

Universal access to research ready data: An introduction to finding, accessing, and using health data from the UK Data Service

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UK Data Service

- Funded by the UK Government: Economic and Social Research Council
- Largest repository of social science research data in UK (over 7,300 datasets), available for secondary analysis
- Flagship service. Pioneers of data curation. Secure long term research access to data. Data policies used by national data archives and international research organisations
- Sources of data: National Statistical Institutes, Government departments, Research Institutes, Individual Researchers
- Types of data: survey microdata, census data, international macrodata, qualitative/mixed methods

Vision and strategic objectives

Our vision

To continue to be a critical part of the UK's research infrastructure where the exceptional economic and social research data we make available are central to the achievement of excellence in research, teaching and in the realisation of public benefit.



Trusted infrastructure

To be recognised as a trusted national digital repository for data owners and users. To innovate and lead in data infrastructure provision through the development of common standards and agreed strategies for data deposit, preparation processing, documentation and preservation.



Training and user support

To provide training and support services for depositing, finding, accessing, using and managing data.

Our mission

To support high quality social and economic research, teaching and learning through assuring long term access to quality economic, social research and population data, supporting and promoting their use, value and impact.



Data access

To provide a federated point of access for users with clear transparent application or registration procedures to quality assured economic and social research data, regardless of data access status. To increase and enhance our collection of datasets available for research and impact.



Data impact

To support research funders in their data related activities and influence relevant data policy development. To lead in the discussions on research integrity and open research, ensuring that data can be used in an ethical and legal way. To extend use of our data to the widest possible academic, policy and practitioner communities for generating greater impact.

- Wide range of topics such as health, ageing, crime, economics, education, housing, politics, poverty.....

Who is it for?

- Academic researchers/lecturers and students (70%)
 - Government analysts
 - Charities and foundations
 - School students and teachers
 - Business consultants and data analysts
 - Independent researchers and think tanks
 - Independent researchers
-
- Wide range of disciplines – not just social scientists!
 - Data widely used for health research/epidemiology

1 APRIL 2020 - 31 MARCH 2022

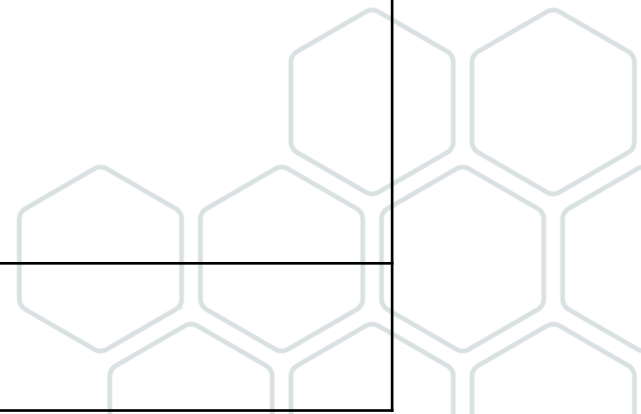
UK Data Service statistics

User profile and reach



Key types of health data available from UK Data Service

Type of data	Examples
Cross-sectional surveys (many are repeated annually or at other time periods for analysis of trends over time)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Health Survey for England/Scottish Health Survey• Dental Health Surveys• Psychiatric Morbidity Surveys• National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles• Smoking, Drinking and Drug Use among Young people• National Diet and Nutrition Surveys• Active Lives Survey• NHS Patient Survey Programme• Evidence for Equality National Survey: a Survey of Ethnic Minorities During the COVID-19 Pandemic, 2021
Longitudinal/cohort studies (follow the same people over time)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understanding Society/UK Household Longitudinal Study (UKHLS)• English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA)• National Child Development Study (1958)• British Cohort Study (1970)• Millenium Cohort Study (2000)• Growing Up in Scotland
Cross-national data	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• European Quality of Life Survey• OECD Health Statistics



Why use cross-sectional & longitudinal/cohort survey data?

