The UK Investigator's Field Guide

for Unlocking Public Records

PublicInsights

Table of Contents

Why the UK Is Different	3
What Public Records Can Tell You	4
Addresses	4
People Subjects are Connected To	4
Business and Financial Links	4
Ownership Clues	5
Lifestyle and Location Indicators	5
Search Limitations to Remember	5
Public Record Discovery: Sources and Strategies	6
Electoral Roll	6
Planning Applications	7
Business Records	9
Rental Licensing Registers	12
Insolvency and Bankruptcy Records	14
UK Company Liquidations and Disqualifications	16
School Register	18
Charity Register	20
Professional Registers	22
Sports Records	23
Land Registry	25
County Court Judgments	27
Wills and Probate	29
Tying It All Together	30
Mapping Connections and Networks	31
Shared Addresses	31
Company Networks	31
Spotting Red Flags Early	32

Fred	quent Address Changes	32
Unu	ısual Rental Activity	32
Sus	picious Business Patterns	32
Fina	ancial Stress	33
Date	a Gaps	33
How	v to Search for Red Flags:	33
A Step-k	by-Step Case Example	34
Scei	nario	34
Step	o 1: Initial Name Search	34
Step	o 2: Confirm Address History	34
Step	o 3: Investigate Business Links	34
Step	o 4: Check for Rental Income	35
Step	o 5: Review Lifestyle Clues	35
Out	come	35
Final The	oughts and Getting Started	36
Prac	ctical Tips for Getting Started	36
Auto	omated Advantage:	36
War	nt to Go Further?	36

Why the UK Is Different

Public data is everywhere, but most investigators quickly learn that *access doesn't mean* ease. This is especially true in the UK.

Most OSINT platforms focus on social media and breach data, where there is an abundance of data. There are invaluable sources, but not enough when you're trying to find out where someone lives, what properties they're linked to, or whether they're hiding assets.

When it comes to consumer data, these solutions tend to have a lot of data for US citizens, where personal data is far more accessible. There are public databases of arrests, vehicle movements, and property ownership, usually available through data brokers. Investigators can plug in a name or phone number and obtain a full picture almost instantly.

Here in the UK, it's a different story. Many categories of data simply aren't publicly available, like arrest records and vehicle ownership data. There's also not the same ecosystem of commercial data brokers collecting publicly available information at scale.

Our public records are more limited and far more fragmented. They are scattered across hundreds of sources, often unindexed, and rarely built with investigators in mind. Planning applications, electoral roll data, landlord registers, insolvency filings; they're all out there, but they're scattered across hundreds of portals. Some are searchable by name, some only by address. Some are hidden in PDFs. A property might have had a planning application submitted in someone's name, but that name might be buried in a PDF, invisible to search engines.

As a result, most global OSINT platforms don't fully serve the UK market. They weren't built to pull data from council portals, parse local records, or surface unlicensed rental properties. And even UK-based data brokers tend to focus on contact enrichment, not investigative depth.

That's why this guide exists.

It's built for UK investigators who need to trace people, properties, and connections using the public data actually available here. It won't cover every source in the UK, but it will show you the ones that matter most, where to find them, and how to link them together.

If you've spent hours going through council portals or chasing scraps of information across multiple sites, you'll know why this matters.

What Public Records Can Tell You

Public records can reveal a lot during an investigation, but only if you know what's available and how to use it.

Local councils, government agencies, and regulators all hold useful information, but it's rarely centralised and often hard to search. Still, if you know where to look, public records can help you build a strong profile of a person or business.

Here's what they can tell you:

Addresses

- Electoral roll data can confirm current and previous addresses, as well as who else may live there.
- Planning records often show links to primary and second homes, rental properties, or new purchases.
- HMO and selective licensing registers list landlords and their rental addresses, and also include the landlord's home address in many cases.

People Subjects are Connected To

- Electoral data can show co-residents.
- Business and professional licensing records often reveal partners, co-owners, or shared addresses.
- Charity trustees, school governors, and football club rosters can suggest local or professional ties.

Business and Financial Links

- Companies House shows directorships, control of companies, and registered addresses.
- Confirmation statements help identify minority shareholders who aren't otherwise searchable.
- The Individual Insolvency Register shows bankruptcies and financial issues tied to named individuals.

Ownership Clues

- Planning applications often include the name of the person submitting them, even if they're not on the title.
- Business records help uncover indirect property ownership via companies.

Lifestyle and Location Indicators

- Sports club rosters, especially at local and amateur level, often show where someone plays or coaches.
- School governance roles or charity work can help link someone to an area, even if they're not listed on the electoral roll.
- ICO registrations confirm when a business or sole trader is actively operating.

Search Limitations to Remember

- Most council portals allow address-only searches, making direct name searches impossible.
- Electoral roll data is partial and quickly becomes outdated.
- Companies House requires separate steps to reveal minority shareholders (reviewing confirmation statements).

Each source has its limitations, but used together, they can provide a clear view of a person's life, assets, risks, and connections.

Public Record Discovery: Sources and Strategies

Finding someone's residential or business address is often the first step in an investigation. In the UK, it's not always straightforward.

There's no central database you can search by name and get every property linked to a person of interest. The Land Registry won't tell you who lives at a property unless you already know what to look for. And most council tools only let you search by postcode or street, not by person.

Still, there are ways to find address links that matter. You just need to know where to look and what the limitations are.

