



SLS-DSU NEWSLETTER

Winter 2024-25

A round up of SLS activity

In June 2024 we celebrated one year into our new office in New Register House, and the team has expanded - what a year it has been! Here are some of the highlights and latest updates from the SLS team.

Welcome to our new SLS colleagues

The SLS team has expanded since our last newsletter! We are delighted to have 5 new team members: Blessious Phiri, Cassia Smith, Joseph Barbour, Lynne Adair and Sandrine Flower. Blessious, Cassia and Joseph are applying their IT expertise to help transition us onto the EPCC cloud hosting. Lynne has returned to us in a new role as Head of Research Support Service and we have additional admin support from our newest staff member, Sandrine. You can read more about them on our [SLS team page](#).

Outreach Events

In December 2024, we welcomed final year pupils from Dornoch Academy with an event run by Tom Clemens. The 12 students, who were on a field trip in Edinburgh, participated in a basic statistics training session using a heat map. They very much enjoyed their experience and showed great enthusiasm. We look forward to developing a wider programme next year to engage more final year pupils.



Update on Safe Setting

We are currently operating 2 Safe Setting areas in New Register House. Due to a NRS change in security practice, researchers who have not been granted Amicus security clearance, cannot work in the main Safe Setting, which is located in the restricted access part of the building. Instead, we are able to accommodate non-cleared researchers in our 2nd Safe Setting in the non-restricted area. We are therefore able to offer 8 Safe Setting spaces in the main Safe Setting and 2 spaces in the 2nd Safe Setting. Please book via sandrine.flower@ed.ac.uk (by Wednesday at 10am the week prior to access) who will allocate which Safe Setting is appropriate. If you have not been into the Safe Setting for a while, we will carry out a short induction on your return.

Spotlight

Safe Setting Bookings

Please email sandrine.flower@ed.ac.uk by Wednesday at 10am the week prior to access to reserve a space in Safe Setting.

This is needed to allow secured entry to the New Register House building.

Census 2022

NRS are making good progress with their [Census Output schedule](#) and we envisage work on SLS linkage to commence early 2025.

Keep an eye out for the next update!

ONS Safe Researcher Training

A schedule of Safe Researcher Training dates is available on the [SCADR website](#)



Automated Stage 2 Publication Outputs Process

In early 2025, we will be launching an automated outputs clearance system for stage 2 publication outputs, via the CALLS-hub website. Researchers will have their own user account to upload clearance requests and output. Some fields will be self-populating for ease and you will have more control over how and when your listing appears on the SLS website. The new system will help us efficiently capture the information required by our funders, as well as streamline the 'submission to web listing' process. Time frames for clearance will remain the same (20 working days), and as always our NRS Project Manager will endeavour to clear requests promptly.

Reminder

For Stage 1 Pre-publication Output clearance, **we expect all stage 1 pre-publication outputs to be publication ready** (eg only the tables you wish to use in the slides, papers etc) rather than intermediate outputs. We now offer synthetic data to all projects as an alternative.

Archiving of SLS Projects

In line with our GDPR responsibilities, we are required to delete data at the end of our 5 year retention period from project end date. We will email researchers of historical projects or who are nearing the end of their retention period for permission to delete old data or archive syntax. If you are approaching your project end date, please contact Greg.Blackadder@nrscotland.gov.uk for a project extension request if this is required.

Protocol change: information governance training to view Stage (1) Pre-publication Outputs

In line with other Scottish data linkage projects, in order to view Stage (1) Pre-publication Outputs now all SLS project members require information governance training - not just researcher(s) visiting the Safe Setting. Currently ONS Safe Research Training (SRT) is accepted and needs renewed every 3 years. SLS-DSU staff will be in touch through 2025 to ensure all active SLS projects now adhere with this protocol change.

Welcome to 2025!

Thank you again for your support in the last year. We are proud of our achievements and we have many exciting plans for 2025 to enhance the data available through the Scottish Longitudinal Study. We look forward to continuing to support our researchers throughout the year ahead.

SLS in numbers

- **33 outputs cleared** for dissemination at various conferences and for journal submissions
- **150 SLS research projects** supported by the team
- **300 visits** to the Safe Setting over the past year

SLS publications of interest

Raab, G.M. (2024) Privacy risk from synthetic data: practical proposals. Chapter in *Privacy in Statistical databases*. International Conference, PSD 2024 published by Springer-Verlag and edited by Melek Önen, and Josep Domingo-Ferrer, pp 254-273.

[Click here to access the article in pdf](#)

Dibben, C., Raab, G., Nowok, B., Williamson, L., & Adair, L. (2024). Synthpop: A Tool to Enable More Flexible Use of Sensitive Data within the Scottish Longitudinal Study. In *Handbook of Sharing Confidential Data* Chapman and Hall.

[Click here to read the abstract and request access](#)



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