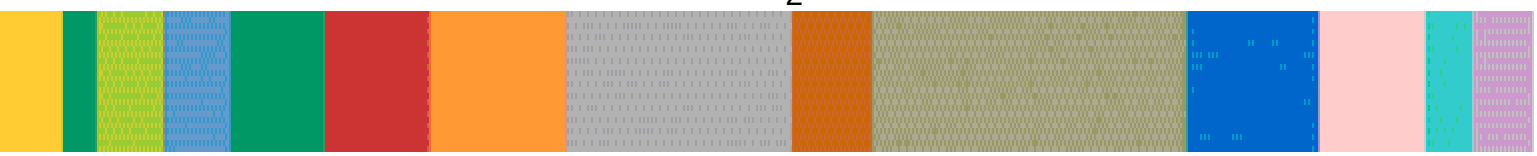
Research Governance

Guidance for undertaking research within the Department of People Services

March 2018

Contents

1.	**General Guidance**	**Page No**
	1.1 What is research governance?	3
	1.2 What is research?	3
	1.3 What to do?	3
	1.4 What to cover in your application?	4
	1.5 What happens next?	4
	1.6 Changes when research is taking place?	4
	1.7 What to do when the research is completed?	4
	1.8 Contact details	5
2.	**Research Guidelines**	
	2.1 Ethics	5
	2.2 Science, Methodology and Rationale	6
	2.3 Information, data storage and intellectual property	6
	2.4 Health and safety	7
	2.5 Finance	7
3	**Application Form**	8



1. General guidance

1.1 What is research governance?

Research governance is the means by which the quality of research can be assured and the rights of those involved can be protected. Published in 2001, the research governance framework (RGF) sets out a number of standards and procedures for anyone involved in research, in five areas:

- ethics
- science
- information
- health and safety, and
- finance.

The purpose is to:

- Be aware of what research is being undertaken
- Ensure the dignity, rights, safety and well-being of researchers and participants are protected
- Safeguard researcher's integrity and make sure of compliance with standards
- Take full responsibility for how research is carried out.

The Department of People Services has to ensure that all research with service users adheres to the RGF.

1.2 What is Research?

We define 'research' very broadly - as any work that involves the systematic collection, collation, analysis and interpretation of information from or about individuals who may be service users, their friends or relatives, members of the public or employees of Bolton's Department of People Services. It includes: surveys, focus groups, consultations, on-going engagement initiatives (at initial set-up), reviews, evaluations, work in connection with audit, student projects and larger scale secondary data analysis projects. It may be funded internally or externally, carried out by staff, students or external organisations. <u>It does not include the routine collection of management information</u>.

If you are unsure of whether something is research please contact the Information and Communication Team (contact details below) and they will be happy to advise.

1.3 What to do?

If you wish to carry out (or commission) a piece of research you need to complete a short application form so that it can be assessed. You must also return any additional paperwork, which will be distributed to participants including any questionnaires, questions to be asked and confidentiality forms. Please return your completed form to the Information and Communication Team who will check all the required information is included.

1.4 What to cover in your application?
The form is self-explanatory and includes prompts for the type of information required. You must ensure in your application that:

- A sponsor has been identified who is willing to take overall responsibility for confirming that everything is ready for the research to begin (this may be a Head of Service or Assistant Director for internal staff)
- Ethical standards are met (see Research Guidelines)
- The research methods are appropriate and will be carried out to a good standard;
- Sound arrangements are in place for the financial management of research;
- There is free access to information (in accessible formats) both on the research being conducted and on the findings of the research
- The safety of participants and of research and other staff must be given priority at all times and health and safety regulations must be strictly observed.
- If you require any support to complete your application please contact the Information and Communication Team in the Department of People Services.

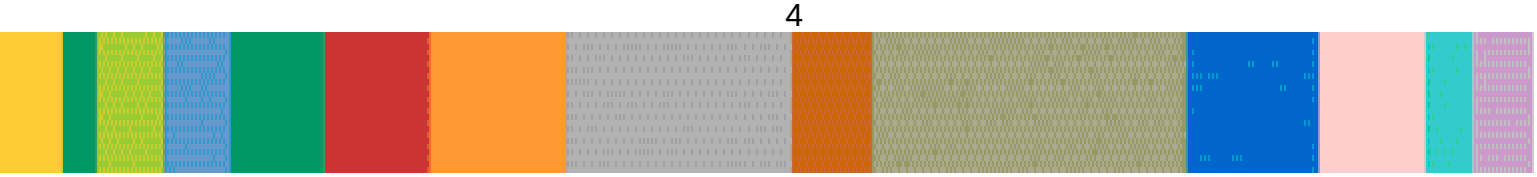
1.5 What happens next?
Once the application is complete it will be risk assessed using the research assessment form. The Information and Communication Team will complete the risk assessment, working with the other research and consultation leads in the Council if necessary. If it is agreed that the research is ethically and methodologically sound, and successfully minimises levels of risk to participants, it will be recommended for approval to the relevant Assistant Director or Director Public Health.

