ADR UK Research Fellowships:
Data First — Magistrates’ and Crown Court Data
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

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1. Eligibility

*Can I submit a joint application with others?*

No, joint applications are not permitted. It is the expectation that these grants are awarded to single accountable researchers. This can still include mentorship and research assistance where necessary, however. Letters of support from other organisations both academic and non-academic are welcomed as we are keen to ensure that research is relevant and well-received.

*Can I apply as a part-time Research Fellow?*

Yes, applications are welcomed from Research Fellows working between 100% and 60% full time equivalent (FTE). Applications will not be accepted if the Research Fellow is working less than 60% FTE.

*What counts as an “Early Career” Researcher?*

For the purposes of this scheme an Early Career Researcher is someone who has yet to make the transition to be an independent researcher. Early Career Researchers may have participated in research projects as co-investigators or research staff but not had the opportunity to lead a research project in their own right. By referring to independent researchers we are referring to someone who has submitted their own proposal and taken on the role of principal investigator (PI). The PI takes the lead for both the intellectual leadership and conduct of the research as well as managing the project and team including observance of the terms and conditions.

In recognition of the increasing diversity of career trajectories, we are not providing a timebound definition of Early Career Researcher as our ambition is to be inclusive of people with different career paths and trajectories. As such, it is not possible to come up with a single definition that could apply to everyone therefore the onus is on applicants to articulate why they should be considered an Early Career Researcher. This justification will be considered as part of the review process.

*What additional documentation do I provide if I want to apply as an “Early Career” Researcher?*

In addition to all other application requirements of the scheme, Early Career Researchers are also asked to submit the following attachments:

A ‘Statement of Eligibility and Skill Development Programme’ which should cover both eligibility to be considered an Early Career Researcher and the programme of skills development they’re planning to undertake; and how the award of an ADR UK Research Fellowship grant will have a demonstrable impact on their trajectory to becoming an independent researcher.
A ‘Mentor Statement and CV’ a supporting statement describing the support that will be provided by your nominated mentor at the host institution and a short CV.

Can I apply if my current contract is due to expire before the project ends?

Yes. In this situation, applicants should ensure that the letter of support from their Head of Department confirms that, in the event of a grant being awarded, their existing contract would be extended for the duration of the funding on the grant.

2. Application and assessment

How and when should I apply for this call?

The ADR UK application should be submitted through the Joint Electronic Submission (Je-S) system no later than 16:00 on 20 October 2020 (please see the Je-S guidance for further information). A draft Research Accreditation Panel (RAP) application must also be submitted to adrcuration@ons.gov.uk for ONS’s consideration no later than 16:00 on 20 October 2020. If your proposal is successful at the funding panel you will have the opportunity to finalise your RAP application following feedback from ONS before it is submitted to the next RAP meeting for a decision on data access.

When ONS has completed an initial review of your RAP application, you will be asked to submit MoJ’s Application Form for Secure Access to Data (DAP) as soon as possible for data owner review.

Why do Research Fellows need to start no later than 15 May 2021?

ADR UK has a finite and time-limited research budget to demonstrate the potential of administrative data within a certain time period. It is therefore essential that we are able to move rapidly and start funding research as soon as possible, and on this occasion we are unable to allow the standard ESRC three-month grace for starting dates.

Do I need to attach a list of my publications to my proposal?

The bibliography for references cited in the proposal should be listed in the ‘List of publications’ attachment to the Je-S proposal. This should only include publications cited in the proposal. A list of the most relevant and recent publications should be included in the CV.

Are letters of support mandatory?

Letters of support are not mandatory for each application. Letters of support from the data owners (Ministry of Justice or HM Courts and Tribunals Service) are actively discouraged as data owner approval is a key aspect of the funding decision which will be coordinated centrally by ADR UK.

In all other cases, letters of support are optional, but the following types of support evidenced in correspondence would be well received:
• Evidence of a relevant public service organisation declaring their interest in the findings of the research and, where possible, why this matters to them and how they may use the findings.
• Evidence of public service organisation or other partners having been consulted in the design of the research.

