



User Guide

Welcome to ALSPAC Explore - a place to discover ALSPAC data

If you are new to Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children (known as ALSPAC or 'Children of the 90's') take some time to look at the study **Overview** page (<https://alspac-data.bristol.ac.uk>).

Here you can find:

- Cohort profile papers.
- Population criteria – detailed information about participants in the study.
- Data collection events - for each population.

The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of the ALSPAC Explore website, which is red with white text and icons. The main content area is white and features the ALSPAC Explore logo, a paragraph of introductory text, and an 'Overview' section. The 'Overview' section is a table with the following data:

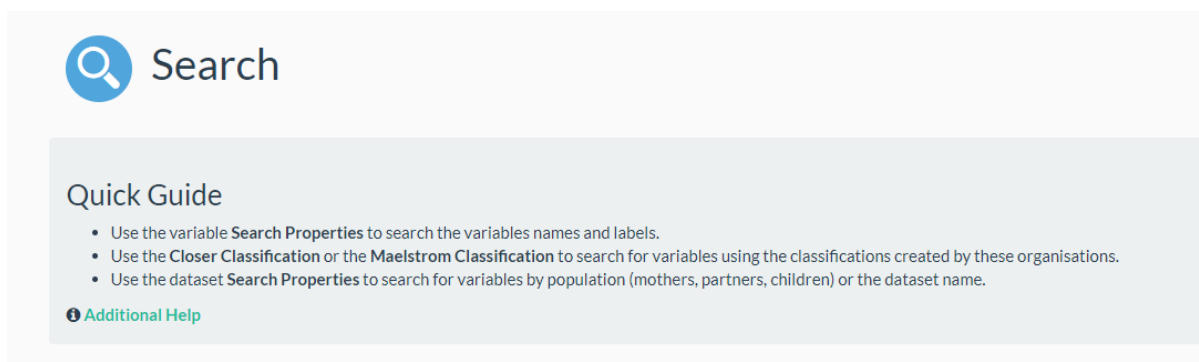
Overview	
Acronym	ALSPAC
Website	ALSPAC Website
Contacts	ALSPAC Executive (University of Bristol)
Investigators	George Davey Smith, Scientific Director Nic Timpson, Principal Investigator Lynn Molloy, Chief Operating Officer Susan Ring, Executive Director - Bioresource Kate Northstone, Executive Director - Data
Start Year	1990
Funding	Core support is provided by Wellcome, MRC and the University of Bristol. Additional funding has been obtained from multiple sources to specific analyses.

Explore Our Data

There are three pages to find and select ALSPAC data variables:

- **Search (main search page)**
- **Multi-variable Search (for quick selection of multiple variables)**
- **Browse classifications (In development: in-depth search by classification)**

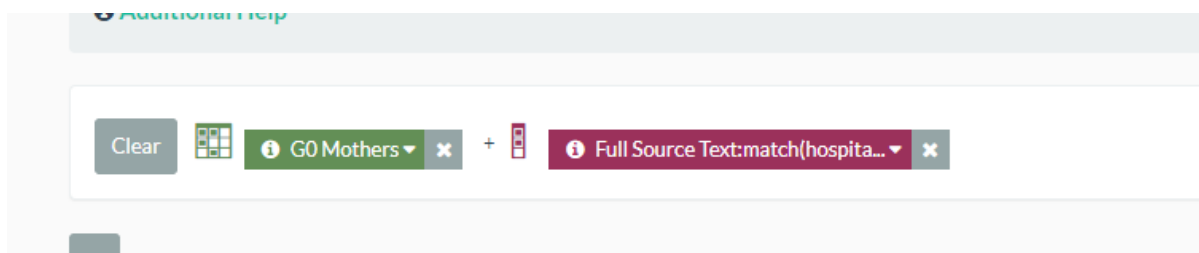
Use the Quick Guide at the top of each of these pages to get a brief overview of the main functions available. For example:



There are two toolbars which will help you understand and refine your searches:

Search Filter Bar

The Search Filter Bar is central to all searches and the contents of it determine the variables on view. It is used to build up a search according to your needs. This can be a basic search (searches for all criteria in the bar) or an advanced search (use the AND/OR operators to modify search parameters).

