

# research matters



## Improving the accessibility and coherence of UK official statistics

By Dr Alex Amaral-Rogers, senior statistical officer; Klaudia Rzepnicka, research officer; and Emma Wallace, higher executive officer; Office for National Statistics

### The UK's widespread statistical landscape

Regardless of whether you are a researcher, a policy adviser or an inquiring citizen, finding official statistics on devolved policy areas can be difficult and time consuming. Many public bodies release their statistics on different websites with no single access point, which can make finding these statistics difficult. To encourage evidence-based decision-making and to help support a more informed public, official statistics must be easier to find.

The Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) has highlighted this need in its systemic reviews of [adult social care](#), [health and care](#), and [housing and planning](#) statistics. These reviews have led the Office for National Statistics (ONS), in collaboration with colleagues from across the Government Statistical Service (GSS), to publish the [GSS interactive tools](#): a series of web-based tools, covering those topics areas, that lets you explore, search and understand more about official statistics.



### Adult social care

Adult social care is devolved across the four nations. There are many different producers of social-care data, published across multiple platforms. The pandemic has had a considerable impact on care services, and this has magnified the need for increased information on social care as demands on services continue to rise.

[The adult social care landscape](#) compiles official statistics on adult social care from across the UK into one location, including statistics from government departments and regulators of adult social care. The user-friendly landscape is updated monthly with new publications covering themes such as access and support, carers, and workforce.

## Health and care

Health is a devolved matter and its decentralised nature in England means that statistics cover a wide range of topics that are published by a variety of different organisations. This makes it difficult for researchers or the public to find the information they need. [The health and care statistics landscape](#) provides one portal that compiles all those official health and care statistics for England in one place.

It covers themes including mortality, health inequalities, childhood and maternal health, disability, cancer, secondary, dental and hospital care, and many others which are updated monthly. It has also been adapted to include official publications relating to Covid-19. This information is updated weekly and includes statistics from all four nations.

The beta version was published in 2018 and, following user feedback, we have produced an improved, updated version published in September 2020.

## Homelessness, housing, and planning

The legal definition of homelessness varies across the UK and so homelessness statistics cannot always be directly compared. Because of this, the tools include:

- ▶ [Definitions for homelessness concepts and their comparability](#) to help you understand what statistical measures are comparable across the UK
- ▶ [Housing aid process maps for the countries of the UK](#) to help you understand the stages people may go through when applying for housing aid from their local authority

Housing and planning statistics cover themes including homelessness, housebuilding, and quality and standards. To help understand these themes and how they relate to one another, the tools include [a landscape of housing and planning statistics](#) which links to a [housing and planning statistics database](#), covering over a hundred different statistical families.

## Feedback and next steps

The user response to the tools has been overwhelmingly positive. Over social media, conferences, or during user research, people have praised the accessibility of the tools. OSR has highlighted the positive impact that the tools have had on the accessibility of official statistics through their [housing](#), [health](#), and [mental health](#) reports, and by [citing the tools as exemplars in applying the principles and practices of the Code of Practice for Statistics](#).

The development of the tools is a positive example of how collaboration between colleagues within the GSS, and proactive user engagement, can lead to a valuable resource for all, regardless of expertise. We continue to grow the GSS interactive tools into new thematic areas and to refine the functionality.

If you would like to provide feedback, please email us at [gss.health@ons.gov.uk](mailto:gss.health@ons.gov.uk)

**ⓘ The GSS interactive dashboards are experimental (beta)**

Government Statistical Service

Your **feedback** will help us improve these tools.

# GSS Interactive tools

Making government statistics accessible to everyone

☰ **Adult social care** ▾ **Health and care** ▾ **Housing and planning** ▾ **Homelessness** ▾

## Home

<b>Contact:</b> gss.housing	<b>Version:</b> 1.2.0	<b>Updated:</b> Fri 12 February 2021	<b>Next update:</b> May 2021
--------------------------------	--------------------------	---	---------------------------------

Government Statistical Service

The GSS Strategy Delivery Team are part of the ONS Public Policy Analysis Directorate.

# SRA chair, David Johnson, on endings and beginnings

Welcome to this quarter's Research Matters. As ever, we have a great range of articles for you including on tools to improve the accessibility of statistics; the ethics of co-produced research; the use of text messaging in push-to-web; group dynamics and avoiding group think; future opportunities in deliberative polling; business models for research; the European Social Survey; an interview with Amun Rehsi; and our usual round up of branch activities.



worked with him on the UK Research Excellence Framework Exercise, and I saw first-hand what an incisive mind he had, how others in the room (all eminent in their own fields) listened when John spoke, how practical and helpful his suggestions were, and also what a nice person he was: calm, measured and friendly. My sincere condolences go to his family for their loss, and I'm certain that his legacy in social policy will live on.

Turning now to another subject that leaves me with some sadness: this is my last editorial for Research Matters. As those of you who were at the recent AGM will know, my time on the SRA board is up as I have reached the maximum term of six years of office. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time on the board, and am proud to be a small part of what the SRA has managed to achieve over the last few years.

I am more convinced than ever that social research remains relevant to understanding our society, and a vehicle for improving the decision-making in vital matters of social policy in our country. The SRA remains in good financial health despite the challenges of the last year, and will be in a great position over the coming months and years to continue to meet its charitable purposes of promoting quality, advocacy and community in social research.

I'm also delighted that we have not one but two new SRA chairs: Ailbhe Mcnabola and Diarmid Campbell-Jack who will be leading the board jointly from our next meeting on 23 March.

I will, of course, remain an SRA member and I hope to see many of you at future SRA events, and of course the next annual conference.

Until then, happy researching!

## Diversity and inclusion

**Huge thanks to everyone who took part in the SRA's survey into diversity and inclusion in the social research profession and circulated the link to colleagues and networks. Over 1,000 researchers took part: a remarkable response.**

A subgroup of the SRA board has been formed to support this programme of work, comprising new trustees Debbie Lee Chan, Naomi Day and Beth Moon alongside advocacy lead, Isabella Pereira.

The group is working with the Young Foundation, which is conducting the research, advising on analysis of the survey data and design of the follow-up qualitative interviews. The Market Research Society, Kantar and Versiti have supported in the research design, and Kantar Public and Power to Change Trust have funded the work.

Research findings will be published in May, with an online launch event and a series of follow-up events to explore the evidence. Look out for details in the coming weeks in forthcoming SRA newsletters, plus LinkedIn and Twitter.

# Ethical dilemmas for co-produced research

By Jane Evans, SRA trustee

Co-production as a research approach is valued because of its equitable, power-sharing approach and emphasis on relationships, consensus and understanding. Typically, it involves participants collaborating closely and equally with researchers in the research process, including design and execution. Some researchers, organisations and research commissioners place co-production at the centre of their values. As a research approach, co-production is seen to empower participants such as service users rather than placing the researcher in an elite position. As such, it may address the asymmetries of power inherent in the research process. Consequently, co-production may be seen as a highly ethical approach to research.



