excited about what's ahead. As UKRI's strategy makes clear, this is what we're here to do: advance knowledge, improve lives, and drive growth – together.

ADR UK in numbers

Take a look at our work in numbers as of September 2026:



Key developments across the partnership

Investing in research that changes lives

This year, [17 more academics joined our Fellowship programme](#), the largest cohort since ADR UK was established in 2018. Projects will tackle challenges across the policy spectrum, including the [pay gap experienced by unpaid carers](#), [changes to special educational needs support](#), and [violence against women and girls](#).

22 PhD students using ADR UK flagship datasets are also currently being directly supported by ADR UK, with funding for a new cohort of 30 PhD students due to be allocated to Economic and Social Research Council Doctoral Training partnerships later this year.

These fellows and PhD students are bringing their passion and expertise to ADR UK's flagship linked datasets, often with the unique opportunity to access datasets for the first time.

Our collection of 'Data Explained' articles allows these researchers at the forefront of administrative data use to share their learnings and code with the wider researcher network. While our regularly published Data Insights continue to offer a publicly available record of key findings for policy and practice.

Through our use of Trusted Research Environments, a growing number of researchers beyond those directly funded by ADR UK are also utilising our rich datasets for public good projects.

Expanding our flagship dataset collection

During this period, we are delighted to have funded and facilitated new and updated flagship datasets across all four national partners, with our current total standing at 24.

Highlights include the launch of [RAPID: Population interactions with employment, benefits and pensions - UK](#), a population-based dataset created from administrative records held by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC).

RAPID enables analysis of month-on-month activities and the transitions between employment and benefits, providing the ability to analyse populations to low levels of geography by age, sex and derived economic activity in each month. Projects using this new resource begin in the autumn of 2026.

Our support has also continued for the world-leading established dataset, [LEO \(Longitudinal Education Outcomes\)](#), hosted by the Office for National Statistics with facilitation by ADR UK. The dataset contains de-identified information on the characteristics, education, employment, benefits, and earnings of members of the British public. LEO provides transformative insight and evidence on the longer-term labour market outcomes and educational pathways of around 38 million individuals. This year we were delighted to have launched versions of this dataset based on records from [Northern Ireland](#) and [Scotland](#), expanding research potential into other UK nations.

We have also expanded our synthetic data provision to support researchers to explore and test datasets safely prior to use. ADR UK continues to lead the way in utilising synthetic data, including this year's SynthSprint, which brought researchers together to rapidly test data and potential projects through synthetic data use.

Formalising partnerships with our government data partners

Our evaluation identified that the greatest societal and financial benefits from administrative data research are often achieved when data generated by one government department or public service is linked to data from others. Linking data surfaces new insights that can otherwise remain hidden.

This year as we move into our new funding period, we have formalised new data owner partnerships with five UK government departments:

- Department for Education
- Department for Health and Social Care
- Department for Work and Pensions
- His Majesty's Revenue & Customs
- Ministry of Justice

This will allow ADR UK to scale up the benefits of the individual relationships we have developed with these departments over time, and to further streamline access to linked data.

ADR England

2025-26 has been a milestone year for ADR England, marking the transition into a new phase of investment and delivery. Following confirmation of renewed UK Research & Innovation funding for ADR UK, ADR England secured £66.2 million in funding for the next five years, enabling continued development of our secure data infrastructure, research partnerships and evidence generation to address key policy priorities for England and the UK.

An evolving partnership model

This year also saw ADR England's partnership model evolve, with the Office for National Statistics (ONS) taking on a strengthened co-leadership role alongside ADR UK. Alongside this, new core partners from across UK Government – including the Department for Education, NHS England, HM Revenue and Customs, the Department for Work and Pensions and the Ministry of Justice – came on board to support our ambitious research programmes spanning areas including economic growth, health, education and justice.

In addition to these government partnerships, ADR England continues to work closely with academic partners including UCL's Centre for Education Policy and Equalising Opportunities, UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health, and the University of the West of England. Their expertise supports the development, accessibility and impact of ADR England flagship datasets including Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO), Education and Child Health Insights from Linked Data (ECHILD), and several of our economic datasets.

Strengthening our research community

Alongside data infrastructure, ADR England strengthened its research community. The launch of the ADR England website has created a dedicated hub for datasets, partnerships and research activity across England, while new communities of practice – including the Criminal Justice Administrative Data Network at the University of Huddersfield – are bringing researchers, policymakers and practitioners together to share expertise, improve research quality, and maximise impact.

Together, these developments lay the foundations for the next phase of ADR England's mission: enabling secure, impactful research that improves understanding of society's most pressing challenges and supports better decision-making for people across England and the UK.

[Read the full update on ADR England](#)

ADR NI

This year ADR NI has further grown the programme across data curation, policy engagement, public involvement, and more.

A key focus has been continuing to drive forward the acquisition of administrative data for research through the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA), including the delivery of rich new research datasets.

New datasets acquired covered a range of themes including business, agriculture, education and employment. Examples include:

- [Business Data for Research 2022](#): available to all accredited researchers in November 2025
- [Administrative Data | Agricultural Research Collection 2011](#): available to all accredited researchers in May 2026
- [Longitudinal Education Outcomes NI](#): available to all accredited researchers in July 2026
- [Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings linked to Census 2021](#): available to all accredited researchers in August 2026.

The Business Data for Research (BDR) 2022 dataset received sustained research interest, with four research projects currently underway as of June 2026. NISRA is currently working on significant enhancements to the 2023 edition of BDR in response to researcher and stakeholder feedback.

Impactful data research

ADR NI delivered linked-data research, policy engagement and public involvement across themes including air pollution, education, homelessness, children's social care, prescribing, mortality and health inequalities. Key outputs included papers on [air pollution and Parkinson's disease](#), [health and educational attainment](#), [mortality risk in underserved groups](#), [social mobility and deprivation](#), and [maternity outcomes related to intimate partner violence](#), alongside new data resource profiles for [SOSCAR](#) and the [Enhanced Prescribing Database](#).

This year, NISRA also published key ADR UK-funded research on [deaths due to suicide](#), [drugs and alcohol](#); [employment transitions](#); and [post-prison mortality](#).

Strengthening policy engagement

ADR NI activity to strengthen policy engagement this year included:

- Policy briefs and [consultation responses](#)
- [Presenting evidence to the UN Special Rapporteur](#) (download)
- Providing the secretariat to the [All-Party Group on Policy and Public Data](#)
- [Briefing the Committee for Communities](#), supporting discussion on poverty, homelessness, data sharing and service improvement.

Findings and learning from our research were shared with policy and research audiences across Northern Ireland and the wider UK to ensure impact.

