



Good Practice Standards for Public Engagement in Data for Research and Statistics

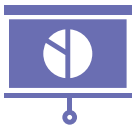


Our Good Practice Standards at a glance



Equity, diversity and inclusion

Ensure representation of people from different backgrounds.



Data literacy and training

Empower the public to understand and contribute.



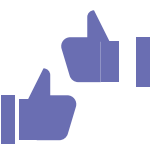
Two-way communication

Enable everyone to have open, honest, and clear conversations.



Transparency

Project information is freely accessible for discussions with the public.



Mutual benefit

There is benefit to everyone involved.



Effective involvement and engagement

There are clear tasks, purpose and impacts that are not tokenistic.



Creating a culture of involvement and engagement

Public involvement and engagement is embedded into ways of working.

Introducing PEDRI

The Public Engagement in Data Research Initiative ([PEDRI](#)) is a sector-wide partnership that unites organisations working with data and statistics to improve how we work with the public. This initiative focuses on promoting good practices in public involvement and engagement (PIE), championing trust-building activities, co-producing projects with the public, and providing learning opportunities to develop or strengthen PIE skills.

The PEDRI Good Practice Standards

PEDRI has developed the Good Practice Standards to guide practices for PIE in the use of data for research and statistics. Building on existing guidance, these standards are designed to support researchers, PIE professionals, and all those involved in data-related projects, ensuring that public voice is an integral part of the data community.

There are seven standards, and they are the result of extensive collaboration among a diverse working group, including public members, PIE professionals, researchers, and representatives from PEDRI partners. Over the course of two years, the group planned, conducted, and analysed inputs from a comprehensive consultation process. This process included two workshops to inform the [draft](#), attended by 62 participants, a [public consultation](#) survey that received 139 responses, and three follow-up workshops to refine the standards, with a total of 96 participants.



Thank you!

We would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the development of these standards. Your input and insights were crucial to ensure that these standards reflect the needs of the community and support a more inclusive and effective approach to PIE in data research.



Further information

This document should be considered a living resource that will guide and support those in the data and statistics community working with the public. It is intended to be updated regularly based on evidence and feedback from its implementation. For more information on PEDRI or how to get involved, please email us at contact@pedri.org.uk or [sign up](#) to our news bulletin.



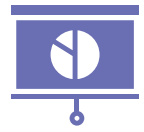
1. Equity, diversity, and inclusion

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) refers to the fair and balanced inclusion of people with different backgrounds, experiences, and identities in research projects or initiatives involving data about people and communities. This standard supports an environment where anyone, including underrepresented and underserved groups, can participate in Public Involvement and Engagement (PIE) activities and inform change.

This could be achieved by:

- Adopting a jargon-free, flexible, and creative approach to talking about data, to help ensure anyone can participate without being excluded by methods used or inaccessible information.
- Developing targeted and adaptable PIE plans, which incorporate equality impact assessments and follow relevant guidance to address the specific needs of different people, groups or communities.
- Collaborating with a variety of groups and organisations to build and maintain relationships with underrepresented and underserved communities, ensuring their voices are heard.
- Seeking contributions from a broad range of public members, including those who may be unfamiliar or have questions or concerns about the topic at hand.
- Celebrating and embracing the unique skills, knowledge, and real-world experiences that members of the public bring.
- Reimbursing costs associated with taking part in PIE activities to help ensure everyone has access to the tools, support, and opportunities to participate.
- Working with others to find solutions to funding challenges or areas where there is a lack of EDI knowledge.

2. Data literacy and training



The ability to read, understand, and communicate data—known as data literacy—empowers people to engage in data research and statistics, which can often be complex and challenging to navigate. By embedding training in PIE activities, it is possible to better understand the unique aspects of research projects or initiatives involving data about people and communities, contributing to a more informed and inclusive community.

This could be achieved by:

- Exploring what public members already know and what they wish to learn about the topic at hand, while managing expectations.
- Personally seeking data training and offering it to public members, ensuring that these opportunities are tailored to individual needs and the specific context of the research project or initiative.
- Defining commonly used terms, such as anonymisation, de-identification, data access processes, and privacy safeguards, to support public participation in conversations about data.
- Ensuring public members have the time and support necessary to build their confidence in understanding data, where needed.
- Providing real-world examples in discussions with the public about data to make them more relatable.
- Sharing any training materials developed for PIE activities widely, so that they are available and accessible to all those interested.