This does not include Head of Department Statement, which is essential for all applications, and a Mentor Statement which is essential for applications from Early Career Researchers. Head of Department Statements must address willingness to apply for Assured Organisational Connectivity in the instance that secure remote access to data is required (see further question below) and commitment to support the researcher throughout the duration of their grant.

Can project partners be included?

Yes, we encourage project partners to be included, where appropriate, and if so you must include this information in your proposal. An organisation should only be named as a project partner if it is providing specific contributions (either direct or indirect) to the research project. If you have secured a direct cash and/or in-kind contribution from another organisation or funding body, not submitting the proposal, details should be included in the Project Partners section of the Completed Proposal Form (Je-S form). A project partner letter of support from each partner organisation confirming the level of support specific to this proposal must be uploaded via the Project Partner details screen (not in the attachments section). Project partner letters of support can be accepted by email after the call closes and must be signed and dated within six months of the proposal submission date.

Examples of project partners include:
• An organisation that is contributing access to specific data sets as an in-kind contribution.
• An organisation that has agreed to support the project with impact activities.
• An individual that has agreed to be on the project Advisory Board.
• An organisation that has agreed to provide cash support for a specific activity relating to the project.

Are academic publications supported?

Yes, academic publications are supported. The user friendly/accessible publications required by the grant and outlined in the main call specification are to be prioritised and delivered within the funded period (for more details see section 2.7 of the main call specification). ADR UK would welcome updates on plans for academic publication once the grant has terminated and anticipate publications to be submitted after the funding period. Any academic publications associated with research funded by ADR UK are expected to appear in an open access publication.
3. Data

Where can researchers find out more about the magistrates’ and Crown Court datasets?

Information on the magistrates’ and Crown Court data can be found on the Data First gov.uk page. The relevant data catalogues provide overall dataset details on structure, coverage, and comparability, as well as a detailed list of variables and their quality. The user guide also provides information on data content, quality and security of the magistrates’ and Crown Court data.

Will researchers be expected to use only the core dataset(s) – or can they link to another third source?

All Research Fellows must use the core dataset(s) (magistrates’ and/or Crown courts). The core datasets cannot be linked to a third source within the ONS Secure Research Service (SRS). Linking is on personal identifiers which is not permissible in the SRS.

Matching additional data by any aspect of geography already in the data such as police force area would be straightforward. Additional data fields providing they are publicly available (for example ONS area classifications or indices of deprivation) could be added and matched by mapping to area/geographic fields already present in the core dataset(s). Any additions to the core dataset(s) will made available to other users via the ONS SRS. If the additional data is publicly available but not currently available in the SRS, ONS will review the data requested in the RAP proposal and deposit the data in the researcher’s project area when approved.

What other data is ADR UK making available for research?

The ADR UK data catalogues can be found on the ‘Our Data’ page of the website. To be the first to hear about newly available data, please sign up to our mailing list. You can also find additional support for researchers wishing to use data on the ADR UK website.

Do I need data owner approval?

Data owner approval for projects is essential in order to gain lawful access to the data which is formally considered as part of Research Accreditation Panel (RAP) approval process. Given the importance of data owner approval, ADR UK is working in close collaboration with the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), and HM Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) as the ‘owners’ of the core dataset to ensure they are in support of any projects that ADR UK would like to fund before RAP applications are considered. For example, MoJ has had the opportunity to shape the call specification, will be reviewing applications and will sit on the ADR UK Research Fellowship Panel. Research Fellows are therefore not required to seek HMCTS Business Sponsorship before submitting their application, but they will be required to complete an application form for secure access to data, which will be reviewed by data owners prior to the Research Fellowship panel. The process for gaining data owner approval is detailed below in section 9.
4. Data Access

*How will researchers be able to access the data if Covid-19 restrictions mean that the SRS safe settings are closed?*

The ONS team have put a range of measures in place to enable secure remote working wherever there is a high priority need, and where the obligations to data security can be maintained. They are expanding temporary remote access from high priority need to include additional projects, subject to application and criteria including project purpose, urgency and timescales. Visit the [ONS website](https://ons.gov.uk) for more information.