Electoral Roll

The electoral roll is the most direct way to confirm the primary residence for someone in the UK. Everyone registered to vote appears on the electoral roll, which includes 43.7 million people. The edited version, also known as the open version, is sold to vetted companies and includes people who haven't opted out, which includes 16.3 million people.

It won't give full coverage, but when a name is listed, it can confirm:

- Current or past addresses
- Who else was living at that address
- Address history across different towns

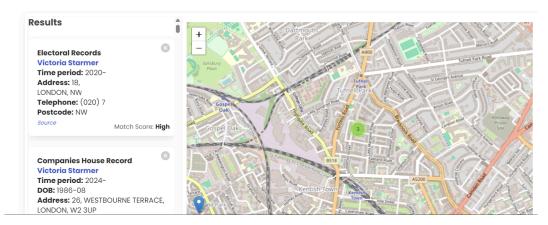
It's also useful for ruling out matches when you're dealing with common names.

How to Search:

Use specialist sources like <u>Public Insights</u>, <u>192</u>, <u>UK Phonebook</u>, or <u>Genes Reunited</u> to search for voters by name and location simultaneously.



CRADLE



Limitations:

- The edited roll excludes roughly 37 million (63%) opt-outs, leading to incomplete data.
- The full register is published once a year and is updated every month; however, many citizens only update around election time. This makes recent moves invisible.

Investigative Use-Case:

Ideal for quickly confirming current/past residency and co-residents.

Planning Applications

A lot of people submit planning applications for properties they own, are buying, or plan to develop. These can include the name of the applicant, their home address, and sometimes the architect or agent acting on their behalf.

Planning records usually show who submitted an application. Over 10 million applications available in searchable portals are tied to specific properties, and the name of the applicant can be listed either in the searchable fields or buried inside attached PDFs.

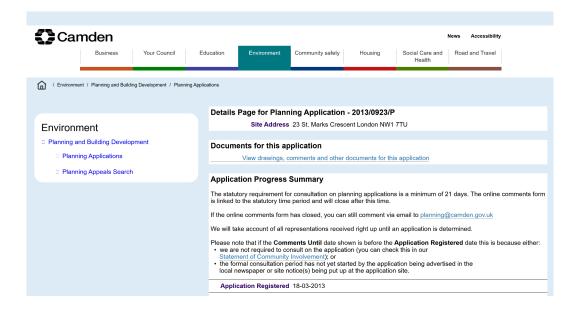
This is a powerful way to:

- Find second homes or development properties
- Discover ownership when you don't have an address to search in the Land Registry
- Spotting new ownership before it shows on Land Registry

Uncover connections that would otherwise go unnoticed

How to Search:

When searching manually, navigate to each council's planning portal. Investigators can then enter a street name or postcode to find relevant applications. A limited number of council portals may enable users to search by an applicant's name.



You can enter a postcode to find the correct council to search manually <u>here</u> and <u>here</u>.

Alternatively, Public Insights maintains a list of links to council planning portals here. Public Insights' tools Cradle and Canvas can also search this data. While planning applicants sometimes aren't easily searchable due to councils embedding them in PDFs, Cradle extracts applicant names from both portal fields and the PDFs, making it easier to link people to properties.

Limitations:

- Names in PDFs are often unindexed and require manual review.
- No central national portal; meaning the data is fragmented across hundreds of sites.

Investigative Use-Case:

Uncover hidden ownership, property development, or unreported changes like extensions or conversions.

Business Records

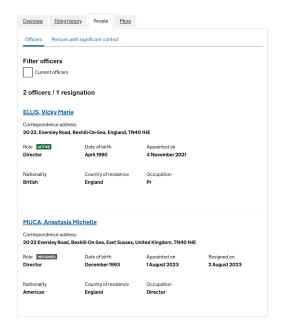
Company records can give you clues about property ownership through business links. The 5.5 million + registered UK companies tend to register their official address as either an office, their accountant's address, a virtual office, or their home address. With multiple officers and persons of significant control attached to businesses, there are tens of millions of searchable individuals linked to companies.

When the subject of an investigation is the director of a company, their residential address might appear as the current registered office or in the filing history. It's especially common with one-person companies and dormant businesses.

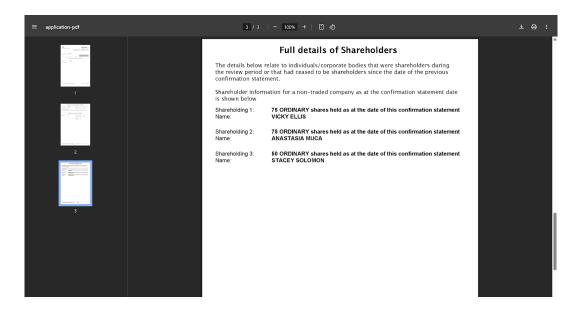
Company records can also help you connect people to properties owned by corporations. People may buy property through a company for tax reasons or privacy, and their name won't appear on the title, but it might appear in filing records.

How to Search:

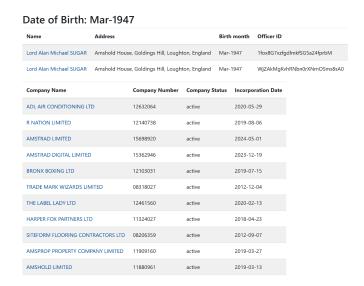
Use <u>Companies House</u> to search by company name or director name. You should then manually review the Overview, Filing history, and People tab to review officers, persons of significant control, and confirmation statements.