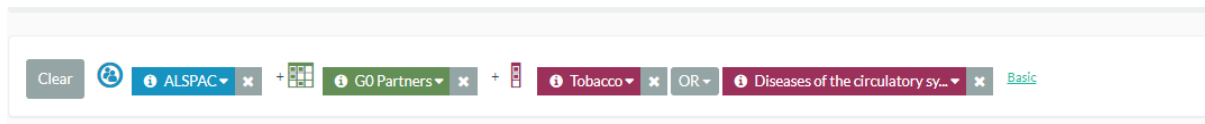


For example, the above will search for all the occurrences of 'hospital' in the Full Source Text of the G0 Mothers data only.

You can remove items without having to restart the search by clicking on the x for each box. Alternatively, if you want to begin again click on the 'Clear' button to remove all search items.

This is a dynamic search bar that can be updated from multiple search locations and is used to search all standard ALSPAC data.

Using the **Advanced** button:

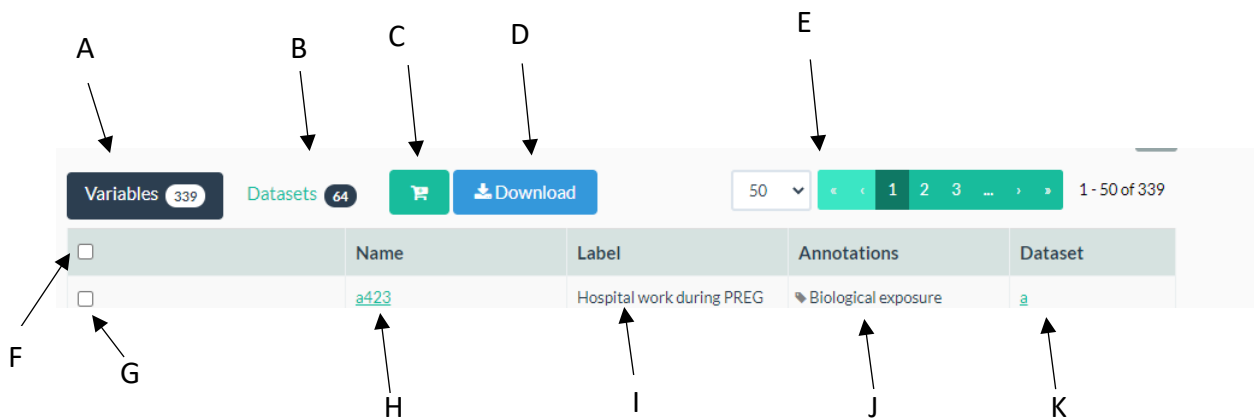


The search filter bar above shows a selection of multiple properties that have been built up to select ALSPAC variables. The variable properties are shown in purple and the dataset properties in green.

If there are more than one variable properties, you can select the 'Advanced' button to further modify the search by using the AND/OR criteria (see above image).

Search List Bar

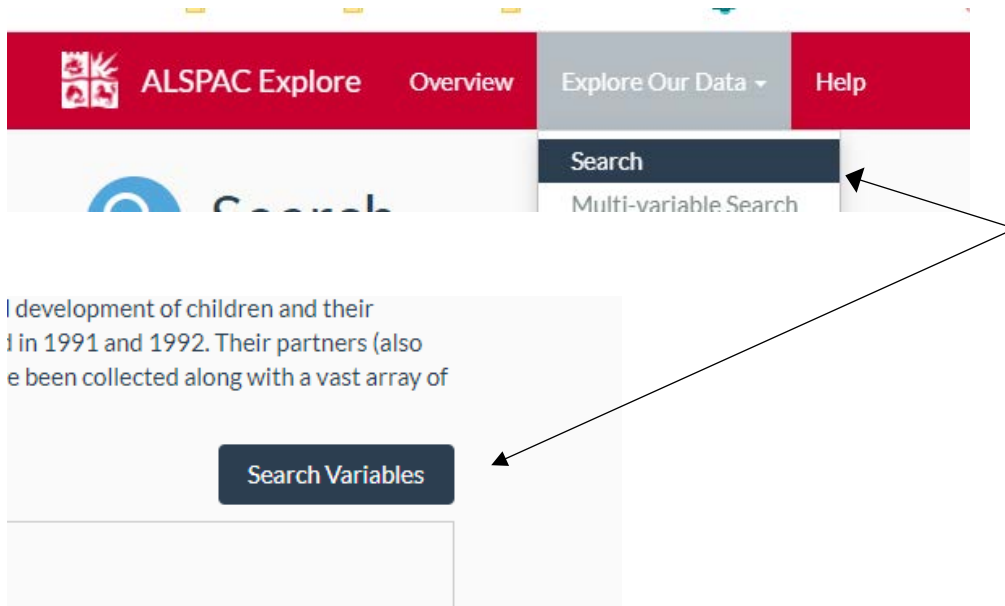
At the top of every search the Search List Bar provides information about the variables selected:



