

City of Wolverhampton Council – Research Governance Approval Consultation

‘Research is a core function of health and social care. It is essential for our health and wellbeing and for the care we receive.’ – Health Research Authority, 2017.

Therefore, research is supported by the City of Wolverhampton Council. However, research can also involve an element of risk, in regards to the safety and wellbeing of research participants and the return on investment for the research. Stringent governance of research is therefore essential to ensure that the public can have confidence in and benefit from quality health and social care research.

As a public body there is an expectation on us to conduct research to high scientific, ethical and financial standards. We are expected to demonstrate transparent decision making processes, clear allocation of responsibilities and robust monitoring arrangements.

To ensure that any health and social care research that takes place in the City of Wolverhampton Council is of good quality, ethical and useful we have a stringent research governance approval process in place. This process ensures that prior to research, researchers have taken reasonable actions to protect the rights, safety and wellbeing of any service users, families, carers and staff that may be involved in the research.

For information around national health and social care research governance guidance, please go to: <https://www.hra.nhs.uk/>

Does your research project need to go through the research governance process?

Before beginning your research you need carefully consider whether or not you need to apply for research governance approval.

You do not need to apply for research governance approval if:

- You will not be requiring access to service users, carers, staff or volunteers, or requiring access to personal information held about them via the council’s adult social care services or public health department;
- You will only be collecting routine management or monitoring information as a normal part of your day to day work;
- You will be carrying out a public consultation;
- You will be carrying out service evaluations; or
- You will be carrying out financial, practice or service quality audits.

However, you do need to apply for research governance approval if you are looking to develop a study that involves:

- Collecting information from service users, carers, staff or volunteers that you will be accessing through council departments, via:
 - A questionnaire,
 - Interview, or
 - Focus group
- Are accessing personal information held by council departments at an individual level about service users, carers, staff or volunteers. This includes information that is identifiable and anonymised, or data held on paper or on digital systems.

Process for social care and public health research approval

Our research governance approval approach is based on the principles for the management and conduct of research that have been outlined in the 'UK Policy Framework for Health and Social Care Research'.

The responsibility for the research governance approval process sits with the public health department and at least two members of the department will independently review your research governance application before coming together to come to a joint decision.

To come to a decision, the following will be taken into consideration:

- Whether the research proposal meets the principles set out in the UK Policy Framework,
- Whether you have provided all evidence required as set out in this guidance pack,
- Agreement and support from the service manager of the service(s) that will your research will involve

The research governance application will involve filling in an online form that requests information about how you are going to conduct and manage your research, including data protection. The majority of the information requested should have been thought about when compiling your research proposal for your research organisation.

Timescales and approval

We will aim to acknowledge your application for research governance approval within 5 working days of receiving it. Following the acknowledgement we will aim to review the application, get permission/support from the service manager involved and provide you with a decision within a further 10 working days.

You will receive an email that will inform you if your application has been approved, approved with conditions or not approved. At this stage, if your application has not been approved, we will provide you with feedback around areas of your application that need to be amended before being resubmitted. If your research governance application is approved, you may continue with your research. If your application is approved with conditions, you must meet these conditions prior to beginning the study and provide evidence that these conditions have been met.

Once your application has been approved we will record details of your research proposal onto our internal recording system and will request that once your research has been completed that you provide us with an executive summary of your paper. We will keep this on record so that if, in the future, we receive a proposal for a research question that resembles yours we can suggest that the researcher amends their question, because the initial study will have answered the question.

Supporting documents

The supporting documents we will require to support your research governance application are:

- Research Proposal
- Research establishments ethical approval
- Research establishments indemnity insurance

Indemnity insurance is a policy which can help to cover costs in the situation that mistakes that might be made in your research result in people involved with the research losing money or business.

Further information

UK Policy Framework for Health and Social Care Research: <http://beta.hra.nhs.uk/planning-and-improving-research/policies-standards-legislation/uk-policy-framework-health-social-care-research/>

Information about data protection and information governance: <https://ico.org.uk/>

Guidance on the Mental Capacity Act (2005) in relation to research:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-capacity-act-code-of-practice>

Information about the Health Research Authority (HRA) approval process and HRA Research Ethics Service: <http://www.hra.nhs.uk/resources/before-you-apply/non-nhs-recs/national-social-care-research-ethics-committee/>

Social Care Research Ethics Committee: <http://www.hra.nhs.uk/resources/before-you-apply/non-nhs-recs/national-social-care-research-ethics-committee/>

The Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) Research Group:
<https://www.adass.org.uk/research>

Flowchart of the research governance approval process

