

# Guidance on drafting a research Participant Information Sheet

## What is a Participant Information Sheet?

The Participant Information Sheet is the document that is given to potential participants with written information about the study. Its purpose is to help potential participants to decide whether they want to take part and to provide relevant details, including contact details. It includes the following core information:

- Title, or name of the project;
- Any relevant logos. The UWE Bristol logo must be included, and funders will usually require their logo is also added;
- The name and contact details of the lead researcher/team/funder/supervisor/Director of Studies;
- The details of the ethical approval(s) granted and the UWE Bristol research ethics committee email details for any ethical queries/comments/complaints;
- An invitation to the participant inviting them to take part in the research and explanation of why they have been invited;
- Non-technical details explaining the research;
- Assurance that participation is voluntary and details of how they can withdraw from the study without penalty;
- Non-technical explanation of what participation involves;
- Summary of the risks and benefits to the participant;
- Explanation of what will happen to the participant's data;
- Details of where the results of the research will be published;
- Contact details for further queries/concerns/complaints;
- A 'thank you' to the participant.
- Privacy Notice for Research Participants

## Study title and logos

The title should be self-explanatory to a lay person. The relevant UWE and any other logos must be included. Some funders make it a contractual term of their funding that their logo is included on all documentation.

## Invitation paragraph

For example:

"You are invited to take part in research taking place at the University of the West of England, Bristol. It is funded by [internal/external funder, if relevant]. Before you decide whether to take part, it is important for you to understand why the study is being done and what it will involve. Please

read the following information carefully and if you have any queries or would like more information please contact [name], Faculty of [ACE/HAS/FBL/FET], University of the West of England, Bristol [email].”

## Who is organising and funding the research?

If there is a research team involved, provide details of the team. For example:

“The project lead is [name]. [names] are co-Investigators. The team’s bios and details of their work are available at [insert links to UWE profiles or other bio information].”

If you are working alone then this section is unnecessary.

If you are a student, you should provide details of your Supervisor and Director of Studies.

## What is the aim of the research?

The background and aim of the study should be given here in non-technical language. An explanation of what the participant is being asked to do should be included, and a short explanation of what will happen to the participant’s data. For example:

“The research is looking at [explain the aim/objective of the research in non-technical language]. Our research questions are [explain the research questions in non-technical language]. To help us answer these questions we will be [conducting interviews/focus groups etc]. The aim of the interviews will be to collect information that will be made anonymous.

The results of our study will be analysed and used [state where the results will be disseminated. For example, ‘in a Report made available on the University of the West of England’s open-access repository and will also be made available via...’]. The anonymised results may also be used in conference papers and peer-reviewed academic papers.”

## Why have I been invited to take part?

This section should explain how the participants have been chosen and why. It should include details on what will and will not be expected. For example:

“As a [professional/student/service user etc], we are interested in gaining information about your [experience/views etc] so the interview will ask you about these things. We will not be asking any questions about [insert details if applicable]. The purpose of the questions will be to [gain information about your experience/gain your views etc].

## Do I have to take part?

You should explain that taking part in the research is entirely voluntary and that participants are entitled to withdraw their consent (although you may need to set a final date for withdrawal). For example:

“You do not have to take part in this research. It is up to you to decide whether or not you want to be involved. If you do decide to take part, you will be given a copy of this information sheet to keep

and will be asked to sign a consent form. If you do decide to take part, you are able to withdraw from the research without giving a reason [insert any restrictions here, for example: until the point at which your data is anonymised and can therefore no longer be traced back to you]. This point will take place [insert time period here] from the date you signed your consent form. If you want to withdraw from the study within this period, please write to [insert name and email details. Only provide one point of contact for this, do not state that withdrawal can take place by contacting any of the research team]. Deciding not to take part or to withdrawal from the study does not have any penalty [insert details of what it cannot affect here, if applicable. For example: and will not affect the standard of care you will receive, your assessment marks, your career progress etc]

## What will happen to me if I take part and what do I have to do?

This section needs a clear description of what will happen to the participant if they decide to take part in the research. In non-technical language, explain clearly what you expect of them. For example:

“If you agree to take part you will be asked to take part in [insert details]. This will be conducted by [insert details]. The team are all experienced in the subject matter and are sensitive to issues it may raise. The [insert activity, eg interview] will take approximately [insert time]. The interviewers can travel to [insert details of where the activity will take place, including whether the participant needs to come to you]

The subject and focus of the discussion will be [insert details]. Your answers will be fully anonymised.