Although co-production is a values-driven approach to research, that does not mean it is without ethical challenges. Co-production is likely to take longer and cost more according to Oliver, Kothari and Mays.<sup>1</sup> This becomes an ethical consideration if time and funding are limited. Good governance may require offering participants resilience to external pressures, such as allowing extra time to do the research and extending deadlines where needed. Thomas Hughes<sup>2</sup> lists a number of ethical

issues related to co-production. There remain issues of obligation and power, and in co-produced research these might be harder to resolve, for example:

- ▶ Does the normal understanding of consent and the right to withdraw apply?
- ▶ How does remuneration affect this process?
- ▶ As research community stakeholders are equal partners in the research, at what rate should they be compensated, and how might this affect other sources of income?
- ▶ How are issues of challenge, disagreement and leadership settled?

Then there are issues of data storage:

- ▶ Who are the partners who store data?
- ▶ What are their facilities to do so safely?

Anonymity and privacy become issues when research activities are equally shared in a research community. Researchers can also become participants, so may know each other on a personal basis because they are a part of the community being researched, which is not the case in traditional models. In more traditional, extractive approaches to research, the imbalance of power may in fact have a protective effect, in that vulnerable participants can be supported by the researchers. In research which is

conducted by practitioners, there are risks of blurring the boundaries between a therapeutic and a research role, which may be inappropriate.

Other ethical issues may arise in a co-produced research project. The main one is about the authenticity of the approach in its attempt to eliminate power asymmetries. Research planning and design needs to ask whether this can truly be the case, or if what is promised to community participants is a genuine sharing of power and equality in the processes.

As the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR)<sup>3</sup> points out, developing co-produced research is valuable and worthwhile but requires commitment to some key principles to be both ethical and authentic. These are:

- ▶ Establish ground rules from the outset with all involved
- ▶ Ensure there is joint ownership of key decisions
- ▶ Demonstrate a commitment to relationship building
- ▶ Provide opportunities for personal growth and development
- ▶ Be flexible, importantly over deadlines: 'co-production almost always takes longer than you think'
- ▶ Value and evaluate the impact of co-producing research
- ▶ Continuous reflection – routinely ask for feedback from everyone involved

<sup>1</sup> <https://health-policy-systems.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12961-019-0432-3>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13645579.2017.1364065?needAccess=true>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.invo.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Copro\\_In\\_Action\\_2019.pdf](https://www.invo.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Copro_In_Action_2019.pdf)

# Ethics guidance update: how and why



By Patten Smith, director of research methods, Ipsos MORI and Graham Farrant, chief executive, SRA

The SRA first published its research ethics guidance in the 1980s. The authors, many of them key figures in the development of social research, recognised the need for guidance in this area, but also felt that a straightforward set of rules would be unsuitable for the wide variety of approaches, contexts and issues that researchers faced.

The original guidance, therefore, aimed to establish broad ethical principles – but as noted in the 2003 update to the guidance:

‘(The principles) are framed in the recognition that, on occasions, the operation of one principle will impede the operation of another, that social researchers, in common with other occupational groups, have competing obligations not all of which can be fulfilled simultaneously. Thus, implicit or explicit choices between principles will sometimes have to be made.’

The [new ethics guidance](#) released by the SRA in February updates earlier guides, and takes the same broad approach, with an emphasis on helping researchers to be reflexive and to carefully consider the full range of ethical implications of their research activities in the round.

But this doesn't mean that the guidance consists of woolly encouragement to 'think about it'. Its 30 pages are packed with practical illustrations and case studies of the kinds of issues researchers can face, under these chapter headings:

- ▶ Informed consent
- ▶ Confidentiality and anonymity
- ▶ Avoiding harm
- ▶ Questionable research practices
- ▶ Ethical foundations

There is also a section of references, links and further reading.

The text was drafted by a group of volunteer SRA members with expertise in ethics. Because volunteers also have busy working lives, and because we wanted to subject the draft to the critical gaze of expert reviewers, it necessarily took several years, with several re-drafts. We are extremely grateful to: Alison Allam, Berni Graham, Carolyn Heitmeyer, Catherine Shaw, Cecile Morales, Rosemary Lampert, Sam Clemens and Yulia Kartalova-O'Doherty who, with the authors of this article, formed the editorial team; Dr Ron Iphofen, Tim Vizard and Emily Mason-Apps of ONS, and SRA trustees, Jane Evans, David Johnson, Isabella Pereira (reviewers).

The guidance includes two new chapters:

## 1. Questionable research practices

We felt it was important to acknowledge that poor-quality research practices can and do occur in social research, and to identify examples. A regrettably lengthy list includes what we call 'unacknowledged methodological limitations'. One commonly encountered example is overclaiming (implicitly or explicitly) about the robustness and generalisability of findings – for example, making confident statements about the characteristics of the UK population based on the results of a survey with a flawed sample.

The guidance notes that 'overclaiming may arise because a researcher is more concerned about drawing conclusions than explaining the limitations of the methods', and concludes that research should both be conducted to high standards and be seen to be so.



Which means that, whenever researchers present their results, they should also offer accounts of the methods they used and the 'potential limitations, inaccuracies and uncertainties of the findings'.

## 2. Ethical foundations

This short section references a lengthy debate on whether social research ethics guidance can be rooted in, and justified by, deeper philosophical principles. And if they can't, does this effectively reduce so called 'ethical' principles to nothing more than a set of opinions expressed by a particular group at a particular time? There are numerous philosophical positions that could, in principle, have been adopted as a basis for our guidelines (deontological, consequentialist, virtue based, etc.), but none would command anything like univocal assent. Therefore, instead of searching for such a basis, we concluded that the wisest approach would be to follow the course adopted by the authors of the earlier versions of SRA guidelines – to base it on:

‘... what social researchers actually do in their everyday practice. It is a fact that most social researchers care about doing research that leaves the world in a better rather than a worse state and, by and large, researchers agree about what constitutes ethical and unethical behaviour in research.’

# Text to push-to-web

By Joanna Barry, senior research executive, Ipsos MORI; Rachel Williams, research director, Ipsos MORI; Hannah Atherton, senior insight account manager, NHS England and NHS Improvement; Hannah Raphael, insight and feedback officer, NHS England and NHS Improvement

The use of text message reminders in the GP Patient Survey (GPPS) has demonstrated the value of this low-cost, arguably simple, contact method.

The GPPS is a large-scale postal survey with an online option, collecting information from over 700,000 patients annually about their experiences of local GP and other health services. As with many other surveys, we have experienced falling response rates and increasing postage costs over the years, and these challenges have created opportunities.

## Trialling the impact of SMS

In 2020, a new sample frame provided mobile numbers and email addresses for the first time. This allowed us to experimentally test push-to-web strategies with multi-mode contact, using a combination of letter, SMS and email. These experiments were embedded within the main survey, allowing us to clearly see the impact of each strategy compared with a control.