*What is involved in applying for AOC? How long will it take?*

To apply for Assured Organisational Connectivity (AOC), please refer to the ONS website, where Section 18 of the [AOC webpage](https://ons.gov.uk), which includes a policy document with further information. More information about Accredited Processors can be found on the [UKSA website](https://www.uksa.co.uk).

5. Public and Stakeholder Engagement

*What additional advice is there about how to develop a public engagement plan, if relevant?*

There are many ways to engage the public with research and research issues. If you choose to conduct further public engagement beyond the expected consultation with the Data First User Representative Panel, the method you choose will depend on your reasons for engaging the public and your own preferences and expertise. Activities that you might consider could include, for example:

- a citizens’ jury;
- a consensus conference;
- debates;
- festivals and public events;
- public lectures;
- or workshops.

You can find more information about running each of these activities on the [ESRC website](https://www.esrc.ac.uk).

Public engagement may involve direct engagement with members of the public relevant to your research, and/or engagement with relevant community representatives – for example, NGOs, community groups and other organisations – able to represent the sub-sector(s) of society to whom your research is most relevant. Public engagement activity may occur at any point during the research cycle up to the time when funding has ended, and the timing of the activity should be justified.
The ESRC’s Guide to Public Engagement offers a host of advice and guidance on how to plan and implement meaningful public engagement activities.

**Can you tell me more about the stakeholder engagement events that ADR UK has offered to sponsor and organise?**

ADR UK Strategic Hub will fund, brand, advertise and organise at least one stakeholder engagement event during the six-month funded period. Appropriate representatives from ADR UK’s network will be invited and events will be aimed at developing relationships with key stakeholders, particularly data owners and government departments to share and develop data analysis plans, research and output production. ADR UK will cover all appropriate costs other than Research Fellow time, travel and subsistence. The nature and timing of these events can be discussed at the induction meeting (see later question).

Research Fellows would be responsible for working together to collectively plan and deliver the content, based on the research underway. The nature of the events is flexible and might include, for example seminars, hackathons, mini-conferences or workshops. Events should encourage learning, exchange and development of ideas, as well as relationship and community building between researchers, government and other research beneficiaries. Research Fellows can also nominate invitees.

### 6. Impact

**Do I need to submit a ‘Pathways to Impact’ attachment?**

Although Impact remains a key element of both the application and assessment process, from 1 March 2020 applicants to all UKRI calls and schemes will no longer be required to provide a ‘Pathways to Impact’ attachment, nor to complete an ‘Impact Summary’ within grant applications. For further information on this change, please see the associated UKRI news item.

**Where do I discuss impact in my application?**

Impact remains a key element of both the application and assessment process across all ESRC calls and schemes and will be assessed as part of the Case for Support.

In line with the UKRI position on Excellence with Impact, we expect applicants to have considered the potential scientific, societal and economic impacts of their research. Applicants should evidence how these impacts can be maximised within their proposal.

Opportunities for increasing the impact of the research may arise at any stage during the research lifecycle, from the planning and research design stage and throughout the period of funding. The research lifecycle therefore includes knowledge exchange and impact realisation activities – including reporting and publication, and the archiving, future use, sharing, and linking of data. It is important that researchers have in place a robust strategy for maximising the likelihood of impact opportunities and their own capacity for taking advantage of these.
The ESRC’s Impact Toolkit gives advice on achieving the maximum impact of your research. The toolkit includes information on developing an impact strategy, promoting knowledge exchange, public engagement and communicating effectively with key stakeholders.

**What kind of impact does ADR UK aim to have?**

ADR UK aims to transform the way researchers access the UK’s wealth of public sector data to enable better informed policy decisions that improve lives. Detailed information can be found on the ADR UK website about the types of impact that ADR UK aims to have, as well as the strategies our partners use to maximise the likelihood of their activity having impact.

