

UK Longitudinal Linkage Collaboration – UK LLC

The UK Longitudinal Linkage Collaboration (UK LLC) is run by the Universities of Bristol and Edinburgh, in collaboration with UCL, SeRP UK, Swansea University and University of Leicester. It is funded by UK Research Innovation, Medical Research Council and the Economic and Social Research Council. Its core aim is to bring together de-identified study data from over 20 of the UK's well-established longitudinal population studies and link it with participant's official health and non-health data. The de-identified linked data is then held in a Trusted Research Environment (TRE) provided by SeRP UK at Swansea University. The UK LLC TRE allows approved researchers to study and analyse data from within the environment, where the data can be read and analysed but cannot be removed or copied outside of the environment – like a reading library.

Find out which UK longitudinal studies are taking part in the [UK LLC project here](#). Each study retains control of the data they have gathered from their study participants and continue to make the decisions around how their participant's data is used, and which research projects are given access to the data.

Why work with the UK LLC?

Supplementing the rich data available in the UK's longitudinal research cohorts with individual patient health data generated through routine care in the NHS can enable many more research questions to be answered. UK LLC's mission is to provide a data linkage resource to its partner longitudinal studies and to provide a simple one-application process to UK based researchers applying to access linked longitudinal data. As well as linkage to NHS data, the UK LLC will offer linkage to other administrative records such as education and employment.

The UK LLC was originally set up during the Covid-19 pandemic to support Covid research but is now also supporting general research projects.

If you have a research question which would be best answered by using Longitudinal Cohort data with linkage to other health or administrative data sources, UK LLC will be a helpful partner in making those linkages available to you.

Contact:

The UK LLC team can be contacted via the following details, depending on the query:

- General information: info@ukllc.ac.uk
- Access queries and support: access@ukllc.ac.uk

Who can apply?

UK LLC welcomes applications from any bona fide researcher based in the UK, including PhD students. All applicants wanting to use UK LLC must either have ONS Accredited Researcher status or be enrolled on an ONS Safe Researcher Training course. Researchers must demonstrate they are trained and authorised to use data safely and understand current GDPR legislation.

Useful training materials and resources for researchers can be found on the [ARC KSS Data Science Hub website](#).

Accessing UK LLC data:

UK LLC hosts an online application system to process data access requests. The UK LLC was originally set up to support Covid-19 research and whilst it continues to do this beyond the pandemic, it aims to expand the service to include more general, non-Covid research project requests too. As a result, there are currently two different data access request pathways in place.

Covid-19 research studies wanting access to UK LLC data will need to follow the below data access request pathway. Research not focusing on Covid-19, so general purpose research projects, can apply for access but will need to contact access@ukllc.ac.uk in the first instance.

Data Access Request pathway:

Step 1: Applicant completes an expression of interest form via the UK LLC Online Application System: [Apply | UK Longitudinal Linkage Collaboration](#).

Step 2: When instructed the applicant will make and submit a full application to be reviewed by the UK LLC Application Review Panel. Further approvals of the proposed study will then commence including review by the Linked Data Review Panel and Data Access Public Review Panel. The lead researcher will be required to attend the public panel and give a 5-minute verbal presentation about the project. This will be followed by a short Q&A to allow questions to be asked directly about the proposed project.

Step 3: Application approved – legal documentation is to be signed and returned. This may include, but is not limited to, Data Access Agreement (DAA), Data User Responsibilities Agreement (DURA) and System Level Security Policy (SLSP). Once all necessary legal documentation is completed the data will be made available.

Step 4: Data is prepared and made available to researchers within the UK LLC TRE environment. The UK LLC TRE is a remote desktop environment, where linkages are refreshed periodically. Each approved user will be given access to a series of project-specific database views, enabling access to datasets approved as part of the project. The typical data access timeframe is roughly 10 weeks from full application to approval stage.

Once researchers access the UK LLC TRE environment, they will be able to see helpful 'How to Guides' on how to work within the TRE, including how to set up a project workspace using the tools of their choice. Researchers can choose which tools or packages to conduct analyses within the TRE environment. Standard packages available include Python, R, Stata and SPSS. Other packages can be requested, but these may be subject to licence provision/fee.

Costs:

There is currently no cost to apply for data access.

Additional Information:

- View the research projects that have been approved to use UK LLC data in the data use register here - [Data Use Register | UK Longitudinal Linkage Collaboration](#).
- Useful list of UK LLC FAQs here - [Apply | UK Longitudinal Linkage Collaboration](#).

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