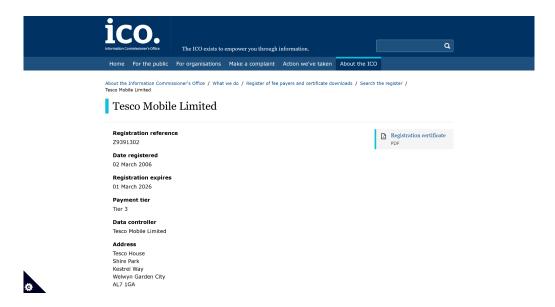
Confirmation statements can reveal minority shareholders, which may suggest a financial interest in companies that you can't otherwise see on Companies House.



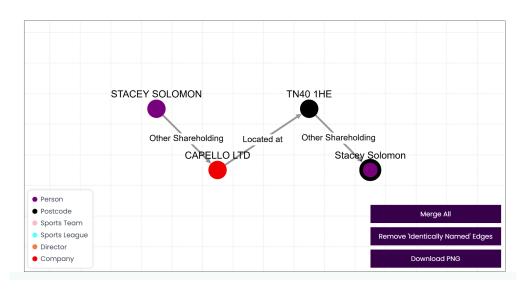
<u>Companies House Unlock</u> is a free tool that groups company directors name searches based on date of birth. Companies registered to the same officers can appear unlinked due to the current structure of Companies House, which can provide multiple officer IDs to the same individual. This may change following the introduction of ID verification in summer 2025, which will potentially group all companies linked to the same officer using one unique director ID code.



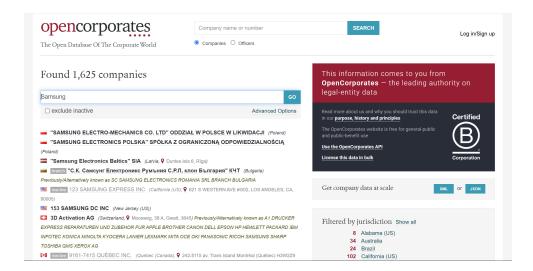
The <u>ICO Register of Data Controllers</u> is an additional source to Companies House. It contains records for over 1.1 million entities registered to handle personal data, including both sole traders and companies. The register includes addresses for these data controllers, which can include home addresses and may offer a different address to Companies House.



<u>Public Insights</u> enables investigators to search for records based on the name of a company, director, secretary, person of significant control, or minority shareholder. Cradle parses confirmation statements to reveal minority shareholders who might otherwise remain unnoticed, giving you deeper insight into hidden business interests from a single search.



<u>OpenCorporates</u> is an international company registry that can be useful for investigators looking into entities with possible international connections.



Places to Check on Companies House:

- Registered office (often residential for small businesses)
- Officer (Director and Secretary) correspondence address
- PSC (Person of Significant Control) correspondence address
- Minority shareholders listed in confirmation statements for links to the registered office

Limitations:

- Confirmation statements (shareholders) are PDFs, requiring manual parsing.
- You cannot directly search by minority shareholder name on Companies House.

Investigative Use-Case:

Discover hidden business interests or indirect property ownership.

Rental Licensing Registers

Many councils require landlords to license their rental properties. This includes:

- Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) with 3+ tenants sharing facilities. There are roughly 400k licensed HMOs in the UK
- Selective Licensing properties in designated areas established by councils to tackle issues like poor property conditions, anti-social behavior, or low housing demand

These public registers usually include:

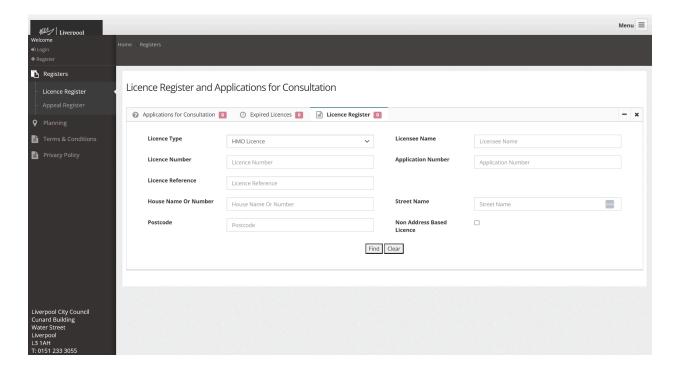
- The address of the licenced rental property
- The landlord's name (usually)
- In many cases, the landlord's home address

They're some of the best sources for linking people to properties that don't appear in other records, given the landlord is unlikely to be residing in the property. They can also expose undeclared rental income or unlicensed properties when something is missing that should be there.

In some cases, the landlord's home address is listed too, giving you another point of reference.

How to Search:

To manually search this data, you'll have to find the relevant local council's website using the property address, where you'll then be able to search a portal or download a spreadsheet, if it is made available publicly for that region.



You can enter a postcode to find the correct council to search manually here.

Alternatively, Public Insights maintains a list of links to councils with easily searchable public data available here. You can also search this data in **Cradle** and **Canvas**.

Limitations:

- Not all councils publish landlord names or addresses openly.
- Many councils only offer PDFs or Excel files.

Investigative Use-Case:

Identify undeclared rental income or properties that a subject or their associates control, where the subject may be hiding.

Insolvency and Bankruptcy Records

Financial distress leaves a trail. Insolvency and bankruptcy records can help investigators understand a subject's financial past and uncover linked addresses and associations that wouldn't appear in other sources. These records are particularly valuable when tracing individuals who have gone to lengths to avoid or don't have standard identifiers, such as voter registration or company directorships.