### 7. Costings

**Can you provide more detail regarding eligible costs that can be claimed?**

We have allowed a two-page Justification of Resources (JoR) attachment to ensure applicants have enough space to fully detail, explain and justify costs claimed. The JoR is a free text document. In order for you to not miss any costings from the Je-S form or any justifications for the items requested, we recommend that you match the costs to the proposal headings in the Je-S form; see the [Je-S help guidance](#) on how to write a good JoR for more information. ADR UK will check all costs claimed on the successful proposal before this is awarded; it is therefore critical that all costs claimed are fully justified in the JoR document. Where ADR UK determines that full justification is not provided, these costs will be cut.

Support for items expected to be found in a Research Organisation department and covered by estates and indirect costs requested for the grant (e.g. non-specialist computers for unnamed researchers) should include justification both for why they are required for the project, and why they cannot be provided by the research organisation’s own resources (including funding from indirect costs from grants).

When completing Je-S sections such as ‘Staff Duties’ or ‘Other Support’ sections, the information is relevant to applicants.

- **Staff duties:** This is a generic section for all Je-S applications to ESRC. Please provide a brief description of the duties and periods of involvement of each individual for which salary is being requested and summarise the responsibilities of all named individuals.

- **Other support:** Enter details of any support sought or received from any other (not ESRC) source for this or other research in the same field in the past three years. Complete all fields for support either received or pending a decision. The full economic costs (i.e. 100% costs) of such support should be identified. Please note contributions from project partners should not be entered here – they should be detailed in the project partners section.
Can training costs be covered by the grant?

Relevant training courses for Early Career Researchers may be included in the grant proposal. For all other applications, where training costs are requested the relevance of the course to the planned project will be considered.

What other staff or support can be costed into the proposal?

In addition to the ADR UK Research Fellow themselves, staff costs can also cover research assistants and senior advice or mentorship. Mentorship is an expectation of any applications from Early Career Researchers. Any other staff time that is costed into the proposal must be well defined and fully justified.

What level of institutional support is required?

No additional institutional support above the standard 20% of FEC is required for this call. Researchers on fixed term contracts are eligible to apply for the Fellowship if their institutions are willing to extend their contracts, and therefore provide the 20%, to cover the period of the Fellowship.

8. Post award

What will happen at the induction meeting?

The induction meeting will be organised by ADR UK and take place close to or before the start date of the grants. All Research Fellows will be invited to meet each other and ADR UK. It will be an opportunity for ADR UK to set out its ambition for the Research Fellowship scheme; for Research Fellows to meet each other to discuss their research plans and opportunities for collaboration and engagement; and to answer any questions.

When will applicants know if there might be the possibility of a funding extension?

Once the awards have begun, ADR UK will keep in close contact with Research Fellows, including about any possibilities to apply for additional funding within the existing funded period or a funded extension to the grant. ADR UK is currently funded until the end of March 2022 although this may be extended if successful in obtaining longer-term investment. Any additional funding would only be for proposed extensions that are of strategic value and the funding process and criteria have not yet been determined.

9. RAP Application Process

What is the Research Accreditation Panel?

The Research Accreditation Panel (RAP) was established by the UK Statistics Authority to oversee the independent accreditation of processors, researchers and research projects under the research strand of the Digital Economy Act (DEA).
What criteria does the Panel use to make its decision?

The criteria considered by RAP are set out in the Research Code of Practice and Accreditation criteria. RAP assesses each project against the following criteria:

i. Is there public benefit?
ii. Is there demonstrable analytical merit?
iii. Is the project feasible?
iv. Are any relevant privacy implications sufficiently mitigated?
v. Has the project successfully completed a formal ethical review?

Data owner approval is also required for a project to proceed (see below).

Why do I need to submit both a Je-S application for ADR UK, a RAP application for ONS and an application form for secure access to data for MOJ?

Applications made via Je-S for the ADR UK Research Fellowship scheme will be used to decide which proposal to fund (please see the Je-S guidance document for further information). The RAP will decide whether projects can be accredited under the DEA, and the application form for secure access to data will be used to assess whether to grant data owner approval for research. ADR UK, MoJ and ONS have collaborated to ensure the application process between this call and RAP are aligned as much as possible. While there is some overlap between the three application forms (for example, on public benefit and ethics) it should not be too onerous for applicants. Because of the overlap, applicants are advised not to submit their application form to MoJ until the RAP form has been reviewed by ONS. This will ensure that any feedback from ONS can be incorporated into the information for data owner review.

