

ADR Wales Strategy

2022–2026

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1. Context

ADR Wales is one of the four, national partnerships that form ADR UK, alongside ADR England, ADR Northern Ireland and ADR Scotland.

ADR Wales shares ADR UK's vision for 2026 which is to be the default choice to host linked administrative data from across the entirety of UK and devolved government, making it accessible to a deep pool of trained researchers to generate insights routinely used to inform policy and practice. This strategy sets out how ADR Wales will contribute to the delivery of that vision over the next four years.

2. What is ADR Wales?

ADR Wales brings together world-renowned data science experts, leading academics, and specialist teams within the Welsh Government and the public sector to produce evidence that shapes future policy decisions in Wales. The partnership is focused on maximising the utility of secure, anonymous data to shape public service delivery, which will ultimately improve the lives of people in Wales and the UK.

ADR Wales was established as one of the UK centres as part of the ADR UK pilot phase in 2018. It has delivered a wide range of policy-informing research and along with partners provided a range of research and intelligence to support the Covid-19 pandemic response for UK and devolved governments.

ADR Wales unites specialists in each field from [Swansea University Medical School](#) and the [Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research and Data \(WISERD\)](#) at Cardiff University with statisticians, economists and social researchers from the Welsh Government. The cutting-edge data analysis techniques and research excellence developed, along with the world-renowned [SAIL Databank](#) – which is an accredited processor under the Digital Economy Act (DEA) – allow the delivery of robust, secure and informative research.

3. Mission and strategic goals

The data linked and analysed by ADR Wales in 2022-2026 aims to address the priority areas for action in Wales, as identified in the Welsh Government's Programme for Government. Priority areas are: early years; housing; social care; mental health; wellbeing; skills and employment; education; and climate change. There is also a dedicated resource that will focus on the impact of the pandemic on society, the embedding of social justice in our research as well as other major societal issues.

Mission: To acquire and develop data resources and enable skills to undertake impactful societal research to underpin the policy agenda of the Welsh Government and across the UK.

There are **four strategic goals** underpinning the ADR Wales mission:

1. **Research to support Welsh Government priority areas:** ADR Wales will continue to work on a 'One Wales' team basis to deliver research programmes designed to support the priority areas identified in the new Welsh Government 'Programme for Government'. Academics and the Welsh Government will identify key policy information needs and execute impactful research via the SAIL Databank.
2. **Research on the major societal challenges facing Wales and the UK:** By building on learning derived from ADR Wales work on leading collaborative UK projects, we will develop powerful research collaborations between other ADR UK partners, external organisations and funded centres. We will develop a catalyst function that will develop and initiate collaborations around key UK societal issues, such as the UK's exit from the EU and the long-term impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.
3. **Work to support the long-term sustainability of ADR Wales:** We seek to embed the academic and government partnership approach of ADR Wales into the 'business as usual' approach of government research and policy decision making. We seek to achieve this state by undertaking and promoting successful work and engaging new and developing policy areas across devolved and local government.
4. **Uphold the quality and integrity of the work of ADR Wales:** ADR Wales has been recognised during the pilot phase of ADR UK for delivering impactful research that is of a high standard, publicly acceptable and executed with the highest regard to both legislative and ethical standards. We will look for opportunities to improve this even further.

4. Change objectives

There are **six change objectives** that will enable the strategic goals to be attained:

1. **Utilise the data, academic and policy strengths as one team to enable impactful societal research that benefits the people of Wales:** ADR Wales operates as a single team, thus ensuring acquisition, awareness, and access to data for research is aligned to a single shared set of project priorities. We will seek to integrate and involve new stakeholders across the investment from local government, third sector, public sector and the NHS to increase the capability and impact of research and realise the value of linked data.

The priority areas for 2022–2024 are to have impactful programmes of work for each of the thematic research areas that are policy aligned and are both proactive and reactive to the information needs of government.

To do this, ADR Wales will:

- Develop and deliver plans for its established research themes of Education, Skills and Employability, Housing and Homelessness, Mental Health, Social Care, Early Years and Wellbeing.
- Engage with new policy areas such as climate change, building a programme of research linked to this new ministerial office to deliver an agreed set of outputs for 2022-2024.
- Collaborate with other local government and third sector organisations to deliver local research for local policymaking, raising the profile of ADR UK at all levels of government.
- Develop new government data assets that develop and grow in research utility and policy informing equity.
- Promote findings and monitor and drive impacts across policy areas and, where relevant, other UK administrations.
- Engage and involve the public to develop the research, promote the societal impacts of linked data research via our Wales Public Panel, set up public research champions (around thematic areas) and further involve the public in our core governance and review processes.
- Utilise the Concept Library and GitHub to allow repeatable research by advocating for open code and documentation.
- Utilise ADR UK's dual publication policy supporting both academic outputs (published in open access journals) and non-academic outputs, such as policy papers and lay summaries.
- Introduce the use of digital object identifiers to ensure citations and impact can be tracked over time.
- Routinely track and report on the public benefit and scientific impact of research using ADR Wales data and promote and drive impacts across ADR UK and other investments.

2. **Work across the UK and its partners to develop projects that address shared societal issues:**

In the pilot phase, ADR Wales developed a unique four nations data driven project focused on the agricultural sector. Based on the learning from this, one of the key objectives is now to operate as a catalyst and facilitator that will identify new sources of funding and opportunities outside of ADR UK and develop collegiate collaborations from the four nations to focus on specific priority issues that are relevant to each nation.

