

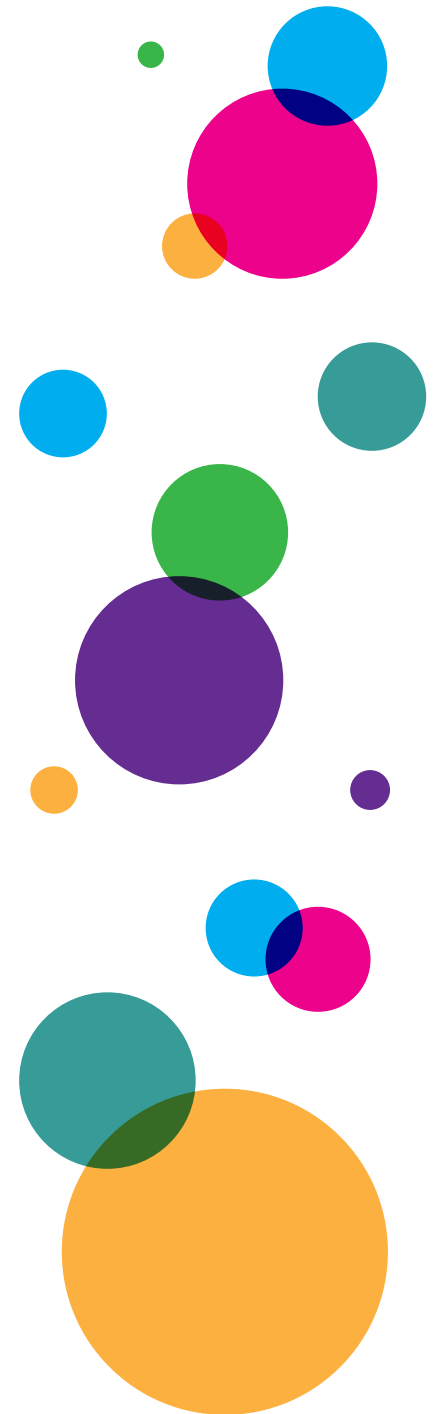
Areas of Research Interest

March 2025

Guidance

CLOSER's bespoke ARI Tracker draws together all of the latest departmental ARIs in one place to enable the LPS community to identify the specific questions relevant to their research.

ARI questions that we think have the most potential for input from the LPS community are highlighted in yellow.



CLOSER is funded by:



Economic
and Social
Research Council

Organisation	ARI or theme	Selected questions
<u>MCHLG: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government</u>	Driving growth	What are the key drivers of economic growth and rising living standards, and how do they vary between different parts of the UK – regionally and locally?
<u>MCHLG: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government</u>	Driving growth	How do we ensure the economic benefits of city centres or industrial clusters generate spillovers for surrounding towns, villages and sectors? What is the key to prosperous local towns and villages?
<u>MCHLG: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government</u>	Driving growth	What are the key policy levers needed to ensure the most deprived communities can share in the benefits and opportunities from growth?
<u>MCHLG: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government</u>	Tackling homelessness	What data, evidence and analytical tools (preventative analytics) are required to identify populations at risk of homelessness, such as families facing eviction, victims of domestic abuse, or individuals with precarious work conditions? What are the best means of outreach and engagement with at-risk populations?
<u>MCHLG: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government</u>	Reforming local government, local government finance and local public services	What is the evidence that prevention and early intervention in adult social care, children's social care and other local services improve outcomes – compared with treating problems – and lead to better value for money for taxpayers?
<u>MCHLG: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government</u>	Make work pay	What are the broader social benefits to individuals from jobs with higher pay, better working conditions and security, and can we link these benefits to wider society e.g. through savings to the Exchequer via reduced healthcare needs?
<u>MCHLG: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government</u>	Make work pay	What is the regional picture on jobs with higher pay, better working conditions and security?