In short, we saw that although SMS reminders are not a replacement for postal contact, they are effective in encouraging online completion. The most successful experiment replaced a postcard (sent after the first mailing) with a text message, and sent a second text message after mailing two. This increased online completes by 10% without affecting the overall response rate, providing significant cost savings. There were also no changes to the demographics or survey responses of those who took part. The GPPS technical annex contains additional detail on the experiments.<sup>4</sup>

## What have we learnt about using text messages?

### Do everything you can to ensure the text message appears legitimate.

NHS England research found that the two key drivers of response to non-traditional contact methods were motivation and trust. This fed directly into the development of the survey materials, using cognitive testing to ensure they conveyed legitimacy: for example, by sending a letter prior to initial SMS contact, by using a named sender and mentioning the NHS in the message. Participants gave mixed opinions about being sent a survey by text message. Some were accustomed to receiving texts from the NHS, while others queried how their number had been sourced, which highlighted the importance of creating legitimacy.

**Make it easy to take part.** Our texts included a unique short link allowing participants to access the online survey without login details. Some literature suggests that short links make it difficult for people to check whether a survey is legitimate.<sup>5</sup> Although participants didn't express concerns about this with GPPS materials, it's something to consider.

**Decide whether personalisation is appropriate.** Although personalisation increases the likelihood of engagement with a letter, cognitive testing revealed it felt intrusive to name participants in a text message, as this isn't common practice. That said, we have successfully personalised texts for other surveys, for example, including the hospital site name.



### Consider ways to 'hook' participants.

Think about what information is visible when the message arrives. With only 160 characters to play with in the SMS itself, can you also use the survey introduction page to capture attention?

### Think about the number of reminders.

We found a second SMS, in conjunction with postal contact, increased the response rate and the proportion completing online. However, you need to strike the right balance, as we found minimal impact when two messages were sent consecutively, and reduced impact with a third text.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, we can't currently consider text messages a replacement for all postal contact. This is for several reasons: mobile-only response rates are lower; postal contact remains vital for inclusivity (as some people cannot or will not take part online) and is vital for data quality (as those who take part online are different to those who take part on paper).

However, text messages are evidently a powerful additional contact method. Covid-19 has changed how the public and the NHS use digital technology, and we hope to see an even greater impact from SMS reminders in the 2021 GPPS results.

## More information

GPPS is administered by Ipsos MORI on behalf of NHS England. Please contact us at [GPPatientSurvey@ipsos.com](mailto:GPPatientSurvey@ipsos.com) or [england.insight-queries@nhs.net](mailto:england.insight-queries@nhs.net)

<sup>4</sup> [www.gp-patient.co.uk/downloads/2020/GPPS\\_2020\\_Technical\\_Annex\\_PUBLIC.pdf](http://www.gp-patient.co.uk/downloads/2020/GPPS_2020_Technical_Annex_PUBLIC.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> The long and the short of it: [www.ncsc.gov.uk/blog-post/long-and-short-it](http://www.ncsc.gov.uk/blog-post/long-and-short-it)

# Focusing on group dynamics

By Diarmid Campbell-Jack, associate director, Ecorys

Confined by lockdown, my thoughts occasionally drift back to when I could discuss research with colleagues in something called 'an office'. One office discussion that recently came to mind concerned a particularly complex focus group. The lead researcher was pleased that they'd heard a variety of perspectives from participants, but then paused before confessing he wasn't really sure whether he had heard many different views after all.



William Whyte in the 1950s and later popularised by Irving Janis, groupthink proponents claim that decision-making is often impaired by individuals conforming to group norms. It is especially likely when the group has a welcoming atmosphere and participants are looking for prestige.

Originally linked by Janis to foreign policy disasters such as the Bay of Pigs or the Vietnam War, groupthink has become the easy explanation for many debatable decisions. Groupthink has not so much grabbed the public

## Any theory so broad that it has been used to explain both Hitler's invasion of Holland and the plot of the film 'Mean Girls' is problematic

attention as seized it by the throat, tripped it up and tried to wrestle it into submission. The sinking of the Titanic? Groupthink. The war in Iraq? Groupthink. The 1999 mass resignation of baseball umpires in the USA? Groupthink. That logistic regression I couldn't correctly program last Thursday? Groupthink.

Any theory so broad that it has been used to explain both Hitler's invasion of Holland and the plot of the film 'Mean Girls' is problematic. The causes of groupthink that Janis identified have been criticised, as have the extent to which his examples support the theory. Groupthink lives on in the

media and popular vocabulary, but died out years ago as a serious academic theory. Despite this, the last decade has seen reinvigorated interest in how groups work, partly due to behavioural economists examining the biases and mental shortcuts that affect decision-making.

What potential solutions can qualitative researchers glean from behavioural economists? Nobel Prize winner, Daniel Kahneman, recommends getting group members to write down their initial views, reducing the chance that they conform simply because others put forward different opinions. 'Nudge' guru, Cass Sunstein, proposes various solutions in 'Wiser', his book on avoiding groupthink. Some are standard focus-group practice, for example recommending that leaders are open and respectful. Other are less standard, for example taking an explicit devil's advocate role, or using a contrarian 'red team' approach to encourage debate.

This is unlikely to be entirely new for many qualitative researchers – some will already use similar approaches and others will have their own methods to encourage positive group interaction. For all researchers, the work of Kahneman and Sunstein shows the value in critically following developments in other fields, adopting what is proven, and adapting what we already do when required. One day, when we're no longer confined by the pandemic, we may even get to try out some of them in an actual, face-to-face focus group rather than one using Zoom...

This is common. We tend to assume that a group has gone well if discussion is amenable, people contribute sensibly, and, above all else, the audio recording works. We can often roughly judge the breadth of opinions if we've run similar groups before, but that isn't always the case. Knowing if we have achieved a reasonable 'saturation' of viewpoints is a recurring challenge.

Debates about saturation in qualitative research may not be as old as the hills but they certainly go back further than my dog-eared tomes on focus-group methods. Some experts favour intuitive approaches based on researcher experience; others favour data-driven calculations based on coding responses. In other words, a qual versus quant split definitely more ancient than any nearby mountains.

We can further examine saturation and group dynamics through the concept of 'groupthink'. Initially developed by

# Why deliberation should go big in 2021

By Lucy Farrow, associate partner, BritainThinks

## The deliberative success story

Deliberative methods have been resurgent in recent years via high-profile projects across Europe such as the Irish Citizens' Assembly, the French 'Convention Citoyenne pour le Climat' and Climate Assembly UK. Beyond these showcase national projects, there are dozens of local authority projects, keen interest from regulated sectors like utilities, and a trickle-down effect of ever greater demand for deliberative approaches in research outside the public sector.



As this work has gained pace, approaches have begun to be codified, with random stratified sampling, providing detailed contextual information, direct interaction between participants and professionals, and extended discussion sessions forming the backbone of most projects. The deliberative community has responded to the pandemic restrictions quickly, and has shown how a combination of video discussion groups and online platforms can successfully replicate the experience of reconvened workshops (see SRA blog on the [National Trade Conversation](#)). Adaptations like spreading shorter sessions over a longer period and dedicated onboarding for less tech-savvy participants are starting to address some of the concerns about inclusion.

