

Participant Information sheet template

The following is a suggested template for participant information sheets. You should adjust and populate the template to suit your project and intended audience. Use clear, simple English at all times and avoid abbreviations and acronyms.

This template is designed primarily for those doing qualitative interviews with adults from non-vulnerable populations and dealing with non-sensitive topics. You will require different sections and information if doing focus groups or structured interviews. If conducting research with vulnerable populations and / or sensitive topics please see Research Ethics Committee website for further details.

If you intend to **publish your research** you should also:

- Use the correct data retention policy as per the Research Ethics Committee website.
- Declare any funding for your research and/or conflict of interest
- Outline provisions for checking direct quotations with participants to ensure that they reflect accurately what the participant said and are used in their proper context.
- Provide information sheets and consent forms on headed paper from the most appropriate institution.

Template

[TITLE OF THE STUDY]: *The title should be clear, self-explanatory and consistent across all documents referring to the study.*

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study. Before you decide you need to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Ask questions if anything you read is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not to take part.

WHO I AM AND WHAT THIS STUDY IS ABOUT

Explain who you are and why you are doing this study. Explain the overall aim of the study. When describing the study take care to be as neutral as possible and avoid suggesting any bias about what you expect the outcomes from the research to be. If the research is being undertaken as part of a course of study state what qualification will result from the process.

WHAT WILL TAKING PART INVOLVE?

Explain what taking part in the research will involve including a list of topics that you will discuss and the expected location and duration of participation. If you plan to use audio-recording discuss that also.

WHY HAVE YOU BEEN INVITED TO TAKE PART?

Explain why you have selected this particular individual to take part in your research and how you came to select them.

DO YOU HAVE TO TAKE PART?

Explain that participation is completely voluntary and that the person has the right to refuse participation, refuse any question and withdraw at any time without any consequence whatsoever.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND BENEFITS OF TAKING PART?

Give a frank and realistic assessment of the possible benefits of the research – do not oversell what the research will achieve. Consider any possible physical or psychological harm that may come to a participant as a result of participating in the research and what you will do should such a situation arise.

WILL TAKING PART BE CONFIDENTIAL?

Explain what steps you will take to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of the participant and any individuals they talk about. Outline the situations in which you may have to break confidentiality: if the researcher has a strong belief that there is a serious risk of harm or danger to either the participant or another individual (e.g. physical, emotional or sexual abuse, concerns for child protection, rape, self-harm, suicidal intent or criminal activity) or if a serious crime has been committed. You should also make it clear that non-anonymised data in the form of signed consent forms and audio recordings are collected and retained as part of the research process.

HOW WILL INFORMATION YOU PROVIDE BE RECORDED, STORED AND PROTECTED?

Explain that the interview will be recorded and outline the arrangements for storing the research data (where it will be stored, security arrangements, who will have access). Also outline the relevant data retention policy. This will vary depending on the nature and needs of your project (see the Research Ethics Committee website for further

information). For students undertaking Masters programmes who have no intention of subsequently publishing their research the relevant paragraph should read:

‘Signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in [specify location, security arrangements and who has access to data] until after my degree has been conferred. A transcript of interviews in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for a further two years after this. Under freedom of information legalisation you are entitled to access the information you have provided at any time.’

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY?

Outline fully and realistically your plans for the dissemination of the final research product including conferences, publications and teaching use. If your plans for the research only consist in submitting your dissertation then simply state this.

WHO SHOULD YOU CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION?

Provide the name, affiliation and contact details of all researchers involved as well as supervisor details where relevant.

[THANK YOU]