Public engagement and co-production remained central to our work. This included involving the public in shaping research through [NI Public Data Panel](#) activity, Experts by Experience workshops with Voice of Young People in Care (VOYPIC), and lived experience group workshops with Homeless Connect. This work was recognised through an ADR UK Partnership Recognition Award for its public engagement model.

Growing the profile and impact of ADR NI

Overall, this year's research outputs and engagement activities increased the visibility of ADR NI and generated growing engagement with policymakers and elected representatives, including invitations to contribute evidence to Assembly discussions on homelessness, poverty and the role of data sharing and linkage in informing policy.

[Read the full update on ADR NI](#)

ADR Scotland

This year, ADR Scotland has strengthened engagement across all our audiences and users, enhancing how we work with government, researchers and the public while updating our data offer and delivering impactful research.

Expanding our data offer for researchers

We've expanded the ADR Scotland data catalogue to include several new datasets, including the [All Providers Qualifications Dataset](#) and the [Annual electricity and gas consumption at the property level, Scotland](#). Alongside this, we have focused on improving our supporting information on datasets through newly designed user guides and data dictionaries, which are now available for [flagship datasets](#). Working closely with Research Data Scotland (RDS), we have also supported ongoing enhancements to their [metadata catalogue](#) and [Researcher Access Service](#), helping to improve consistency, transparency and the researcher user experience.

Improving data access and governance remains a priority. ADR Scotland is supporting the Scottish Government's [Data for Research: Change Management Board](#) to review data access and data ingest processes while maintaining secure, transparent and legally compliant systems.

Generating insights for policy, practice and the public

ADR Scotland's research programme continues to generate valuable insights for policy and practice. Recent presentations at the [International Population Data Linkage Network \(IPDLN\) Conference 2026](#) highlighted work on [commuting patterns among nurses and midwives](#), factors associated with [school absence in Scotland](#), and whether insufficient [sunlight exposure may be an under-recognised risk factor for cardiovascular disease mortality](#) in Scotland. We are also pleased to be expanding our research on trends in [deaths at home](#) during [Covid-19](#).

Increasing engagement on administrative data research has been a key focus this year. We have welcomed new members to the [Scotland Talks Data public panel](#) and participated in public events such as [Pint of Science](#) and the [Edinburgh Science Festival](#). Our knowledge exchange programme has been busier than ever with a [monthly seminar series](#), an event on [Scottish Child Payment](#) and participation in the [Scottish Parliament's Festival of Politics](#). To further strengthen engagement with policymakers, we also introduced policy briefings, with [our inaugural briefing](#) focusing on the relationship between childhood poverty and youth offending.

[Read the full update on ADR Scotland](#)

ADR Wales

This has been a year of growth, change and achievement for ADR Wales. Building on the success and sense of unity generated through hosting the ADR UK Conference 2025 in Cardiff, we have continued to strengthen our position and ambition for the future.

Recognising the people who shaped this year

Throughout the year, we have celebrated the well-deserved recognition of colleagues who have received a range of awards, honours and accolades, reflecting the exceptional talent and dedication across our team.

We also marked an important leadership transition with the retirement of Co-Director David Ford. David's vision and stewardship helped establish not only ADR Wales but the wider data science research community in the strong position it enjoys today, and we are immensely grateful for his contribution. At the same time, we have welcomed a new leadership team, with [Lucy Griffiths](#) and [Simon Thompson](#) joining existing Director [Stephanie Howarth](#). Together they bring a powerful combination of strengths in government engagement, technological innovation and security, and academic excellence, creating an exceptional platform from which to deliver our ambitions.

Delivering research that makes a difference

This renewed leadership comes at a pivotal moment as we look ahead to the 2026-2031 funding period with confidence, excitement and a wealth of opportunities. Across all our themes of work, we have maintained a strong record of delivery, producing research and insights that have informed government policy and supported our partner organisations.

Building skills and expanding data for research

ADR Wales has continued to build capability across sectors by helping organisations make better use of their data. Key initiatives include the successful secondment of staff from Shelter Cymru into academia and the contributions of ADR Wales colleagues working within Welsh Government to support local authorities in developing their data expertise. We were also delighted to welcome another cohort of interns during summer 2026, including, for the first time, interns placed directly within government teams.

Alongside these developments, we have made significant progress in acquiring important new datasets, including PAYE data and data on Adults Receiving Care and Support in Wales. This work is creating valuable new opportunities to enhance research, improve understanding and deliver impact for the people of Wales. [Read the full update on ADR Wales.](#)

Office for National Statistics (ONS)

As the Office for National Statistics (ONS) moved into our new ADR UK investment period until 2031, we were pleased to see some long-running work through to completion, while also kicking off some new, exciting projects and initiatives.

Increasing the data and support available for researchers

We confirmed the Secure Research Service (SRS) as our sole externally facing trusted research environment following the formal closure of the Integrated Data Programme in March 2026. Usage of the service remains strong, with over 800 live projects accessing over 150 datasets. To help us continue to scale but maintain performance levels, we have established a dedicated service improvement function with a focus on improving both internal efficiency and the user experience.

Some significant new datasets have been made available, including the [Nursing and Midwifery Council Register linked to Census 2021 – England and Wales](#) and [RAPID: Population interactions with employment, benefits and pensions – UK](#). Demand for RAPID is expected to be particularly high. Importantly, we have worked to ensure that existing ADR UK flagship datasets, such as [Longitudinal Education Outcomes \(LEO\)](#) and [Education and Child Health Insights from Linked Data \(ECHILD\)](#), have been refreshed and enhanced to ensure continued research relevance.

Building cross-sector collaborations

The successful delivery this year has been made possible through continued collaboration with multiple partners:

- data owners and academic partners, to create research ready datasets
- ADR UK national partnerships, to facilitate the onward sharing of ONS data
- the ADR UK central team, to progress the Fellowship and PHD Studentship funding opportunities.

We have continued to be active in promoting our work externally through in-person and online events, as well as tracking the impact of research conducted in the SRS.

[Read the full update on the ONS](#)

New and emerging datasets

This year has expanded what researchers can do with linked administrative data. New datasets and major updates from England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales are opening up fresh insight into education, health and economic life across the UK. Read on to find out more.

Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) – England

The LEO dataset is a flagship ADR UK-enabled dataset that links education, employment, tax and benefit records, allowing researchers to understand how education pathways shape long-term outcomes. It provides a unique, longitudinal view of approximately 42 million learners in England, supporting research on social mobility, skills, employment and inequality.

In 2025–26, LEO was further enhanced through the release of Iteration 2.1. This update added three additional years of labour market data for individuals already included in Iteration 2, extending tax and benefit records to 2023–24 and enabling researchers to observe outcomes for the oldest individuals in LEO up to age 40.