The Individual Insolvency Register in England & Wales, Scottish Insolvency Register, and Northern Ireland Bankruptcy Register list individuals who have entered into:

- Bankruptcy
- Debt relief orders
- Individual Voluntary Arrangements (IVAs)
- Protected Trust Deeds (in Scotland)

The Individual Insolvency Register currently lists around 75,000 people.

These records often include the individual's name, date of birth, occupation, and residential address at the time of the insolvency.

Even when the insolvency has been resolved, historical entries can help connect someone to a previous address or uncover co-located individuals (e.g. family members or business partners also registered at the same property).

How to Search:

Each jurisdiction has its own portal:

• Individual Insolvency Register (England & Wales)

Home > Search the Individual Insolvency Register > Search results

Search results

Your search returned **146** records. These may include individuals with an alias or a previous name which matches your search criteria. If you expected to see a name in the register and it is not there, <u>tell the Insolvency Service</u>.

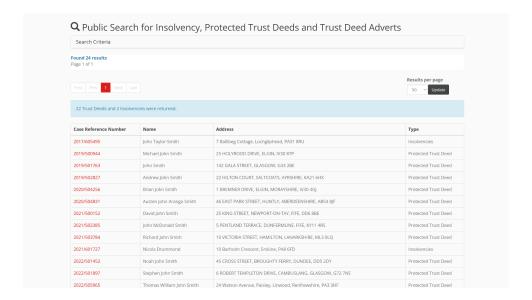
Select a Name link to view the relevant case details.

Name	Birth date	Trading details	Postcode
John Smith	No Date of Birth Found		TW18 4EP
John Smith	16/03/1977		EX18 7DJ
John Smith	22/08/1971		CH45 4LT
John Smith	24/07/1974		LN4 4GY
John Smith	19/10/1952		LN11 8RP
John Smith	23/02/1973		S60 2UW
John Smith	17/08/1969		DH2 2AH
John Smith	11/10/1989		GL51 4SA

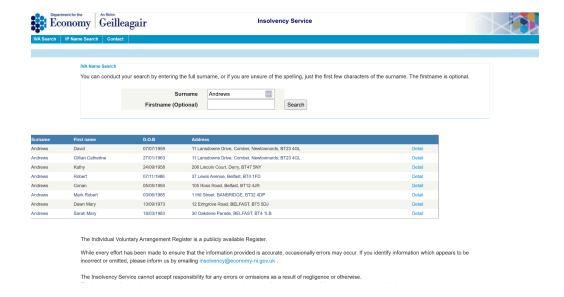
Related content

Get help from the Insolvency Service Find out more about bankruptcy and insolvency Give feedback about the Individual Insolvency Register

• Scottish Insolvency Register



• Northern Ireland Bankruptcy Register



In Cradle, these records are searchable by name and address to find address-based records for context.

Limitations:

- Records may be deleted after discharge, usually after after 12 months, depending on type and jurisdiction
- Older historical entries may not be accessible via public portals
- These portals only cover formal proceedings; informal debt or financial issues won't be visible

Investigative Use-Case:

Confirming financial distress, linking someone to a specific address, or explaining attempts to hide assets. Also useful for identifying cohabitants.

UK Company Liquidations and Disqualifications

Company liquidations, compulsory strike-offs, and director disqualifications offer valuable clues about financial mismanagement, dissolved businesses, or attempts to evade responsibility through shell companies or phoenixing (restarting under a new company).

While these records don't always directly link to a home address, they help build a picture of a subject's financial conduct, risk exposure, and business associations. In many cases, failed

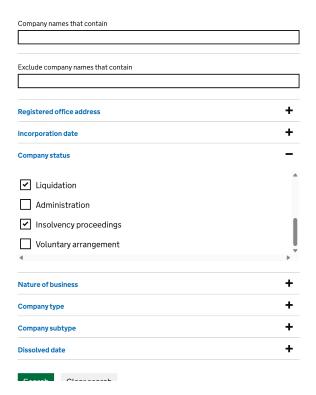
companies share addresses or directors with active ones, giving investigators a way to map historical links.

Director disqualification records, in particular, can point to:

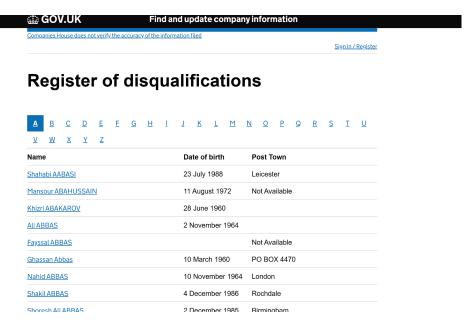
- Fraudulent or unfit trading behaviour
- Individuals trying to hide their involvement in companies
- Patterns of company collapse under the same individuals

How to Search:

Compulsory Strike-Offs & Liquidations - Use <u>filters in the advanced search of</u>
 <u>Companies House</u> to limit results to companies with a status of dissolved, liquidation, or insolvency proceedings. Check the filing history of results for strike-off actions, insolvency notices, and winding-up orders.



Disqualified Directors - Use the <u>Disqualified Directors Register</u> to search by name.
 This reveals the disqualification period, reason, and the associated company.



Limitations:

- Disqualification records only appear for directors formally banned from serving
- Companies House doesn't clearly link dissolved companies to active ones unless manually traced

Investigative Use-Case:

Reveal patterns of failed businesses tied to the same person or address, identify high-risk individuals, and build context around business failures. Useful in fraud and due diligence investigations.