The quality, utility and flexibility of the data:

- High quality, nationally representative data
- Large sample sizes for sub-group analyses
- Many have objective health measurements (biomarkers, blood samples etc)
- Range of covariates for multivariate analyses
- Intra household analyses (e.g. parents and children)
- Microdata – flexible, can derive your own variables for your own concepts



A few examples of use

> [Lancet Psychiatry](#). 2021 May;8(5):353-354. doi: 10.1016/S2215-0366(20)30570-8. Epub 2021 Jan 11.

Child mental health in England before and during the COVID-19 lockdown

Tamsin Newlove-Delgado¹, Sally McManus², Katharine Sadler³, Sharon Thandi⁴, Tim Vizard⁵, Cher Cartwright⁶, Tamsin Ford⁷; Mental Health of Children and Young People group

Original research

BMJ Journals

Journal of
Epidemiology &
Community Health

Are housing circumstances associated with faster epigenetic ageing?

Amy Clair¹, Emma Baker¹, Meena Kumari²

> Private school education linked to better health more than 25 years later, study finds

Private school pupils are more likely than their peers at comprehensives to have a lower body mass index (BMI) by the time they reach their early 40s. They also spend less time watching television and eat fewer take-away meals, according to new research published in the *International Journal of*

Research

OPEN ACCESS

BMJ Journals
BMJ Sexual &
Reproductive Health

Where do women and men in Britain obtain contraception? Findings from the third National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles (Natsal-3)

Rebecca S French¹, Rebecca Geary², Kyle Jones², Anna Glasier¹, Catherine H Mercer², Jessica Datta¹, Wendy Macdowall¹, Melissa Palmer¹, Anne M Johnson², Kaye Wellings¹



Social Science & Medicine

Volume 321, March 2023, 115606



How does arthritis affect employment? Longitudinal evidence on 18,000 British adults with arthritis compared to matched controls

Nasir Rajah^{a, b}, Edward J.D. Webb^a, Claire Hulme^c, Sarah R. Kingsbury^d, Robert West^a, Adam Martin^a

Kelly et al. *BMC Public Health* (2016) 16:169
DOI 10.1186/s12889-016-2847-x

BMC Public Health

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Open Access

What influences 11-year-olds to drink? Findings from the Millennium Cohort Study

Yvonne Kelly¹, Alice Goisis², Amanda Sacker¹, Noriko Cable¹, Richard G. Watt¹ and Annie Britton¹



Journal of Health Economics

Volume 92, December 2023, 102805



The intergenerational transmission of mental and physical health in the United Kingdom ☆

Panka Bencsik^a, Timothy J. Halliday^{b, c}, Bhashkar Mazumder^d

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<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhealeco.2023.102805>

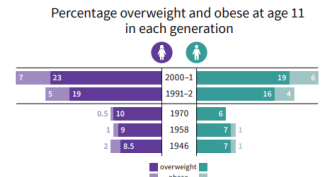
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The rise of the obesity epidemic

£22.9 bn per year by 2050

Obesity poses a major public health threat around the world. In the UK, the Government Office for Science estimates that the obesity 'epidemic' will cost the National Health Service £22.9 billion per year by 2050. But little is known about how people develop weight problems over the course of their lives, and how this has changed over time. CLOSER has tracked the rise of the obesity epidemic across the lives of five generations of Britons born in 1946, 1958, 1970, 1991-92 and 2000-01.