ADR UK-funded work with the Department for Education introduced new derived variables to make LEO easier and more efficient to use. These include measures of persistent disadvantage and additional needs based on free school meal eligibility and special educational needs records. By providing these variables as standard, the enhancements reduce the need for researchers to construct their own measures from detailed personal data, improving consistency across research projects while supporting data minimisation. Further developments are also improving access and usability.

Synthetic data

A synthetic version of LEO has been created to help researchers understand the structure and potential of the dataset before applying for secure access, while shared SQL code supports more efficient preparation of LEO extracts within the ONS Secure Research Service.

Future plans include continued development of research-ready resources and improvements informed by researcher feedback, supporting wider and more effective use of LEO for public benefit.

Education and Child Health Insights from Linked Data (ECHILD) - England

ECHILD is a flagship ADR England-enabled dataset that links administrative records across health, education and social care to create a longitudinal picture of children and young people's lives. It enables researchers to explore how early-life circumstances, health needs, educational experiences and access to services interact to shape outcomes.

During this phase of the project, ECHILD's research potential has expanded through the addition of new data sources and enhancements to the resource. The Individualised Learner Record (ILR), which covers learners participating in publicly funded further education and skills training, has recently been added to ECHILD. This extends the dataset beyond compulsory education, enabling researchers to explore young people's transitions into further education alongside their earlier health and education experiences.

Further enhancements are also planned, including the addition of Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data, subject to approval processes, which will provide new opportunities to understand education pathways beyond further education. The ECHILD team is also undertaking a major data refresh, with education data being updated to include the 2024/25 academic year and health data updated to December 2025, ensuring the resource remains current for researchers.

ECHILD supports research into key policy questions including special educational needs and disabilities, health inequalities, school attendance, educational attainment and children's life chances. By bringing together information held across previously separate systems, ECHILD enables researchers to understand how different aspects of children's lives interact and generate evidence to support better policy and services.

Alongside expanding the dataset itself, the ECHILD team has continued to build research capability through training, seminars, guidance and engagement with researchers, policymakers and the public. These activities are helping more researchers make use of linked administrative data responsibly and effectively.

Continued development of ECHILD's linked data sources, documentation and user support will help strengthen its role as a national research resource, enabling research that improves understanding of children's experiences and informs decisions about services and support.

Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) - Northern Ireland

The first release of the [Longitudinal Education Outcomes Northern Ireland \(LEO NI\) dataset](#) was made securely available to all accredited researchers in July 2026. This is a linked, de-identified database, comprising post-primary school data from the NI Department of Education linked to apprenticeships and further/higher education data from the NI Department for the Economy.

- Phase 1: post-primary school data, apprenticeships and further/higher education data – securely available from July 2026
- Phase 2: employment and earnings data from His Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC) and benefits data from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and the Department for Communities (DfC)
- Phase 3: Census data and Youth Justice Agency markers

The available data provides longitudinal, person-level insight into NI learners' progression through post-primary schooling into further/higher education and apprenticeships. It also enables the analysis of transitions between key education stages and identification of patterns across learner characteristics and pathways.

Future enhancements to this dataset will be incorporated over two additional phases: Phase 2 aims to add employment and earnings data from HMRC and benefits data from the DWP and the DfC; and Phase 3 aims to add Census data and Youth Justice Agency markers.

Together, the three phases of delivery will create a richly linked, population-level evidence base that enables researchers to study educational, economic and social outcomes over time, strengthening the capacity for informed decision-making and targeted interventions across Northern Ireland.

Business Data for Research 2022

The [Business Data for Research \(BDR\) 2022](#) dataset was released to all accredited researchers in November 2025. BDR 2022 is a linked, de-identified dataset combining survey data from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), the NI Annual Business Inquiry (ABI) (including Northern Ireland Economic Trade Statistics (NIETS)) and the Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES).

The dataset provides a longitudinal, business-level view of employment, earnings, business structure, trade and performance from 2014 to 2022, enabling analysis of firm demographics, productivity, labour market dynamics and export activity, as well as regional and sectoral trends.

BDR 2023 is planned for release in December 2026 and will incorporate several enhancements informed by researcher feedback, including the addition of: Input-Output and Supply-Use reference tables; data from the NI Research and Development survey; and a 'good jobs' flag, along with the annual update.

Together, these enhancements will significantly extend the analytical capability of the dataset, enabling more detailed and integrated research on business behaviour, supply chains, innovation and job quality across the Northern Ireland economy.

Sure Start Play Data 2010 – 2020

In Northern Ireland, the Sure Start programme supports parents with children under four years old in disadvantaged areas. Sure Start projects deliver services designed to enhance children's learning, health, and emotional and social development.

To better understand the programme's impact, ADR NI researchers are working with Sure Start's Strategic Planning and Performance Group to link 10 years of Sure Start data with NI health records - evaluating the health outcomes of this popular, government-led intervention for the first time.

10 years of Sure Start data (2010 - 2020) will be linked to a range of de-identified health administrative datasets by the Honest Broker Service, including GP registration index, prescription data (i.e., the Enhanced Prescribing Database), emergency department data, death data, deprivation data, peace line data, and urban/rural data.

This newly accessed dataset will, in the first instance, be used to examine trends in Sure Start service use in Northern Ireland over the past decade and associations between Sure Start support and health outcomes.

Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)

Through the ADR Scotland programme, accredited researchers can now securely access Scottish [Programme for International Student Assessment \(PISA\) data](#) from the 2012, 2015 and 2018 survey cycles within the [Scottish National Safe Haven](#). PISA is widely recognised as a global benchmark for measuring the skills of 15-year-olds in reading, mathematics and science. It is carried out every three years by member countries of the [Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development \(OECD\)](#).

In Scotland, around 3,000 pupils participated in each survey cycle. The dataset includes detailed background information from pupils and headteachers, covering factors such as socioeconomic context, attitudes to learning and school environments. When linked to administrative data, including the [Pupil Census](#) and [Attendance and Absence records](#), researchers can use this data to explore how wider life circumstances and school experiences shape attainment and development over time.

Research questions could include:

- What factors are most strongly associated with high performance in mathematics, reading and science?
- How do PISA outcomes vary for care-experienced young people compared with their peers?
- Is PISA performance a predictor for participation and success in higher education, apprenticeships or employment?
- Is PISA performance impacted by different local community characteristics (socio-economic, digital access)?

This transforms PISA from a largely standalone international comparison tool into a rich, connected resource for understanding educational journeys in Scotland. It can generate insights to support the delivery of Scottish Government policy priorities laid out in the [National Improvement Framework](#), [Getting It Right For Every Child](#), [The Promise](#) and the [Scottish Attainment Challenge](#). Research using the data will have the potential to inform decisions in focus areas including education reform, closing the poverty-related attainment gap, improving wellbeing, enhancing literacy and numeracy outcomes and ensuring positive school leaver destinations.

