

**The University of Sheffield**  
**Research Ethics Policy Note no. 8**

**USING EXTERNAL RESEARCH ORGANISATIONS**

From time to time research involving human participants is carried out on behalf of the University of Sheffield by external organisations: market research organisations, private- or public-sector social research organisations, voluntary sector organisations, and so on.

Many of these organisations have their own research ethics guidelines or policies. However, in all cases it is the University of Sheffield's Ethics Policy Governing Research Involving Human Participants, Personal Data and Human Tissue that should govern the conduct of the research. The University of Sheffield is the contracting body and the University's Policy applies to any research that is carried out on its behalf. The contract under the terms of which such research is undertaken must stipulate this clearly and unambiguously. Research contractors must be made aware of the Policy's details.

Such research must be approved in accordance with the University of Sheffield's Policy and the details of the research ethics stipulation(s) in the contract with the external organisation should form part of the documentations submitted for ethics review.

In addition to the above, from a data protection perspective, any arrangements with external research organisations must comply with data protection legislation if personal data will be collected and used as part of the work. The contract with the organisation must clearly set out the rights and liabilities of the Data Controller (the University) and the Data Processor (the external organisation). Further guidance is provided by the Information Commissioners' Office (<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/accountability-and-governance/contracts/>)