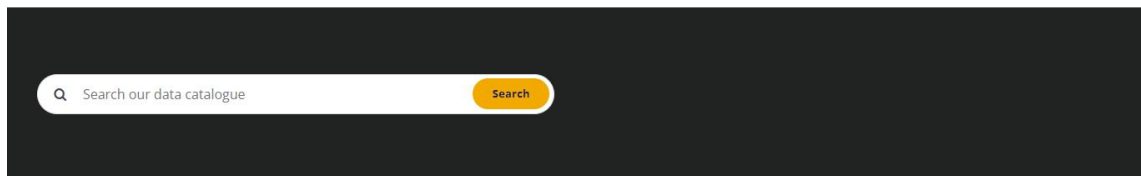
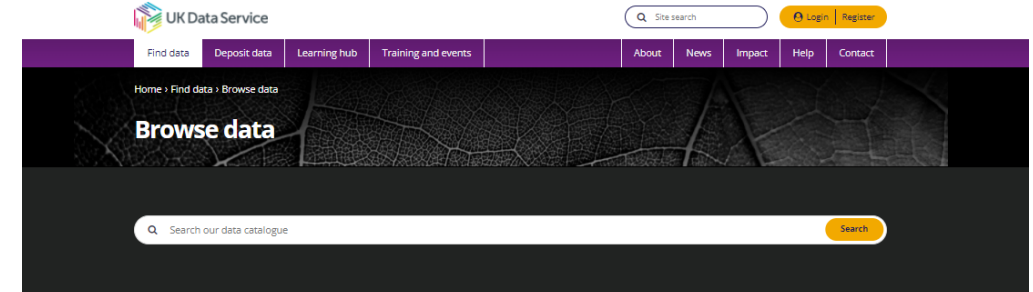
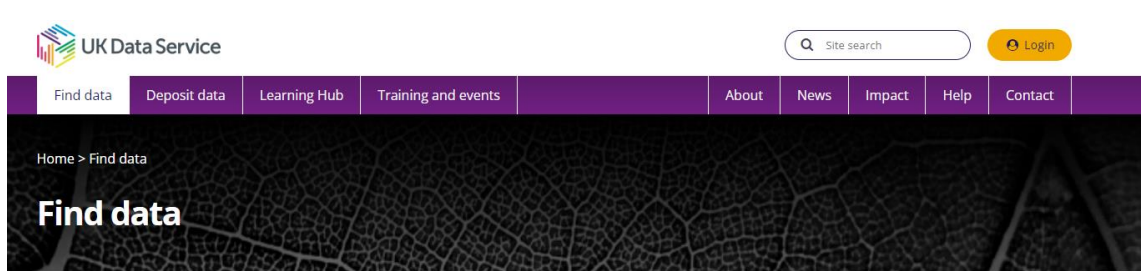
Child obesity risk has increased three-fold in five generations
Children born since 1990 are up to three times more likely than older generations to be overweight or obese by age 11. Around one in ten children born in 1946 were overweight or obese by age 11, compared to more than one in four 11-year-olds today.



Every generation is heavier than the last

Since 1946, every generation has been heavier than the previous one - and it is the most overweight children who are becoming even heavier. The heaviest 9 per cent of people born in 1946 had a BMI of 20 or above by the age of 11, compared to 23 or above for the most overweight children born at the turn of the century.

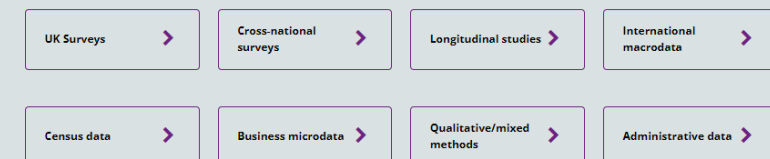
Finding data in the UK Data Service: browsing



Browse by theme



Browse by data type



[Find data — UK Data Service](#)

Finding data in the UK Data Service: browsing

Home > Find data > Browse data > Health [View all data >](#)

Health

Health and health behaviour covers a wide range of topics and cuts across many academic disciplines. Data have been collected and are made available via the UK Data Service on topics as varied as the experience of illness, child development, access to care, lifestyle behaviour, subjective physical and mental well-being, diet and nutrition, immunisation programmes and attitudes towards health service provision.

Data on health and health behaviour can cover not only a person's status, behaviour, attitudes and expectations but also the provision of health care, including the mechanics of policy making, government expenditure and service coverage. Explore our library of [impact case studies](#) demonstrating how our data have been used. Find out [how to search our catalogue](#).


Some key datasets

Here are some popular datasets within the theme of health.

