

Understanding Society User Support - Support #2331

Access for Special Licence Data

02/18/2026 04:35 AM - David Kong

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|--|---|--------------------|------------|
| Status: | Feedback | Start date: | 02/18/2026 |
| Priority: | Normal | % Done: | 50% |
| Assignee: | Understanding Society User Support Team | | |
| Category: | Special license | | |
| Description | | | |
| Dear Support Forum, | | | |
| I am a graduate academic researcher from the USA looking to use one of the datasets SN 6136, SN 6670, or SN 7245 from the UK Data Service for my analysis in my project. I am currently filling out the special licence application for that purpose. However, I have come across an error. I understand that there is an exemption to the strongest form of data protection law that may be applicable to me, especially with regards to restrictions on international data transfers. | | | |
| I wonder if special permission is required in order to order that dataset. My main aim is to be able to trace BHPS respondents across different travel to work areas from 1991 to 2013 as it reflects the changes agglomeration patterns of the UK. I understand that I need 1991 census ward data, and 2001 and 2011 TTWA geographic identifiers for this purpose. If the 3 above referenced datasets may not be released to me, please suggest alternatives that would achieve this aim. | | | |
| Best regards David | | | |

History

#1 - 02/18/2026 04:00 PM - Understanding Society User Support Team

- Category set to Special license
- Status changed from New to Feedback
- % Done changed from 0 to 50
- Private changed from Yes to No

Hello David,

At present, the only possible route to access this data would be to apply to become an ISER Visitor. Please see the attached document for details of the application process. The current Visitor Coordinator is Silvia Avram (<https://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/people/savram>), whom you may contact directly if you have any further questions.

According to the UK Data Service, which hosts the UKHLS/BHPS data:

"The owners of census microdata have specified that only data users within the EEA and the other countries deemed by the European Commission to be able to safeguard the data can be allowed access to some census microdata held in UK Data Service."

As the datasets you mention make use of Census information, access is therefore restricted to users based in the UK or in countries deemed to provide an adequate level of data protection. The United States is not currently included on that list.

You can find further details here:

<https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/help/data-types/faqs-on-different-types-of-data/> (see the FAQ: "As a researcher living outside the UK, can I access any census microdata available in the UK Data Service?")

As an alternative, you may wish to explore conducting your analysis using SN6614, which can be downloaded here:

<https://datacatalogue.ukdataservice.ac.uk/studies/study/6614>

You could, for example, use variable gor_dv (Government Office Region). For more information, please see:

https://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/documentation/mainstage/variables/gor_dv/

I hope this information is helpful

Best wishes,

Roberto Cavazos

Understanding Society User Support Team

#2 - 02/18/2026 04:27 PM - Understanding Society User Support Team

- File ISER_Research_Visitor_Policy_v1.pdf added

#3 - 02/18/2026 04:29 PM - David Kong

Hi Mr Cavazos,

Thanks for your quick response and for your help in previous methodological queries.

My analysis is contingent on having a proper definition of the 30-50 largest local labour markets of the UK (there is cluster size and characteristics heterogeneity). Other than constructing this (and removing tiny clusters who may have fewer than 10 persons with disabilities in the cluster sample, for example in rural Wales or Northern Ireland), I will conduct no analyses on microdata based on geographies larger than at the TTWA level.

Best
David

P.S. I do not see the attached application form to apply for Visitor status. I will contact Ms. Abram in the meantime.

#4 - 02/18/2026 04:35 PM - David Kong

Thanks for attaching the visitor guidelines.

Best
David

Files

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------|------------|---|
| ISER_Research_Visitor_Policy_v1.pdf | 222 KB | 02/18/2026 | Understanding Society User Support Team |
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