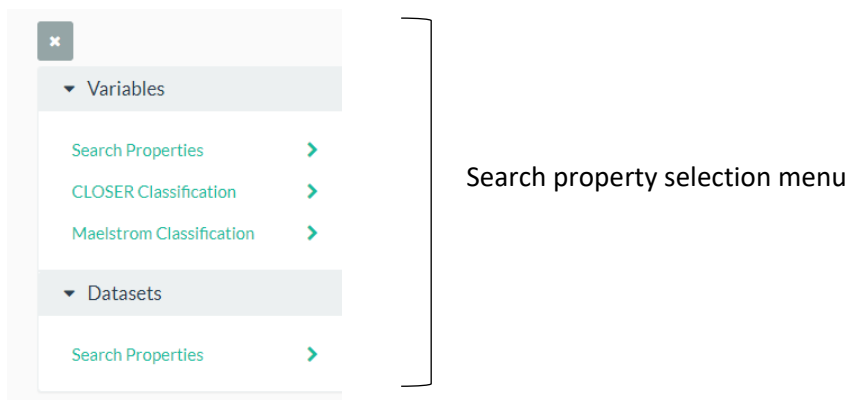
A	Variables (number selected) – the number of individual variables that have been selected
B	Datasets (number selected) – the number of datasets that hold these variables
C	Adds selected variables to the shopping cart (if none selected then adds entire search list)
D	Download selected variables as a csv to computer (if none selected then downloads entire search list)
E	Search page per 50 variables (adjustable) and can switch between pages by clicking on the page nos.
F	Tick this box to select all the variables in the search in one go
G	Select this individual variable
H	Variable name – click on this to view variable details such as label categories, frequencies and missing data.
I	Variable label
J	Classification label
K	Dataset name – click on this to see an overview of the dataset and classification areas including any supporting documentation

Main Search Page

This is the main search page to explore ALSPAC data. You can access this from the menu or button as below:



On this page the left panel has a menu to select search properties which are described below:



Variable Search Properties

The screenshot shows a web interface for searching variables. On the left, a sidebar under 'Variables' has 'Search Properties' selected, with 'CLOSER Classification' and 'Maelstrom Classification' as sub-options. Under 'Datasets', 'Search Properties' is also selected. The main area has a search filter 'Filter these Options' with 'Variables 1,726' and 'Datasets 28' counts, and a 'Display Results' button. Below are four search sections: 'Abbreviated Label', 'Full Source Text' (with a 'Clear' button), 'Variable Name', and 'Historical Variable Names'. Each section has a search input field and a tick button.

This form allows you to enter search text based on the following data items:

- Abbreviated label – the label used to describe the variable name.
- Full Source Text – typically the full question text or derivation description.
- Variable name – this is the final built file variable name.
- Historical variable name – there are some variables that have had their name changed and this searches for the previous variable name.

The text can be partial e.g. 'hospital' to find any occurrence of the word hospital in the data item. Wildcards can also be used e.g. hosp*. Type in the text into the relevant box and click on the tick