Additional information, including how to apply for access to the dataset, can be found in the [Research Data Scotland metadata catalogue](#). You can also find additional content about PISA and how the survey was conducted on the Scottish Government website for [2018](#), [2015](#) and [2012](#).

All Providers Qualifications - Scotland

Improving outcomes for children and young people is a core priority in Scotland, reflected in Scottish Government policies such as [Getting It Right For Every Child](#), [The Promise](#) and the [Scottish Attainment Challenge](#).

This year, ADR Scotland made a new national, linkable dataset available to enhance how education is understood, analysed and improved. The [All Providers Qualifications](#) dataset is now available within the Scottish National Safe Haven, bringing together approximately 35 million records from 2008 to 2023, making an important step forward in the availability of research-ready education data.

A defining feature of the dataset is its breadth. It goes beyond traditional Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) awards to include qualifications from a diverse range of providers, including colleges, [Young Enterprise Scotland](#), [Sports Leaders UK](#) and the [Duke of Edinburgh Awards](#). This broader scope offers a more complete view of how learners gain skills and recognition, reflecting the increasingly varied pathways young people take through education and training.

The dataset also unlocks powerful new opportunities for data linkage. It can be securely linked to other datasets such as the [Pupil Census](#) and [Attendance and Absence records](#), enabling more sophisticated and longitudinal analysis.

Research questions could include:

- How has the range and uptake of qualifications changed between 2008-2023 and what impact have attainment policy initiatives had on qualification patterns?
- How do different qualification pathways relate to later educational, training or employment outcomes?
- How do qualification outcomes vary by socioeconomic backgrounds, geography or school characteristics?

These enhanced insights can support Scotland's key policy priorities. By improving understanding of attainment, progression and outcomes, the dataset can inform evidence-based interventions aimed at reducing child poverty, raising educational attainment and improving wellbeing.

Scottish Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) - University extract

ADR Scotland is continuing to build momentum in developing its dataset offering on educational outcomes. The [Scottish Longitudinal Education Outcomes \(LEO\) - University extract dataset](#) offers a rich longitudinal picture of graduate pathways, enabling analysis of outcomes across study, work and early careers for UK-domiciled students who studied in Scotland. It helps identify which groups thrive, where inequalities remain and how opportunities vary across Scotland, offering valuable insights for priority agendas such as [Getting it Right For Every Child](#), [The Promise](#) and the [Scottish Attainment Challenge](#).

Developed through collaboration between the [Scottish Government](#), [Department for Education](#), [Department for Work and Pensions](#) and [HM Revenue & Customs](#), the dataset securely links higher education records with data on employment, earnings and benefit receipt. This creates a powerful longitudinal resource, enabling researchers to track outcomes from study into early careers and beyond, including patterns in earnings, employment sectors and benefit use over time.

The dataset covers nearly 2.8 million records and spans education data from 2003–2020, alongside tax and benefits data through to 2022. Further records are due to be added in autumn 2026.

Crucially, the Scottish LEO dataset enables analysis of inequalities in outcomes. Researchers can explore how experiences differ by deprivation, disability or care experience, and how these relate to subject choice, institution or geography. This makes it a vital tool for informing policy on key areas, including widening access, skills development and social mobility. This year, research led by [Professor Iain Atherton](#) and [Alice Pearsons](#) is already demonstrating the value of the data for workforce planning, with early-stage analysis underway on [nursing graduate career pathways](#).

Supporting documentation

With this dataset now a flagship dataset, ADR Scotland has enhanced the supporting documentation available to researchers, including a user guide, data dictionary and [webinar recording](#). Looking ahead, we are exploring opportunities to further expand the dataset, including the addition of Scottish schools, colleges and Modern Apprenticeship data.

[Find out more about this dataset and how to apply for access.](#)

New datasets from ADR Wales

This year has seen significant progress in expanding the breadth and depth of data available within the SAIL Databank, thanks to the dedication, expertise, and collaborative approach of the ADR Wales Data Acquisition team and colleagues across SAIL.

The acquisition and onboarding of new datasets is a complex process that requires close partnership with data partners, careful governance oversight, and a thorough understanding of how data can be used to deliver meaningful research outcomes. Throughout the year, the team has worked extensively with data owners and stakeholders to establish robust data sharing arrangements, develop comprehensive metadata, and ensure that datasets are fully understood, appropriately governed, and research-ready.

These efforts have resulted in a growing portfolio of health, social care, education, workforce, and administrative data sources that, when linked securely within the SAIL Databank, provide researchers with unprecedented opportunities to generate insights that can inform policy, practice, and public services across Wales and beyond.

Among the newly available or imminent data acquisitions progressed this year are:

- Adults Receiving Care and Support (ARCS) data is now available within SAIL and is already supporting research through an ADR Wales-funded partnership project involving the CARE LAB team at Cardiff University, Swansea University, Social Care Wales, and the Welsh Government.
- Discussions around access to Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) Data remain encouraging, with the data expected to be an important resource for workforce and professional regulation research.
- PAYE (P14D) Data governance is progressing well, with readiness anticipated during the autumn of 2026, planned for initial use on an ADR-Wales Ymateb approved SAIL project.
- National Vascular Registry Data (NVRD) will be ready for researchers to access within SAIL later this year.
- UCAS Data onboarding is progressing well, representing an exciting addition that will enhance opportunities for education and life-course research.
- National Exercise Referral Scheme (NERS) Data has been reintroduced and is once again available within SAIL, providing valuable opportunities to support research into physical activity, prevention, and population health outcomes.

These achievements reflect not only the hard work of the Data Acquisition team but also the strength of the relationships built with data partners, policymakers, researchers, and partner organisations. Together, these collaborations are helping to create an increasingly rich and diverse research environment, enabling accredited researchers to answer important questions and deliver evidence that supports better outcomes for individuals, communities, and public services.

RAPID: Population interactions with employment, benefits and pensions - UK

[RAPID: Population interactions with employment, benefits and pensions – UK](#) is a population-based dataset created from administrative records held by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC).

The dataset includes de-identified records for all people with a National Insurance number, including children, who were alive on or after 6 April 2010. It captures an annual summary of employment, benefit and pension activities, and the income associated with those activities, between 2010/11 and 2023/24. The dataset enables analysis of month-on-month activities and the transitions between employment and benefits, including the ability to analyse populations to low levels of geography by age, sex and derived economic activity in each month.

This year, RAPID was made available for accredited researchers to apply to access in the Office for National Statistics Secure Research Service. This represents a significant milestone in the availability of UK-wide economic administrative data for public good research. The dataset can be used to uncover insights related to priority policy questions around employment, inequalities and financial security.

