

An introduction to the UK Data Service

March 2025



Overview of the session

- Who are we?
- How can we help you?
- What is secondary data?
- What types of data do we hold?
- Useful resources.
- Questions?



What is the UK Data Service?

- Long-term access to high quality Social Science data since 1967.
- Funded by the UKRI and ESRC.
- Comprehensive learning resources, support, training, and guidance.
- Experts in Safe Research.
- Data curation, digital preservation, data access and user support.
- A data impact blog showcasing the impact of our research.

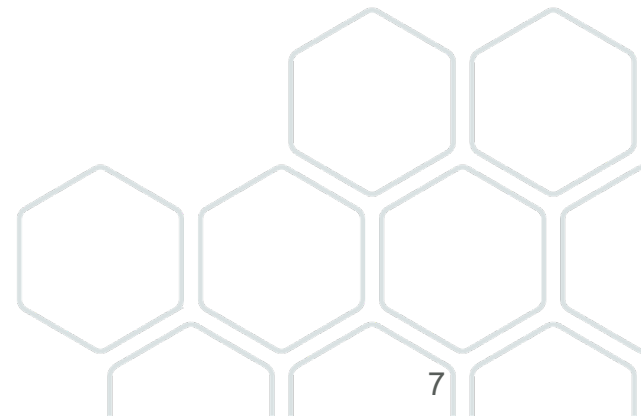


Quick facts about the UK Data Service

- The UK Data Archive was established in 1967, it then became the UK Data Service in 2012.
- The previous name for the UK Data Service was The Social Science Research Council Data Bank.
- The UK Data Archive operates from the University of Essex however the UK Data Service is made up of the archive and partners from The University of Manchester, University College London, The University of Edinburgh and JISC.
- We have over 9,200 datasets in our collection, which is ever expanding.
- The most downloaded dataset is 6614, coming from study Understanding Society.

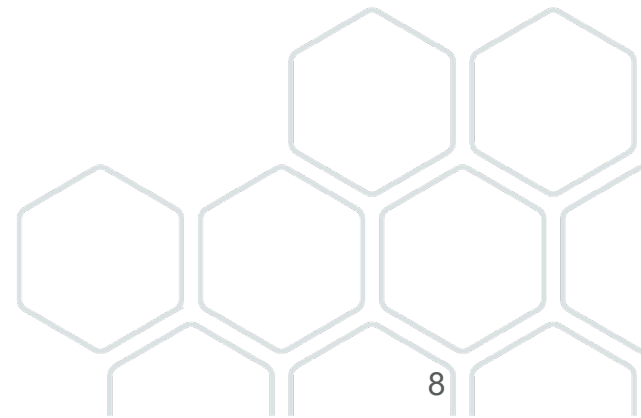
Who is it for?

- Academic researchers and students.
- Government analysts.
- Charities and foundations.
- Business consultants and data analysts.
- Independent research centres and think tanks.
- Independent researchers.