Your interview will be [insert details, eg recorded on a voice recorder but the recording will not contain your name]. [Give withdrawal details here, eg a unique identifier will be used to re-identify you if you choose to withdraw from the study within the period. At the point of transcription, your voice recording will be deleted. Your data will be anonymised at this point and will be analysed with interview data from other anonymised participants].

## What are the benefits of taking part?

An example: This work is funded to respond directly to the President of the Family Division’s request for research to look at the rise in s.31 care order applications. We have the personal endorsement of the President to conduct the project and are an approved Ministry of Justice project. If you take part, you will be helping us to gain a better understanding of the reasons why care order applications are made and will be helping to influence measures that could be put in place to help reduce the need for care order applications to be made.

## What are the possible risks of taking part?

This section should include a statement about any possible risks that you foresee. For example:

“We do not foresee or anticipate any significant risk to you in taking part in this study. If, however, you feel uncomfortable at any time you can ask for [the activity] to stop. If you need any support

during or after [the activity] then the researchers will be able to put you in touch with suitable support agencies. The research team are experienced in conducting [insert activity] and are sensitive to the subject area. The [insert activities] have been designed with these considerations in mind.

## What will happen to your information?

This section should be written in non-technical language and should include a statement about any circumstance where you feel you need to break confidence. For example, if you find someone has a serious medical condition, or if there is evidence of a criminal offence or professional misconduct etc. For example:

“All the information we receive from you will be treated in the strictest confidence.

All the information that you give will be kept confidential and anonymised at [insert point of anonymisation of data]. The only circumstance where we may not be able to keep your information confidential is [insert details of when, and what would happen if that circumstance arises]. Hard copy research material will be kept [insert details of exactly where this data will be stored. Eg, in a locked and secure setting to which only the researchers will have access in accordance with the University’s and the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation requirements]. Voice recordings will be destroyed securely immediately after anonymised transcription. Your anonymised data will be analysed together with other interview and file data, and we will ensure that there is no possibility of identification or re-identification from this point.”

## Where will the results of the research study be published?

This section tells the participants what will happen to the results of the research. When are the results likely to be published? Where can they obtain a copy of the published results? You might add that they will not be identified in any report/publication. For example:

“A Report will be written containing our research findings. This Report will be available on the University of the West of England’s open-access Research Repository, and [insert details if applicable]. The project funder is [insert details if applicable]

A hard copy of the Report will be made available to all research participants if you would like to see it. Key findings will also be shared both within and outside the University of the West of England [insert details of others who will receive a copy of the Report and/or findings]. Anonymous and non-identifying direct quotes may be used for publication and presentation purposes.

## Who has ethically approved this research?

The project has been reviewed and approved by [the Faculty/University of the West of England University Research Ethics Committee and insert details of any other ethical approvals obtained]. Any comments, questions or complaints about the ethical conduct of this study can be addressed to the Research Ethics Committee at the University of the West of England at:

[Researchethics@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:Researchethics@uwe.ac.uk)

## What if something goes wrong?

Explain how concerns, queries and/or complaints will be handled. For students, this could be in the form of contacting your Director of Studies in the first instance. For staff, this may mean contacting the lead researcher, the ethics committee, the research governance manager or a line manager.

## What if I have more questions or do not understand something?

If you would like any further information about the research please contact in the first instance:

[insert name, professional address and email address].

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study.

You will be given a copy of this Participant Information Sheet and your signed Consent Form to keep.

V.1, Professor Lauren Devine, 15 April 2019