To do this, ADR Wales will:

- Build on existing partnerships with ADR UK partners and other data investments and stakeholders to collaborate on shared public policy and priority needs.
- Provide a focal point to seek and promote opportunities to partners, identify funding, and subsequently collaborate and co-produce impactful research.

- Promote the successes, learning and best practice derived from projects across ADR UK and partner networks.

3. **Create powerful research-ready data linkages from existing and new data sources:** ADR Wales will build on its success in acquisition of data by identifying key assets, and within a robust governance and public acceptability framework and in collaborations with other ADR UK partners, such as ADR England, develop research-ready data assets. The development of these assets will be driven by demand from users and an assessment of their ultimate research value. They will be linked to thematic research areas and will provide powerful high-standard and documented research tools for important research.

To do this, ADR Wales will:

- Work with ADR UK and its partners to assist in developing a framework model and standard for linked data across the partnership with a particular focus on collaborating and supporting ADR UK projects around specific research-ready data assets.
- Champion best practice and share expertise in creating research-ready data assets, including publishing a guide to their creation and use.
- Promote the assets and their utility to researchers, and involve new and existing researchers and data owners in the development process and inputting into new asset development.

4. **Engage in wide-ranging knowledge and best practice sharing across the ADR UK partnership to develop knowledge bases, innovations, and capacity building:** ADR Wales has developed a wide knowledge base around many areas of linked data research within a trusted research environment, along with many innovative developments around methodologies, tools, and techniques. As part of the new investment for 2022–2026 ADR Wales will engage with ADR UK partners to share knowledge, upskill, and identify and communicate new developments in linked data.

To do this, ADR Wales will:

- Develop short courses and accessible learning materials around key aspects of linked data.
- Engage with the other ADR UK partners to understand and address any learning gaps that could be remedied by our knowledge base and intervention.
- Work to ensure identification of learning and delivery modes are as flexible as possible including formats such as online media, seminars, workshops.
- Support students at undergraduate, postgraduate and early career levels with knowledge and skills to access and undertake research in linked data safe settings.
- Support Doctoral Training Partnerships requirements and align delivery to ADR UK Training and Capacity Building strategy priorities.

5. **Operate at high standards of accreditation, ethics, governance and public acceptability and engagement:** All the work of ADR Wales is based on a platform that is secure and accredited, and the research is ethically sound, publicly acceptable and

beneficial. For example, Digital Health and Care Wales is accredited under the Digital Economy Act. We will continue to maintain and develop our standards in each area.

To do this, ADR Wales will:

- Continue to keep public engagement, involvement and acceptability at the heart of our activities by regular engagement with our public panels, our community events (large and small), by having public members on our Independent Governance Approval Panel and public involvement in guiding researchers to embed public involvement and engagement into their project development and research.
 - Sustain the highly accredited state of the SAIL Databank, which is Digital Economy Act accredited, ISO27001 accredited and Cyber Security accredited.
 - Ensure all our operations, data acquisitions and holdings are fully compliant with legislative requirements such as General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) regulations.
 - Continue to ensure SAIL operates under the principles of the '5 Safes' of trusted research environments.
6. **Establish a robust information and research base to understand the impacts of the pandemic and be able to respond to future major priorities:** During the Covid-19 pandemic period of March 2020 to the present, ADR Wales and SAIL Databank in collaboration with other partners were focused on delivering a wide range of Covid-19 policy research and intelligence to governments at a very fast, unprecedented pace. This work truly demonstrated the ability of information derived from linked data at speed to address major societal emergencies and it was widely used by governments to inform the pandemic response.

The impacts of the pandemic will be long lasting, and ADR Wales will be focusing on responding to these impacts across a wide range of societal areas.

In addition to responding to the impacts of Covid as well as retaining an ability to respond again should circumstances demand it, this same resource will be used to focus on other key priority challenges beyond Covid-19 that may emerge if directed to do so.

To do this ADR Wales will:

- Develop a dedicated team to focus on the [five harms of Covid-19](#) and develop impactful research.
- Work with the Welsh Government and UK partners to identify additional priority areas beyond Covid-19.
- Maintain the ability to pivot and work with other organisations again at an enhanced pace to address the information needs of any emerging future priorities.

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

ADR Wales mission ADR Wales' mission is to acquire and develop data resources and enable skills to undertake impactful societal research to underpin the policy agenda of the Welsh Government and across the UK.

ADR UK aims	Trust & sustainability	Research for public good	Research access & support	Available data for research
ADR Wales strategic goals	Research to support Welsh Government priority areas	Research on the major societal challenges facing Wales and the UK	Work to support the long-term sustainability of ADR Wales	Uphold the quality and integrity of the work of ADR Wales
ADR Wales objectives	Utilise the data, academic and policy strengths as one team to enable impactful societal research that benefits the people of Wales	Work across the UK and its partners to develop projects that address shared societal issues	Create powerful research ready data linkages from existing and new data sources	Engage in wide ranging knowledge and best practice sharing across the ADR UK partnership to develop knowledge bases, innovations, and capacity building
	Operate at high standards of accreditation, ethics, governance and public acceptability and engagement		Establish a robust information and research base to understand the impacts of the pandemic and be able to respond to future major priorities	

<https://www.adruk.org/ad-r-wales/>

Image shows a summary of ADR Wales' mission, strategic goals and objectives, as listed above.