These notes are designed to help you decide what you need to include in your Consent form.

This guidance will explain the text that has been included in this example form provided on page 3, and why it has been included. It is then for you to decide what is appropriate to include for your participants. PLEASE NOTE: If you are a student, please consult with your Supervisor with regard to what you need to include in the consent form for your project.

**Taking Part in the Project**

*“I have read and understood the project information sheet dated DD/MM/YYYY or the project has been fully explained to me. (If you answer No to this question please do not proceed with this consent form until you are fully aware of what your participation in the project will mean)”*

- It is very important that your participants understand what is involved in the project, what they are expected to do, how much time and effort will be required to be involved in the project. This should be explained in your Information Sheet. If your research is emergent, you need to explain this to participants and explain why it is not possible for you to be precise about what is expected of them.

*“I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project.”*

- Participants will not understand your research as well as you understand it. They should have an opportunity to raise any questions they have before they are asked to give their informed consent.

*“I agree to take part in the project. I understand that taking part in the project will include… (add in what your participant will be doing: completing a questionnaire, being interviewed, being recorded (audio and / or video, participating in a focus group; if there are several stages to the research, you may need separate tick boxes for each.”*

- You may be asking people to participate in activities such as an anonymous questionnaire, an interview, a focus group or an experiment, or a combination of activities. Whatever you are asking people to do, you must make it very clear what you are expecting people to agree to, and what will happen to the data/information obtained from them.

An example of how you may choose to break down what people are providing consent for is provided below:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Yes | No |
| I agree to take part in the project.  |  |  |
| I understand and agree that taking part in the project will include: participating in an interview |  |  |
| I agree that whilst I am participating in this interview video recordings will be made. I agree to being video recorded and for these anonymised video recordings to be used in the research.  |  |  |
| I agree that whilst I am participating in this interview audio recordings will be made. I agree to being audio recorded and for transcripts of these anonymised audio recordings to be used in the research.  |  |  |

*“I understand that by choosing to participate as a volunteer in this research, this does not create a legally binding agreement nor is it intended to create an employment relationship with the University of Sheffield.”*

- You must include this statement to clarify to participants that by taking part in your research project they are not employed by the University (which would have legal and tax implications).

“I understand that I can withdraw from the research/study, with or without notice, at any time. I understand that I do not have to give any reasons for why I no longer want to take part and there will be no adverse consequences if I choose to withdraw”

- You need to make it very clear to people that they can withdraw from the project at any time. However, you may need to add an additional point regarding the continued use of data collected from them prior to their withdrawal.

For example, if they are participating in an anonymous questionnaire it will not be possible to withdraw the data they have provided once they have participated as there will be no way for you to identify and remove their responses. If data are to be included in a dataset for analysis, then after a certain point, withdrawing one person’s contribution may still be “possible” but there may be so much work involved that it is not practical to do so. Also, once any data has been published it will not be possible to withdraw those data, and, similarly, if data have been shared with other researchers, it may not be possible for people to withdraw those data from the project.

You therefore need to make it clear to participants whether they will be able to request that the data they have provided are withdrawn from the research, and if this is possible, set a realistic date(s) or point(s) in the research process by which a participant may request the withdrawal of their data (with a full explanation in your information sheet).

**How my information will be used during and after the project**

*“I understand my personal details such as name, phone number, address and email address etc. will not be revealed to people outside the project.”*

- The personal details of research participants should always be treated as confidential information, unless they have given explicit consent for their details to be shared. However, you must take steps to ensure you can meet this promise. Ensure that all personal data are held only for as long as strictly needed, and are stored on secure University drives accessible only by those members of the research team who need to be able to use them, ideally in a separate location to the data being used for analysis as part of the research. You can temporarily store data on your University Google drive but do not store data on any personal Google or other drive without checking the data protection terms and conditions first (the University has a formal agreement in place with Google that meets the requirements of the EU and UK data protection legislation).