<u>MCHLG: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government</u>	Make work pay	What are the long-term impacts from prolonged insecure work on the life chances of individuals, including on family formation and stability, opportunities to get on the housing ladder and healthcare needs?
<u>MCHLG: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government</u>	Stronger, more integrated and more cohesive communities	Why do otherwise similar areas experience different health, education and other outcomes?
<u>MCHLG: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government</u>	Stronger, more integrated and more cohesive communities	What is the best evidence for the social and economic impacts of living in a more integrated and cohesive place?
<u>MCHLG: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government</u>	Stronger, more integrated and more cohesive communities	What are the barriers to, and drivers of, political participation by young people? What interventions would be effective in engaging young people (16+) to register and vote in elections when they are enfranchised to?
<u>MoJ: Ministry of Justice</u>	Ensure access to justice in a way that best meets people's needs	What are the long-term impacts on children's developmental outcomes because of placements made under public law orders in care proceedings? Including care orders, placement orders, and special guardianship orders?
<u>MoJ: Ministry of Justice</u>	Reduce rates of reoffending and improve life chances	How can we identify children that are at risk of offending at an early stage? How can we prevent the transmission of intergenerational offending to children and young people in families with a history of offending? How can we minimise the criminogenic impact of a child's contact with the youth justice system?
<u>MoJ: Ministry of Justice</u>	Cross-cutting themes and research methods	<p>Equality and diversity: How do protected characteristics and socio-demographic differences impact upon interactions with the justice system? How can we better understand and account for population-level differences, experiences and inequalities in our policies, particularly for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) individuals?</p> <p>Intersectionality: How do multiple sources of disadvantage combine and reinforce over an individual's time within the justice system? How does intersectionality affect individual experiences and outcomes?</p>
<u>BEIS: Business, Energy and</u>	Solving the Grand Challenges facing our society	What are the benefits of international collaboration for research and innovation?

<u>Industrial Strategy (now Department for Business and Trade and Department for Energy Security and Net Zero)</u>		<p>How can the impacts of research and innovation on UK productivity and competitiveness be demonstrated?</p> <p>What are the roles and responsibilities of different sectors (including Government, academia, industry) in driving a research and innovation culture that promotes and supports UK productivity and competitiveness for all regions?</p>
<u>BEIS: Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (now Department for Business and Trade and Department for Energy Security and Net Zero)</u>	Making the UK the best place to work and grow a business	<p>Understanding the longitudinal dynamics of productivity growth? E.g. Is this episodic or continuous in most firms? What starts or shapes productivity growth episodes?</p> <p>What drives regional labour mobility and how does place impact upon individuals' life chances?</p> <p>What are the long-term effects of family friendly policies on participation and progression within the labour market?</p> <p>What role does gig/platform working play in the modern economy? How widespread is the phenomenon, how does it interact with traditional employment and what are the experiences and motivations of those participating in gig working?</p>
<u>Home Office</u>	The changing landscape of crime	<p>Changes in the opportunity structure for crime and in the drivers of the tendency to criminal behaviour, whether social, innate or environmental.</p> <p>The changing modes and operation of criminal behaviour, the size and characteristics of the offender population, and pathways into offending.</p> <p>Drivers of serious violence.</p>
<u>DfT: Department for Transport</u>	Grow and level up the economy	<p>To what extent do we have evidence on the impacts of transport investment on specific areas such as the spatial distribution of productivity or social mobility and inclusion?</p> <p>What role could the theory underpinning social welfare functions play in analysis associated to the Government's levelling-up agenda? What role could new census data play in the analysis of levelling-up?</p>

		What does recent data tell us about possible long-term demand for private cars, electric vehicles, carpooling or public transport as a substitute and how might this impact decarbonisation?
<u>DfT: Department for Transport</u>	Improve transport for the user	<p>How can we embed better evidence into our investment decisions, the impacts of investment on transport users and communities (including vulnerable and protected groups)?</p> <p>How will public transport confidence be affected as lockdown eases and use increases? What are effective techniques to reduce public transport hesitancy?</p> <p>What are likely to be the main barriers to public transport use in a post pandemic context and how can these be overcome?</p> <p>What research methods are capable of estimating which users are not travelling, since the introduction of Covid-19 restrictions? Which journeys might be being foregone or replaced?</p>
<u>DfT: Department for Transport</u>	Reduce environmental impacts	<p>How can we make public transport and active travel the natural first choice for daily activities?</p> <p>Do people who switch to active travel see benefits in broader health and wellbeing? Can longitudinal research establish or disprove a connection between outcomes?</p> <p>How and why has the trend in the number of walking trips changed over time? What can we expect in future?</p>
<u>DWP: Department for Work and Pensions</u>	Maximise employment, reduce economic inactivity, and support the progression of those in work	<p>What sort of interventions are required to address barriers to employment, to reduce economic inactivity and support in-work progression?</p> <p>How do economic cycles affect employment, unemployment, economic activity and wages? How do any effects vary for different groups?</p> <p>What is most important in preventing people from falling out of the labour market? Does this differ for different groups? Who is best placed to deliver support?</p>