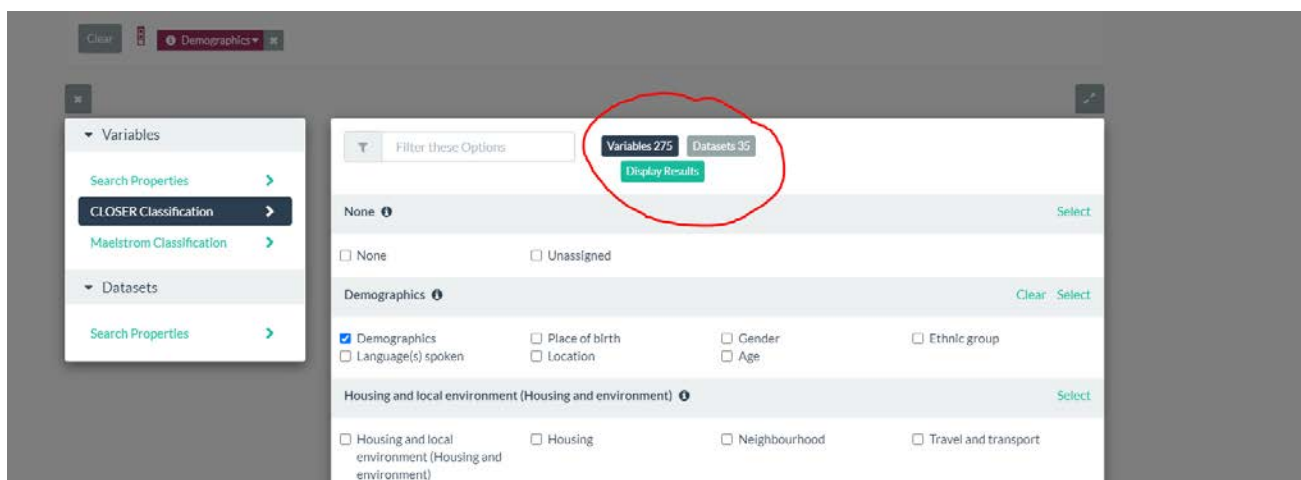
to put it into the search bar. Multiple data items can be entered into the same search.

This can then be filtered by:

- Source population
- Target population
- Built file name

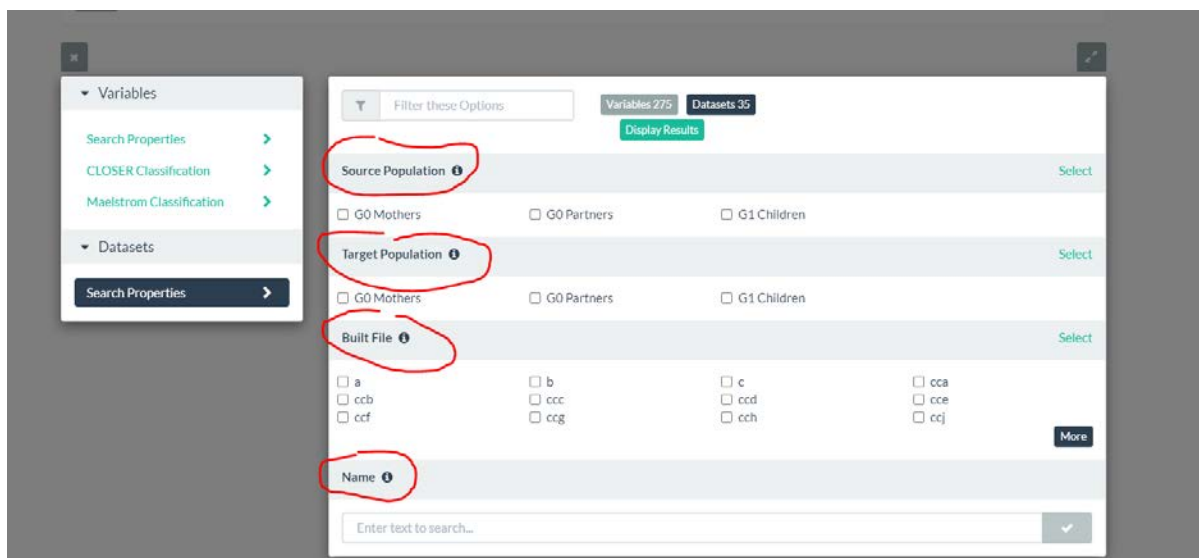
CLOSER and Maelstrom Classification Search Properties

ALSPAC data has been classified using the CLOSER (<https://wiki.ucl.ac.uk/display/CLOS/Topics>) and Maelstrom (<https://www.maelstrom-research.org/maelstrom-catalogue>) controlled vocabularies. You can select topic areas to show all ALSPAC variables that have been classified in that area. Multiple selections can be made, and the search will display all variables that match each classification selected. The Advanced search can be used to group classifications together although this would only be useful in certain cases.