Investing in the research use of RAPID

Funding from ADR UK will boost the research output from RAPID over the coming year. The first users of the dataset include [three ADR UK Research Fellows](#), who will use the data to undertake a variety of projects. Their research will investigate themes including the labour market dynamics of older working-age people; the economic determinants of health-related benefit claims; and a local view of economic inactivity in the UK. As well as generating new evidence to inform policy across these priorities, the fellows will test the dataset as an asset for academic research and provide feedback and advice for data owners and future users.

Also [announced this year](#), a new ADR UK Academic Lead team will work with DWP and HMRC to drive secure research use of economic data for public benefit from 2026 – 2031. A core part of this team's work will focus on scaling up research use of RAPID, including providing training and support for researchers, advising data owners on potential improvements, and building a sustained community of practice. By investing in and supporting the research use of RAPID, we are building the potential of the dataset to help inform better economic decisions for the UK.

Our impact: Impact case studies from 2026

Insights generated from ADR UK's data are making a real-world impact across the partnership – demonstrating how evidence unlocked through administrative data can improve people's lives.

Explore just a few examples of our impact this year:

Helping schools identify children who need support earlier

Research using ADR UK's linked education and justice data is helping shape conversations about how schools and policymakers can better support children at risk of later offending.

The study conducted by ADR UK fellow Dr Paul Garcia found that children with social and emotional difficulties at the start of primary school are more likely to be excluded from school, and that exclusion is one of the strongest indicators of later offending in adolescence. The findings highlight the importance of identifying and supporting children early, before problems escalate.

Garcia presented and discussed the evidence at the public policy event *Schooling, Skills and Sanctions*, attended by organisations including the Department for Education, Welsh Government, Youth Endowment Fund, Centre for Justice Innovation, National Children's Bureau and the British Association of Social Workers. It has contributed to policy debates on school behaviour, early intervention and reducing youth offending. This work has also contributed to the development of new funded research on the role of schools in pupils' outcomes, including projects on teachers' mental health and on restorative and relational practices in schools.

The research was made possible by using the ADR UK-funded Ministry of Justice and Department for Education linked dataset for England. By following children's education and justice outcomes over time, the researcher was able to understand how early development, school experiences and later offending are connected.

This work demonstrates the value of securely linked administrative data for tackling complex social challenges. By providing robust evidence on where support can make the biggest difference, it is helping inform policies and practices that could improve life chances for vulnerable children while reducing future involvement with the justice system.

Informing new approaches to tackling regional inequalities

ADR UK-enabled research is helping policymakers better understand why regional inequalities persist and where interventions could have the greatest impact. By revealing how education, geographical mobility and local labour markets interact over people's lives, the research is providing new evidence to support policies that improve opportunity across the country.

Using the ADR England Longitudinal Education Outcomes dataset, researchers have shown that regional inequalities are shaped not only by differences in skills, but also by where people can access high-paying jobs and opportunities. Research led by ADR UK fellow Xiaowei Xu at the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) found that many high-achieving young people from outside London move away from their home areas, often towards London and the South East, showing how uneven distribution of jobs can reinforce existing geographical divides by attracting skilled workers towards areas with more economic opportunities.

These findings were brought directly into policy discussions through an [IFS conference on tackling regional inequalities](#), where Xu presented evidence from her ADR UK Fellowship alongside research on investment, education and social mobility. The event featured a keynote speech from Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester (now UK Prime Minister), who joined discussions on the policy levers needed to improve opportunities outside London and the South East.

The research also contributed to a wider programme of policy engagement, including a [Fiscal Studies symposium issue](#) on geographical inequalities, an accompanying [policy commentary](#) and discussions with government departments including the Department for Education, HM Treasury and the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government. Findings have also reached wider audiences through IFS publications, ADR UK blogs, media coverage and accessible formats such as podcast discussions.

The research challenges the assumption that improving skills alone will reduce regional inequalities. Instead, it highlights the need for policies that combine education investment with measures to create high-quality jobs, strengthen local economies and improve access to opportunity. By providing robust evidence on how place shapes life chances, ADR UK-enabled research is supporting more effective approaches to boosting productivity and social mobility.

Profiling suicide, drug and alcohol deaths in Northern Ireland

[Research enabled by ADR Northern Ireland](#) (ADR NI) has strengthened suicide prevention policy in Northern Ireland by providing new evidence on the social and economic factors associated with suicide.

Publication of the suicide research was included as a formal action within the [Protect Life 2 Suicide Prevention Strategy](#) Implementation Plan and directly contributed to a change in the Terms of Reference for a stronger socio-economic focus within the Executive Working Group on Wellbeing, Mental Health and Suicide Prevention.

Using linked administrative data from multiple sources, the research identified population groups at increased risk. These included people reporting poor mental health and self-reporting a disability, the economically inactive/unemployed and males with no educational qualifications and males living alone and male children in lone parent households, enabling policy makers and service providers to better target prevention and early-intervention activity. The evidence also supported cross-departmental collaboration on suicide prevention and mental health.

Professor Sir Michael McBride, Chief Medical Officer NI and Chair of Protect Life 2 Strategy, said: *"The research strengthened our ability to target interventions more effectively for the Protect Life 2 Strategy and provided underpinning evidence for the change to the Terms of Reference for the Executive Working group on Wellbeing, Mental Health and Suicide Prevention."*

Homelessness among young people leaving care in Northern Ireland

ADR NI research is helping to inform and support the delivery of the Northern Ireland Executive's New Foundations Programme. By providing the first population-level evidence on the scale and timing of homelessness after leaving care, the research identified a critical window for intervention. Using linked administrative data, the study found that over six in ten care leavers experienced homelessness, with the highest risk occurring during the first two years after leaving care. These findings provided a strong evidence base for targeted prevention and early intervention activity.

New Foundations is a cross-departmental initiative led jointly by the Department for Communities and the Department of Health. It sets out a holistic approach to support young people as they leave care. It aims to prevent youth homelessness by providing guaranteed, stable housing and tailored, multi-agency wraparound support as they transition into independent adult life.

[The findings from ADR NI research](#) were used to support the programme's launch and have helped build support among policymakers and stakeholders. They are also helping to shape the programme's evaluation, with the Department of Health and Department for Communities working with the ADRC NI team to explore how linked administrative data can be used to assess outcomes and inform future service delivery.

Grainia Long, Chief Executive, Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE), said: *"Incredible research shows 17-times the risk of homelessness for care leavers – this is not acceptable. It also showed the biggest risk in the first 2 years. If we crack this, we can get it right first time and target resources here."*

Understanding social mobility among UK armed forces veterans

Understanding the long-term outcomes of those who have entered military service is essential to ensuring veterans (service leavers) are supported in civilian life. An ADR Scotland-led project has produced the first population-scale [evidence](#) on intergenerational social mobility among UK Armed Forces veterans in England and Wales – evidence which is informing discussions with a range of organisations that support veterans.