## The possibilities of digital-first design

So far, however, the approach to deliberation online has tended towards incremental change and, understandably given the uncertainty of lockdown, pragmatic choices.

But with a return to large-scale face-to-face research looking uncertain in the next year, we have an opportunity to go beyond a holding strategy of digital versions of the old methods. What if, instead, we asked what novel modes of deliberation could emerge from processes that aren't bounded by physical place? Below are some of the possibilities I'd like to explore.

## Working at scale

With modern digital platforms we have the technical capacity for unlimited participant numbers. And with transcription available as standard on platforms such as Zoom, the practical barriers are much reduced. So how much of our resistance is actually about losing control? By reconsidering the role of the moderator, and allowing more self-moderated discussion, we could work at a different scale and open up space for the unexpected. What forms do deliberative conversations take when they're not prescribed by a moderator? Will we see more narrative discourse, less transactional exchanges?

## International participation

If deliberation works best when participants are exposed to a wide range of different perspectives, then conducting it with an international audience could be game-changing both for the professional expertise we could bring in and the potential participant pool. Imagine a climate assembly with direct participation from countries already experiencing the effects of climate change. How might participants interact? There are no more excuses for fielding panels of specialists that aren't demographically diverse either. Will more participants seeing their identities reflected among the professionals enable more equitable participation?

## Technology positive

I'd like to see the deliberative field making bolder technology choices and going beyond the Zoom-plus model to integrate virtual and augmented reality tools, automated/machine learning systems for different kinds of insight, and more creative tools for participant-generated data. We need to be aware of the needs of digitally-excluded participants, but defaulting to the most basic platforms rather than increasing our efforts to upskill people is limiting experimentation.

## Radically transparent

With careful consideration of protecting individual participants (mandatory cat filters?), the digital format allows for vastly simpler broadcasting of deliberative processes. One of the main challenges for asynchronous approaches like the Polis tool trialled by [Engage Britain](#) is that participants aren't exposed to the back and forth of debate – streaming discussion groups for a wider audience to watch before giving their own views could substantially overcome this. And opening up a new form of participation beyond the stratified random sample could address, in part, the challenge from those who see sortition as unfairly restrictive.

## The challenge for 2021

This aim here isn't to set out a blueprint for a particular deliberative method, but to explore the characteristics of digital participation and to consider how we might apply them to the deliberative setting. We have a window of opportunity to test the boundaries of practice in 2021: while the argument for departing from the norm is already won, let's make the most of it.

# The European Social Survey electronic questionnaire device

By Professor Rory Fitzgerald, director, European Social Survey ERIC, City, University of London

When the pandemic struck in early 2020, face-to-face data collection ground to a halt in most European countries. As a (repeat) cross-sectional (cross-national) survey, the European Social Survey (ESS) was unable to switch modes to re-interview panel members (like its sister project SHARE or UK Understanding Society for example). There was, therefore, a real risk that if a return to 'normality' was delayed (or never occurred at all) the ESS would be unable to collect any new data at all for its 10th round. One way the ESS has risen to address the challenge has been to try and develop an ESS electronic questionnaire device (ESS EQD).



countries. Furthermore, the offline population is often highly concentrated amongst older, rural and less well-off respondents. The ESS EQD, therefore, allows the possibility to include most of the population in a digital self-completion survey.

The design of the device itself is being organised to ensure it can be used by those with little or no experience of using computers or smartphones. In addition, the data must be captured

**There was ... a real risk that if a return to 'normality' was delayed (or never occurred at all) the ESS would be unable to collect any new data at all for its 10th round**

The idea behind the ESS EQD was to take an existing tablet and adapt this to allow those unable or unwilling to complete a web survey to still answer the ESS. They would do this by entering answers into a tablet themselves. This would ensure data could be captured immediately in digital format and avoid a barrier identified in our earlier web panel work where 'offline' struggled with connectivity and logins when provided with a device to complete our surveys. The ESS EQD, therefore, enables offline respondents to answer a survey in a very similar manner to those completing it online using their own devices. This also avoids the problems of a paper self-completion survey that can be difficult to navigate and appear very long due to routed sections.

It is of note that, while those without internet access in the UK are now less than 10% of adults, the figure is as high as 30% or more in some ESS

in offline mode to ensure the ESS EQD can be used when there is no internet connectivity. The device can then be switched to online mode later by a fieldworker to enable the data to be uploaded to a central server. It is envisaged that fieldworkers would deliver the device to the respondent's doorstep, engage the correct respondent with the survey, and briefly explain how to use the device. They would then return later to collect it, and take it home to upload the data before cleaning the device for further use. However, the development project is also considering the feasibility of delivering the devices in the post, or having respondents post them back.

ESS is working with NatCen Social Research in the UK and CentERdata in the Netherlands to

develop the prototype. We are currently experimenting with a standard tablet and a smaller Kindle-like device.

A selection of ESS question types has been programmed, and initial user-testing is taking place in the Netherlands and Slovenia. Emerging issues have included: how to switch the device on and off; where and how to tap on the screen; how to navigate forwards and backwards; as well as the font size and spacing. We are also comparing text entry and voice recording for open answers, and exploring how to assist respondents during the questionnaire process when there is no interviewer present.

Once the initial usability testing is complete, we will move to acceptance testing in four countries to see if respondents would be willing to receive the device, complete the survey, and return it safely. Future projects might help to further develop the device, such as providing a recording of the question wording for each item to help those who are less literate use the device.

Even if the ESS EQD is not, in the end, used in this immediate pandemic situation, it is hoped that such a device could be part of a future switch of mode in the ESS to help include the offline population in a scenario where internet becomes the primary data-collection mode.



# Talking ownership

Fiona Hutchison of the Research Matters editorial team interviews Oliver Allies, director of Wavehill Ltd, about Wavehill's transition to an employee-owned business.

Wavehill is a social and economic research company with over 30 staff and associates, and offices in Bristol, Newcastle, London and Aberaeron. It specialises in social and economic research, evaluation and impact assessment.



buy shares and gain ownership through traditional means. Assuming this, and the specific details of the size and value of a business, can create a fixed glass ceiling. The SRA is currently conducting research into socio-economic mobility within our sector, and this is at the forefront of our minds too at Wavehill.

## Have you had a lot of interest in your move to employee ownership?

People are intrigued about what it is and how we went about it. Although employee-owned businesses are increasing in number across the UK, we aren't aware of any other research consultancies with this model. We also have had interest from social researchers interested in working for us because they are attracted by our existing reputation and this new model.

## Why do you think this model appeals to potential new talent?

Employees can have both a financial stake in the business and a say in how it is run. Supporters of this model show how it helps employee commitment in the short-term, along with business succession and transition. This set-up can meet expectations that we have encountered, particularly (but not exclusively) amongst 'millennials' for autonomy in their work and value-driven working models.

## What stage are you at now?

We had been building up to this change well before Covid-19. We started the process in summer 2019, and everything was formalised by November 2020. Much of our input happened during the pandemic. This, conversely,

meant we progressed a bit quicker than we would have done under normal circumstances.