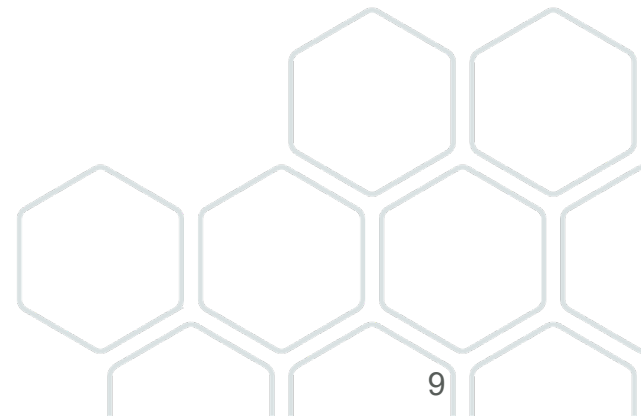
Access levels

- Open Data
- EUL
- Special Licence
- Secure

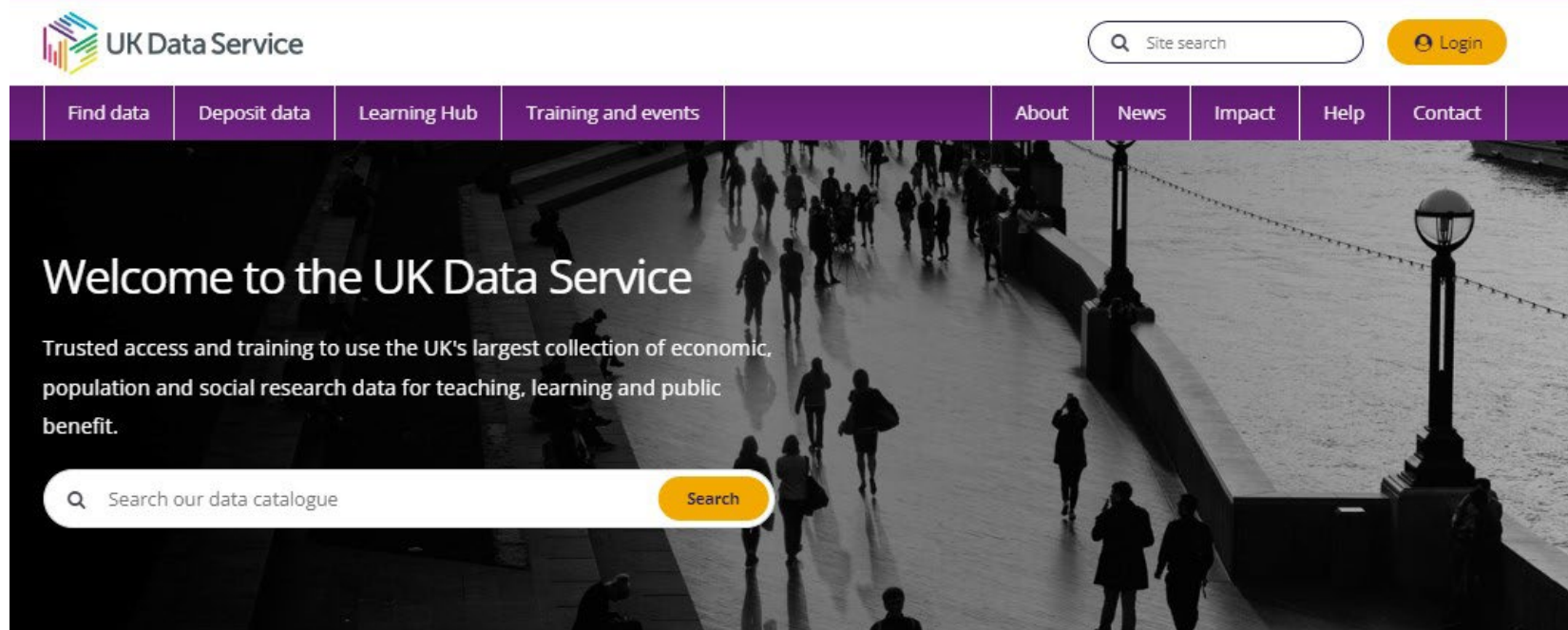


How could the UK Data Service help you?

- Wide range of datasets on a wide range of topics.
- Tools to access different datasets, such as the ICEM tool.
- Training and data specific events held throughout the year.
- Support throughout your whole project, from initial application to project end.
- SecureLab access and support throughout the project.



UK Data Service website



The screenshot shows the UK Data Service website homepage. At the top left is the UK Data Service logo. To its right is a site search bar and a yellow 'Login' button. Below these is a purple navigation bar with links: Find data, Deposit data, Learning Hub, Training and events, About, News, Impact, Help, and Contact. The main content area features a large background image of a busy city street. Overlaid on this image is the text 'Welcome to the UK Data Service' and a sub-headline: 'Trusted access and training to use the UK's largest collection of economic, population and social research data for teaching, learning and public benefit.' Below this is another search bar with the text 'Search our data catalogue' and a yellow 'Search' button.