The study analysed data from 213,986 individuals aged 16 - 66 from the [Office for National Statistics \(ONS\) Longitudinal Study](#) and 2021 Census, linking childhood socioeconomic background with adult social class outcomes and veteran status. By comparing veterans with matched non-veterans, the researchers assessed how military service relates to changes in social class across generations. Notably, the new service leaver question included in the 2021 Census was used to distinguish between regular and reserve veterans.

When veterans are considered as a single group, estimates suggest that service-leavers were somewhat more likely to experience upward social mobility and less likely to remain in their parents' social class than comparable civilians. However, important differences emerged by service type. Reserve veterans showed higher rates of upward mobility and lower rates of downward mobility than both regular veterans and comparable civilians. In contrast, regular veterans were more likely to experience downward mobility and lower levels of class persistence.

These findings provide important evidence for policymakers responsible for delivering the [Armed Forces Covenant](#), highlighting the need to better understand and address the distinct transition experiences of regular and reserve personnel. The research is informing discussions with the [Office for Veterans' Affairs \(UK Government\)](#), [Forces in Mind Trust](#) and veteran support organisations on how support can be better targeted. The work also highlights the value of improved service history data in government surveys and future census collections to better understand veterans' experiences and outcomes.

Turning insight into impact: Supporting the delivery of Scotland's Areas of Research Interest

Following the [2015 Nurse Review of Research Councils](#) recommendation, UK Government and devolved governments are to publish Areas of Research Interest (ARIs), setting out key research themes and questions for evidence-informed policymaking. The Scottish Government recently committed to publishing ARIs for the first time.

ADR Scotland supports this by convening cross-sector expertise across justice and social care. ADR Scotland has engaged with Scottish Government Justice Analytical Service colleagues on the themes outlined in their [ARI](#) including:

- Whole Justice System Analysis
- Justice Processes and Experiences
- Crime and Prevention.

ADR Scotland Crime and Justice research lead, [Professor Susan McVie](#) has actively contributed to the post-publication dissemination of the Justice Analytical Service ARI, including presenting at a roundtable engagement event hosted by Scottish Government and Scottish Policy and Research Exchange. The event provided an overview on the ARI and gave researchers the opportunity to connect with policymakers and government analysts.

Similarly, building on a [Data-With-Impact: Spotlight on Social Care event](#) in 2025, ADR Scotland continued to facilitate engagement between government and the research community. This work informed the publication of the [Social Care Analytical Unit ARI](#) in March 2026.

Beyond publication, ADR Scotland is supporting implementation and impact. This includes strengthening embedded analytical capacity through a University of Edinburgh–Scottish Government Policy Fellowship aligned to the ARI priorities. Embedded within the Social Care Analytical Unit, Dr David Henderson is working with partners, including Public Health Scotland, to improve the accessibility and research-readiness of key datasets for secure linkage within the Scottish National Safe Haven and future large-scale research. This work supports delivery of a planned flagship dataset 'Adult Health, Social Care and Census – Scotland'.

ADR Scotland is actively engaging on a range of forthcoming ARIs including an ARI on [The Promise](#), to highlight the potential of administrative data research to support evidence gaps in priority areas of government.

IADRA: Building skills and confidence in administrative data research

Administrative data has enormous potential to improve research, policy and public services, but navigating complex datasets, governance requirements and analytical methods can be challenging for new users. To address this, ADR Scotland and the [Scottish Longitudinal Study and Development Support Unit](#) developed the [Introduction to Administrative Data Research and Analysis \(IADRA\) course](#), which has led to a demonstrable increase in skills and confidence in administrative data research for participants.

Originally delivered as a five-day face-to-face programme, IADRA has evolved into a four-week online course, broadening access and reach across the UK. Since March 2023, 190 participants from universities, research organisations and public sector bodies have completed the training, including PhD students, postdoctoral researchers and policy professionals.

The course combines expert-led lectures, practical exercises using synthetic datasets in R-Studio, researcher spotlight sessions and live Q&A discussions. Participants gain an understanding of the administrative data landscape, data governance and access procedures, alongside the analytical skills needed to work with complex linked datasets.

Feedback demonstrates a strong impact on research capacity. Around 60% of participants reported little or no prior experience using R-Studio before attending, while 97% said they felt more confident analysing administrative data after completing the course. Participants highlighted the value of hands-on learning and opportunities to learn directly from experienced administrative data researchers.

To find out more about impact of the IADRA course, please see the full [ADR Scotland case study](#).

Shaping Wales' Nation of Sanctuary through migrant health insights

A notable example of ADR Wales' impact during the year is the work led by Jane Lyons within our Social Justice theme, exploring integration of migrant populations in Wales through linked GP data. Through the ongoing strong collaboration and engagement between ADR UK academic researchers and Welsh Government colleagues, Jane was approached to support the Migrant Integration Framework for Wales. The Migrant Integration Framework for Wales was published in December 2023 and plays a key part in the Welsh Government's commitment to becoming a Nation of Sanctuary.

One of the framework's indicators is the percentage of individuals registered with a GP by migrant status. Through the SAIL Databank, analysis allowed the calculation of the percentage of GP registrations in Wales at a given point in the year that are associated with migrants, the percentage of GP appointments that are attended by migrants and how these figures vary according to the length of time migrants are resident in Wales.

This research has made an important contribution to understanding the needs of migrant communities in Wales and has now achieved significant policy recognition through its inclusion as an indicator within the Welsh Government's *Anti-racist Wales Action Plan Interactive Dashboard 2026*.

The dashboard, published in May 2026, brings together key measures used to monitor progress against the Action Plan, with Jane's research directly informing the *Nation of Sanctuary* chapter and supporting evidence-based approaches to improving outcomes for people seeking sanctuary in Wales. This achievement demonstrates how high-quality administrative data research can move beyond academic impact to become embedded within national policy monitoring frameworks, providing decision-makers with robust evidence to track progress and shape future action.

Strengthening the evidence base to increase understanding of homelessness in Wales

Through a combination of data innovation, research, partnership working and stakeholder engagement, ADR Wales' homelessness team is strengthening the evidence available to policymakers and practitioners, helping to drive more effective action to prevent homelessness and improve outcomes for vulnerable people.

A key achievement has been supporting the development of a new individual-level homelessness data collection for Wales. Working alongside Welsh Government Statistical Services, local authorities and sector stakeholders, the ADR Wales Welsh Government team is helping to replace aggregate reporting with richer, person-level data on homelessness applications and outcomes. This represents a significant step forward in understanding homelessness experiences, enabling more detailed analysis of pathways into and out of homelessness and providing policymakers with stronger evidence to inform future decisions. The future inclusion of these datasets within the Secure Anonymised Information Linkage (SAIL) Databank will further increase their value, creating opportunities for linked-data research that can inform both policy and service improvement.