Now we are all set up, the next step is operating an employee-owned business in practice. So far, operationally we haven't seen much change, and we are keen to minimise disruption to staff. We now have an extra governance layer with staff membership representatives.

We transferred the majority of company shares to a trust, holding these on behalf of our staff. This means that staff will have to agree to any future sale of the business, and will benefit from the proceeds. We already had a profit-share arrangement for staff, so that has been retained (as a recognised element of a trust) along with part-ownership.

## What advice would you give another company looking into this option?

Firstly, consider what you are trying to achieve and whether employee ownership could be a route to addressing your challenges including succession planning. It might be a model shift, or even a cultural shift for your business, and everyone needs to be involved in this shift for it to succeed.

Secondly, look at what advice you can access from experts. Different nations in the UK have different go-to organisations. And you will need a fair amount of financial and legal advice to aid the transition.

Thirdly, remember it is not an overnight process. It takes time and resource from owners to make it happen: the age-old challenge of committing time to work on the business rather than for it.

## What was the main motivation for looking into employee ownership?

Primarily succession planning. One of our directors is approaching retirement age and while that is a good number of years away for the remaining directors, collectively we were looking at ways forward for the company. Having conducted research in this area on behalf of the Welsh Government and the Wales Co-Operative Centre recently,<sup>6</sup> for succession planning to work, it needs to be planned years in advance. A quick look at Companies House will show you that many consultancies in our field are in a similar situation. Many were set up in the early 1990s and their founding members are now having to think seriously about how to exit.

## Why did you pursue this model, rather than one in which the current owners sell on the business?

Ultimately, our directors did not want the staff to be an afterthought: we wanted to reward their commitment – they are the assets of our organisation after all. Nor did we choose to assume that current employees will be in the financial position to put money in to

<sup>6</sup> <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-05/sme-succession-planning-support-in-wales.pdf>



# Balancing belonging and freedom at work

Anna Eaton, director, Ideas Alliance CIC answers our questions.

## Can you tell us a bit about your company structure?

[Ideas Alliance](#) is a small team with experience in community engagement, community research, collaborative practices, commissioning, co-production and health and social care. We have three founding directors and one team member who all run things behind the scenes day-to-day, as well as acting as an umbrella organisation for several community-focused associates. We collaborate in different formations on a project-by-project basis between our core team and associates.

## How did this come about?

In 2016 our directors Linda Hutchinson, Helen Sharp and Anna Eaton were all working separately as consultants, mainly in the public and community sectors and across health and care. They noticed a growing movement of people in the UK wanting to transform the way we do things: using collaboration and approaches that focus on people's strengths, not just their needs.

But back then, it felt like most of us didn't know about each other. Many of us were trying to work in these ways on our own, committed to our convictions but without any expert support.

Co-production, collaboration, asset-based thinking – all those approaches which will transform the way we work in the public sector, are scary and messy and often fly in the face of our structured, strategic and risk-averse leadership.

We wanted to create a place where like-minded people doing similar work could feel supported and championed. Our mottos from the start have been 'collaborate, don't compete' and 'we

will help you to be brave'. Having worked as lone consultants ourselves, we valued our freedom and flexibility but wanted to provide an umbrella organisation to bring people together.

Over the last few years our team has grown, and so has the movement to make this way of working the norm and not the exception. We are very lucky to be a part of that movement, and we are very proud of our growing network of people who work in a similar way.

## What are the benefits for the company of using this structure?

We have input from a wide range of people, expertise and perspectives. It helps us offer more to partners who are interested in working with us, and creates a team atmosphere without tying people down. It also means we are all accountable in different ways for our work, spreading the responsibility and acknowledging what different people bring to the table.

## What are the benefits for the researchers working at the company?

We've been told by our associates that the benefits of working with us are having a team atmosphere without being tied in; access to great project work; and opportunities to connect to other like-minded people and to learn together through our network.

It can be frightening to manage a project on your own without people to have by your side. Our associates tell us they feel part of something bigger when working with us, and they don't have to take everything on themselves.

We also provide the experience of a different way of working which is trust-based and supportive. It's a flexible way of working which we are trying to get others to adopt. So, hopefully, it gives our associates and others faith that it is possible!

## What are the challenges for the company of using this structure?

We want people we work with to feel they belong while leaving them the freedom to pursue their own development. It can feel like a challenge to maintain this balance sometimes and to keep finding ways to bring everyone together, check in as regularly as needed, and support people working remotely. We try to make it as nice and easy to work with us as possible – aiming for minimal paperwork, always paying quickly and having fun.

## What are the challenges for researchers working at the company?

Similar to the challenges faced by the company, the challenges for researchers are also in finding the balance of standardised ways of working, ways to connect and check in, alongside the freedom to do things their own way and the flexibility to fit working together around life and other projects. Sometimes things can feel a little chaotic when they get busy!

## What advice would you give to someone considering structuring their research organisation this way?

Trust the people you work with and know that you don't have to do everything – that is what collaboration is all about. Focusing on creating a strong base/organisation helps support others to do great work. Finally, and probably most importantly, decide what your values are and try to instil them in all you do.

# Social research careers

Eileen Irvin of the Research Matters editorial team spoke to Amun Rehsi, a research executive at Ipsos MORI who started on the graduate scheme, to find out more about her role.

## What made you decide to look at jobs in social research?

Before starting at Ipsos MORI, I had experience at a market research agency, where my main account was a large supermarket. While I was keen to continue to pursue a career in research, I was interested in social research as I felt the research topics would be more aligned with my personal interests.

## Why did you decide to apply for the graduate scheme at a large research agency?

I applied to graduate schemes because I knew they would provide tailored training and support which would further my development. I thought that a larger research agency would provide opportunities to work across different policy areas and increase the likelihood of working on projects that use different and innovative research methodologies. As I didn't have a preference of methodology, it was also important for me to be able to work on different projects for a range of clients to better understand the social research landscape.

## How would you describe a typical day in your job?

As I work on several projects with different methodologies, no two days are the same. I work on the GP Patient Survey (GPPS) which has recently gone into field, so at the moment, a typical day involves helping to monitor the communications we receive from participants and working with our helpline team to ensure that everything is running smoothly.

## Is your job how you expected it would be?

Mostly, yes. However, I didn't realise how much project management and coordination was required to keep big projects like the GPPS running each year.

## How do you see your career in social research developing in the future?

After finishing the graduate scheme, I feel much more confident in my role and have a better understanding of all of the Ipsos MORI processes. I would like to continue to learn about new research methods and to gradually increase my level of responsibility, which will further improve my skills as a researcher. I would also like to develop more of a policy specialism within the social research sector.



As I didn't have a preference of methodology, it was also important for me to be able to work on different projects for a range of clients to better understand the social research landscape



# Research meets policy in Scotland: a UX example

By Dr Mariola Tarrega, digital resources coordinator,  
Scottish Policy and Research Exchange

## The Scottish Policy and Research Exchange (SPRE)

supports researchers and policy makers to find smart solutions to policy challenges. We work with academic and independent researchers in Scotland to help them overcome barriers to engagement with policy professionals. A few months ago, we began a user experience (UX) project to design a digital guide to help with policy engagement.