The image above shows the CLOSER classification search box. Tick all those you wish to look at and then click on 'Display Results' to process the search. The 'Variables' and 'Datasets' boxes will display the number of variables and datasets that contain the topic area(s) selected.

Dataset Search Properties



The Datasets Search Properties allows you to search by source population, target population, built file name, or the built file descriptive name. If you already know the dataset name this is a quick way to select it. This will also filter your main search by the population you wish to target.

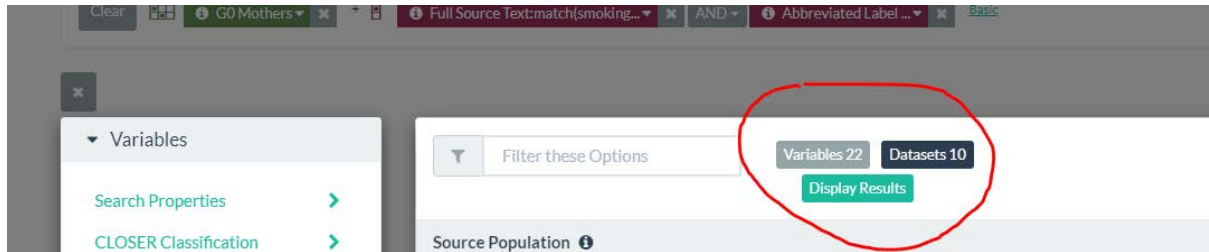
Source Population – participant type who was the source of data i.e. filled out the questionnaire or completed the clinic.

Target Population – participant type who the data refers to e.g. the mother who supplied data about their child.

Built File – this is the built file name (e.g. A, B, YPA).

Name – this is the descriptive name of the dataset that is used to describe it (e.g. Your Life Now, It's All About Your 20+).

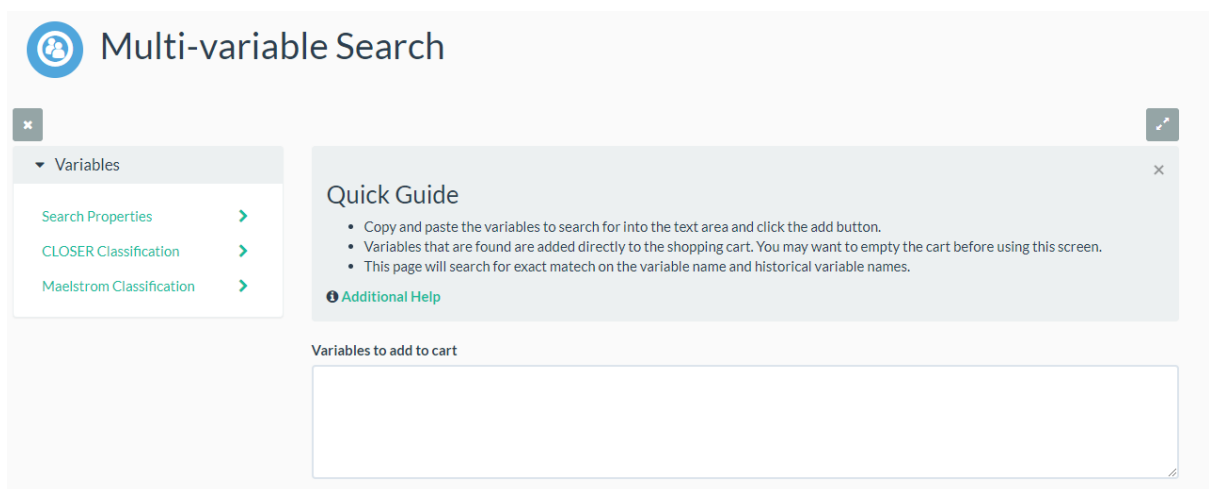
Again, the display updates automatically to show how many variables and datasets are available using these dataset search properties.



Click on the 'Display Results' to return these results in the main search window.

Advanced Search


Multi-variable Search Page



If you already know the variable names you wish to request, then use this page to copy and paste them into the text box. Click the Add button and they will be automatically added to the shopping cart.

Browse Classifications

This page displays the same classifications as those available in the main search page. The only difference is the layout and better ease of use if you wish to interrogate the data using the classification criteria.