Adult Dental Health Survey, 2009 Coverage: 2009 - 2009; England, Northern Ireland, Wales Topic: See data catalogue record for full topic listing.	View >
English Longitudinal Study of Ageing Coverage: 1998 - ongoing; England Topic: See data catalogue record for full topic listing.	View >
European Quality of Life Survey Coverage: 2003 - ongoing; Europe Topic: See data catalogue record for full topic listing.	View >
Health Survey for England Coverage: 1991 - ongoing; England Topic: See data catalogue record for full topic listing.	View >
National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles Coverage: 1990 - 1991, 2000, 2010; Great Britain Topic: See data catalogue record for full topic listing.	View >
Scottish Health Survey Coverage: 1995, 1998, 2003, from 2008 - ongoing; Scotland Topic: See data catalogue record for full topic listing.	View >
Understanding Society Coverage: 2009 - ongoing; United Kingdom Topic: See data catalogue record for full topic listing.	View >
Welsh Health Survey Coverage: 1995, 1998, from 2007/8 - ongoing; Wales	View >



Finding data in the UK Data Service: Data Catalogue



UK Data Service

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Home > Find data

Find data

Catalogue search guidance

Our video guide provides step-by-step instructions for using the data catalogue.

[Short tutorial on how to access and download data >](#)

Browse and access key data

Find and access key data easily by themes, data types and teaching datasets.

[Browse and access data >](#)

Access requirements and processes

Open, safeguarded or controlled data access requirements and application guidance for UKDS SecureLab.

[Open, safeguarded or controlled SecureLab access >](#)

Search our data catalogue

Search

Data catalogue

health

Search

[Search tips >](#) [Variable and question bank >](#) [QualiBank >](#)

STUDIES (2841)

SERIES (68)

Date from:

2015

Date to:

2022

Refine date

Topic:

Data Type:

UK Survey data

Access:

Country:

Reset filters

Displaying 1 - 10 of 324 results for 'health'

Page 1 of 33

Results per page:

10

Sort by:

Relevance

SN 8860 | [Health Survey for England, 2019](#)

NatCen Social Research | University College London

SN 8649 | [Health Survey for England, 2018](#)

NatCen Social Research | University College London

SN 8398 | [Scottish Health Survey, 2017](#)

ScotCen Social Research

SN 8488 | [Health Survey for England, 2017](#)

University College London | National Centre for Social Research (NatCen)

SN 8569 | [Scottish Health Survey, 2018](#)

ScotCen Social Research

SN 8737 | [Scottish Health Survey, 2019](#)

ScotCen Social Research



UK Data Service training programme

Research Data Management	Finding and Accessing Data from the UK Data Service	Using data (introductory skills)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data management planning: sharing, archiving and preserving data • Anonymisation and licence/access frameworks • Documentation and metadata standards • Ethical and legal considerations • New project Sept 2023 (ESRC & MRC funded) – training for Population Research UK 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data discovery • How to access data • Safe Researcher Training for the most confidential data 	<p>Introductions to data we hold:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Datasets e.g Census, LFS • Data types e.g Surveys • Substantive themes e.g health • Evaluating data for research • Preparing data/data handling • Basic data analysis skills • Basic software/tools • Teaching with data • User conferences <p>+ Computational Social Science + Reproducible research</p>

At the heart:

- Secondary data analysis
- Introductory level
- Training for the data that we hold
(*Survey, Census, Longitudinal, Cohort, International Aggregate*)

Health-data specific training:

- Annual health studies user conference
- Health-themed webinars/workshops

UK Data Service Training programme

- Training and events — UK Data Service
 - 100+ [training events](#) per year
 - 6000+ attendee per year
- Learning Hub and YT channel
 - [Learning Hub](#) 15000+ unique visitors per month
 - [YouTube channel](#) 7000+ views per month
- All free of charge!

Learning Hub

Enhance your data skills and teaching

[New to using data](#)

Best practice and training for researchers new to accessing and using data in our collection. Includes advice and tools to correctly cite data; student-specific information on our Dissertation Award for undergraduates; and more.