3. Two-way communication



Data research and statistics often includes complex terms and abstract information. As such, two-way communication is essential to promote an active exchange of information between parties, allowing both to share and receive insights. This approach can help all parties to better understand each other's views and contribute effectively to the conversation.

This could be achieved by:

- Increasing awareness of how data is used in people's daily lives.
- Ensuring conversations are engaging, culturally sensitive, and relatable for members of the public from all educational backgrounds.
- Listening, acknowledging, and responding to public views and concerns, demonstrating their opinions are valued.
- Investigating communication preferences of various audiences to meet diverse needs, including non-native English speakers, neurodivergent people, or people living with disabilities.
- Using jargon-free language, limiting or avoiding the use of abbreviations where possible, and unpacking abstract information by co-creating summaries and glossaries.
- Increasing accessibility by using a range of channels of communication and formats, such as large print documents, videos, images, and diagrams, to invite feedback and ensure clarity.
- Being mindful of reading age when developing materials for PIE activities, encouraging understanding and open dialogue.
- Acknowledging the barrier of digital exclusion, seeking ways to overcome it where possible.

- Anticipating the likelihood of uncomfortable conversations and planning for trained facilitators to address them, or to signpost to relevant information and support.
- Providing varied opportunities for the open and constructive exchange of views and ideas.
- Recognising that consensus may not always be possible but ensuring that all perspectives are heard and considered.

4. Transparency



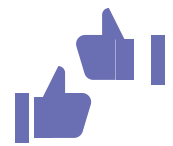
Transparency refers to an approach to PIE that involves making information freely available and easily accessible while fostering a safe space for open and honest conversations with the public. This approach can help create an inclusive environment, allowing all parties to contribute comfortably and effectively to discussions.

This could be achieved by:

- Being open and clear throughout the research project or initiative, including the public in decision-making around planning, partnerships, access to data, PIE activities, budget, and timelines.
- Clarifying the purpose of PIE activities at all times, highlighting the value and purpose of public participation.
- Encouraging a dialogue that meets public expectations for transparency, allowing enough time for questions and answers.
- Providing up-to-date research materials in accessible formats, including summaries and user-friendly channels of communication.

- Ensuring timely follow-up with people involved in PIE activities to share their impact and outline the next steps.
- Sharing all outcomes of the research project or initiative (including successes and lessons learned) with those involved in PIE activities.
- Recognising public members' contributions and inviting them to assist in broader communication of information where possible.

5. Mutual benefit



To maximise the benefits of PIE activities, it is important to adopt an ongoing, dialogue-based approach that encourages benefits for all parties involved, including public members, professionals, and the wider population. This approach can help achieve valuable insights and ideas that generate impactful research informed by public views.

This could be achieved by:

- Explaining to public members why they have been invited to participate in PIE activities.
- Highlighting the broader benefits of the research project or initiative and clarifying what the public would gain by participating and contributing to PIE activities.
- Setting realistic expectations for PIE together, agreeing on ways of working, and preparing to navigate any disagreements that may arise.
- Acknowledging the contributions of public members by offering payments and or other agreed forms of appreciation.

- Ensuring ongoing evaluation of the PIE impact on all parties involved, while providing updates on any changes made and the rationale behind them.
- Promoting knowledge exchange among all parties involved, ensuring that dialogue is driven by active listening and responsive behaviour.

6. Effective involvement and engagement



PIE practices should be led by clear objectives, purpose, outcomes, and a strategy for integrating public input into the project. What constitutes 'effective' PIE may vary depending on the specific context of involvement and engagement, but it ultimately rests on the genuine intention for collaboration. This approach can help ensure that PIE plans and the projects they support are informed by and shaped through public input.

This could be achieved by:

- Collaboratively developing PIE plans, using shared decision-making approaches, such as co-creation, co-development, and co-production.
- Setting realistic objectives for PIE activities, including how public input will be integrated into the relevant projects.
- Creating an environment where everyone feels able to contribute throughout the project.
- Continually monitoring PIE progress and public's needs, making necessary adjustments based on real-time feedback.