		<p>In what ways do housing circumstances affect the way people move into, and remain in, work? What role is played in labour market outcomes by temporary accommodation, housing affordability, poor quality housing, insecure accommodation and the private and social rented sectors?</p> <p>What are the different ways to define and measure labour market progression and sustainable work? How does this vary by life stage and group? What are the implications for targeted policy measures in terms of health, employment and wellbeing outcomes?</p> <p>How do the characteristics, needs and experiences of older workers vary in relation to work and health? What factors affect whether older workers continue in employment? What approaches work best to maximise employment options for older workers?</p>
<u>DWP: Department for Work and Pensions</u>	Deliver financial support to people who are entitled to it	<p>What impacts has COVID-19 had on income poverty, material deprivation and the cost of living?</p> <p>How has rising inflation impacted on the living standards for different groups?</p> <p>What are the causes, consequences and costs associated with parental conflict and family breakdown? What is effective in avoiding or mitigating parental conflict and for whom? How do parental characteristics including worklessness, low skills, lack of stable housing, ethnicity, parents in the perinatal stage, LGBTQ+, being (or having been) a member of the armed forces, mental health and parents with SEND children interact with conflict and influence what works?</p>
<u>DWP: Department for Work and Pensions</u>	Enable disabled people and people with health conditions to start, stay, and succeed in work, and get financial support	<p>Which interventions for disabled people are most effective in supporting movements into work? What barriers prevent disabled people and/or people with health conditions from moving into, and progressing in, work?</p> <p>How is disability changing over time? What is the role of the benefit system in this change?</p>

		How have disabled people been affected by the recent Cost of Living challenges, compared with non-disabled people, and have they sought out extra resources to help them cope?
<u>DWP: Department for Work and Pensions</u>	Support financial resilience in later life	<p>How does financial insecurity impact later life and retirement? Who is financially insecure over the life-course? Who should prioritise short-term income over long-term pension saving?</p> <p>What factors are associated with greater financial resilience? What are the best ways of measuring financial resilience?</p>
<u>DfE: Department for Education</u>	Skills	<p>What is the impact of under-attainment for disadvantaged students on future skills needs and participation in HE?</p> <p>How has the cost-of-living affected access and participation in HE?</p>
<u>DfE: Department for Education</u>	Schools	<p>What works to reduce persistent and severe absence and why?</p> <p>How can schools and local partners work together effectively to reduce persistent and severe absence?</p> <p>What works to reintegrate pupils who are persistently or severely absent?</p> <p>What are the drivers of pupils not attending school and what factors influence pupils being at risk of becoming persistently absent?</p> <p>What is the impact of children's access to nature from an educational and wellbeing perspective?</p>
<u>DfE: Department for Education</u>	Early years and family support	How do we improve parental access to, and engagement with, family services? How do we improve connections and relationships between parents and professionals (e.g. through parental networks)?
<u>DfE: Department for Education</u>	Vulnerable children	What are the risk factors for children's involvement in serious violence, and how can these be used to target early intervention support most effectively?