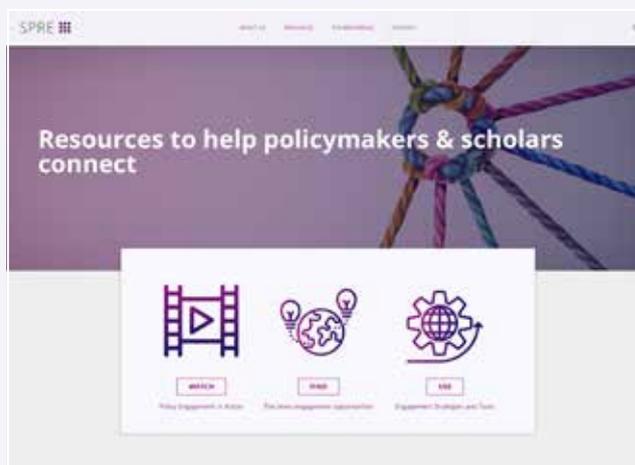


SPRE's digital guide on policy engagement is not the first. There are at least six other online or PDF versions for the UK context. We analysed their respective navigation frameworks and content structures, interaction features, their readability and accessibility. We also reviewed academic research on policy engagement and interviewed experts and stakeholders.

We found that some guides had been designed for print and were difficult to read on screen. Some had large sections of unformatted text with little support for online reading (such as headings, bulleted lists, defined sections). According to a [Nielsen Norman Group report](#) on how people read online, people scan text rather than read every word. The amount of time they are willing to spend depends on their task, goals (for example, to find new information, research a topic), focus and personal preferences.

## UX findings on our target audience

Our target users explained that they are usually overworked and have limited time for learning about how to engage with policy professionals. Our desk research and interviews found that, while most academics would like to engage with policy professionals, this can also create pressure and anxiety. They face barriers such as access to policy professionals, and limited time and resources. Existing guidance presents an idealised version



of the relationships between policy professionals and academics. This mostly focuses on the process for parliamentary inquiry submissions, when there are many avenues for engagement.

## Progress

We have used the learning from benchmarking for our prototype guide. We set out four steps to planning why, how, when and where academics can engage with policy professionals in Scotland. Our next step is usability testing to explore readability, content structure and users' mental models.

## Reflections

In developing this work, we have found many crossovers in outlook and methods between UX in design and in social research. There is awareness that successful digital products need human-centred design. By examining the behaviour and demands of knowledgeable users, we can understand what human-centred means. Common UX methods include interviews, groups and participatory design.

Next time you use a digital tool such as SPRE's upcoming digital guide, take a moment to consider the research process behind its design.

## Purpose of our digital guide

SPRE trains the academic community on policy engagement in the digital sphere. Although we encourage people to feed into the policy process, we didn't have an online resource to help our users find information about how, when and why to engage with the policy community. So, we decided to create one.

## Choosing to use a UX approach

We advocate for using research evidence to inform policy processes, and so we applied this same principle to our design process. We wanted to avoid guessing how and why our target audience would use our tool, so UX was the design approach. UX encompasses the design tools and research methods to find out how users interact with our content; to understand their needs; and make the right choices for them. Users can help us design the structure of sections, use of multimedia, tone of language and more.

## Steps in UX

We began by benchmarking, asking: how can we create content that is easily read and offers insights to users who have limited time and other priorities?

# REMEMBERING Professor Sir John Hills

Senior SRA members reflect on the life of Professor Sir John Hills of LSE, who died at the end of 2020. You can find out more about his life and influence on the [condolences page](#) of the LSE website.



## Gillian Smith, editor SRA newsletter

John was an exceptionally supportive person and his death is a huge blow to the social policy and analysis world, particularly at this point in time when his incisive analysis of inequalities and the distributional implications of policy proposals, and his ability to work constructively with different governments, would have been so very valuable. His legacy, however, will live on.

I first met John in 1995/1996 when I was working on urban research issues at the old Department of the Environment. Political change was on the horizon and we were quietly, but actively, planning for an explosion in demand for analysis on social exclusion issues, when John came to lobby us to support his bid to the ESRC to set up a new unit on social exclusion at the LSE. We happily and actively supported this, the successful outcome being the Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion (CASE) which was set up early in 1997.

In the early years of the Labour government, John had a huge amount of influence, including in the work of the Social Exclusion Unit, set up by Tony Blair to help drive forward the neighbourhood renewal and similar agendas. John approached these roles with his usual insightful, clear analysis of the way that different policies interact and play out in the real world, with profound, multiple impacts on individuals and places.

During 1998 I enjoyed a short secondment to CASE as the unit's first ESRC-funded 'user fellow', and I can readily endorse what others have written about John being a supportive, friendly colleague at what was a very busy and lively time.

## Sue Duncan, independent research consultant

John Hills stands as a shining example of how good research can influence policy. His research was rigorous and his analysis was insightful. Combine this with a remarkable ability to write in plain English and to explain the most complex ideas in a readily understandable way, and it isn't hard to see why he contributed so effectively to policy debate, both inside and outside government. His insights into the dynamics of poverty, income and wealth earned him a wide and genuine respect among policy makers. He had a deep personal commitment to his work and was a genuinely kind and caring person. His memory will live on in his work and through all those he trained and motivated to follow in his footsteps.

## William Solesbury, independent research consultant

John was committed not just to policy-relevant research but also to bringing it to policy makers. He undoubtedly advised many informally. But he had three appointments to conduct formal reviews – on fuel poverty for Chris Huhne, Liberal Democrat minister in the coalition government; on social housing for the Conservative minister, Ruth Kelly; and as chair of the National Equality Panel for Labour's Harriet Harman: all three topics on which he had relevant expertise from his research. My colleague, Ruth Levitt, and I, when senior visiting research fellows at King's College, London interviewed him on these experiences as part of our research project on 'policy tsars' in 2010-2012. We found that he had thoroughly enjoyed the tasks, but was very reflective on the pros and cons of contributing to policy

development in this way. In that, he was very influential on the conclusions of our research that recognised the political value of such appointments but was critical of the irregularities of practice. In pursuit of this we developed a draft code of practice for such appointments, which John contributed to and indeed, spoke in its support, when we formally launched it in 2014.

## Ceridwen Roberts, independent research consultant

I first came across John when in the early 1990s he produced a major report on poverty for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. This was one of his earlier instances of path-breaking work on this topic, which continued to be a major aspect of his life's work. Like most of the JRF-funded work, it had an important policy impact and John excelled throughout his academic life in combining high quality social science research and analysis with readable reports which practitioners and policy people could use. He embodied the phrase 'speak truth to power' which made him so respected across the academic and practitioner worlds.

He was a very approachable person, and though I only knew him slightly, I always felt I could turn to him for comments on work or to take part in policy debates. He was a good social science citizen. His work output was enormous and all of us interested in challenging common sense or ideological views about poverty, and the limited mechanisms so far used to tackle deepening inequalities, owe him a great deal. He has left us much material to use and a keen sense of the importance of doing so. He has died too young, but his work will live on and we will remember him with gratitude.

