

Ethics and Data Protection

Your duties as data collectors and analysts



Consent and collection

Ensuring that your participants understand the purpose of data collection and are consenting to take part is the first step. You should keep a copy of every participant's consent to data collection for your records. It should be explicitly stated that you are gaining consent for the purpose of research and additional consent must be requested if it is to be shared widely. Furthermore, careful consideration should be given to the implications of participant data and voice within communications, and you should discuss these aspects with the young person if you wish to seek their or their guardian's (if under 16) permission for this.

Participants have the right to opt-out of the evaluation process at any time and should they choose to, all data collected from them for this purpose should be deleted. Taking part in data collection should not be a mandatory process for your participants. No individual should feel forced or pressurised into providing feedback – it should be a safe space where participants are willing to share their thoughts and feelings. Offering reflections or personal experiences may be a vulnerable or challenging time for a participant. If there are issues raised which you cannot address, be prepared to signpost young people to appropriate services to ensure their wellbeing is prioritised at all times.

A system should be in place so that if music leaders or practitioners outside of the evaluation team are collecting data, there is a **prompt and secure transfer of the**

collected data over to those analysing it. It is your responsibility to maintain secure ownership over collected data.

Also consider the potential of duality within the role of the data collector. It may be that a music leader is conducting research, in which case it should be made clear that data is collected with confidentiality and stored with anonymity. The wellbeing of your participants is always a top-priority and non-participation is always an option.

Data protection and privacy

A secure approach to data collection and storage should mean that no individual can be identified by anyone who should not have access to the data. Personal information must be collected and stored in line with your data protection and safeguarding policies. **No more personal data should be collected beyond what is necessary** for the purpose of the evaluation. For example, in a survey to participants in your project, you may wish to collect their age to be able to analyse trends within and across age groups, but you should not need to collect their address or contact details. We are aware you might collect contact information for other purposes, but evaluation data should not be stored alongside it.

Confidentiality must be a priority at all stages of the process. Files should be stored in secure locations on work computers/devices and should be password protected. Avoid keeping data on personal locations and drives, including USBs, email and unsecure data clouds. If you mistakenly receive data which contains personal information that you should not have access to, or is sent insecurely, immediately delete the data and notify the sender that you have done so. It is the responsibility of the sender to ensure a safe and secure transfer of data to the appropriate recipient.

You can **ensure anonymity by using an ID system** which assigns a unique identifying number or code (ID number) to each individual. Any piece of data you store should not contain the name of the participant, only their ID number. You should store your ID system, which matches names with their corresponding ID numbers, separately from any other data you keep. There are instances where you may need to complete some data entry before anonymising the source, e.g. reflective diaries or hand-written feedback. This means extracting the information from the data source and saving it securely by utilising a system as described above.

The Data Protection Act 2018 controls how personal information relating to individuals is used by your organisation. According to this act, organisations responsible for using personal data have to follow strict rules called 'data protection principles.' Your organisation needs to make sure that the information is:

- used fairly, lawfully and transparently,
- used for specified, explicit purposes,

- used in a way that is adequate, relevant and limited to only what is necessary,
- accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date,
- kept for no longer than is necessary,
- handled in a way that ensures appropriate security, including protection against unlawful or unauthorised processing, access, loss, destruction or damage.

After your data analysis has been carried out and you have completed the evaluation of your project, **consider what data you need to retain, if any at all**. The information in this document is provided to give guidance on how to handle data securely but does not reflect an exhaustive list. Your organisation should consider having ongoing reviews of your data protection and safeguarding policies to ensure they are robust, reflect current legislation and are appropriate for your work.

Further resources

The Market Research Society and Social Research's GDPR Guidance for Social Research <https://the-sra.org.uk/SRA/Resources/Good-practice/SRA/Resources/Good-Practice.aspx?hkey=ccb6430d-24a0-4229-8074-637d54e97a5d>

BERA's Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research <https://www.bera.ac.uk/publication/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-2018-online#participants>

[Youth Music: Sample sizes](#)

[Youth Music: Quantitative analysis](#)

[Youth Music: Qualitative analysis](#)

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Registered charity number: 1075032

Limited company number: 3750674

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LOTTERY FUNDED



Supported using public funding by

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