

Can we share and re-use personal or sensitive research data?

Research material containing personal data - even sensitive information such as that relating to an individual's health and ethnicity - can often be shared if researchers obtain informed consent, anonymise and control access where required (1).

If your research involves identifiable individuals, use this checklist to help you share material in future.

Checklist

Have you consulted the University of Cambridge guidelines on **Ethics in Research** (2)?

Have you checked your **funder's policy on sharing and deposit**?

Have you informed interviewees and other participants how:

research material will be **stored, preserved and used** in the long-term?

confidentiality will be maintained (if required e.g. by **anonymising data**)?

Have you obtained written **consent for sharing and re-use** from interviewees (or verbal if no personal data collected)? (3, 4)

Have you spoken to your IT support officer about **security** and **controlling access** to personal and/or confidential information?

Have you stored **information about the data's** sensitivity, participant consent or usage agreements alongside the material itself to avoid accidental misuse in future?

More information

1. UK Data Archive: <http://www.data-archive.ac.uk/create-manage/consent-ethics>
2. <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/research/research/Ethics.aspx>
3. UK Data Archive template consent form: <http://www.data-archive.ac.uk/media/2894/managingsharing.pdf> (page 24)
4. Other example consent forms: <http://www.data-archive.ac.uk/create-manage/consent-ethics/consent>

You will find more information, links to advice and a copy of this factsheet at <http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/dataman/pages/DPandE.html>.