

ADR England Public Insights Panel: Meeting 10 Summary Report

25 November 2025

The ADR England Public Insights Panel held its tenth meeting on 25 November 2025, 18:30 – 20:00, on MS Teams.

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1. Attendance

Facilitators: Tom Curran (Associate Director, The Social Agency), Connie Portman (Research Executive, The Social Agency), Pia Hardelid (Professor in Child Health Research and Epidemiology at UCL), Sarah Barrett (Senior Researcher at Office of the National Statistician) and Shayda Kashef (Senior Public Engagement Manager, ADR UK).

Public attendees: 12 out of 15 public attendees (referred to as panel members) were present.

2. Feedback from panel members

The purpose of the session was for Pia and Sarah to introduce their team’s research about how overcrowded housing can impact the health of babies. They wanted to find out how panel members would respond to their proposed research and their use of administrative data, as well as their priorities for findings from the research.

Part one: Research into overcrowded housing and babies’ health

Pia began by explaining what overcrowding in the home means. She spoke about the impacts of overcrowding on the home and the risks of overcrowding to pregnant women and babies’ health. Pia then touched on the reasons why some families are more likely to have limited housing choices which can lead to overcrowding (such as low or insecure income, discrimination, disability, a shortage in social housing, cost of private renting, and caring responsibilities within a family).

The presentation covered the research team's plan, such as comparing mothers and babies living in overcrowded housing with mothers and babies who are not living in overcrowded housing. Finally, Pia detailed the different types of administrative data that her research team will use: birth records and mortality records of children born between 2010-2012, and between 2020-2022; maternal hospital records for pregnant women's health from the same years; information about the household from the 2011 and 2021 Census; Energy Performance Certificates (EPC); and Council Tax Property Data.

Tom then opened the discussion to the panel and helped facilitate a Q&A.

Panel members had questions concerning four main themes:

- the risks of using data from the COVID-19 pandemic
- the meaning of overcrowding
- the groups of people that would be included in the study
- how the findings of the research will be shared with the public.

Firstly, panel members were concerned about the impacts of researchers comparing babies born between 2010-2012, and 2020-2022, due to the latter cohort being born during the COVID-19 pandemic. They raised the fact that many **behaviours which affect health – including overcrowding – were affected during the pandemic** and so it might be difficult to compare with data from 10 years prior. For example, panel members noted that things like the general use of the home, how long people spend in the home, illness spread amongst families, and the amount of contact babies have with people outside of the home, were somewhat unique to the pandemic and could throw up “wobbly” data.

“The use of the homes have drastically changed from pre-COVID to COVID so even though the same definition [of overcrowding] applies, homes are being more heavily utilised by people in general. I’m just kind of thinking, how dangerous is it for this research to compare one period with another because the use of the home is drastically different.” - Panel member

Next, one panel member needed clarification on what overcrowding means. Pia clarified the definition but acknowledged that there are two different definitions that are widely used, which can be confusing.

The largest number of questions came from panel member's concerns about which **specific groups and factors they thought ought to be included in the research.**

Specifically, panel members asked about:

- whether which babies from different **religious and ethnic groups** may be impacted differently by overcrowding
- whether the research team would account for different **norms surrounding multi-generational households**
- whether mothers and babies who were **homeless or in temporary, overcrowded accommodation** would be included.
- whether data will show whether members of households have **disabilities**, and how this might impact overcrowding
- the impact of **housing instability**, as well as overcrowding, on the health of babies
- whether researchers will consider the **effects of mould** on the health of mothers and babies
- how **energy costs** have impacted the respiratory health of pregnant women and babies.

Finally, a couple of panel members asked questions about **the outputs** from the research. One panel member wanted to see the findings from the research **disseminated to local authorities**, in the hopes that people living in overcrowded housing across different regions could be helped. Another panel member wondered if research findings would be **shared with affected communities** – including in community settings such as places of worship – to **provide advice on how to manage health issues** in these circumstances.

Responses to the research

Panel members gave **overwhelmingly positive feedback** for the research team's proposed research. They expressed that the research had good and clear intentions, and that the benefits of the study (for example, the findings which could help very vulnerable people) outweighed the risks that come with using a lot of administrative data. For some panel members, the use of EPCs and Council Tax Property Data boosted their confidence in the study. As long as the data is handled sensitively and securely, panel members were comfortable with the research team using data from lots of different sources.

"I think there's a clear, tangible outcome [of the research] that could have good benefit. So, there's sort of that clear intention that the research is for good and for what can only be described as tragic events to hopefully prevent them in the future. So, I think so long as it's obviously treated sensitively and [kept] non-identifiable, then I think it's a good use of the data."

- Panel member

Finally, Pia asked the panel what findings they would prioritise within her research. Some wanted to prioritise **understanding how babies are impacted by overcrowding in their first year of life** (including sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)), while others wanted the research to reveal more about **babies who are stillborn**.

Tom ended the first part of the session by thanking Pia and Sarah. Participants then took a five-minute comfort break.

Part two: Life after the ADR England Public Insights Panel

In the second part of the session, Tom and Shayda spoke to the panel about the panel coming to an end, and future opportunities for panel members.

Firstly, Tom asked panel members if they were interested in making a short video on their experiences of the panel. These videos would help ADR UK to explain life on the panel to newly recruited members, to advertise the panel at conferences and other events and to be used as a resource to support public engagement in data research. There was notable interest from panel members in contributing a video.

Shayda then presented the different opportunities for the panel members to stay involved with ADR UK after the panel formally ends. This included:

- entering a panel of community representatives
- being a public contributor.

Tom wrapped up the session by thanking the panel members for their time.

3. Forthcoming actions

The next (and final) session will be held in December 2025. The Social Agency will canvass availability and preferences for the next meeting. The Social Agency will share Shayda's slides with panel members and take questions via email.

Pia, Sarah and the rest of their team plan to use this feedback to discuss impact pathways once results are available with the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, local authorities and any other relevant government departments and non-government partners.

Shayda and Tom shared information on how to register as a public contributor for research funded by ADR UK, HDR UK and DARE UK. Shayda shared her contact details for panel members to get in touch if they have any questions.