A flow diagram of how the processes interact, and indicative timelines for the perspective of applicants, is also available.

How will the RAP application be assessed?

The SRS team in ONS will review the RAP application forms and provide advice for applicants (if required) about how their application might need to be amended before it can be submitted to RAP. ONS work closely with the RAP Secretariat to ensure researchers complete project applications to the required standard before they proceed to RAP. The UK Statistics Authority have published guidance for project applications, together with an example project application. It is the responsibility of the applicant to draft a comprehensive RAP form, as per the published guidance.

Once ONS has reviewed the RAP application form, applicants will be asked to submit the MoJ’s Application Form for Secure Access to Data to secure data owner approval.

Why are both ADR UK, MoJ and RAP processes looking at public benefit?

ADR UK’s mission is to transform the way researchers access the UK’s wealth of public sector data to enable better informed policy decisions that improve lives.
RAP considers whether the primary purpose of the research is in the public interest. For example, to provide an evidence base for public policy decision-making; public service delivery; or for decisions which are likely to significantly benefit the economy, society or quality of life for people in the UK. This meets the demands of the Digital Economy Act (2017) Chapter 5 which states that data obtained under the Research power must only be disclosed, processed and used for the purpose of supporting research in the public interest.

ADR UK will be assuming that the primary purpose of all research will be in the public interest and rather than considering whether this is the case, will take a deeper look at the extent to which this public benefit has the potential to be realised. This will be an assessment of Criteria 1 as set out in the call specification: Likelihood of demonstrating the potential of administrative data research for public policy impact.

Data owners are also independently required to assess the public benefit of proposals before approving access to data.

**Why are both ADR UK, MoJ and RAP processes looking at ethics?**

Ethics is an important feature of standard ESRC assessment criteria and an essential component of approving projects for lawful access to data for research under the Digital Economy Act. Data owners also have a duty to independently review ethics as part of their decision making process. ADR UK and ONS hope to consider whether we can better align these requirements but for now we accept there may be some duplication. The Je-S application requires a section of 4000 characters on Ethics and the RAP application form must also be accompanied by an ethical self-assessment.

**Will the RAP application form inform ADR UK’s funding decision?**

The RAP application will not be assessed by the ADR UK Research Fellowship Panel against the assessment criteria in the process of providing a funding recommendation to ADR UK.

For proposals that the ADR UK Research Fellowship Panel has recommended for funding, ONS will be invited to highlight any concerns that projects would not be approved by RAP. Less fundamental concerns that ONS feel could be addressed in the documentation before submission to RAP would be added as funding conditions. More significant concerns about a project passing successfully through RAP may result in a project being ruled out of the funding decision. For example, if the draft RAP application submitted with your application includes issues that mean you will not be able to start on time then this may result in your project not being funded. Is it therefore suggested that your application is as near to complete as possible before submission.

An essential criterion for RAP project approval is data owner approval of the project. Data Owners will be reviewing applications before the ADR UK Research Fellowship Panel, and their decisions and concerns will be considered both by ONS and the ADR UK Research Fellowship Panel. As above, less fundamental concerns that MoJ feel could be addressed before the project commences would be added as funding conditions. More significant
concerns about a project, or rejection of the data access request is likely to result in a project being ruled out of the funding decision.

**What happens to my RAP form if my proposal to the ADR UK Research Fellowship Scheme is successful?**

After ADR UK’s funding decision, ONS will work closely with all the successful ADR UK Research Fellows to ensure their documentation is prepared in time for the next RAP meeting. Meetings are usually held on a monthly basis; feedback from the RAP meeting should be within a week of the meeting date. Once your project has been approved through RAP then the data required will be set up in ‘project space’ for secure access which should be approximately two weeks from the RAP meeting date.