If there are further information requirements or areas of the project, which do not meet ethical or methodological standards, the applicant will be informed of this and asked to resubmit the application with amendments.

Once the research is approved you will be notified and the research can go ahead. All stages in the process will be electronic and all efforts will be made to keep the timescales for approval to a minimum in order not to delay progress.

1.6 Changes when research is taking place?
If there are any substantial changes to the research after approval is granted you must re-apply for research governance approval in accordance with the procedure above.

1.7 What to do when the research is completed?
Once the research is completed any reports or presentations must be copied to the Information and Communication Team. If appropriate, the reports will be made accessible via the Council's Consultation Database or Secondary Research Database.



1.8 Contact Details

For more information please contact:
Information and Communication Team
Department of People Services
01204 332170
Email: socialcare.consultation@bolton.gov.uk

2. Research Guidelines

2.1 Ethics

2.1.1 The respect, dignity, rights safety and well-being of participants must be of primary importance in the consideration of any proposed research.

2.1.2 All proposed research project plans, which involve data concerning users, their relatives or friends, care professionals, volunteers, must be referred for Research Governance approval prior to commencing the project.

2.1.3 The arrangements for obtaining **INFORMED AND WRITTEN CONSENT** from participants must be considered as a matter of prime importance in the project plan. In cases where it is not possible to obtain a written signature directly from the participant, the researcher must take all reasonable steps to identify and obtain consent from a legal guardian or advocate. Approval of the arrangements must be sought from the appropriate reviewing body prior to commencing the research.

Note:
(i) INFORMED CONSENT includes

- giving participants as much information as is appropriate about the purpose of the study and it's intended outcomes
- Explaining clearly their rights and limits to their participation e.g. location (if appropriate), time involved, how the data will be used and stored etc.
- raising participant's awareness to any potential harm/risk in taking part
- ensuring compliance is freely given
- ensuring participants are made aware of their right to withdraw or refuse to take part in a study without suffering any effect on their right of access to services
- Giving consideration to obtaining informed consent from 'vulnerable' populations e.g. children, learning disabled etc.
- Ensuring that all reasonable steps will be taken to assure confidentiality and anonymity. However, they should be informed that data which gives postcodes or other geographic data identifiers could lead to identification.

The issue of informed consent **does not** apply if data is collected through anonymous questionnaires where the participant cannot be identified.

(ii) If the method of collection of data is by observation, which relies on observing behaviour without the participant's knowledge, such studies

should only take place in a location in which people would normally expect to be in public view. If possible, an attempt should be made to obtain consent after the study has taken place.

2.1.4 Every effort should be made to ensure that the design of the research does not discriminate against participants on the basis of sex, ethnic origin, age, sexual orientation or disability. This may mean that special arrangements need to be made to ensure participation e.g. Braille, audio cassettes, plain English, translations in minority languages, payment of travelling expenses etc.

2.1.5 Wherever appropriate, participants or their representatives should be given the opportunity to help with the research including, planning, data collection and analysis.

2.1.6 During contact with participants, care must be taken not to raise expectations of services or to imply that resources will be available to meet their needs.

2.1.7 Researchers have a duty to pass on requests for help or information to the appropriate agency on any situation which gives rise to serious concern, e.g. domestic abuse or child protection issues.

2.1.8 An appropriate channel for registering any complaints must be identified to participants

2.1.9 All data is confidential and should not be put to any use which may conflict with the original purpose for which it is gathered, without the informed and written consent of the participants.

2.2 Science, Methodology And Rationale

2.2.1 All existing sources relating to the proposed area of study must be considered before undertaking any projects to avoid replication of existing work.

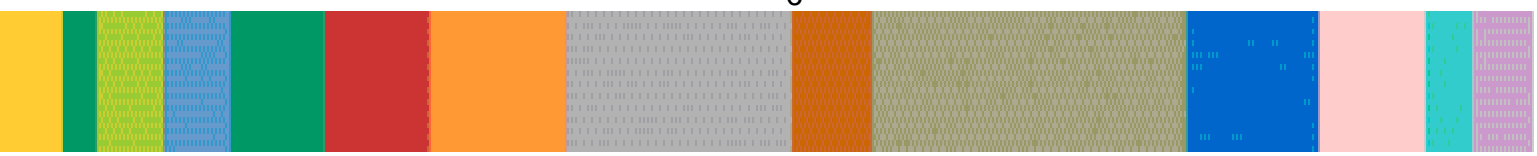
2.2.2 All research should have clear objectives linked to clearly defined positive benefits to customers, staff or in the generation of new knowledge.