UK Data Service

Site search

Login

Find data Deposit data Learning Hub Training and events About News Impact Help Contact

Welcome to the UK Data Service

Trusted access and training to use the UK's largest collection of economic, population and social research data for teaching, learning and public benefit.

Search our data catalogue

Search

Latest highlights



[October 2023 UK Data Service newsletter](#)



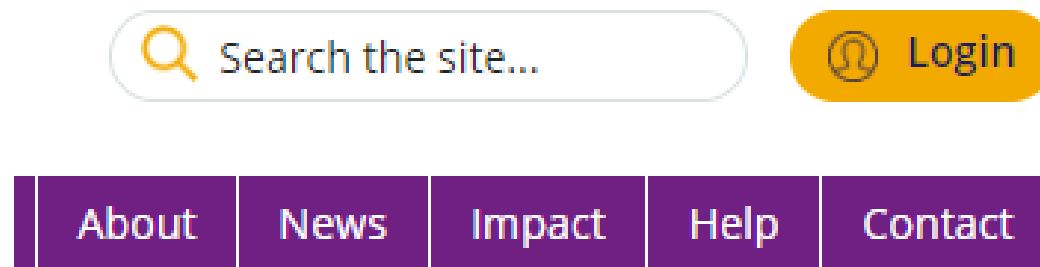
[UK Data Service receives new ESRC investment of £37.5m, funding research infrastructure to 2030](#)



[Research into experiences of ethnic minorities in the UK used to improve lives](#)

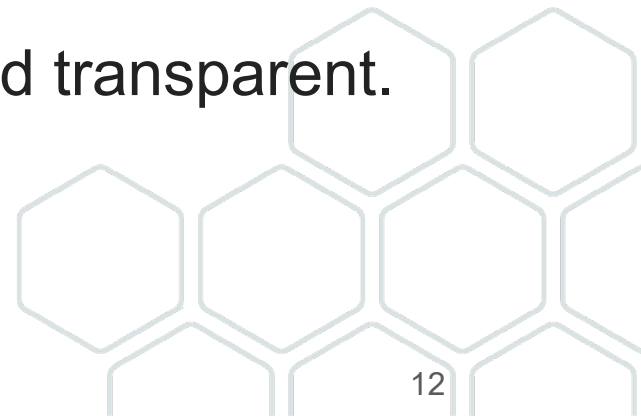
Registering with the UK Data Service

- UK Higher education/Further education- [sign in through your institution](#).
- If not, [request a username](#).



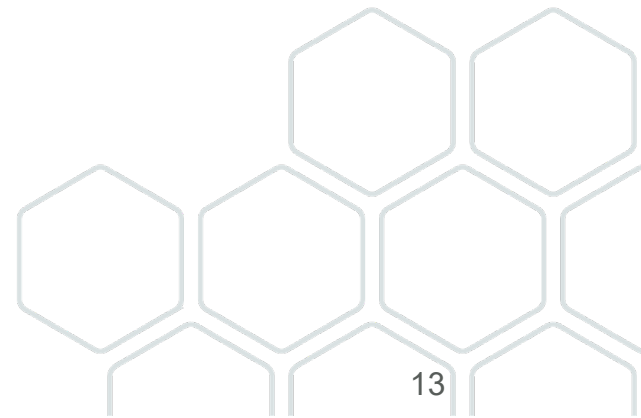
What is secondary analysis and why do it?

- Data is collected in many ways: surveys, interviews, administrative records, business records, and censuses.
- Primary collection can be time-consuming, expensive, and requires expertise.
- Re-analysis of existing data that has already been collected.
- Usually free, large range of sources, representative, robust, and transparent.