		How does a child's journey through different systems of support, and the different qualities of the experiences along the way, serve to protect or expose them to involvement in serious youth violence?
<u>DfE: Department for Education</u>	Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Technology	<p>How can we adapt research methodologies to robustly measure the impact of technology in education, given its fast-moving nature?</p> <p>What are the most robust research methodologies for assessing the effectiveness of technology used for education?</p>
<u>DHSC: Department for Health and Social Care</u>	Early action to prevent poor health outcomes	New ways of identifying those most at risk (for example, predictive analysis of GP records to identify those who would benefit from early intervention, new methods of cancer screening and new approaches to diagnosing the causes of chest pains).
<u>DCMS: Department for Culture, Media and Sport</u>	Arts, Heritage and Tourism	<p>Analyse the value of AHT sector work on public health</p> <p>How has COVID-19 changed the way in which businesses in the DCMS sectors operate and what does this mean for future financial resilience and lessons learnt for future economic shocks?</p> <p>To what extent has COVID-19 and cost of living crisis impacted on the drivers for private giving and cultural organisations' approach to donations?</p> <p>Analyse to what extent the culture and heritage assets/offer act as push and pull factors in people and business decisions to move, stay or leave for a different location? What does this mean for public investment policy in culture and heritage and growth of cultural clusters?</p> <p>Analyse and explain the drivers of spatial differences in cultural engagement across the UK?</p> <p>Which methodologies could be used to more accurately forecast the wider impact of major cultural events on local economies and societies?</p>

		<p>How do wages of creative Higher Education graduates progress over time and what factors determine short and long-term wages? For example what factors can explain why arts and design graduates have some of the lowest earnings one and five years after graduation?</p> <p>What is the educational background of those working in the culture and creative industries?</p> <p>What is the proportion working in the sector that have undertaken creative courses? Is this a predictor of those that go on to work in the culture and creative Industries sectors?</p> <p>What are the possible technical solutions to link culture related datasets together, particularly given the lack of Uniform Resource Names (URN) across datasets holding cultural data?</p> <p>What sources and methodological approaches can be developed to allow for more consistent and granular data on freelancers?</p>
<p><u>DCMS: Department for Culture, Media and Sport</u></p>	<p>Civil Society and Youth</p>	<p>What social and economic value does this sector provide?</p> <p>What are engagement levels across different groups?</p> <p>Who accesses the services of charitable and voluntary organisations and social enterprises?</p> <p>What are the impacts of lower/greater rates of engagement with voluntary sectors?</p> <p>Do the challenges and issues facing young people differ regionally or for different groups?</p> <p>What are the impacts of lack of skills, employability and wellbeing among young people?</p> <p>What are the costs of not addressing these issues/improving youth outcomes?</p>

		<p>What are the benefits of and opportunities to improve youth outcomes?</p> <p>What works in improving youth outcomes?</p> <p>How widespread is loneliness?</p> <p>Who is affected by it?</p>
<u>DCMS: Department for Culture, Media and Sport</u>	Media and Creative Industries	<p>To what extent do audiences who watch linear TV engage with digital technologies such as on demand players, broadband at home, and smartphones?</p> <p>What are the characteristics of those who watch linear TV but engage very little with digital technologies? Why is their engagement low? What are the barriers and enablers for adopting non-linear TV?</p> <p>How does engagement with and perceptions of different media forms shift across demographic characteristics? What interventions could improve engagement?</p> <p>Are there geographical or other demographic differences in participation with creative industries?</p> <p>How does participation in the creative industries, and in creative activities, affect individuals' wellbeing and performance?</p>
<u>DCMS: Department for Culture, Media and Sport</u>	Sport and Gambling	<p>Assess and provide evidence for effective interventions to reduce inactivity (undertaking under 30 minutes of exercise per week for the adult population, 16+), and increase physical activity (defined as +150 minutes per week for the adult population), considering underrepresented groups and demographics, as well as the cost benefit analysis.</p> <p>Which (online) gambling behaviours and operator practices are most harmful and how can these be best mitigated?</p> <p>Is there an identifiable "lifecycle" of harmful gambling that maps how problem gamblers start and stop? If so, at which points in the lifecycle are interventions most effective?</p>