 Search

i The classifications page allows to browse the classification system applied to the variables. ×

[← Back to Search](#)

Variable Dataset

All variable classifications [↻](#)

Variables

Search Variable Name and Label	CLOSER Classification	Maelstrom Classification
Variable properties as defined in the catalogue.	Information classification developed by CLOSER Discovery.	Information classification developed by Maelstrom.

How to find Supporting Documentation and Questionnaire PDFs

Each built file has documentation which gives more detail about how the data was collected, frequencies, forms, scales used and any other relevant information to support this data. These are available as pdfs in ALSPAC Explore. There are also PDFs of any questionnaires used to collect the data.

If you already know the built file descriptive name, the easiest way to find the documentation is by using the ALSPAC Explore Overview page.



Select the population that the built file belongs to i.e. Mother/Partner/Child:

Populations

GO Mothers

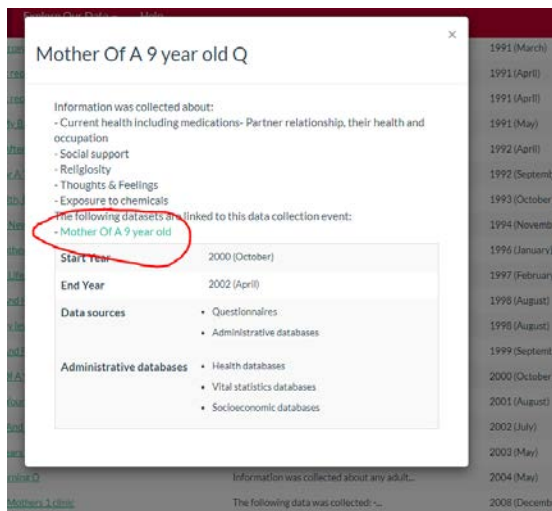
[GO Partners](#)

[G1 Children](#)

Then from the Data Collection Event list select the built file:

Name	Description	Start	End
Mother biosamples results	Data included in this file have been obtained...	1990 (July)	2015 (March)
Mother social class	Social Class Information was collected at the...	1990 (September)	1997 (January)
Your Environment Q	Information was collected about: - The home...	1990 (September)	1992 (October)
Having A Baby Q	Information was collected about: - Past...	1990 (November)	1992 (September)
About Yourself Q	Information was collected about: - Medical...	1990 (November)	1993 (August)
Your Pregnancy Q	Information was collected about: - Pregnancy...	1991 (March)	1992 (January)

This will give you an overview of the dataset and a link in green to the actual dataset description page (example shown is for Mother of a 9-year-old questionnaire):



This will take you to the dataset information page which gives an overview, documents available and breakdown of the classification of the variables. Here you can view and download the documentation and questionnaire PDFs that are available (see below).

Mother Of A 9 year old

Search Variables

Overview

Built File	p
Description	Questionnaire completed by the G0 Mother about herself at 9y 2m
Population	G0 Mothers
Data Collection Event	Mother Of A 9 year old Q
CLOSER Online Questionnaire Structure	https://discoverv.closer.ac.uk/Item/uk:alspac/63421ace-9952-40e8-bd84-594e28ef94c8
Number of Variables	520

Documents

Name	Type	Size	Modified
D1114_Ppdf	Documentation	972.75 KB	a year ago
Q1114_Ppdf	Questionnaire	308.4 KB	a year ago

It is also possible to navigate to this page using the main search facility. The dataset file name is on the far-right column of the search list and you can click on this to view that dataset overview as above.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Name	Label	Annotations	Dataset
<input type="checkbox"/>	p0001	Questionnaire sent	Questionnaire and interview-related information	p
<input type="checkbox"/>	p0002	Reminder 1 sent	Other administrative information	p
<input type="checkbox"/>	p0003	Reminder 2 sent	Other administrative information	p

'The Mother of a 9 year old' questionnaire dataset name is 'p' and can be seen above. Click on this to view the same overview page as described earlier.

How to Request Variables Using ALSPAC Explore

Download shopping cart list and email to alspac-data@bristol.ac.uk

Contact us:

If you require any further help or have any comments or suggestions about ALSPAC Explore please email alspac-support@bristol.ac.uk.