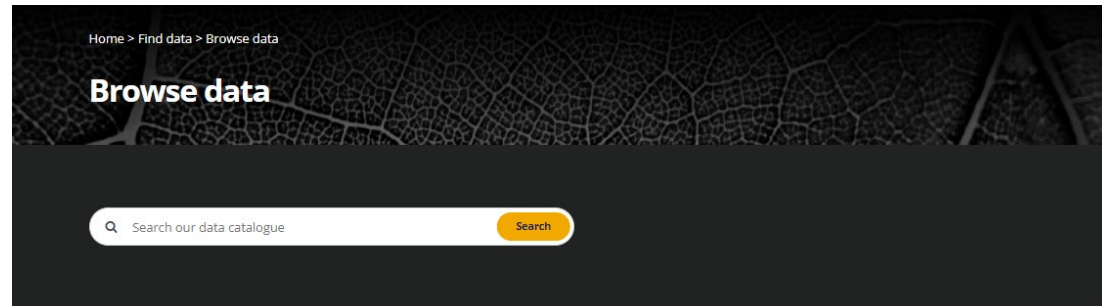
Sources of data

- National statistical authorities.
- UK government departments.
- Intergovernmental organisations.
- Research institutes.
- Individual researchers.



What kind of data is in our catalogue?

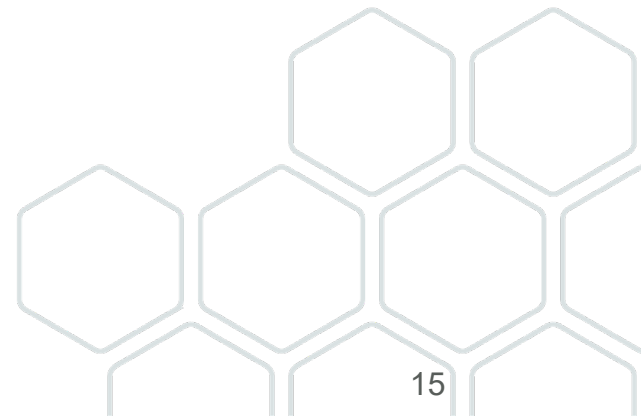
- Our catalogue contains over 9,200 datasets.



Browse by theme



Any questions so far?

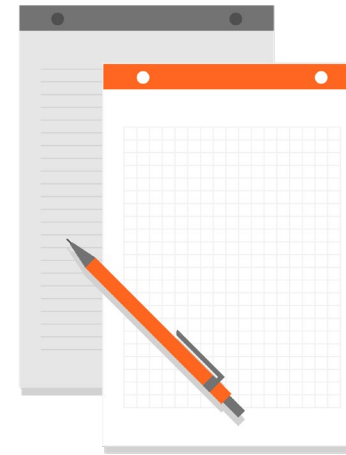


Types of data

Survey microdata	International macrodata	Census	Qualitative/Mixed Methods
Major UK Surveys: Cross-national Surveys Longitudinal Studies	Multi-national aggregate databanks and survey data	Aggregate data for 1971- 2011 Microdata for 1991-2011 Flow data Boundary data	Range of multimedia qualitative data sources Mix of qualitative and quantitative data

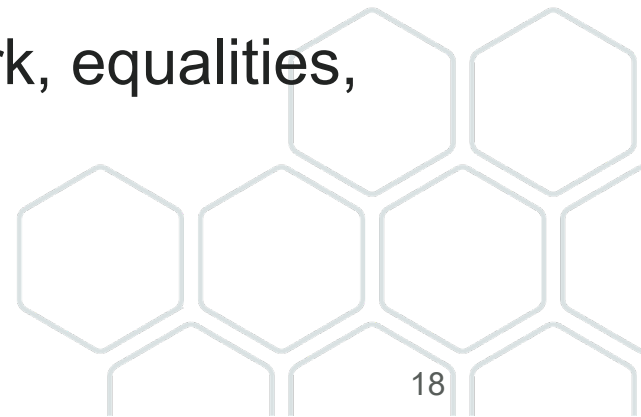
Survey Microdata

- Anonymised individual or household level data.
- Large sample sizes.
- Nationally-representative.
- SPSS, Stata, or R.
- Flexible.