## SRA Scotland By Karen Kerr



At our recent lunchtime webinar on 'The impact of Covid-19 on taking Scotland's next census', over 40 participants joined a presentation given by Esta Clark (head of statistical design) and Larissa Baines (head of census business design) at the National Records of Scotland. They discussed the census statistical and operational design for 2022, noting the changes from the last census in 2011 and areas being considered in light of the pandemic. Keep a look out for future SRA Scotland lunchtime webinars: you can sign-up for these on the SRA website.

SRA Scotland web pages have been updated and you can find [presentations from our previous events and committee blogs](#).

The committee is working to support early career researchers, and we're planning online sessions with a range of students in Scottish institutions. We're also liaising with SRA North to support the development of an event for early career researchers.

Please feel free to get in touch with me, either by email, [karen.kerr@sds.co.uk](mailto:karen.kerr@sds.co.uk) or telephone, 07584 470028 if you have any suggestions for webinar topics or if there is any way in which the SRA Scotland committee can support you. To keep up to date with SRA Scotland news please follow our twitter account [@SRA\\_Scotland](https://twitter.com/SRA_Scotland).

## SRA North By Jenni Brooks



Our December event focused on health inequalities, thrown into sharp relief by the pandemic. Cath Dillon has written a comprehensive blog post about the event and there's a recording on YouTube.

In the spring we will be focusing on early careers, so look out for events hosted by SRA North and other

regional groups, and do get in touch if there is anything in particular you would like to see.

We are experimenting with a series of short, informal 'bring your own biscuits' meetings to support members. There will be no presenters, no recordings, no agenda – just a space to chat with other researchers as you might do in a workplace kitchen. Please do get in touch if you'd like to join.

Keep an eye on our Twitter feed for announcements [@SRANorth](https://twitter.com/SRANorth), or email [srnorth@gmail.com](mailto:srnorth@gmail.com)

## SRA Cymru By Rachel Hughes



Hello! I'm the new chair of SRA Cymru and I really look forward to working with you. SRA Cymru has benefited from Faye Gracey's excellent leadership, commitment and involvement over many years, and I want to personally thank her for everything that she has done. I'm pleased to say that Faye will continue to play an active role within SRA Cymru.

Over the next few months, I'd like us to re-establish a committee to support the SRA's work in Wales, engage with you about what you want from SRA Cymru, and develop a programme of events. If you're interested in helping and supporting with any of this, or indeed have any ideas, please do get in touch!

Email: [Cymru@the-sra.org.uk](mailto:Cymru@the-sra.org.uk)

Twitter: [@sracymru](https://twitter.com/sracymru)

LinkedIn: [Social Research Association \(SRA\) Cymru](https://www.linkedin.com/company/social-research-association-sra-cymru/)

# SRA JOURNAL 'Social Research Practice'

Issue 10, winter 2020, is free to download at: [www.the-sra.org.uk/journal](http://www.the-sra.org.uk/journal)

The overall aim of the journal is to encourage and promote high standards of social research for public benefit. It promotes openness and discussion of problems. We welcome offers of articles and research notes for future issues. Read the guidelines for authors and download the article template at the link above. If you have an idea for an article or research note but are not sure if it's suitable, please email Richard Bartholomew, the editor: [rabartholomew@btinternet.com](mailto:rabartholomew@btinternet.com)



# Co-producing research. A community development approach

Edited by Sarah Banks, Angie Hart, Kate Pahl and Paul Ward

Policy Press, 2019

Reviewed by Dr Rachel Hughes, Dotiau Ltd

Communities are increasingly seeking an active role in producing knowledge about how to understand, represent and shape their world for the better. At the same time, we're seeing similar shifts in how policy is created. For example, in Wales, a key facet of the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) is involving people with an interest in Wales' well-being goals, and ensuring those people reflect the diversity of the area. And academic research too is increasingly realising the critical importance of community knowledge in producing robust insights into contemporary change.

By focusing on a community development approach to the co-production of research, this book brings this thinking and doing together. It is

a collection of learning from a five-year ESRC research project, 'Imagine – connecting communities through research'. It explores the extent to which the landscape of community research is being transformed by the research methodologies employed, particularly the promotion of co-produced research and creative, collaborative, participatory and inclusive methods.

In exploring this question, the contributors show, through a series of case studies, what this looks like in different settings, different geographies, and with different cohorts of people. The research is interdisciplinary, which echoes the principles of co-production and re-emphasises the 'doing research together' philosophy.

At the end of each chapter, the authors helpfully outline key learning, much of which is methodological. This is a key strength of the book, not just because this contributes to academic debate, but also it helps others in their practice of co-produced research.

The authors acknowledge that they are on a journey, and that the starting point is to think of yourself as a 'we'. Co-production is a mindset and a way of working. It is an asset-based approach in which power and responsibility are shared. I'd like to see the next stage of the journey embedding the principles of co-production within the whole research process – in analysis and reporting, as well as in the methodological approach.



## Titles for review



We are always looking for reviewers. Write a short review for us and you get to keep the book. All books up for review are listed below. If you are interested, please email [admin@the-sra.org.uk](mailto:admin@the-sra.org.uk) and we'll send you guidelines. Here are a few of the titles on offer:

### Gather your data online – Little Quick Fix

Janet E. Salmons

SAGE 2019

<https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/eur/gather-your-data-online/book268246>

### Researching in the age of COVID-19

Edited by Helen Kara and Su-Ming Khoo

Policy Press, 2020

Volume I: Response and reassessment

<https://policy.bristoluniversitypress.co.uk/researching-in-the-age-of-covid-19>

Volume II: Care and resilience

<https://policy.bristoluniversitypress.co.uk/researching-in-the-age-of-covid-2>

Volume III: Creativity and ethics

<https://policy.bristoluniversitypress.co.uk/researching-in-the-age-of-covid-1>

# Training courses in research methods

Our courses are designed to help you learn the practical application of research methods, and are led by experts in their field.

Currently all courses run online, in live sessions, with small groups of attendees (between 9 and 16).

The full list of training courses is below. These are available during the year, but not all at the same time: please check our website for availability, and details of each course.

Courses are either 'standard' length (6 to 7 hours of content) or 'extended' (12 to 14 hours). A standard course costs £165 for SRA members or £220 for non-members. An extended course is £330 for members or £440 for non-members.

Standard courses run over one day or two half-days and extended courses over two full days or three part-days.

Full details of courses on offer at [www.the-sra.org.uk/SRA/training](http://www.the-sra.org.uk/SRA/training)

If a course is of interest but is not shown on our website then please email [lindsay.adams@the-sra.org.uk](mailto:lindsay.adams@the-sra.org.uk) Lindsay can also help with any queries.