School Register

Publicly available registers of school governors, trustees, and senior staff can help confirm town-level links, especially when other records are sparse.

While not as comprehensive as other public records, these registers can:

- Place a subject in a specific town or region
- Confirm recent community involvement
- Reveal affiliations that might support lifestyle profiling
- Connect individuals to others in local leadership or governance roles

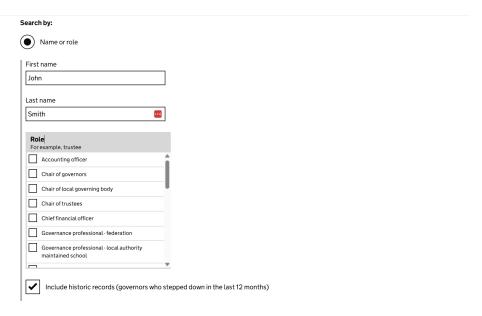
These are especially helpful for early-stage investigations, tracing people with minimal online presence, or validating information from other datasets.

How to Search:

The UK Department for Education maintains a central school database, <u>Get Information</u>

<u>About Schools (GIAS)</u>, with information on every school in England. Search by school or governor name to view:

- School governors roughly 250,000 in England
- Headteacher and senior staff roughly 55,000 in England
- School address and type



Limitations:

Records for governors only include the school name and school address, providing a
potential town of residence for a subject, but not their personal addresses

Investigative Use-Case:

Use school governance roles to confirm local ties, highlight involvement in leadership roles, or find community links where address and business records are lacking.

Charity Register

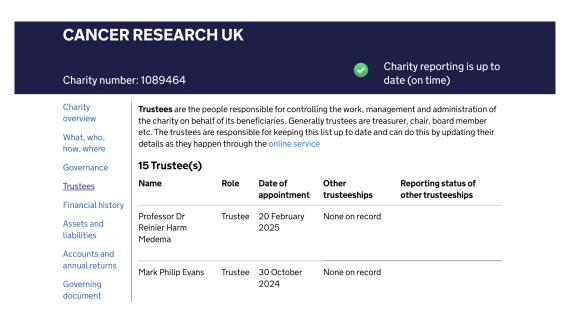
Charity records can surface useful information about individuals involved in nonprofit work, often revealing town-level locations, professional roles, and affiliations with other trustees or organisations. There are roughly 900,000 trustees connected to the 400,000 charities registered in England and Wales.

Though rarely linked to home addresses and not always central to an investigation, charity roles can:

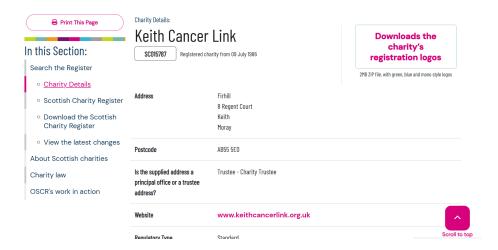
- Confirm a subject's presence in a specific town or region
- Highlight interests or causes they're publicly associated with
- Reveal professional relationships with other trustees or organisations
- Provide leads when no company or electoral data is available

How to Search:

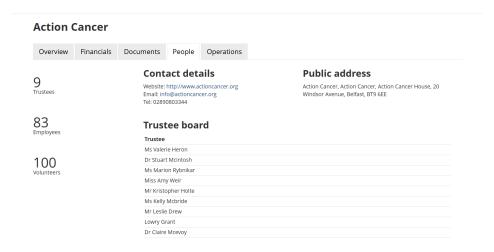
 The Charity Commission <u>Register of Charities</u> for England and Wales enables investigators to search by charity name to see trustee names, charity purpose, and address. You cannot search the register of charities by trustee name.



 The <u>Scottish Charity Register</u> lists registered charities in Scotland but will not list trustees until January 2026.



 The <u>Charity Commission for Northern Ireland</u> is a searchable database of charities and trustees, searchable by charity name only.



 Cradle from <u>Public Insights</u> allows name-based searches of charity trustees to surface community roles without previous knowledge of ties to a charity.

Limitations:

- Only town or business addresses are usually shown, rarely a home address
- Trustees are generally not searchable via name alone on government portals
- Records may be outdated if charities have not filed recent updates

Investigative Use-Case:

Useful for validating town-level location, confirming interests, identifying community ties through professional or personal affiliations, and mapping networks through shared board membership.

Professional Registers

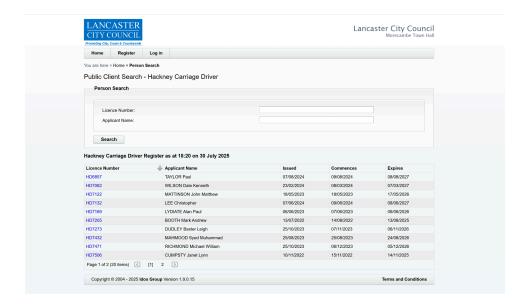
Many professions in the UK require individuals to be registered with a regulatory body. These public registers often list names, work addresses, and sometimes home addresses, offering a valuable window into employment, qualifications, and location.

They're especially useful when:

- Verifying current or past employment
- Identifying secondary income streams
- Confirming a subject's profession or workplace
- Locating people with limited online presence
- Exposing undeclared work.