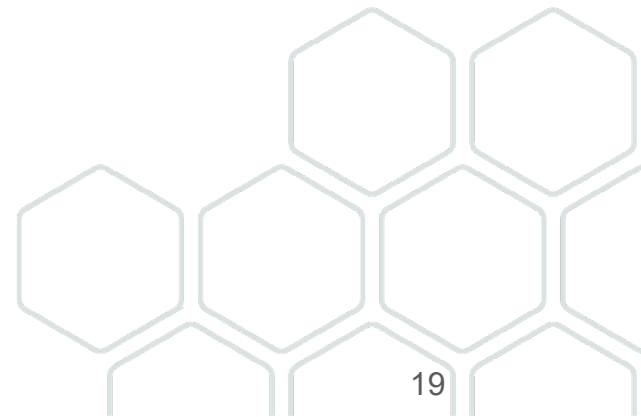
Key data: Cross-sectional surveys

- Crime Survey for England and Wales (1982-)
 - Information about levels of crime, public attitudes to crime, and other related issues.
 - Asks people about crimes they have experienced in the last year.
 - An important alternative to police records.
- British Social Attitudes Survey (1983 -)
 - Runs annually.
 - Measure of public views on a range of topics such as work, equalities, welfare, health, and how the country is run.



Longitudinal data: Panel and cohort data

- Similar to cross-sectional survey - **large, nationally representative** studies.
- One key difference – it follows the **same individuals or households over time**.
- Change at individual level over time.
- Two main types – panel and cohort.
- Example- Understanding Society



Panel and Cohort Study Examples

- Understanding Society
- National Child Development Study (1958-)
- British Cohort Study (1970-)
- The Millennium Cohort Study (2000-).



Cross-national surveys

- Allow comparisons across different countries.
- Topics include - education and income, working conditions, poverty.

Examples in our catalogue include:

- European Working Conditions Survey.
- European Quality of Life Survey.
- Young Lives: an International Study of Childhood Poverty.
- Young Lives: School Survey.
- European Values Study.
- National Youth Social Action Survey.



International Macrodata

- Time series data aggregated to country/region.
- Regularly updated.
- International governmental organisations.
- Various access conditions.
- Databanks cover many different topics.



International Macrodata: Tools

- [International Aggregate Data from the UK Data Service](#)

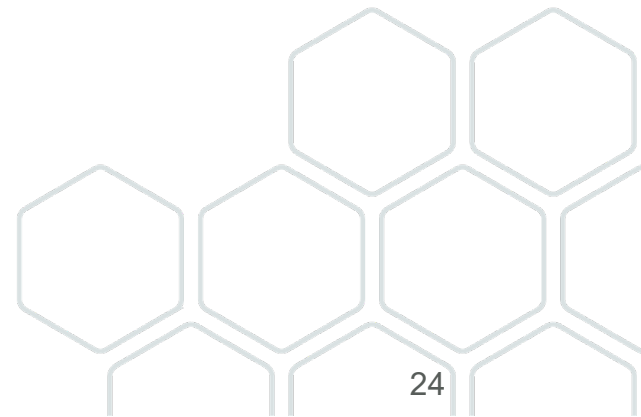


We recommend using Mozilla Firefox with this tool

- Hosts hundreds of economic and social datasets provided by the World Bank, OECD, International Monetary Fund, United Nations, and International Energy Agency.
- View by data provider.
- Extract the information you require.
- User guides and video tutorials available - [Accessing, exploring and visualising international data](#).