## Evaluation

(all with Professor David Parsons)

### 21 APRIL

Theory-based evaluation: options and choices

### 29 APRIL

Foundations of evaluation

### 12 MAY

Impact evaluation: options, choices and practice

### 18 MAY

Research and evaluation project management

## Qualitative

### 24 AND 25 MARCH (2 FULL DAYS: £330/£440)

Converting to online qualitative research, with Dr Karen Lumsden and Professor Karen O'Reilly

### 14 APRIL

Planning and designing a qualitative study, with Professor Karen O'Reilly

### 16 APRIL

Conducting Online Focus Groups, with Dr Karen Lumsden

### 22 AND 23 APRIL

Reflexivity in qualitative research, with Dr Nicole Brown

### 27, 28 AND 29 APRIL (3 PART-DAYS: £330/£440)

Designing and moderating focus groups, with NatCen Social Research

### 30 APRIL

Interpreting and writing up your qualitative findings, with Professor Karen O'Reilly

### 5 AND 6 MAY

Reporting qualitative data, with NatCen Social Research

### 11 MAY

Digital qualitative interviews, with Dr Karen Lumsden

### 12 MAY

Qualitative Interviewing, with Professor Karen O'Reilly

### 14 MAY

Narratives and storytelling in qualitative research, with Dr Karen Lumsden

### 14 MAY

Grounded theory, with Professor Karen O'Reilly

### 19 AND 20 MAY

Creative methods in qualitative research, with Dr Nicole Brown

### 21 MAY

Narrative analysis, with Dr Karen Lumsden

### 26 MAY

Qualitative data analysis, with Professor Karen O'Reilly

### 28 MAY

Interpreting and writing up your qualitative findings, with Professor Karen O'Reilly

## Quantitative

### 12 MARCH

Real world data with R, with Dr Alex Cernat

### 16 AND 17 MARCH

Introduction to evidence reviews, with NatCen Social Research

### 30 AND 31 MARCH

21 ways to test your survey questions, with Dr Pamela Campanelli

### 13 AND 14 APRIL

Weighting and imputation for survey non-response, with Dr Tarek Al Baghal

### 20, 21 AND 22 APRIL (3 PART-DAYS: £330/£440)

Regression analysis using R, with Dr Pamela Campanelli

### 29 AND 30 APRIL

Questionnaire design, with NatCen Social Research

### 7 MAY

Introduction to sampling and weighting, with Dr Alex Cernat

### 13 MAY

Understanding statistical concepts and essential tests, with Dr Valerija Kolbas

### 25, 26 AND 27 MAY (3 PART-DAYS: £330/£440)

Advanced questionnaire design, with Dr Pamela Campanelli

### 9 AND 10 JUNE

Cognitive interviewing, with NatCen Social Research

### 18 JUNE

Introduction to R, with Dr Alex Cernat

### 2 JULY

Real world data with R, with Dr Alex Cernat

## Other research skills

### 14 APRIL

Consultancy skills for social researchers, with Professor Simon Haslam

### 15 APRIL

Introduction to data visualisation, with Nigel Hawtin

### 20 AND 21 APRIL

Public involvement in social research, with Dr Louca-Mai Brady and Berni Graham

### 19 AND 20 MAY

Research with children and young people, with Dr Louca-Mai Brady and Berni Graham

### 8 JUNE

Writing effective research reports, with Professor Simon Haslam

## COURSES COMING SOON INCLUDE:

Introduction to applied behavioural science, with Chris Perry

Web survey design, with NatCen Social Research

Depth interviewing skills, with NatCen Social Research

Analysis of qualitative data, with NatCen Social Research

Managing challenging interviews, with NatCen Social Research

# Spotlight on SRA activity

## Training

[www.the-sra.org.uk/training](http://www.the-sra.org.uk/training)

Many qual, quant and evaluation courses are online.

## Events

[www.the-sra.org.uk/events](http://www.the-sra.org.uk/events)

A range of practical webinars arriving soon – free for members!

No face-to-face conference this year, but we're looking at a virtual event.

## Blog

[www.the-sra.org.uk/blog](http://www.the-sra.org.uk/blog)

Plenty of topical posts on researching under lockdown – why not consider a contribution?

## Journal

[www.the-sra.org.uk/journal](http://www.the-sra.org.uk/journal)

Read back issues and find out how to write an article for our free journal.

## Resources

[www.the-sra.org.uk/resources](http://www.the-sra.org.uk/resources)

Good practice guides, support during lockdown, and more.

## Ethics

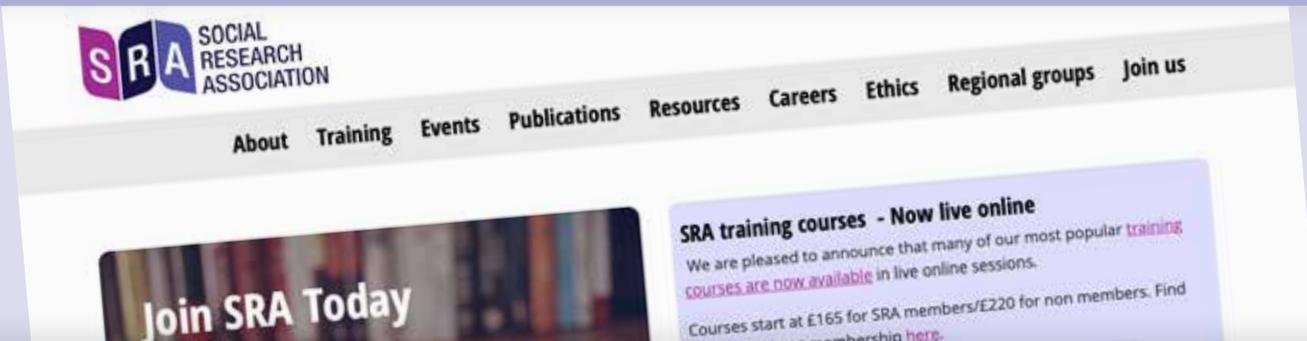
[www.the-sra.org.uk/ethics](http://www.the-sra.org.uk/ethics)

An expert forum for members' queries, good practice guides, more resources.

## Member resources

Go to [www.the-sra.org.uk](http://www.the-sra.org.uk) then see 'members' section

Free access to 5,500+ social science journals, data science training at a third off, and more.



# research matters

Views expressed by individual contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the SRA.

## Publication dates 2021

We publish four times a year. Next issue: **June 2021**. Copy deadlines for 2021: **30 April** (June issue); **20 July** (September issue); **5 October** (December issue).

## Editorial team

**Andrew Phelps**, ONS (commissioning editor) • **Imogen Birch**, Citizens Advice  
 • **Emma Carragher**, Home Office • **Andy Curtis**, Paul Hamlyn Foundation  
 • **Jess Harris**, Kings College London • **Fiona Hutchison**, Historic Environment Scotland  
 • **Eileen Irvin**, Ipsos MORI • **Genna Kik**, IFF Research • **Patten Smith**, Ipsos MORI  
 • **Martina Vojtkova**, NatGen Social Research • **Paul Webb**, Praxis Care

The Social Research Association (SRA)

Email: [admin@the-sra.org.uk](mailto:admin@the-sra.org.uk)

[www.the-sra.org.uk](http://www.the-sra.org.uk)