How to Search:

- Industry-Specific Registers: Some commonly used professional registers include:
 - GMC Medical Register (Doctors)
 - o GDC Dental Register
 - HCPC Register (Health & Care Professions)
 - SRA Roll of Solicitors
- Council Licensing Pages: Some councils maintain registers of licensed professionals (e.g. taxi drivers, landlords, or therapists) with names and addresses, such as this Lancaster Council example.



 Cradle from <u>Public Insights</u> consolidates selected professional registers and allows investigators to search by individual name, helping surface links to current jobs, workplace addresses, and regulatory status.

Limitations:

- Many registers only list work addresses, not residential ones
- Licensing information is sometimes only available regionally via local councils or by request

Investigative Use-Case:

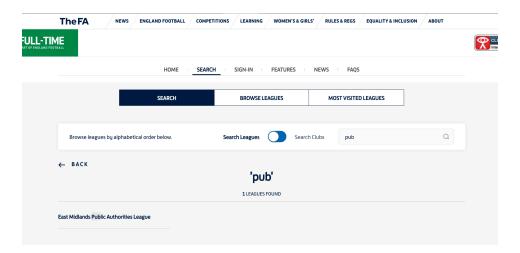
Ideal for confirming occupation, identifying employers, and flagging undeclared secondary employment or income streams.

Sports Records

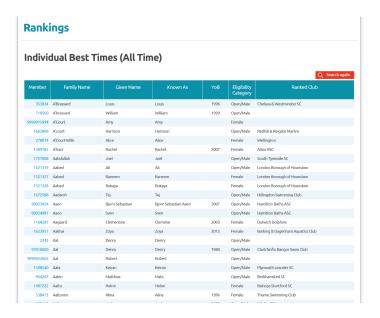
Membership in sports clubs and achievements for sporting events can reveal a subject's current town, personal interests, or even provide a lead on where they're likely to be found in person. These records are particularly helpful when traditional sources don't surface a residential address, such as when someone lives at their parents' home with limited financial activity.

How to Search:

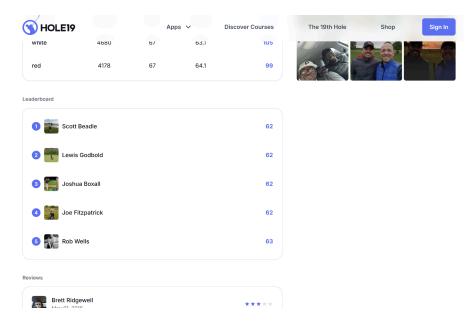
 Football Club Rosters: FA Full-Time enables investigators to search for players linked to football teams, from grassroots to semi-professional level, by the name of teams.
 There are around 90k players currently connected to these clubs.



 Swimmers: Swimming Results provides competition times and locations for over 600,000 athletes.



• **Golf Records:** <u>Hole19</u> is a golf app showing leaderboards at local clubs. These lists may include subjects if they have played that course.



Cradle from <u>Public Insights</u> lets users search for sports records and club membership
by athlete name. This includes players from professional, semi-pro, and amateur
teams, offering a way to link people to towns and social groups.

Limitations:

- Coverage varies across sports, teams, and leagues
- Most records list only name, team, and town, rather than full addresses

Investigative Use-Case:

Spot location patterns, build lifestyle profiles, or locate hard-to-find individuals who may not appear in formal records.

Land Registry

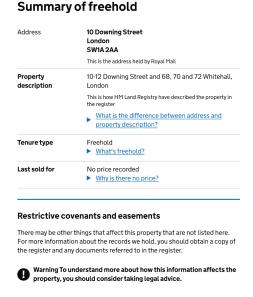
Land Registry records are the official source of property ownership in the UK. They tell you who owns a property, when it was purchased, and how much was paid (if bought after 2000). For investigators, it's a critical way to confirm ownership when the address is already known. These records reveal:

- Property ownership (individuals or companies)
- Purchase price and transaction history
- Mortgage or charge details (via additional documents)

- Leaseholds and freeholds
- Sale dates and transfer of ownership

How to Search:

England & Wales: You can search for property information on the **HM Land Registry portal** using a postcode or street address. Each title deed costs £7 and is delivered as a downloadable PDF.



Scotland: You can buy title sheets and plans for any address for £3 using the Land register.

GLENCARSE HOUSE, GLENCARSE, PERTH PH2 7LF

Title number	PTH14343		
Address	GLENCARSE HOUSE, GLENCARSE, PERTH PH2 7LF		
Last purchase price	£2,350,000		
Last purchase date	3 May 2023		
Land register	Registered		
Interest	Ownership What's This?		
	Ownership <u>What's This?</u> Residential <u>What's This?</u>		
Property type Historical prices for	Residential What's This?		

Northern Ireland: For £5 you can inspect the <u>Land Registry</u>. If you search by address and the land is registered, you'll see the current registered owner and previous owners. If you know the name of a former owner, you can also search for their name in the Index of Names, which will show whether a deed created by that person has been registered in ROD and the property it relates to. Unfortunately, this data cannot be searched online and must be handled over the phone or in person.

Limitations:

 You must already know the address, as the portals don't support name-based searches

Investigative Use-Case:

Best for confirming ownership, sale history, and potential links between companies or individuals and known properties.