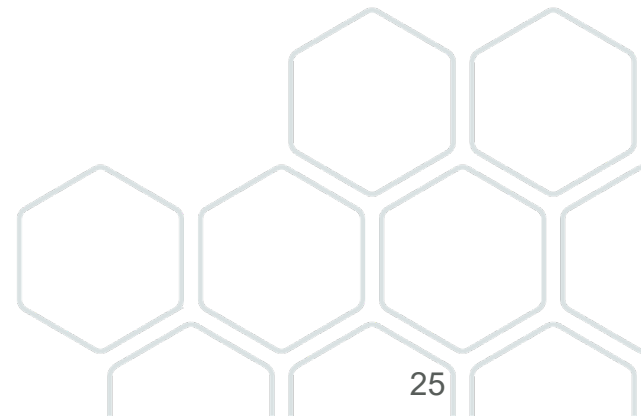
UK Census Data

- Census 2021 was released in July 2022 - designed to be 'digital first' (75% of population completed online questionnaire).
- First to include sexual orientation and gender identity questions.
- Used as baseline for other statistics. Different data have different access requirements.
- There are 4 kinds of census data available from the UKDS:
 - Aggregate.
 - Boundary.
 - Flow.
 - Microdata.



Types of Census Data:

- There are 4 kinds of census data available from the UKDS:
 - Aggregate
 - Boundary
 - Flow
 - Microdata.



Census tools- Casweb

UK Data Service
Census Support



[Skip to main content](#) [UK Data Service](#) | [Contact](#)



Casweb

- [Casweb Home](#)
[Guide](#)
[Accessibility Statement](#)

We're sorry that we cannot make Census data available through Casweb.

- You can bulk download census data for 1971 to 2021 (for England, Wales and Scotland) and 1991 - 2021 (for Northern Ireland) via our bulk download platform, [CKAN](#).
- You can subset data from the 2001 and 2011 censuses (England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland) from [InFuse](#).

Casweb is part of the [UK Data Service](#) see our [Cookies policy](#)

[Casweb Home](#)



We recommend using Mozilla Firefox with this tool

Qualitative/Mixed Methods

- Non-numeric information, such as interview transcripts, diaries, anthropological field notes, answers to open-ended survey questions, audio-visual recordings, and images.
- Can be searched in the catalogue or accessed through [QualiBank](#).



[Essay by 132](#)

SN4867 School Leavers Study, 1978

Sex: Female. **Age group:** 16-24. **Socio-economic status:** Not

... involved with the nursery nursery school I did child minding. W
house. My husband retired through **ill health** and died shortly af
...

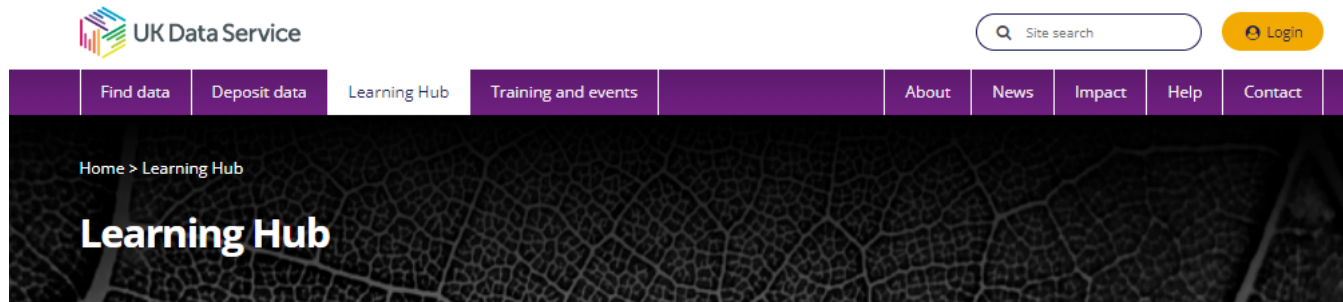


Quick quiz

- How many datasets do we have in our collection?
- What study does the most downloaded dataset in our collection come from?
- What was the first name for the UK Data Archive, now the UK Data Service?
- What year did the UK Data Service in its original form start?



Resources for using data



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.