The impact of the team's expertise is also being recognised internationally. Members of the Housing and Homelessness team contributed to the OECD's *Monitoring Framework to Measure Homelessness*, drawing on their experience in homelessness data collection and administrative data linkage. Their research informed the framework and helped shape international thinking on how better data can support homelessness prevention and policy development. Building on this contribution, the team has continued to refine and extend its approach, further strengthening the evidence base for homelessness policy and practice.

Partnership working has been central to extending the reach and impact of this work. Through an eight-month secondment with Shelter Cymru, ADR Wales helped facilitate the transfer of Shelter Cymru's case management data into the SAIL Databank. This has created a valuable new resource for housing and homelessness research in Wales, while also strengthening collaboration between the research and third sectors. The project has opened up opportunities to explore longstanding evidence gaps and generate new insights from data that previously could not be used for research purposes.

ADR Wales has also made a direct contribution to homelessness prevention through its work with Upstream Cymru, a school-based initiative delivered by Llamau to identify young people at risk of homelessness before they reach crisis point. The team played a key role in redesigning data collection systems used across the UK programme and provided evidence that informed the adoption of a revised methodology for measuring homelessness risk. This change has influenced how vulnerable young people are identified and supported across the wider Upstream programme. Analysis of Upstream Cymru data has also generated new evidence on youth homelessness,

educational disengagement and groups facing heightened risks of homelessness, helping to inform future policy and practice in Wales.

The influence of ADR Wales' work is increasingly visible in public policy. Research examining school absenteeism among children experiencing family homelessness was referenced in the Welsh Government White Paper on Ending Homelessness, helping to inform the reform of homelessness legislation in Wales. This demonstrates the importance of generating Wales-specific evidence that reflects local circumstances and can be directly applied to policy and service delivery.

Taken together, these achievements demonstrate the breadth and impact of ADR Wales' homelessness programme. By combining large-scale data development, innovative research, stakeholder collaboration and knowledge exchange, the programme is improving the evidence available to decision-makers at local, national and international levels. In doing so, it is helping to create a stronger foundation for homelessness prevention, more effective services and better outcomes for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness in Wales.

Ethnic inequalities in the criminal justice system

Research by ADR UK Fellow Kitty Lymperopoulou found significant ethnic disparities in court experiences and outcomes. These new findings have had substantial impact, informing policy discussions on ethnic inequality, contributing to major reviews, and driving improvements to the production of official statistics on ethnicity.

The research found that defendants from ethnic minority backgrounds were more likely to be sent to Crown Court, plead not guilty, and be remanded prior to trial than white British defendants. While conviction rates were similar or lower, defendants from most ethnic minority groups were more likely to receive custodial sentences, with some groups also receiving longer sentences, even after controlling for other factors. Evidence of cumulative disadvantage demonstrated how earlier decisions in the justice process contributed to harsher final outcomes.

This research had substantial impact on both policy and practice. The findings were submitted as evidence in the [Independent Sentencing Review](#) and cited in the Equality and Human Rights Commission report "[Racial Discrimination in Great Britain](#)" which was submitted as evidence to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The findings also informed discussions at a MoJ and Action for Race Equality policy roundtable attended by key government and non-government decision-makers, had significant judicial engagement, and also contributed to the MoJ's decision to publish [disaggregated ethnicity statistics](#) for the first time.

This research used linked criminal justice datasets made accessible to accredited researchers via the Office for National Statistics Secure Research Service, as a result of the ADR UK-funded Ministry of Justice (MoJ) Data First programme. This includes the flagship [Data First: Cross-Justice System – England and Wales dataset](#). Data from magistrates' and Crown Courts, alongside measures of offence severity and deprivation, were used to investigate the effect of offender, case, and court characteristics on court outcomes. The detailed analysis and findings strengthened the Data First programme and supported wider use of linked administrative data across the research community.

Our ambitions for the future

This year marked the beginning of ADR UK's new £168 million reinvestment, allowing us to expand the ambitions of the programme and our potential impact.

As we look ahead at our full five-year funding to 2031, our top priorities across the partnership are:



1. DATA CREATION

INCREASE DATA
AVAILABLE TO
RESEARCHERS



2. DATA USE

IMPROVE
RESEARCHER
ACCESS AND
SUPPORT



3. IMPACT

DELIVER IMPACT
FOR POLICY AND
PRACTICE



4. PUBLIC TRUST

UPHOLD AND
GROW PUBLIC
TRUST

This long-term commitment ensures the teams and partners across the ADR UK programme continue to drive forward together ensuring public data is used for public good research with real-world impact for all.

Plans for future delivery across each UK nation

ADR England

The next five-year phase of ADR England will build on the strong foundations established since 2021, strengthening the role of administrative data research in addressing some of the most important challenges facing society in England, across the UK and internationally.

Through a shared ADR England Strategy for 2026–31, we will set out the collective ambitions of ADR England, ADR UK, our data delivery partner the Office for National Statistics and our wider network of core partners. This will provide clearer strategic direction for the programme, strengthen collaboration and help maximise the value of ADR England's investment.

Priority research themes

A key ambition is to sharpen our strategic focus around priority research themes that reflect policy challenges, including UK Government agendas, departmental Areas of Research Interest and local government priorities. By bringing evidence, expertise and datasets together around these themes,

ADR England will support research that is ambitious, relevant and responsive to policy needs at national and local levels. We will also curate and showcase evidence, highlighting emerging findings, synthesising research and sharing impact stories that demonstrate how administrative data research can inform policy and improve outcomes, while strengthening policy-facing engagement through accessible outputs and publications.

Enhancing flagship data

Thanks to the work of ADR England's core partners, our flagship datasets will continue to be enhanced, improving researcher access and experience in response to user feedback and insight. This will include developing synthetic data resources for each flagship dataset, strengthening documentation and guidance, and creating clearer pathways for researchers to discover and use these resources. We will also continue to promote uptake of ADR England flagship datasets, including supporting research and analysis beyond directly ADR UK-funded projects.

Delivering the new Training and Capacity Building (TCB) Strategy

Alongside this, we will expand researcher capacity through the ADR UK Training and Capacity Building Strategy 2026–31, including through an enlarged PhD programme and increased provision of skills training to strengthen student and researcher pathways into administrative data research across England. We will support the growth of researcher communities, ADR UK research fellow alumni networks, and peer learning opportunities, helping to build a sustainable pipeline of researchers able to use administrative data to address key challenges.

Expanded the ADR England digital presence and identity

We will amplify ADR England's digital presence through the new website and expanded ADR England brand, developing multimedia content on policy impact, communities, regional insights, research themes and alignment with government priorities. We will also increase proactive media engagement with regional and sector press, including working with partners to highlight locally relevant research stories.