County Court Judgments

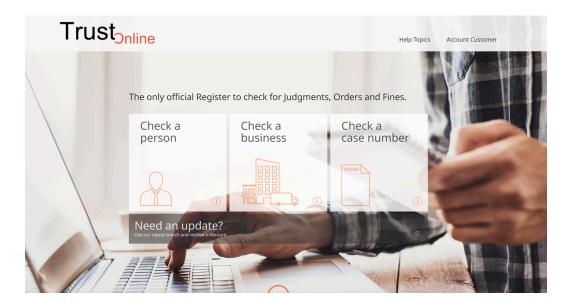
A County Court Judgment is issued when someone is taken to court for a debt and doesn't pay. These records can highlight financial distress, fraud risk, or business instability, and they often include names, addresses, and amounts owed.

While they don't confirm ownership, they're a strong indicator of someone's current or past address and offer valuable context for investigating subjects. These records include:

- Full name of the individual or company
- Address linked to the judgment
- Judgment amount
- Date of issue

How to Search:

Registry Trust (TrustOnline) lets investigators search individuals or companies by name and town. Results cost £6 per search.



Limitations:

- Paid access, not free to search
- Results may not include the full context around the claim

Investigative Use-Case:

Flag financial pressure, confirm name and address associations, or assess risk when screening individuals or businesses.

Wills and Probate

Wills and probate records can help confirm whether a subject is deceased, identify their former address, and uncover connections to relatives or inherited assets. They are especially useful in family tracing, asset investigations, and confirming timelines around a subject's death. These records can reveal:

- Full name of the deceased
- Date of death
- Last known residential address
- Executors or administrators of the estate
- Potential value of the estate

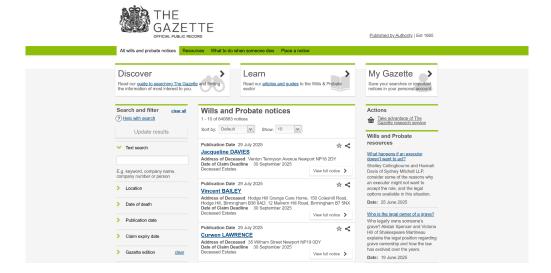
How to Search:

You can check probate records using:

<u>Probate Search</u> is a portal that enables investigators to search for deceased individuals across England & Wales by name and year of death. You can view the index for free and order copies of wills or grants for £1.50.

213 results returned							
Last ‡ name	First ‡	Date of \$ death	Date of \$ probate	Probate number †	Document † type	Registry \$ office	
Smith	John	25 May 2024	4 August 2024	1721650135300208	PROBATE	Principal Registry	Add to basket
Smith	John	29 June 2024	9 January 2025	1733240675782191	PROBATE	Principal Registry	Add to basket
Smith	John	30 October 2024	7 January 2025	1732788360029170	PROBATE	Principal Registry	Add to basket
Smith	John	19 January 2024	3 April 2024	1709207795268302	PROBATE	Principal Registry	Add to basket
Smith	John	20 November 2024	6 January 2025	1734018158354194	PROBATE	Principal Registry	Add to basket
Smith	John	6 October 2024	29 November 2024	1731439202921510	PROBATE	Principal Registry	Add to basket
Smith	John	29 July 2024	11 November 2024	1728998465894297	PROBATE	Principal Registry	Add to basket
Smith	John	25 June 2024	21 October 2024	1726569710731527	PROBATE	Principal Registry	Add to basket
Smith	John	18 September	7 May 2025	1742987198340712	PROBATE	Principal Registry	Add to basket

The Wills and Probate Notices dataset from <u>The Gazette</u> lists official legal notices of death and probate.



Limitations:

- Coverage is limited to England and Wales
- Government records require an approximate year of death to search effectively
- Some older records are not digitised and may require physical access

Investigative Use-Case:

Establish whether a subject is deceased, confirm last known addresses, or trace family members through executor listings. Helpful for identifying assets, inheritance paths, or connections between individuals in asset tracing or family-related investigations.

Tying It All Together

On their own, none of these sources will give you full visibility. Used together, they can build a reliable picture of control, access, and ownership, identifying where someone lives, where they used to live, and what properties they may be connected to.

While this guide has introduced many of these data sources individually, they haven't been listed in any particular order of importance. The value of each one depends entirely on the context of your investigation.

Next, we'll turn to how to use these records to map connections between people, companies, and addresses.

Mapping Connections and Networks

Once you've found a few addresses or company links, the next step is figuring out who else is involved. Whether you're tracing associates, building out a fraud network, or trying to understand influence and control, connections matter.

This section outlines how to map those links using public records, even when the relationships aren't obvious.

Shared Addresses

When two or more people show up at the same address across different sources, that's often your starting point. Electoral roll records, HMO licences, and planning applications may all show who was living at or responsible for a property.

Look for:

- Co-residents in the electoral roll
- Registered business addresses
- Applicants for planning permission

Patterns over time, like repeat overlaps at different addresses, can point to family or business ties.

Company Networks

Companies House is one of the most effective sources for understanding links between people and businesses. Many networks involve multiple companies sharing the same director, PSC, or registered address.

Focus on:

- Individuals listed across several companies
- Dormant companies still using the same residential address
- Persons of significant control and minority shareholders who have a financial interest in a company

Spotting Red Flags Early

Not every search will lead to a clear conclusion, but there are common patterns that experienced investigators watch for. These red flags don't prove wrongdoing on their own, but they can help you decide where to dig deeper.

This section outlines the signs worth noting during early-stage checks.

Frequent Address Changes

A person moving repeatedly over a short period may be trying to avoid detection, limit traceability, or hide assets. It can also indicate financial instability or the use of short-term lets.

