

ADR England Public Insights Panel: Meeting 1 Summary Report

30 May 2024

Attendance

The ADR England Public Insights Panel held its first meeting following the panel induction on 30 May 2024, 18:30-20:30, on Zoom. The meeting was facilitated by Dan Clay and Emma Martinez Daniel (Basis Social), Angela Sorsby (University of Sheffield law lecturer, research fellow at ADR UK) and Shayda Kashef (Senior Public Engagement Manager, ADR UK). 12 out of 15 public attendees (referred to as 'panel members') were present. Three panel members were unable to attend.

Agenda

1. Communicating criminal justice research with members of the public

The first part of the workshop considered how to make criminal justice terminology accessible to the public. This was led by Angela Sorsby.

Angela introduced her research looking at inequalities in the criminal justice system using administrative datasets and opened the floor for questions. The questions included:

- a. *Could you explain the difference between community sentencing and prison sentencing?*
- b. *Does your work take gender into consideration?*
- c. *Are the percentages reported based on the cases considered in the research, or weighted percentages?*

In a 'jargon busting' exercise, Angela shared some slides with common terminology in the criminal justice field that might not be well understood outside the field. In the initial discussion, panel members volunteered their understanding and definitions of these terms. Angela then discussed the definition of the terms in the criminal justice context. These terms are detailed below, along with feedback from panel members (some members were more familiar than others):

- *Community order* – seen as interchangeable with community payback and relates to work as a punishment or reparation
- *Community payback*
- *Unpaid work* – some participants expressed an initial confusion, associating unpaid work with voluntary work, but it was clarified that unpaid work in this context is mandated as a form of punishment and community reparation. There was also a

suggestion that unpaid work could be perceived as a “privilege” for prisoners behaving well, aiding their rehabilitation

- *Accredited programme* – a programme leading to an accreditation or recognition by an outside source
- *Curfew requirement*
- *Rehabilitation Activity Requirement (RAR)*.

It was noted that many people have definitions for some terms (e.g. community payback and unpaid work) outside the context of criminal justice, and this could lead to further confusion among the discourse.

The group was then prompted to consider how information can best be communicated in a situation where technical or unfamiliar terms are present. The primary responses were:

- **Text supported by graphics:** if text is published without graphics or vice versa, this risks clouding the reader’s understanding. In this context, people may find infographics valuable.
- **Storytelling:** stories were seen as important way to communicate potentially complex subject matter in an engaging manner. People also gravitate toward sentiments and emotions, so panel members felt that pen portraits and case studies of individuals helped with engagement.

2. Feedback on the ADR UK podcast

The second half the workshop, led by Shayda, looked at encouraging public engagement with the soon to be launched ADR UK podcast.

Panel members discussed their preferences for podcasts. Most do listen to podcasts and have a positive view of them. People generally appreciated the companionship and engagement in conversation in a podcast, even though they weren’t actively participating. They appreciate the flexibility to multitask while listening and the variety of content in podcasts; they also looked to podcasts to learn, especially in their fields of work. Some noted that podcasts can have too many advertisements and sometimes require too much concentration. On the latter point, providing a transcript to follow could be helpful.

Shayda then introduced the ADR UK podcast as a podcast about administrative data and how it is used for research in the public good. The panel members discussed what would and wouldn’t draw them to listen to this podcast. They indicated that they would listen to relatable, relevant and timely topics, clear and engaging content presented in layman’s terms, with good market appeal (e.g. taglines, graphics/visuals). On the flip side, the perception of the word ‘data’ as dry or unappealing could deter engagement. Too much technical language, lack of personal connection, and advertising might also reduce interest.

Panel members then discussed what would make the podcast most engaging for members of the public:

- **Actionable insights:** providing practical steps for the listener to take away from the episode. This creates an additional tangible benefit for listeners.
- **Relevance to professional or personal interests:** people are more likely to engage long-term if the content aligns with their work or interests.
- **Topical:** listeners would lean towards content that relates to what is happening in the world around them (e.g. AI or identity theft) or their lived experience.
- **Clear and specific taglines:** taglines that clearly and accurately indicate the topics discussed can help potential listeners decide if this content is for them.
- **Consistent and predictable structure:** listeners would be more likely to return to the podcast if the structure of the episodes was uniform, so that they would know what to expect in each new release.
- **Release schedule:** one episode a month is likely not enough to maintain consistent public interest in the podcast, so more regular episodes would be advised. The initial release might also be more successful in hooking listeners if they could do a “mini binge” from the jump (e.g. releasing the first three episodes at once).

Panel members were polled to identify the best tagline for the podcast. The most popular (tied) were ‘a podcast about the everyday data that shapes our lives,’ and ‘what they don’t tell you about how data shapes our lives’ (suggested by a panel member).

3. Name of the ADR England Public Insights Panel

A poll was distributed for the panel members to select the preferred name for the panel, and the winner with a 64% majority was the ‘Public Insights Panel’.

Forthcoming actions

- The next meeting will be held on 23 July.
- Basis Social will canvass availability and preferences for remaining 2024 dates in a Doodle poll.