

# Research Governance Application Pack

Shropshire Council  
Social Care and Public Health





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# 1. What is research governance?

Research governance within a council refers to the processes and procedures in place to ensure that all research activities are conducted ethically, legally, and to a high standard of quality. Research can make a real contribution to increasing knowledge and improving practice. The governance process provides a defined quality assurance mechanism. It aims to protect the rights, safety, and well-being of research participants. It also protects the research by ensuring there are clear arrangements in place to identify and manage any risks associated with a study.

Key Components:

**Ethical Considerations:** Ensuring research is conducted in an ethical manner, respecting the rights and dignity of participants, and minimizing potential harm.

**Scientific Rigor:** Maintaining high scientific standards in research design, methodology, and analysis to ensure the validity and reliability of findings.

**Data Protection:** Safeguarding personal information and adhering to data protection regulations, such as GDPR.

**Compliance:** Ensuring research activities comply with relevant laws, regulations, and institutional policies.

**Quality Assurance:** Establishing mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the quality and impact of research.

**Risk Management:** Identifying and mitigating potential risks associated with research, including those related to participant safety, data security, and financial management.

The term research is interpreted widely and includes surveys, evaluations, focus groups, consultations, interviews, audits, student projects and dissertations which involve service users or staff.

All Research Governance requests should be submitted in writing with the correct supporting information, as set out in this guidance. Shropshire Council will consider the application based on if the study is achievable and ethically viable and does not interfere with the rights of residents.

Whilst the Council will consider each application carefully, it reserves the right to impose conditions on the research as a requirement of granting approval or to decline any application for research. Reasons for concerns will be clearly explained and in most cases changes can be made to reduce risk and amend a study to resolve any concerns.

It is a core standard for health and social care organisations to have systems to ensure the principles and requirements of the research governance framework are consistently applied. Health and social care organisations have to take this standard into account in discharging their duty of quality under [Section 45 of the Health and Social Care \(Community Health and Standards\) Act 2003](#).

## UK Policy Framework for Health and Social Care Research

The UK Policy Framework for Health and Social Care Research sets out principles of good practice in the management and conduct of health and social care research in the UK.

These principles protect and promote the interests of patients, service users and the public in health and social care research, by describing ethical conduct and proportionate, assurance-based management of health and social care research, so as to support and facilitate high-quality research in the UK that has the confidence of patients, service users and the public.

It is for organisations and individuals that have responsibilities for health and social care research. This includes funders, sponsors, researchers and their employers, research sites and care providers. It is for everyone working in health and social care, managers and staff regardless of grade or level.

It sets out the standards and procedures to have a rigorous and effective governance system in place. It requires that all research involving service users, carers or staff has its methodology and ethical standards reviewed and approved prior to the research commencing. It is for those who participate in, fund and manage research and those who allow research to be undertaken in their organisation. Its principles will also be followed for any research approved by the Council.

Use this link to access the [UK Framework for Health and Social Care Research](#).

The 15 principles described within the UK Framework are shown below:

**Principle 1: Safety** The safety and well-being of the individual prevail over the interests of science and society.

**Principle 2: Competence** All the people involved in managing and conducting a research project are qualified by education, training and experience, or otherwise competent under the supervision of a suitably qualified person, to perform their tasks.

**Principle 3: Scientific and Ethical Conduct** Research projects are scientifically sound and guided by ethical principles in all their aspects.

**Principle 4: Patient, Service User and Public Involvement** Patients, service users and the public are involved in the design, management, conduct and dissemination of research, unless otherwise justified.

**Principle 5: Integrity, Quality and Transparency** Research is designed, reviewed, managed and undertaken in a way that ensures integrity, quality and transparency.

**Principle 6: Protocol** The design and procedure of the research are clearly described and justified in a research proposal or protocol, where applicable conforming to a standard template and/or specified contents - see [HRA Planning and Improving Research page](#).

**Principle 7: Legality** The researchers and sponsor familiarise themselves with relevant legislation and guidance in respect of managing and conducting the research.

**Principle 8: Benefits and Risks** Before the research project is started, any anticipated benefit for the individual participant and other present and future recipients of the health or social care in question is weighed against the foreseeable risks and inconveniences once they have been mitigated (A formal, structured risk assessment is only expected where identified as essential. The risk: benefit ratio will normally be sufficiently described and considered as part of review processes such as research ethics committee review.)