*“I understand and agree that my words may be quoted in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs. I understand that I will not be named in these outputs unless I specifically request this.”*

- If you wish to be able to include direct quotes from participants in your research outputs, then you need to include this statement. If you intend that participants can and will be named in outputs (or if they have requested to be named) make sure they understand the potential implications of this (e.g. potential for negative feedback, the potential impact on their families and friends, and the fact that once their name is published it cannot be withdrawn).

*“I understand and agree that other authorised researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.”*

- You may wish to explain to participants how their data might be used in future research. This gives added value to their data and makes their participation even more worthwhile. However, it will not always be appropriate for data to be shared; for example, if it is particularly sensitive and/or if there is a greater risk of participants being identifiable to third parties.

*“I understand and agree that other authorised researchers may use my data in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs, only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.”*

- As per the above question, the need for this consent question very much depends on the nature of the research you are completing. Anonymised data on relatively impersonal subjects is much easier for researchers to share.

*“I give permission for the [specify the data] that I provide to be deposited in [name of data repository]**so it can be used for future research and learning”*

- Although depositing data in a repository is encouraged by many research funders, as above, the need for this consent question very much depends on the nature of the research you are completing. Anonymised data on relatively impersonal subjects is much easier for participants to allow to be deposited and shared; however, ensuring true anonymity can be almost unachievable within certain types of research. Participants should not be pressurised into agreeing to share their data if they do not wish to do so.

**So that the information you provide can be used legally by the researchers**

*“I agree to assign the copyright I hold in any materials generated as part of this project to The University of Sheffield.”*

A number of data repositories ask for evidence that participants have signed over copyright for their contributions to the organisation depositing the data. This is because some participants have requested royalties or payments for the use of their intellectual property. It is probably best, where possible, to gain agreement from participants to sign over copyright of their data so that this problem does not arise.

**Please note this can be adapted to your needs**

**[insert name of project] Consent Form** (NB. All items in RED to be amended or removed.)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ***Please tick the appropriate boxes*** | **Yes** | **No** |
| **Taking Part in the Project** |  |  |
| I have read and understood the project information sheet dated DD/MM/YYYY or the project has been fully explained to me. (If you will answer No to this question please do not proceed with this consent form until you are fully aware of what your participation in the project will mean.) |  |  |
| I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project.  |  |  |
| I agree to take part in the project. I understand that taking part in the project will include… (add in what your participant will be doing: completing a questionnaire, being interviewed, being recorded (audio and / or video, participating in a focus group; if there are several stages to the research, you may need separate tick boxes for each. |  |  |
| I understand that by choosing to participate as a volunteer in this research, this does not create a legally binding agreement nor is it intended to create an employment relationship with the University of Sheffield. |  |  |
| I understand that my taking part is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the study at any time/before [DATE]; I do not have to give any reasons for why I no longer want to take part and there will be no adverse consequences if I choose to withdraw.  |  |  |
| **How my information will be used during and after the project** |  |  |
| I understand my personal details such as name, phone number, address and email address etc. will not be revealed to people outside the project. |  |  |
| I understand and agree that my words may be quoted in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs. I understand that I will not be named in these outputs unless I specifically request this. |  |  |
| I understand and agree that other authorised researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.  |  |  |
| I understand and agree that other authorised researchers may use my data in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs, only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form. |  |  |
| I give permission for the [specify the data] that I provide to be deposited in [name of data repository]so it can be used for future research and learning |  |  |
| **So that the information you provide can be used legally by the researchers** |  |  |
| I agree to assign the copyright I hold in any materials generated as part of this project to The University of Sheffield. |  |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |
| Name of participant [printed] | Signature | Date |
|  |  |  |
| Name of Researcher [printed] | Signature | Date |
|  |  |  |

**Project contact details for further information:**

These details should include Principal Investigator/lead researcher; Supervisor (if applicable); a person outside the project who can be contacted in the event of a complaint (E.g. Head of Department): Include names, email addresses, the University’s address, and phone if appropriate (DO NOT include phone details for HoD)

Save 2 copies of the consent form: 1 paper copy for the participant, 1 copy for the research data file