geoplace®

The Power of Place.

A world of value and possibilities, using **UPRNs** and **USRNs**

Good addressing makes life better. By knowing where to find something, exactly, we can cut costs, reduce risk, make things work better and even save lives.

Think about how the emergency services work and how traffic plans and deliveries get made. How energy companies plan cables and pipes, and how insurers look at risks near our houses and offices.

Government services, including local councils, depend on accurate addressing to pick up waste, deliver social care, and make plans for schools, GP's surgeries, new housing estates for instance.

It all depends on understanding location, precisely.

Most of us don't wonder how the emergency services know where to find us; or think about our home insurance policies being tailored to where we live; or how our council runs an efficient waste collection service – sending lorries on the most efficient route to visit every building.

But behind every one of those decisions, someone is using data that includes a Unique Property Reference Number or a Unique Street Reference Number – **UPRNs** and **USRNs.**

Who creates addresses?

By law, local authorities in England and Wales must give every property in their area an individual address. Royal Mail records those against their official postcodes.

However, on average, there are about 15 properties to every postcode – so there's also a need for a more detailed way of identifying locations. That's why all addresses and streets in Great Britain are also given a unique reference, known as a UPRN and an USRN (unique property and unique street reference numbers).

GeoPlace is the organisation that's responsible for managing the definitive database of addresses and streets in Great Britain. The GeoPlace team has a reputation for excellence, and we are seen as world experts

in managing address and street data. We pass these quality-checked references on to Ordnance Survey, which makes the data available to businesses and government departments through its AddressBase range of product, OS Open UPRN and OS Open USRN products. They are also available in the National Street Gazetteer (NSG).

You can explore your own local UPRNs and USRNs at findmyaddress.co.uk and findmystreet.co.uk

What makes UPRNs and USRNs important?

There's one UPRN for every house, school building and barn, and even physical objects we don't imagine having an address… like ponds, electricity substations and communication masts.

In a similar way, there's one USRN for every street. These references never change. From planning, to building, and on through to demolition, the UPRN and USRN are – as their name suggest – unique, so that they can be entered into databases known as the National Gazetteers.

In short, because UPRNs and USRNs are applied to physical objects and they never change, it means we can use these codes to connect datasets that, otherwise, would not match.

That opens up a world of possibilities for reducing errors, understanding information better, and presenting it in a way that makes it easier to share and measure and understand.

If there's a location involved (there almost always is), data can be matched accurately, with confidence. It means that organisations can work more closely with each other, keeping records up to date and making sure their services are delivered efficiently and securely. This improves analysis, policy, planning and visualisations too. Complex plans, projects, programmes of work and essential services always run better if they use accurate location.

UPRNs and USRNs are everywhere, and their value lies in enabling different organisations and departments to use them in limitless ways. They are the golden threads – the single point of truth – that makes it possible to link data seamlessly – to exchange information, instantly, and be confident about its integrity and currency. These are a few examples:

UPRNs enabling analysis

A developer wants to evaluate locations before submitting planning applications. UPRNs enable detailed analysis and modelling of risk, routes, local infrastructure, and the impact of change on the environment.

USRNs minimising disruption

Utilities and local authorities use the USRN to plan streetworks in a way that minimises disruption to road users, homeowners, and businesses.

UPRNs protecting privacy

A social care team needs to protect the identities of vulnerable householders, but wants to share data with a business providing meals on wheels. A set of UPRNs provides a practical solution without revealing personal details.

USRNs mapping our underground assets

A utility company wants to use USRNs to improve underground infrastructure maintenance to keep the country supplied with water, gas, electricity and communications.

UPRNs shaping policy

Accurate addressing makes a tremendous difference to analysis and policymaking. The UPRN removes doubt about the data driving decisions on communication, health, welfare, education, customer targeting – and more.

USRNs securing funding

The Department for Transport provides funding to local government's highways departments based on the actual length of road network in each area. USRNs are used in this calculation.

USRNs supporting renewable energy

Utilities use USRNs to check on planned streetworks and see how they might impact local underground heating systems, resulting in safer works for operatives and the public.

UPRNs leading to efficiency

Organisations and local authorities often have siloed departments that must work collaboratively. Education with bus services, for example; asset management with human resources. UPRNs connect that data accurately.

USRNs lighting up the neighbourhood

Local authorities use USRNs to manage all kinds of assets from properties to street furniture and street lighting throughout their area.

UPRNs verifying identity

Fraudsters may try to validate their identity with a false address. The UPRN provides the single point of truth that's needed to help mitigate fraud across central and local government.

USRNs supporting data sharing

Organisations can use USRNs to seamlessly share information about streets, street projects, and access to streets by ensuring that USRNs are integrated in their projects from the outset.

Here's just some of the organisations we've worked with…

Department for Transport   NFCC National Fire Chiefs Council   GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY   Office for National Statistics

What has changed?

Above all, accurate addressing is essential for government to work efficiently, for business to function, and for us all to benefit from improved life-services.

In April 2020, the Government Digital Service (GDS) mandated the use of UPRNs and USRNs as the standard way of referencing and sharing information about location across central government.

UPRNs and USRNs are now open datasets. That means that businesses can start using them more, too.

There's no charge to access this data, which is now royalty-free and backed up with all the support and expertise needed to use it.

Get in touch with GeoPlace

For over 20 years, GeoPlace has been handling UPRNs and USRNs on a daily basis. We create them. We match, cleanse, and help businesses to analyse them. We're the UK's foremost UPRN and USRN advisors, and one of the most accessible organisations you'll ever work with – because we believe in bringing location to life.

We can provide advice, support and services to help you start using UPRNs and USRNs in your everyday operations and projects, and in extraordinary ways, too.

So, if you need the know-how to get maximum value from UPRNs and USRNs?

GeoPlace can help.

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GeoPlace is a public sector limited liability partnership between the Local Government Association and Ordnance Survey.