**Principle 9: Approval** A research project is started only if a research ethics committee and any other relevant approval body (i.e. the HRA, the Administration of Radioactive Substances Advisory Committee (ARSAC), the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) or the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA)) have favourably reviewed the research proposal or protocol and related information, where their review is expected or required.

**Principle 10: Information about the Research** In order to avoid waste, information about research projects (other than those for educational purposes) is made publicly available before they start (unless a deferral is agreed by or on behalf of the research ethics committee).

**Principle 11: Accessible Findings** Other than research for educational purposes and early phase trials, the findings, whether positive or negative, are made accessible, with adequate consent and privacy safeguards, in a timely manner after they have finished, in compliance with any applicable regulatory standards, i.e. legal requirements or expectations of regulators. In addition, [where appropriate](#), information about the findings of the research is available, in a suitable format and timely manner, to those who took part in it, unless otherwise justified.

**Principle 12: Choice** Research participants (Either directly, or indirectly through the involvement of data or tissue that could identify them) are afforded respect and autonomy, taking account of their capacity to understand. Where there is a difference between the research and the standard practice that they might otherwise experience, research participants are given information to understand the distinction and make a choice, unless a research ethics committee agrees otherwise. Where participants' explicit consent is sought, it is voluntary and informed. Where consent is refused or withdrawn, this is done without reprisal.

**Principle 13: Insurance and Indemnity Adequate** (Special provision is not expected unless existing arrangements (e.g. professional insurance, membership of NHS Litigation Authority schemes) provide inadequate cover) provision is made for insurance or indemnity to cover liabilities which may arise in relation to the design, management and conduct of the research project.

**Principle 14: Respect for Privacy** All information collected for or as part of the research project is recorded, handled and stored appropriately and in such a way and for such time that it can be accurately reported, interpreted and verified, while the confidentiality of individual research participants remains appropriately protected. Data and tissue collections are managed in a transparent way that demonstrates commitment to their appropriate use for research and appropriate protection of privacy.

**Principle 15: Compliance Sanctions** for non-compliance with these principles may include appropriate and proportionate administrative, contractual or legal measures by funders, employers, relevant professional and statutory regulators, and other bodies.

Some of these principles, and themes within them, are picked up again in the next section looking at the benefits of research governance.



## 2. Why is research governance needed?

This document aims to provide a quality assurance mechanism for managing research and defines clear standards and procedures of good practice to enable Shropshire Council to make sound and robust decisions concerning the research conducted within the county and with our residents. It outlines guidance for ensuring research meets legal, ethical, scientific and financial standards and also to maximise learning and reduce risks for researchers, participants and any potential risks which may affect us.

Councils with Social Services Responsibilities are required 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 integrity and make sure of compliance with standards for ethical review and scientific quality;
- Establish a transparent system to approve, record and monitor all research activity;
- Take full responsibility for how research is carried out.

Researchers are expected to demonstrate adherence to the guidance and work in line with the duty of care to social care clients, and the professional and ethical standards of Shropshire Council and to comply with our safeguarding practice and procedures.

### Benefits

The benefits of Research Governance include:

**Protecting Participants:** Research governance safeguards the well-being and rights of individuals involved in research projects. It can prevent certain groups of users or staff from being over-engaged and consulted. It also prevents replication/duplication within the research carried out.

**Maintaining Trust:** It helps build public confidence in the council's research activities and ensures transparency and accountability.

**Improving Research Quality:** By setting standards and providing oversight, research governance contributes to the overall quality and impact of research.

**Preventing Harm:** It helps identify and address potential risks early on, minimizing the likelihood of negative consequences for participants or the council. Involving others in assessing risk can help researchers who may occasionally lack the local knowledge to be able to identify all risks and issues.

**Meeting Legal and Ethical Obligations:** Research governance ensures that research activities comply with relevant legal and ethical frameworks.

**Learning:** The process can encourage the sharing of research studies to influence learning, change and service improvement.

Proper governance of research is essential to ensure that the public can have confidence in, and benefit from, quality research in health and social care. The public has a right to expect high scientific, ethical and financial standards, transparent decision-making processes, clear allocation of responsibilities and robust monitoring arrangements.

