

## English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA)

### Key contact details:

To get in touch with the ELSA project team please contact [ELSA@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:ELSA@ucl.ac.uk). For data specific enquiries use the following details, [ELSAdata@natcen.ac.uk](mailto:ELSAdata@natcen.ac.uk). To discuss ELSA data access, contact [help@ukdataservice.ac.uk](mailto:help@ukdataservice.ac.uk).

### ELSA data dictionary:

ELSA was established in 2002 as a multi-faceted survey to track the dynamics of ageing, with the aim of advancing research and informing policy. ELSA is a unique and rich resource of information on the dynamics of health, social, wellbeing and economic circumstances in the English population aged 50+. The ELSA project has over 18,000 participants and has been successfully running for over 20 years.

During each wave of ELSA, interviewers ask respondents to complete a core self-completion questionnaire covering topics such as wellbeing, relationships, and alcohol consumption. During some ELSA waves a nurse visit has been carried out, meaning various additional information has been obtained such as physical examination and performance data.

The ELSA sample was selected from three survey years of Health Survey for England data. Households were included in ELSA if they contained at least one adult aged 50 or over and had agreed to be re-contacted at some point in the future. Those who become ELSA participants are interviewed by the study team every 2 years, and their responses make up the ELSA dataset.

The [ELSA data dictionary](#) provides an overview of the data collected by ELSA and the variables available for analysis. Further information on ELSA as well as introductory videos to the project can be accessed [here](#).

### Accessing ELSA data:

Researchers can access and download ELSA data from all waves via the [UK Data Service](#) (UKDS). ELSA data can be downloaded, ordered or organised online with the condition of registering and accepting the End User Licence. If your institution is part of the UK Access Management Federation you will be able to access ELSA data via UKDS by using your institutional credentials. If your institution is not listed you will need to request a new login using the contact details above.

Not all data is accessible this way as some ELSA data is classed as controlled data. This type of data is only accessible through the UKDS SecureLab service, due to its sensitive nature. The UKDS SecureLab service is a remote access safe environment which allows researchers to access and undertake analysis without the need to download the data.

To access the UKDS SecureLab you will need to complete a detailed project application and demonstrate public benefit resulting from the use of the requested data. Users must also become an Accredited Researcher, this involves attending Safe Researcher training and the user's institution will need to enter into a legal agreement with UKDS.

All applications are scrutinised by the UKDS Specialist Data Access Services team as well as the NatCen Data Release Panel.

**User access agreements:**

Researchers accessing ELSA study data will need to register and accept the End User Licence with UKDS. For researcher's whose institutions are part of the UK Access Management Federation, their institutional credentials will allow them to access the data.

For access to more sensitive, controlled ELSA data a detailed project application will need to be made to access and analyse the data in the SecureLab, a virtual data environment. Users must be an Accredited Researcher, which involves completing Safe Researcher training and the user's institution will need to enter into a legal agreement with UKDS.

Safe Researcher training is offered by UKDS, and is run approximately every 3 weeks. The training is made up of the following important components: data security and personal responsibility, statistical disclosure, and how to use the SecureLab (guidance and tutorial). If Safe Researcher training has been completed with another provider, the researcher must inform UKDS, who will confirm attendance and successful completion of the assessment (with certificate). SecureLab access will only be granted to approved researchers for approved projects, and access is governed by the UKDS Data Access Policy.

**Cost of access:**

The majority of ELSA data is free to access via UKDS. If you require more specific data you will need to apply for data access. There will be an admin fee for this type of data request, a fee will also be applied when requesting access to special licence data. Charges will be discussed upon request.

**Additional information:**

Further information about the ELSA study can be found [here](#). In addition, ELSA also host events which are listed on the following [webpage](#).

ELSA has a podcast, details of which can be found [here](#).

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