- Ensuring adequate time and budget is allocated to PIE activities, as insufficient resources can limit the achievements of desired results.
- Evaluating the impact of PIE activities by agreeing on indicators of success and clarifying the characteristics that make PIE effective in each specific context.
- Capturing lessons learned and sharing strategies for promoting positive change.

7. Creating a culture of involvement and engagement



Creating a culture of involvement and engagement in an organisation means embedding PIE at every level, ensuring adequate resources and ongoing support while also encouraging an environment where public members' contributions are valued and integrated throughout research projects or initiatives. This approach can support a seamless partnership between the data research community, PIE professionals, and the public.

This could be achieved by:

- Championing PIE at all organisational levels, recognising the added value of public members' contributions to strategic thinking and forward planning.
- Promoting senior leaders' accountability and commitment to adequately resource PIE, ensuring they actively support and take responsibility for the success of PIE efforts.
- Resourcing PIE throughout the entirety of a research project or initiative, ensuring adequate funding, staff, training, and other relevant resources that are necessary to align to good practice standards.

- Promoting the value of PIE across the data research and statistics community to ensure outcomes remain relevant and can be implemented in real-world contexts.
- Offering ongoing and updated PIE training extended to the wider data research and statistics community, beyond just PIE professionals.
- Embedding PIE throughout any research project or initiative, while being mindful of the differences across the four nations, and always prioritising public benefit.
- Sharing and exchanging knowledge on good practices, especially with those new to PIE.
- Continually improving approaches to PIE, including evaluation methods and evidence of impact.



Glossary

- **Anonymisation:** Anonymisation is the process of changing personal identifiers (i.e., address, name) in some way – such as being removed or replaced – so that the data cannot be traced back to the individual. This process allows data to be shared and used safely while preserving the privacy of people included in the data.
- **Data access processes:** Data access processes refer to procedures and criteria used to grant access to data held by organisations (known as data custodians), such as research institutions, the National Health Service, Police, Education authorities, and others. These processes ensure the data is used ethically, securely, and in ways that benefit the public, while following the law and rules.
- **De-identification:** De-identification is the process of removing personal information from data, creating ‘de-identified data’. While this data no longer contains details that directly identify a person, it can still be linked to identifiable information. This differs from anonymised data, which cannot be linked back to an individual.
- **Equity:** Equity means promoting fairness and justice by ensuring that everyone has access to the same opportunities and resources, taking into account their personal needs and circumstances.
- **Engagement:** A series of activities aimed at creating a conversation with the public about data and research, based on listening and responding. Example: A researcher attending science festivals to raise public awareness of a specific topic through hands-on activities.
- **Facilitators:** A facilitator is someone who helps to guide a meeting or discussion, making sure it runs smoothly, everyone gets a chance to share their thoughts, and the goals of the activity are achieved.
- **Good Practice Standards:** A set of standards to support professionals in the data and statistics community to effectively involve and engage the public in the governance and conduct of data-related initiatives and research projects.

- **Involvement:** Including members of the public in shaping, guiding, and making decisions about research or projects. Their input is enabled and valued throughout the process, ensuring the work reflects diverse perspectives and priorities.
- **Privacy safeguards:** Privacy safeguards refer to measures designed to protect people's personal information and ensure that data is handled in a way that maintains confidentiality, security, and trust.
- **Public:** This term can cover a broad range of people, including the general public, patients, and professionals working across different sectors.
- **Research initiative:** A research initiative (sometimes referred to as 'research programme') is a broader effort designed to tackle a problem or explore a significant topic. It often includes multiple activities, projects, or collaborators working together to drive innovation, develop solutions, or advance knowledge.
- **Research project:** A research project is a smaller, focused task within a research initiative. It often involves asking questions, collecting information, testing ideas, and looking for answers step by step.
- **Underrepresented:** Underrepresented (sometimes referred to as 'seldom heard') refers to specific groups, populations, or communities who are not often included as research participants or public contributors in research. This means their perspectives, needs, or concerns may not be represented in research.
- **Underserved:** Underserved refers to specific groups, populations, or communities that face limited access to resources, services, or support due to barriers like social, economic, or systemic factors.