		<p>Development of longitudinal studies to better understand developing patterns of individual/group harm using rich digital data.</p> <p>What is the prevalence of gambling harm among the population and among specific cohorts? How is that expected to change in the future?</p>
<p><u>DSIT: Department for Science, Innovation and Technology</u></p>	Data Policy	<p>What are barriers to data sharing in general and for businesses and scientific/research institutions in particular?</p> <p>What are the barriers to accessing public sector data in particular?</p> <p>How should government approach public sector valuation to encourage further utilisation of datasets. What are some effective models to provide access to sensitive public datasets for research purposes.</p> <p>What impact did data regulations (linking to data prospects consultation and Impact Assessments) have on data sharing? What should we expect from the Government's proposed changes?</p> <p>What are the potential cases and market failures Privacy Enhancing Technologies (PET) might help to resolve? What are the potential barriers to their adoption? What are some of the most adopted PETs in use in the UK?</p> <p>What are the direct and indirect costs to different sizes of organisations of adopting and navigating data protection regulations?</p> <p>What role does cloud and computing play in enabling efficient research? Are there any current market failures that the government should be seeking to remedy and how could it intervene?</p> <p>How secure and resilient is data infrastructure (DI) in the UK? Which systems in the sector should be designated Critical National Infrastructure (CNI) and how? What are the risks (social and economic) to the UK of less-than-ideal levels of security and resilience?</p>

		<p>What are the trade-offs between data access, openness and security? How should we consider and measure the pros/cons, risks and opportunities of restrictions on international flows of data, such as the impact of trade restrictions? How do we identify the appropriate balance between a healthy, competitive market with ensuring that rules are in place to ensure the safety and resilience of the data infrastructure and its users?</p> <p>What is the impact of data security measures on international data flows?</p> <p>What are the benefits of securing data adequacy with the rest of the world? What is the added value of data adequacy, especially to small and medium firms, in comparison to using alternative transfer mechanisms such as standard contractual clauses? Do businesses use such contractual clauses even where data bridge (adequacy) agreements are in place, and if so why.</p> <p>Are there any benefits to data localisation - economic, security, scientific and tech leadership? What are the costs?</p>
<u>DSIT: Department for Science, Innovation and Technology</u>	Digital Economy Unit	<p>Which groups are vulnerable to which types of digital exclusion?</p> <p>What research and social experimentation can quantify harms and impacts of harmful online practices with a view to develop best practice principles and regulation?</p>
<u>DSIT: Department for Science, Innovation and Technology</u>	Security and Online Harms (SOH)	<p>What types of harmful content exist online, and what is the impact to children's offline behaviour?</p> <p>What novel research approaches can be deployed to help effectively measure the impact of online harm beyond typical quantitative survey methods? How could these be used to measure the wider impacts of Online Safety Legislation?</p> <p>What evaluation methods/ tools can be used to measure the impact of media literacy interventions on citizens' attitudes and behaviours online in a robust way?</p>

		<p>What are the direct impacts of the harms of online mis/disinformation and what types of online mis/disinformation are most harmful? How do these impact individuals, wider society and the democratic process (whether physical, psychological health, civil unrest, UK security, elections)?</p> <p>What are the long-term outcomes of exposure to online mis/disinformation for the individual and society?</p>
<u>DSIT: Department for Science, Innovation and Technology</u>	Government Office for Life Sciences	<p>Evidence on inequality of the impact of the diseases across different population groups.</p> <p>Evidence on inequality of access to and benefit from treatments.</p> <p>Evidence on the prevalence of long-term conditions associated with the disease areas covered by the healthcare missions (cancer, ageing, dementia, mental health, respiratory disease, obesity, addiction). Further, we would like to understand what links exist between these disease areas: whether there are mutual risk factors or whether any of these disease areas are a risk factor for another.</p>
<u>DSIT: Department for Science, Innovation and Technology</u>	International Research and Innovation	<p>What impact do UK research professionals and academics have overseas?</p>
<u>DSIT: Department for Science, Innovation and Technology</u>	Science, research and innovation	<p>Effective funding models: What funding models are most effective and for what type of research (e.g., tightly controlled spending versus flexibility)?</p> <p>Evaluation methods for RDI programmes: What new methods and approaches are emerging to understand the short-term and long-term impact of public sector RDI investments?</p> <p>RDI outside of the Greater South East: How can the government boost RDI outside of the Greater South East to boost productivity, pay, jobs and living standards? Also, how can the UK attract RDI investment in these clusters from private actors?</p>