[Data skills modules](#)

There is a wealth of data available for reuse in research and reports. These free, interactive tutorials are designed for anyone who wants to start using secondary data. They show you how to get started with finding good quality data, understanding it and starting your analyses.

[Students](#)

Students can access most of the UK Data Service's collection of social, economic and population data. Find resources to help you find and use our data during your studies including the UK Data Service dissertation resources.

[Survey data](#)

Survey data, including data from long-running surveys, series and longitudinal studies, are a major part of social science research. Learn how to use survey and longitudinal data through training resources including videos, on-demand webinars and written guides.

[International data](#)

Our international macrodata contain socio-economic time series data aggregated to a country or regional level for a range of countries over a substantial time period.

[Qualitative data](#)

Qualitative research gives a voice to the lived experience, offering researchers a deeper insight into a topic or individuals' experiences. Qualitative data can be combined with quantitative to enhance understanding around a policy or topic in a way that quantitative data by itself often cannot.

[Computational social science](#)

[Census](#)

[Software and tools](#)

Licensing and access framework



Open

Available under open licences with almost no restrictions on reuse, registration is not required

15% of studies



Safeguarded

Available under the End User Licence Agreement, requires registration and additional conditions of use may apply

82% of studies



Controlled

Available under the Five Safes Framework, requires registration, project approval, user training and safe settings

3% of studies

On average, data from the Service are downloaded or accessed every 6 minutes, every day, throughout the entire year

Registering with the UK Data Service



Students and members of staff at a UK institution of higher or further education or members of organisations part of the [UK Access Management Federation](#) can [register with us](#) using the username and password issued by their institution



Any other researchers can register with us by [applying for a username](#)



[Registration and login FAQs](#)

Why is registration required?

Registration and agreeing to the terms and conditions of the [End User Licence Agreement](#) and any additional access conditions are part of your ethical responsibility in secondary data analysis

The conditions of use require researchers to act responsibly and ethically with the data, throughout the project and at the end of their project

Research data handling and security guide for users



27 February 2023

Public

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Version: 12.00



[Source](#)

Five Safes Framework



- **Safe data:** treated and de-identified
- **Safe projects:** approved by data owners/Research Accreditation Panel and must demonstrate public good
- **Safe people:** complete the Safe Researcher Training and gain Accredited Researcher status
- **Safe settings:** environment prevents unauthorised access i.e. UKDS SecureLab
- **Safe outputs:** screened and approved to ensure no disclosive information leaves the Safe Settings

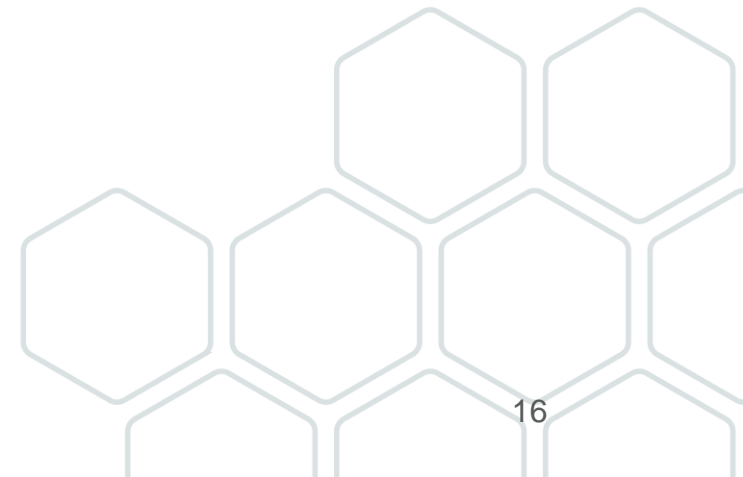
Bespoke data licences and reproducibility

Repositories (national/institutional) employ different access/licence frameworks, including open and bespoke ones

Data published under bespoke (i.e. non-open) licences can rarely be shared without permission from the original data creator

Always check the licence agreement e.g. End User Licence Agreement before sharing data obtained from a repository, if unsure get in touch.