Watch for:

- Multiple electoral roll entries across different towns
- Planning applications submitted at several unrelated properties
- Use of business addresses as residential listings

Unusual Rental Activity

Many investigators overlook landlord registers, but they often reveal:

- Individuals linked to multiple licensed HMOs across town
- Unlicensed properties, when licensing should apply to known rentals
- Repeat licences for similar properties through different names

This can point to subletting schemes, undeclared income, or landlord avoidance of enforcement.

Suspicious Business Patterns

Company records can highlight high-risk behaviour. Common warning signs include:

- A subject listed as a director of multiple dissolved companies
- Businesses set up and shut down in short cycles
- Different people reusing the same registered address or business name

Check the filing history, not just the active status, as it often reveals more than the current snapshot.

Financial Stress

The insolvency and disqualified directors registers can help identify:

- Repeated bankruptcies or IVAs
- Directors associated with multiple failed businesses
- Attempts to restart operations under new company names

This is especially relevant when assessing risk or due diligence on new employees, suppliers, or business partners.

Data Gaps

Finally, the absence of data where you'd expect it can raise questions. For example:

- A subject with no open electoral roll listing, but active company and rental data
- A landlord license with no linked Companies House record
- A planning application with missing or anonymised details

Gaps are sometimes just that, but when combined with other indicators, they can sometimes suggest a picture of concealment.

These warning signs don't always point to something serious, but they're worth flagging. They help you decide where to focus your time and which records deserve a second look.

How to Search for Red Flags:

- Search multiple council licensing registers for repeat landlord names or unusual management setups.
- Cross-reference insolvency and Companies House filings for directors repeatedly linked to failed businesses.

A Step-by-Step Case Example

To bring everything together, here's a real-world style walkthrough of how UK public records can uncover fraud in an insurance investigation. This scenario demonstrates how an investigator might use multiple sources to validate or challenge a claimant's statements.

Scenario

An insurer is reviewing a long-term disability claim. The claimant reports minimal income and no property ownership, stating they rent a small flat and are unable to work due to ongoing injury. The claims team suspects the subject may be underreporting assets and lifestyle activity.

Step 1: Initial Name Search

A search of the claimant's full name returns:

- An electoral roll entry confirming their stated flat address
- A previous listing at a detached house in a more affluent town
- A planning application filed under their name for that previous address within the last year

This suggests a possible retained interest in the property, even if it's no longer their declared residence.

Step 2: Confirm Address History

Using electoral roll data:

- The subject was listed at Address A (the detached house) until 2022
- They're now registered at Address B (the small rental flat)

The planning application for Address A, submitted just six months ago, indicates the subject may still control the property.

Step 3: Investigate Business Links

 Companies House reveals the claimant is the sole director and PSC of an active business, Company X, registered at Address A • The confirmation statement also lists a minority shareholder with the same surname (potential relative)

This suggests undeclared business activity and that the subject continues to use Address A for operations.

Step 4: Check for Rental Income

A search of the local council's HMO register shows:

- Address A is now a licensed rental property
- The claimant is named as the landlord, with their correspondence address listed as Address B

This implies that the subject may be receiving rental income from a property they did not disclose in their claim.

Step 5: Review Lifestyle Clues

- Sports club data shows the claimant as an active player in a local team, participating in games regularly
- This undermines the stated physical limitations used to support the disability claim

Outcome

The investigator compiles evidence that contradicts the subject's original statements, including:

- Ownership and control of a previously undeclared property
- Undisclosed rental income
- Active involvement in running a business
- Physical activity inconsistent with the claimed injury

The claim is escalated for further review. Public records played a key role in identifying lifestyle red flags and undeclared financial activity without contacting the subject or purchasing third-party data.

Final Thoughts and Getting Started

UK investigations rely on scanning a multitude of public data sources to determine residence, assets, and networks. Investigators need to know where to look, what to cross-check, and how to read between the lines.

Practical Tips for Getting Started

- Start wide, then go deep:
 - Begin with names, filter by geography or date of birth where possible, and look for recurring addresses
 - o Prioritise electoral roll checks to confirm primary addresses
 - Immediately follow up with planning and rental records to discover secondary addresses or hidden properties
 - Use Companies House to quickly establish business links
- Use multiple data types together No one source is perfect. The best insights come when you combine property, business, and electoral data
- Save what you find Sources change or disappear. Take screenshots or downloads of key records to keep your audit trail
- **Keep track of indirect links** A company address used twice, or a surname that shows up in two different filings, may lead you to the next breakthrough

Automated Advantage:

- Quick, centralised data extraction and visualisation
- Reduces investigation from hours to minutes, increasing accuracy and coverage

Want to Go Further?

This guide only scratches the surface. You can search every record manually, or use a tool like Cradle to query over 50 million UK public records in one place, all in a matter of minutes.

Public Insights gives you a faster, smarter way to investigate.

<u>Cradle</u> lets investigators search over 50 million UK public records by name or address.
 Instantly link people to properties, businesses, financial records, planning applications, licensed rentals, sports clubs, and more

- <u>Canvas</u> offers visual link analysis to help you map and visualise the connections between people, properties, and companies
- <u>Pano</u> is our free OCR (Optical Character Recognition) tool for London street imagery.
 Just enter a keyword or phrase, and Pano scans building signs, shopfronts, vans, and more across the city to find those words in the real world

Try Public Insights free for 7 days and see how much faster your investigations become when all the UK data you need is in one place. Sign up now at: https://cradle.publicinsights.uk/accounts/signup.