

The Children's Information Project

By the Rees Centre at Oxford University, University of Sussex, London School of Economics and Political Science, University College London, Manchester Metropolitan University and Research in Practice

The 'Children's Information' project is **an initiative aimed at transforming how data about children and families involved with children's services is collected, interpreted, and used.**

Supported by the [Nuffield Foundation](#), this collaboration involves multiple local authorities, universities, and research organisations working together to create a more ethical and effective approach to handling children's information. By amplifying the voices of children, families, and practitioners, the project aspires to deliver better outcomes, reduce inequalities, and enhance cost-effectiveness in local and national children's services.

Despite the wealth of information gathered about children and families, much of it remains underutilised or poorly integrated, resulting in missed opportunities to tailor services to their needs.

This project seeks to:

- Ensure that children's voices and diverse experiences are central to how information is collected, shared, and applied.
- Build an ethical framework for the responsible use of data and qualitative insights.
- Reduce inequalities and improve outcomes by informing local authority policies and practices with robust, context-specific information.

This project unites:

- Two County Councils ([North Yorkshire](#) and [Hampshire](#)).
- Two Borough Councils ([Oldham](#) and [Rochdale](#)), collaborating with the [Greater Manchester Combined Authority](#).
- Five leading universities.
- [Research in Practice](#), a key partner supporting the Learning Network.

Each participating local authority focuses on specific service areas:

- **Hampshire:** Enhancing early help for children and families needing additional support.
- **North Yorkshire:** Supporting young people transitioning out of care.
- **Oldham:** Targeting communication, speech, and language development in early years services.
- **Rochdale:** Strengthening the role of Family Hubs in supporting universal and targeted services.

The project explores five interrelated themes to shape its approach:

Data: Integrating statistical data across agencies to provide a comprehensive view of children and families over time while considering financial implications.

Voice: Ensuring meaningful engagement with children, families, and practitioners to complement statistical insights with qualitative perspectives.

Ethics: Establishing ethical guidelines that promote the rights and dignity of children and families.

Use: Applying data and voices to inform policies and practices, with an emphasis on including diverse perspectives.

Learning: Developing tools and frameworks that support continuous improvement in the use of information.

Local sites work closely with researchers to:

- Assess how data and qualitative insights are currently utilised.
- Identify opportunities to improve data integration and application.
- Involve children, families, and practitioners in shaping how information is used to influence decision-making.

In addition to the five local sites, a Learning Network comprising 20 other local authorities will engage with the project. This network will test and refine the project's findings, contributing their insights to co-produce practical guides and resources.

The project aims to:

- Equip local authorities with the tools to address inequalities and improve service outcomes.
- Provide actionable insights into how information can be used more effectively and ethically.
- Foster a collaborative culture among children, families, and practitioners to co-create better services.
- Influence local and national policies through shared learning, events, and an interactive project website.

See more: [Children's Information](#).

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