2.2.3 It is useful to have participant involvement in the design of any research at an early stage to ensure that any questions to be used are appropriate to the group being researched.

2.3 Information, Data Storage And Intellectual Property

2.3.1 Once appropriate approval has been granted, all information about the research and its findings should be made freely available.

2.3.2 All results of the research need to be presented at an appropriate level e.g. in such a way that it is easily understood, using non-jargon language.



2.3.3 All data collected during the course of the research must be stored securely for an appropriate period to allow further analysis by the original researcher or others and also for the purposes of monitoring and the development of good research practice. This may require gaining the consent of the participants involved i.e. if there are any consequences for the participant from whom the data was originally collected.

2.4 **Health and Safety**

2.4.1 The safety of participants and of research staff must be given priority at all times and health and safety regulations must be strictly observed.

2.4.2 *Participants*: Harm can arise from stress through participation, loss of self-esteem, psychological injury or other side effects. All researchers must consider such risks within their research plan.

2.4.3 Researchers: Employing Organisations are responsible for the safety of their staff. All researchers should carry identification and ensure that a system is in place so that your whereabouts are known. Contact should be made before any home visits and a risk assessment made.

2.5 Finance

You must

- Consult your employing agency or organisation regarding details of arrangements for compensation to yourself or anyone harmed by the research should the need arise, prior to submitting you project plan.
- Give details about any grants covering the study and estimates of any expenditure
- State if you or anyone else will profit financially from the results of your study.

3. Application Form (Please note that you can also download this form in word format)

Part 1: Overview		
Title of Research Project		
Research sponsor	**Bolton Council**	Yes / No
	Other (please state)	

Part 2: Details of researchers	
Name of Principal Researcher	
Job Title of Principal Researcher	
Organisation of Principal Researcher	
Email address of Principal Researcher	
Name(s) of co-researchers (if applicable)	
Job titles of co-researchers	
Organisation(s) of co-researchers	
Name of research supervisor (for student projects)	
Job title of research supervisor	
Organisation of research supervisor	

Summary of researchers relevant experience	

Part 3: Summary of proposed research		
Background (including details of any similar previous research)		
Aims / objectives (including how does it relate to Departmental priorities)		
Methods (e.g. how will you select sample, how will you recruit /inform participants about the research, will participant be rewarded, how will data be collected, Does the approach take into account any specific needs of participants? Is there any potential risk or harm to participants? Have you considered whether the researchers would need to have DBS checks? Are there any conflicts of interest? How will data be stored? How will you ensure the data is kept confidential? Who will have ownership of the research results/reports? How will you deal with any complaints?)		
In which parts of the research, if any, have/will service users or carers be actively involved? (By research in which service users or carers are 'actively involved' we mean research that is carried out **with** or **by** people who use services, rather	As user researchers	
	As members of a research group	
	In commenting on documents	
	As members of a departmental or other wider research strategy group	

than research that simply gathers information from participants.)	None of the above	
Results / conclusions (How will you make sense of data? How will you present the findings of the research? How will you use the research findings?)		
Feedback / dissemination (How will you feedback research findings to participants? Who will you share the research findings with? How?)		
Any other relevant information		

Section 4: Funding / Resources / Timescales		
Finance	Who will fund the research?	
Council staff time	How much council staff time would you estimate would be required?	
Timescales	Planned Start Date	
	Estimated Completion Date	
Approvals	**Have you any other Research Governance approval/pending for this specific piece of work?** (If yes, please summarise)	Yes/No
	Have you any other Research Governance approval/pending for? (If yes, please summarise)	Yes/No

Section 5: Risk Assessment		
(*Please identify the risk level for each criteria. If you identify high/medium risks ensure you include details of how these risks will be overcome in the space provided)*		
	Risk Level i.e. High, Medium or Low	**Steps taken to minimise any risk**
Participants are not able to give informed consent and are not able to withdraw from the research.		
Researcher(s) not well qualified with little or no experience or knowledge of either the topic of investigation, the participants or the methods to be used		
The topic and kinds of information being sought are likely to be regarded as highly personal or sensitive by those from/about whom it is being collected		
The methods are inappropriate/ the need for the study is not established/ the project does not have the resources to properly address the issues		
Participants data will not be kept confidential		
There could be a conflict of interests for researcher given existing relationships with participants		
Study is likely to be extremely sensitive		
Please summarise any other risks that you have identified below		

Please submit this completed application form to
socialcare.consultation@bolton.gov.uk