

Reflections of a research administrator on the Children's Participation in Schools project

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As we near closer to the end of the [Children's Participation in Schools](#) project, I have been reflecting on my time on the project where I work as a Research Administrator. It is hard to believe that when I joined the project on a temporary six-month contract back in February 2023, I would be given the opportunity to stay on throughout its duration. Apart from a short internship at Swansea University after completing my MA in Childhood Studies, this has been my first time working on a research project in a professional capacity - I've come far!

Working as a researcher administrator on a fast-paced project such as this has been challenging at times, but also incredibly rewarding - I have had to upskill in various capacities, navigating university processes such as finance systems and purchasing, as well as improving on my generic administrative skill set such as minute taking at meetings.

As someone who is just beginning in her career and would love to move into academic research, there have been specific opportunities I have had, such as working on our project Research Fish submission which have been especially valuable to me and will no doubt be a great advantage to me in the future. I have also been given the opportunity to build upon research skills that I have been cultivating over many years such as working on ethics forms and applications and data collection.

A large portion of my role day-to-day is supporting with our [Work Package 4](#). Work Package 4 concerns our collaborative network and public engagement efforts, runs across the project, and is related to our fifth research question 'How can findings from this work be drawn together to understand the process by which pedagogies can be transformed in order to embed participative rights?'. Working with Dr Jacky Tyrie, I have helped to develop our Children's Participation in Schools Collaborative Network (CPSN) which has been a great success! As of April 2025, we have over 130 members in the CPSN - each month, I coordinate a network newsletter

which features project updates from across our work packages as well as highlighting relevant resources and upcoming events in the field. The CPSN newsletter has proved popular and surveying members has revealed they enjoy this aspect of the network greatly. Jacky and I also organise bi-monthly seminars which feature talks from members of our team, as well as featuring guest speakers from the field of child participation. These seminars have stimulated interesting group discussions with members across many different types of organisations. If you are interested in joining our network, [you can do so here](#). I also run our social media pages on [LinkedIn](#) and [X/BlueSky](#) – social media has proved a great way to connect with colleagues and build our reach as a project. A particularly interesting, and unexpected aspect of this work has been grappling with the morality of continuing to use X. X is where we have arguably had our greatest levels of engagement, however personal views, and that of the wider academic community find us in a conflicting position to continue using the platform. Whilst we have tried to rebuild our community on BlueSky, it cannot be said that this has perfectly translated across – we have considerably less followers and overall are seeing a lower level of engagement. We have tried to offset this by turning our focus to LinkedIn where we have had a considerable period of growth over the last couple of months and are seeming to find our niche.

Another successful output Jacky and I have worked on collaboratively, is a [policy briefing](#) based on findings from our [legislative and policy analysis of Welsh education documentation](#). A targeted press release for the policy briefing has meant we have received responses from Welsh government officials for future engagement – watch this space!

I have found it both rewarding and interesting undertaking data collection – I have joined the research associates collecting data in primary schools across Wales and I joined the Work Package 3 team at their Discursive Workshops with student teachers and teacher-educators – these have been real highlights for me!

As a junior member of staff, it can be challenging dealing with differing priorities across institutions, luckily, I work with a fantastic team who have all been incredibly supportive throughout my time on the project. I would

like to especially thank our PI Dr Sarah Chicken who has consistently provided me with feedback that has helped me progress in my role and feel confident in my abilities.

Although the project is nearing its end, we still have more exciting outputs and events planned as well as lots of conferences that we will be attending and presenting at, so keep in touch if you would like to know more!