

# ADR UK's approach to engaging with children and young people



June 2023

ADR UK is committed to embedding public engagement in our research projects, as outlined in our [Public Engagement Strategy](#). As part of this, we seek to ensure that the voices of children and young people are represented appropriately. There are a range of policies which aim to improve children's health, wellbeing and lives, as well as highlighting their rights such as the [United Nations Rights of the Child](#) (UNCRC) which is ratified across the UK. These policies highlight why hearing children's voices and enabling participation is so important towards improving their lives and outcomes.

ADR UK research falls within eight themes, some of which include data on [children and young people](#). These projects aim to involve children or [expert community representatives](#), such as Barnardo's, Voices of Young People in Care (VOYPIC) and Children in Scotland. We strive to include children and young people in our public engagement around data research, and ensure this engagement is meaningful, inclusive and mutually beneficial.

## Pilot study in Scotland

In 2022, the Scottish Centre for Administrative Data Research (SCADR), carried out a [pilot study](#) around engaging children and young people. In partnership with Children in Scotland, they worked directly with children to unpack their understanding of data use, research and how it is communicated. Key recommendations included:

An infographic titled "SCADR PILOT STUDY" with the central theme "Engaging with children" written in a large, cursive font. Below the title, it states "8 Recommendations". The infographic is divided into eight rectangular boxes, each containing an icon and a recommendation. The recommendations are: 1. Staff know children's rights, based on UNCRC (icon: group of people). 2. SCADR to create a child friendly leaflet about upholding children's rights when using data (icon: document with magnifying glass). 3. Researchers should work in a children's rights-based way (icon: three children holding hands). 4. Create new resources to explain to children how their data is used (icon: bar chart with speech bubble). 5. Find the best way for children and young people to influence future data research work (icon: two people with a lightbulb). 6. Researchers should ensure the data has been collected legally, ethically and stored securely (icon: document with lock). 7. SCADR to use creative and engaging ways to communicate (icon: person at a computer). 8. SCADR to build links with community groups to share their findings (icon: two people shaking hands).

It also led to a training session for researchers to encourage them to think about children's rights and ensure that these rights were considered when planning and undertaking administrative data research. The training highlighted Scotland's integration of the [UNCRC into Scots Law](#), which is centred on recognising, respecting and promoting children's rights, as well as reflecting on the findings from the pilot.

## Our ambition

ADR UK's public engagement strategy emphasises a purposeful set of activities designed to promote an ongoing dialogue about administrative data research, driven by active listening and responding. Focusing on our work with children and young people, we are keen that best practice for engaging and involving children, and awareness of children's rights, are shared across the partnership. In light of this, ADR UK is committed to:

- making its work more accessible
- involving children more frequently in research
- championing children's rights and voices in the data landscape
- responding to the views and needs of children and young people

The **following guidelines** will help to support the work in this area across our national partnerships:

1. Newly funded researchers and programmes of work should consider and embed children's engagement in their planning when relevant
2. Content creators and researchers should consult and co-create on their work with children, young people and their expert representatives where possible
3. ADR UK should support affiliated researchers with understanding how to engage with children and young people
4. Research using children's and families data should be promoted using a range of accessible and engaging outputs and channels
5. Research findings relevant to children and young people should be shared with children's groups and third sector organisations who regularly engage with children
6. ADR UK should encourage innovation and support further funding in this area
7. ADR UK should share knowledge with those working within the data and statistics landscape, and learn from others' experiences.

## Summary

We recognise that public engagement with children requires specialist skills and dedicated staffing and time, but hope that this guidance helps to build and enhance our work in this area. We are committed to seeking out and responding to the voices of children and young people in the design and implementation of research using children's administrative data, and collaborating with others working in this space to help achieve our ambitions. We will evaluate this work as part of our regular assessment of ADR UK's Public Engagement Strategy.