Sharing well documented code ensure reproducibility and increases the visibility of your research, while respecting the usage terms and conditions



Sharing code guidance

 code/syntax file are clean, well formatted and do not contain any data

 avoid including unnecessary personal information

 code/syntax file are well commented

 always include the full citation (including the persistent identifier) for the data used

 provide in-depth metadata describing the files and methods used

 provide a ReadMe/Methods document for ease of use for secondary users

English Longitudinal Study of Ageing example

Economic activity and family history data management code

2020

Chanfreau, Jenny (2020). *Economic activity and family history data management code 2020*. [Data Collection]. Colchester, Essex: UK Data Service. [10.5255/UKDA-SN-854277](https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/10.5255/UKDA-SN-854277)

This ESRC-funded PhD project compared cohorts to investigate whether and how differences in women and men's labour market and family patterns have changed over time and educational differences in these patterns.

DATA DESCRIPTION (ABSTRACT)

Collection consists of Stata do files which reformat the economic activity history, partner history and parenthood history variables included in the ELSA life history study (person-level, wide format) into separate long format files (person-activity-spell, person-child and person-partner format respectively). The aim of the project that the code resulted from was to compare the employment and parenthood histories from age 16 reported in ELSA to the employment and parenthood histories of two of the UK birth cohorts (the 1958 National Child Development Study and the 1970 British Cohort Study) and thus some decisions were necessary for the purpose of harmonisation. The accompanying note sets out the decisions taken in the data management process.

Data creators:	Creator Name	Affiliation	ORCID (as URL)
	Chanfreau Jenny	University College London	https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3914-5859
Sponsors:	Economic and Social Research Council		
Topic classification:	Economics Demography (population, vital statistics and censuses) Labour and employment		
Keywords:	LIFE HISTORY, ECONOMIC ACTIVITY, FERTILITY, EMPLOYMENT, PARENTS		
Project title:	Gendered and classed work-family life courses: stability and change over time in the UK		
Grant holders:	Jenny Chanfreau		
Project dates:	From	To	
	1 October 2015	30 September 2018	
Date published:	27 Apr 2020 12:46		
Last modified:	08 Jun 2020 11:59		

[Images source](#)

AVAILABLE FILES

Data

+ [854277_ELSA_history_do_files.zip](#)

Documentation

+ [854277_ELSA_Employment_and_family_histories_note.docx](#)

DOWNLOADS

84 data downloads and **159** page views since this item was published

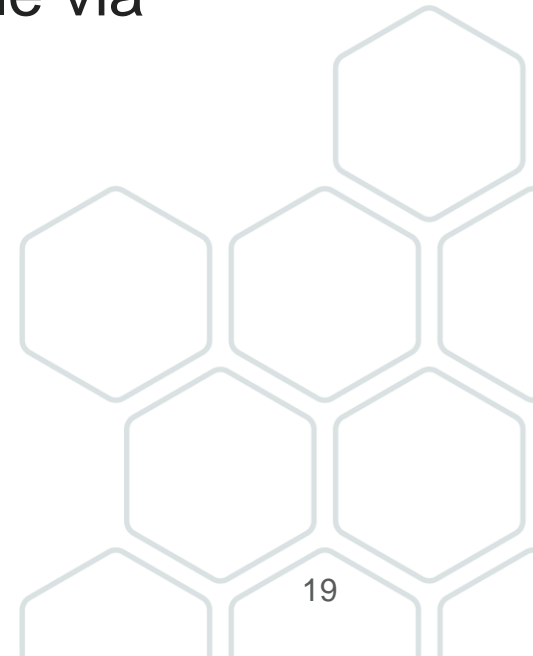
[View more statistics](#)

Metadata records for code



Ensures resource discovery and citation supported with persistent identifiers (DOIs)

Make your code available via [ReShare](#)



Thank you

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<http://ukdataservice.ac.uk>