		<p>Ensuring the UK has the right diversity in the Science & Technology (S&T) landscape: How can the UK RDI system be mapped thematically and usefully (systems mapping as well as geographical mapping)? What have previous attempts achieved and how? How can gaps in the system be identified?</p> <p>Financial sustainability of research: What impact would various changes to the long-standing approaches to research funding have on research sustainability?</p> <p>Reduced bureaucracy of research and innovation funding: What approaches work to reduce 'unnecessary' bureaucracy in government funded RDI programmes?</p>
<u>HM Treasury</u>	Labour market	<p>What is driving the rise in health-related labour market inactivity? And what policies could be used to tackle this?</p> <p>How do financial incentives affect individual labour market decisions and how do these vary, for example across people with different characteristics, time and wider economic factors.</p>
<u>HM Treasury</u>	Tax	<p>Estimates of the impact of public health taxes, such as the soft drinks industry levy, on social outcomes including health outcomes, in the UK and internationally.</p>
<u>HM Treasury</u>	Public spending and public services	<p>How can the government better understand the interactions between different areas of spending, for example between early years, health and welfare?</p> <p>How have the drivers of welfare spending (e.g. demographics, health, employment rates) changes, and how are they likely to change, over time? How do these interact with other areas of government policy?</p>
<u>HM Revenue and Customs</u>	Data sharing	<p>How can HMRC best collaborate on research or analysis that brings together data from different departments and public bodies?</p> <p>What issues arise from sharing data with external/commercial partners and organisations?</p> <p>How should government utilise other data sources from third parties, are there any concerns or benefits from government knowing more about its citizens?</p>

<u>Women and Equalities Committee / Home Affairs Committee</u>	Violence against women and girls	The prevalence and types of VAWG in different communities across the UK.
<u>Senedd Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee</u>	Modal shift and active travel	No specific questions given. Register expertise and research insights here .
<u>Food Standards Agency</u>	Understanding consumers and our wider society	<p>How do consumers view and understand the food system, and balance their choices against multiple competing factors (including safety and standards, nutrition and health, choice, availability, affordability, sustainability, and welfare)?</p> <p>What impact do food insecurity and other disparities have on the consumer and the food system?</p>
<u>Office for Statistics Regulation</u>	Produced	<p>How does the quality of statistics and communication of this quality influence public confidence in the statistics?</p> <p>How should the quality of statistics be conceived, measured, and communicated to support users in selecting statistics that are most appropriate for their needs?</p> <p>Building on the work of others, how should we understand and measure the value of statistics and data used as evidence, and what influences this?</p>
<u>Office for Statistics Regulation</u>	Used	<p>Who is using official statistics, where do they find them, how are they being used, and what influences this?</p> <p>What do people look for in statistics or data being used as evidence to have confidence in using them, and how can we build this confidence?</p> <p>What makes a statistic or data vulnerable to misuse, in what contexts is this more likely (including who is most susceptible to this and why), and how is this best addressed?</p>

		<p>What are the impacts when statistics or data are misused, how does misinformation propagate?</p> <p>How can public confidence in statistics or data be maintained in the face of misuse?</p>
<u>Office for Statistics Regulation</u>	Valued	<p>What does it mean for statistics to serve the public good, and how might this be measured and communicated?</p> <p>How can views from ‘the public’ be brought into this conversation, respecting that there is no single homogenous group and there will be many varied perspectives?</p>
<u>Office for Statistics Regulation</u>	Cross-cutting interests	<p>How does the way that statistics are produced influence the value that users get from them, and how can this be addressed to maximise value?</p> <p>How may advances in wider society (such as the increasing sophistication of large language models) influence how statistics are produced, used, and valued?</p> <p>How are statistics valued and used in the wider evidence landscape, such as in comparison to privately produced statistics, anecdotal evidence or management information, and what influences this?</p> <p>How does the communication of statistics influence their use and how they are valued?</p> <p>What factors ought to be considered in the communication of statistics, for example the audience, uncertainty around the estimates?</p> <p>How well or poorly do statistics represent society, and what are the impacts of this on how they are used and valued?</p>