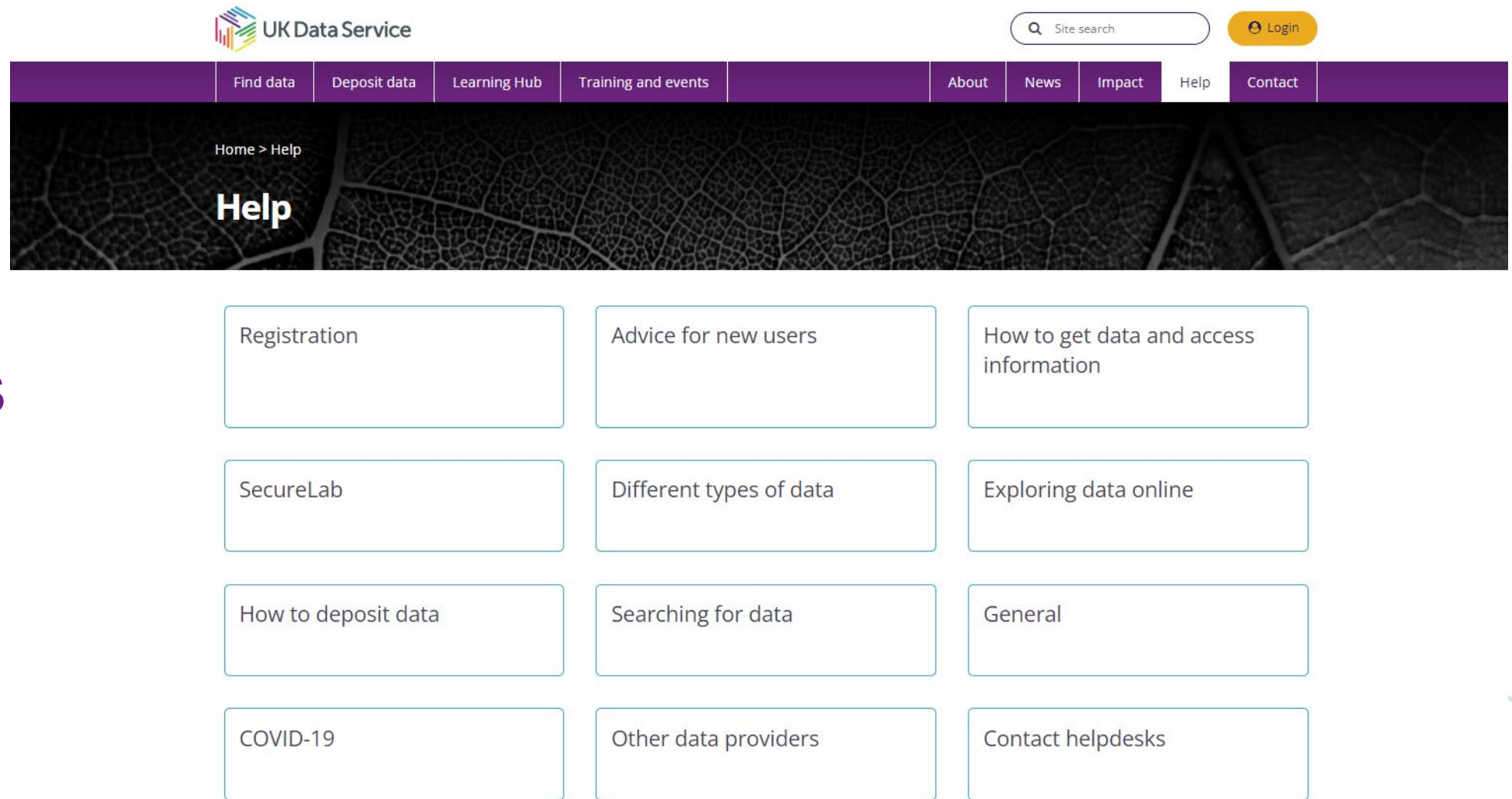
International data

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.