ADR NI

ADR NI has an ambitious data acquisition and research plan for the 2026-2031 funding period.

NISRA, the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, as a core element of the partnership in Northern Ireland, will lead on the provision of new datasets such as a longitudinal Youth Justice Agency dataset, subject to approval, and Growing Up in Northern Ireland (GUINI).

Phase 1 of GUINI will link birth registrations recorded by the General Register Office with Census information, alongside education data from Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) NI, with future phases aiming to incorporate justice and poverty-related data. New bespoke Census linkages will also be developed, including links to child social care data, subject to approvals, and homelessness data from the NI Housing Executive, supporting key [Programme for Government](#) priorities.

Building on existing flagship data and providing training

NISRA will also continue to build on existing flagship datasets, incorporating updated data and enhancements based on researcher and stakeholder feedback, including AD|ARC NI, BDR, ASHE-Census NI and LEO NI.

In addition, NISRA will strengthen training provision, including synthetic data, and increase promotion and engagement with researchers, stakeholders and the public.

Expanding the scale of NI research using administrative data

Over the 2026 - 31 funding period, the academic partners in ADR NI, collectively called 'ADRC NI', will expand the scale and ambition of its research programme.

The programme will address complex policy and societal challenges including: homelessness, time in prison, Sure Start, social work and social care, impact of cancer on households, social and structural factors related to reproductive and maternal health, school and subject refusal, educational inequalities, farmers' health and wellbeing, environment and suicide risk, air pollution, economic inactivity, sub-regional economies and the costs of policy challenges.

Cross-cutting work on economics and measuring mental health will support research across the portfolio, helping generate more joined-up evidence for policy and practice.

Engaging the public across the programme

Public involvement and co-production will remain central, with experts by experience, VCSE partners and the Northern Ireland Public Data Panel embedded across the programme. Through structured training, Communities of Practice, cross-sector collaboration and UK-wide partnership working, ADRC NI will help grow a larger, more skilled and sustainable administrative data research ecosystem.

ADR Scotland

ADR Scotland's ambition for 2026–2031 is to facilitate improvements to our trusted data research infrastructure and strengthen links between research, policy and public services to enable timely academic insights that support decisions that can improve outcomes for the people of Scotland.

Working as a unified partnership, our focus is on delivering research for public good through [five strategic research themes](#):

- Children and young people
- Crime and justice
- Health, mental health and social care
- Housing and environment
- Work, welfare and the economy.

Our research projects under these themes, align with Scotland key priorities laid out in the [National Performance Framework](#), the [Programme for Government](#) and emerging [Areas of Research Interest](#) (ARIs). They also respond to cross-cutting priorities on Prevention, Poverty, Equality and Evaluation. Over the next five years, we plan to build further opportunities for research by connecting academics and government through Data Impact Groups and [Communities of Practice](#).

Increasing visibility through flagship data provision

A significant focus will be on developing flagship datasets to increase the visibility and usage of administrative data in Scotland. ADR Scotland plans to cultivate knowledge and stimulate demand for our existing flagships, explore emerging opportunities and develop new ones in strategic research areas (such as Adult Health, Social Care and Census, and Housing, Health and Environment Scotland).

Supporting researchers through documents and tools

Work is already underway to enhance support for researchers through improved data documentation and tools, and a training review. Investment in innovation, including geospatial analysis, household linkage, family reconstruction and causal AI, will enable richer and more impactful analysis. We will also make Scotland's data infrastructure more efficient and sustainable by modernising data processing, automating workflows, and improving cloud-based systems.

Communicating with the public

Our new [ADR Scotland website](#) will provide a central information point for both current and developing work. Alongside this, we will continue to build public trust through meaningful [engagement, transparency and collaboration](#), ensuring the responsible use of data remains at the heart of everything we do. Through our [Scotland Talks Data panel](#), events programme and wider engagement activities, we will support informed public dialogue about the use of data for public good.

Ultimately, we aim to increase the use of administrative data, expand research capacity, deliver greater policy impact and position Scotland as a leader in data-informed innovation.

ADR Wales

Looking to the longer term future, ADR Wales has bold ambitions for the next five years. This period will be about far more than maintaining our existing strengths; it will be about driving innovation, embracing emerging opportunities and ensuring that we remain at the forefront of administrative data research.

Providing leadership across administrative data

We will continue to cement our reputation as leaders in technical expertise and innovation, proactively adopting new technologies and methodologies while remaining firmly grounded in our core principles of responsibility, robust governance and ethical data use.

Embracing advances in technology

We will explore how advances in technology can help streamline the processes that support research, improving efficiency and enhancing the experience of researchers and partners alike.

As the use of artificial intelligence continues to grow, we will play a leading role in fostering informed and meaningful public dialogue about its use in research and public services, helping to build trust and understanding around these transformative technologies.

Expanding a multidisciplinary approach

We are also excited to expand our multidisciplinary approach through greater engagement with economists, integrating economic analysis into our research to deepen understanding of policy impacts and strengthen the evidence available to decision-makers.

Through these ambitions, ADR Wales will continue to push the boundaries of what is possible with data, delivering innovative, impactful and trusted research that benefits Wales and contributes to the wider UK research landscape.

Office for National Statistics

As we move further into the new ADR UK funding period, the Office for National Statistics (ONS)'s focus will be on strengthening the Secure Research Service (SRS) as a key part of the UK's research infrastructure, supporting safe and secure access to administrative data at scale.

Improving the researcher experience

Building on strong foundations, we will continue to improve the researcher experience, expand access to high-value data and support research that informs policy and delivers public benefit.

A priority for the year ahead will be enabling sustainable growth across the service. This includes continuing to enhance the Project Application Service for SRS (PASS), improving data discovery and access processes, streamlining researcher journeys and embedding service improvements that reduce administrative burden while maintaining robust governance and security standards. Alongside this, we will further strengthen engagement with researchers, data owners and strategic partners through the SRS Advisory Group, Strategic Governance Board and the newly branded annual SRS Conference.

Expanding data available through the SRS

The ONS will also continue to expand the range of data available through the SRS, including the delivery of priority linked datasets such as the Linked Employer–Employee Dataset and the Kids' Environment and Health Cohort. Working closely with ADR UK-funded government departments and data owners, we will seek to maximise the value of existing data assets while enabling new opportunities for data linkage and research.

Monitoring emerging technologies

Finally, we will continue to assess emerging technology options for the SRS to ensure the platform remains scalable, flexible and fit for purpose, supporting the next generation of administrative data research and helping researchers tackle some of society's most important challenges.

Get in touch

Get in touch for further information about our annual report 2026: hub@adruk.org

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