Children of the 90s Five Safes

What is the Five Safes framework?

The Five Safes framework is a set of established principles which enable studies such as Children of the 90s to provide safe research access to your data and biomedical samples. The framework originated from the Office for National Statistics has become best practice in data protection whilst fulfilling the demands of open science and transparency.

What are the Five Safes?

Safe data: data is treated to protect any confidentiality concerns.
Safe projects: research projects are approved by data owners for the public good.
Safe people: Children of the 90s staff and approved researchers are trained and authorised to use data safely.
Safe settings: a secure environment prevents unauthorised use of data.
Safe outputs: screened and approved outputs from us and from researchers that are non-disclosive.

What does this mean for Children of the 90s?

By following the Five Safes, Children of the 90s provide controlled access to sensitive or confidential data to approved researchers, meaning they access and use datasets in a secure and responsible way. The Five Safes works in parallel with our commitment to you procedures.

Safe data

Data is de-identified, by removing names, addresses and any other details that would directly identify you. A new research ID is added to a dataset before we make it available to a researcher for analysis. All data is prepared using disclosure control procedures to ensure anonymity – this means that we make sure that an individual cannot be identified in each dataset.

Safe projects

Any researcher that requests access to Children of the 90s data is required to submit a project proposal to the Children of the 90s Executive. For access to data to be granted, a researcher needs to demonstrate that their proposal is an appropriate and ethical use of the data, that it will deliver clear public benefits and that they will publish their results to enable scrutiny and promote further research.

Safe people

Only 'bona fide' researchers can access your data and they must sign a data user agreement which commits them to maintaining participant confidentiality. They must agree to adhere to current legislation on data protection, and state that they understand the controls that must be in place at their institution to keep data safe.

They and their institution (typically the university they are employed by) are required to sign a Data Access Agreement which binds them to these terms and conditions, including the requirement to maintain the confidentiality of the study participants.

Safe settings

When the data is shared with researchers, they download it and store the data file at their institution (following the strict instructions they have agreed to). Researchers are not permitted to transfer Children of the 90s data outside of the research group defined in their original project proposal.

Data received with your consent from the NHS or government departments are held securely in our Data Safe Haven which has secure office space. The Data Safe Haven is accessible

only to specialised staff trained in processing data that comes from external records and ensuring these data are de-identified before their use in Children of the 90s research.

Safe outputs
Data made available to approved researchers is de-identified. We only share the data that is required to answer their research question. Data is encrypted and securely transferred to the researcher. The researcher downloads and stores the data file at their institution (following the strict instructions they have signed up to). The dataset for each project is allocated a unique ID so cannot be used by anyone else.

Before any research using your data is submitted to academic journals for publication, the Children of the 90s Executive review any documents to ensure that no individual study participants can be identified.