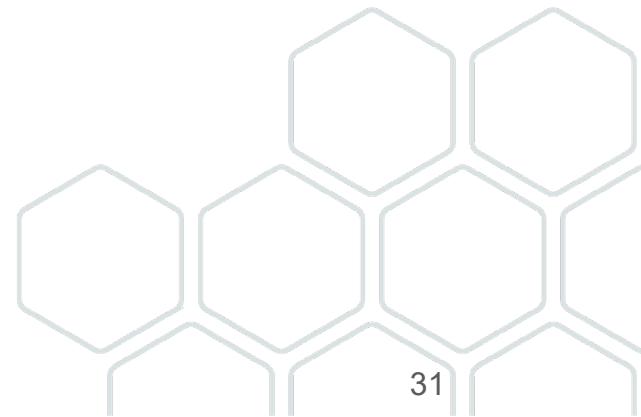
Help pages



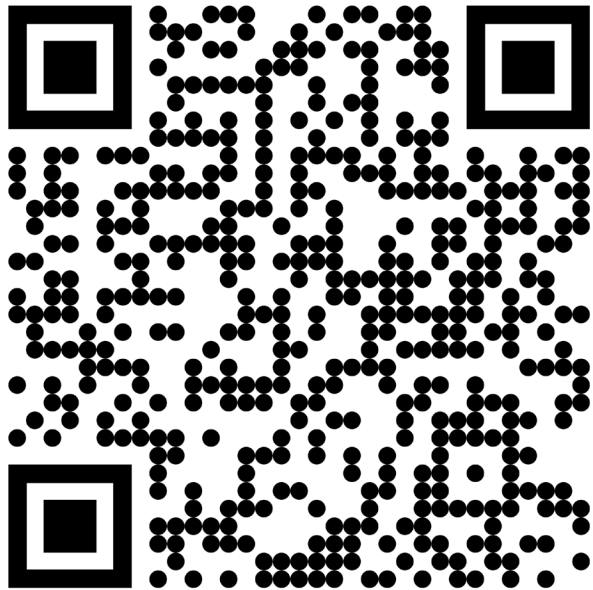
Useful links

We have the links mentioned in the presentation listed below:

- Youtube channel - [UK DATA SERVICE – YouTube](#)
- Data Catalogue - [UK Data Service › Studies](#)
- Help Desk [Webform](#)
- Browse Data Page – [Browse](#).

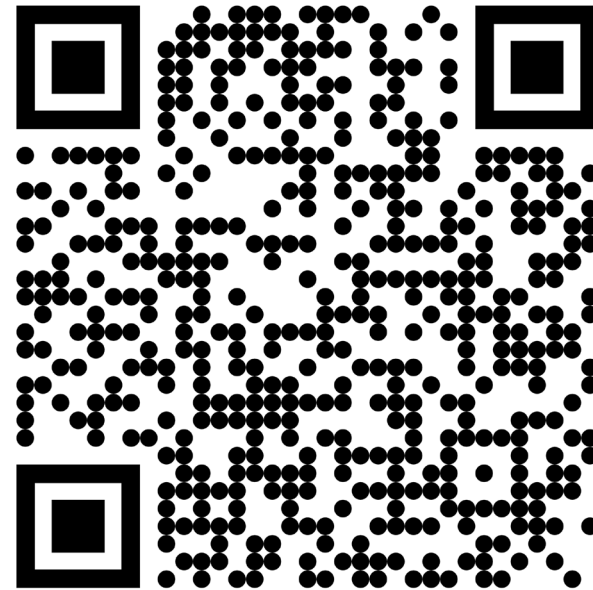


Register for the UK Data Service



beta.ukdataservice.ac.uk/myaccount/login

UK Data Service training and events



ukdataservice.ac.uk/training-events/

Any questions?

Thank you

[UK Data Service: Get in touch](#)

[X \(Twitter\)](#)

[Newsletter](#)

[Data Impact Blog](#)