**Can I still apply to access the dataset if my proposal to the ADR UK Research Fellowship Scheme is not funded?**

Yes. All applicants, whether successful or not in receiving funding through ADR UK, can still apply to access the dataset (magistrates’ and/or Crown court data) for an approved project. If an applicant is not successful in securing funding through ADR UK, this would not prevent or go against them applying to access the data for their Approved Research project through RAP without ADR UK funding.

**How do I know if my project will be approved by RAP?**

If you have any further questions about your project or the RAP criteria having thoroughly read the guidance, you should contact ONS directly for support (see contact details below). It is the responsibility of the applicant to draft a sufficiently comprehensive RAP form, addressing the RAP guidance, drawing on the support of ONS where necessary. There is also an example application available on the UKSA website.

**How do I submit my RAP application form?**

The RAP application form required as part of the application is not submitted onto Je-S but should be emailed to adrcuration@ons.gov.uk and copied to hub@adrduk.org by the same deadline.

**Please note, the RAP application form can be revised following advice from ONS before being submitted for consideration by RAP.**

How do I submit my application form for Secure Access to Data to MoJ?

The application form to seek data owner approval can be found on gov.uk and should be drafted alongside the Je-S and upon finalisation of the RAP forms with ONS. All relevant sections required for access to HMCTS data should be completed except 8.2 Business Sponsor Details. MoJ will be working closely with ONS to coordinate Business Sponsorship alongside data owner approvals on behalf of applicants for this Research Fellowship. Applicants are request not to contact MoJ or HMCT sponsorship or support separately.
The application form will not need to be submitted until ONS has screened the RAP form. This will ensure that any clarifications or amendments requested by ONS can be reflected in the application form before data owner review. Applicants will be notified when ONS’s review is complete and should then submit their application form For Secure Access to Data by emailing the completed form to dataaccesspanel@justice.gov.uk and datafirst@justice.gov.uk. Applicants will be expected to have the form drafted and ready to submit when requested by MoJ; delays may leave Data Owners unable to approve access before the ADR UK Research Fellowship Panel.

**How will Data Owner approval be assessed?**

In the first instance, the project proposal will be reviewed by the HMCTS Data Access Panel (DAP). The panel will review applications to ensure that all external requests for individual data are legal, ethical, proportionate and secure, and will ensure that applications meet the following general criteria:

1. Research is aligned with the data owner’s areas of research interest.
2. There is overall benefit to the data owner and wider public.
3. Ethical considerations have been made.
4. Data protection and security.

If the panel has concerns about the project then the application may be escalated to the MoJ’s Data Access Governance Board and/or HMCTS’ Senior Data Governance Panel before a decision is made.

More details on the Data Access Panel are available online, and details on panel criteria can be found on both the application form and supporting guidance.

**How do I become an Accredited Researcher and when does this need to happen by?**

Only researchers accredited under the DEA are able to access data in the SRS. The lead researcher on a project application must be an Accredited Researcher by the time the project is submitted to RAP for approval. If applicants are not already Accredited Researchers, they need to allow time to attend the training and complete the assessment before the documents are sent to the RAP panel in March 2021. Researchers should apply for accreditation through the Research Accreditation Service (RAS).

Detailed information is provided in ‘Documents for Download: For Accredited Researchers’. If you have any additional enquiries having read the guidance thoroughly, please contact ONS on the details below. More information about ONS’s role in supporting Accredited Researchers is also available.
10. Other questions

**What other funding opportunities will ADR UK be promoting?**

ADR UK will be announcing further Research Fellowship calls over the next 12 months to promote selected newly available, deidentified, unlinked and linked data. To be the first to hear about newly available data or funding opportunities, please sign up to our [mailing list](mailto:).  

**I have a question not answered in any of the call documents – who should I contact?**

The [full call specification](#) and a range of supporting guidance documents for this call are available on the [ADR UK website](#). Having read these, if you still have enquiries please contact us as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Query category</th>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADR UK Call queries</td>
<td><a href="mailto:hub@adruk.org">hub@adruk.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Je-S System or technical queries</td>
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<td>Research question queries</td>
<td><a href="mailto:datafirst@justice.gov.uk">datafirst@justice.gov.uk</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>