We want to make sure that social care and public health research within Shropshire Council is of good quality, ethical and useful.

Our research governance process helps us to do this and makes sure that people carrying out research take all reasonable steps to protect the dignity, rights, safety and wellbeing of the service users, families, carers and staff involved in the study.

**The Market Research Society's Code of Conduct includes 10 Principles:**

1. Researchers shall ensure that participation in their activities is based on voluntary informed consent.
2. Researchers shall be straightforward and honest in all their professional and business relationships.
3. Researchers shall be transparent as to the subject and purpose of data collection.
4. Researchers shall respect the confidentiality of information collected in their professional activities.
5. Researchers shall respect the rights and well-being of all individuals.
6. Researchers shall ensure that participants are not harmed or adversely affected by their professional activities.
7. Researchers shall balance the needs of individuals, clients, and their professional activities.
8. Researchers shall exercise independent professional judgement in the design, conduct and reporting of their professional activities.
9. Researchers shall ensure that their professional activities are conducted by persons with appropriate training, qualifications and experience.
10. Researchers shall protect the reputation and integrity of the profession.

### 3. Which projects need to go through the research governance approval process?

Shropshire Council research governance approval is required before you begin your research and you want to:

- Collect information from service users, carers, staff or volunteers accessed through the Council's adult social care services, children's social care services or public health team. For example, by means of a questionnaire, interview or focus group;

or

- Have access to personal information at an individual level about service users, carers, staff or volunteers held by the Council's adult social care services, children's social care services, or public health team. This applies to anonymised as well as identifiable information, and information held on paper or as electronic records.

Some research studies may also need approval from the NHS Health Research Authority before you send your application.

[Check whether you need NHS Research Ethics Committee approval.](#)

Research studies involving four or more Local Authorities will also need [Association of Directors of Adult Social Services \(ADASS\) approval](#) and [Association of Directors of Children's Services \(ADCS\) approval](#).

#### Exceptions

You don't need to apply for research governance approval if:

- you will not need access to service users, carers, staff or volunteers or to personal information held on them through the Council's adult social care services, children's social care services or public health team;
- 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 public consultations that do not collect any personal data;
- you will be carrying out service evaluations; or
- you will be carrying out financial, practice or service quality audits.

## 4. Approval process for social care and public health research

Research Governance Advisors are responsible for recommending to the Research Governance Lead whether or not to approve your research application. These Advisors will usually be staff within Shropshire Council with a knowledge of the service area the research relates to or those with research knowledge and experience.

They will consider:

- a. the feasibility of providing support to your proposed research;
- b. whether the research proposal meets the principles set out in the UK Policy Framework; and
- c. whether you've met all the requirements, as appropriate, as listed in the Application Checklist.

Please remember that getting approval is likely to be quicker if you send us clear, relevant and detailed information when you apply.

### Requesting research governance approval

Please send us:

1. a copy of your research protocol/plan or completed Research Governance Application Form (Appendix 1);
2. a completed copy of the Application Checklist (Appendix 2).
3. appropriate supporting documentation as listed on the Application Checklist;

Email your application to: [TellUs@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:TellUs@shropshire.gov.uk)

### Timescales

We aim to:

- a. let you know we have received your application and supporting documents within 5 days of us receiving them; and
- b. let you know whether your application has been approved within 20 working days of us receiving all documents if we have no initial concerns or queries about your proposal.

If we are unable to keep to these times we will explain why as soon as possible.

## **What happens next?**

Your application will be considered by at least two Research Governance Advisors who will check:

- a. there are no concerns or queries about the research methods or ethics;
- b. there is no potential risk of physical, emotional or psychological harm to anyone taking part, or that where there are potential risks, these are fully addressed in the way the research has been designed;
- c. the proposed research is not unnecessarily intrusive and only collects the information needed to achieve its aims; and
- d. whether the directorate(s) considers that it has the capacity and capability to support the research.

If we have any concerns, we will give you feedback about the areas of concern and invite you to re-submit your research plan.

If your research plan has already had approval from elsewhere (for example, from a university or through the Health Research Authority's Research Ethics Service) it will still need to be considered by us.

The Research Governance Advisors will recommend that your application is either:

- a. approved;
- b. approved with conditions; or
- c. not approved.

If your plan is not approved, we will explain our reasons and may make some suggestions.

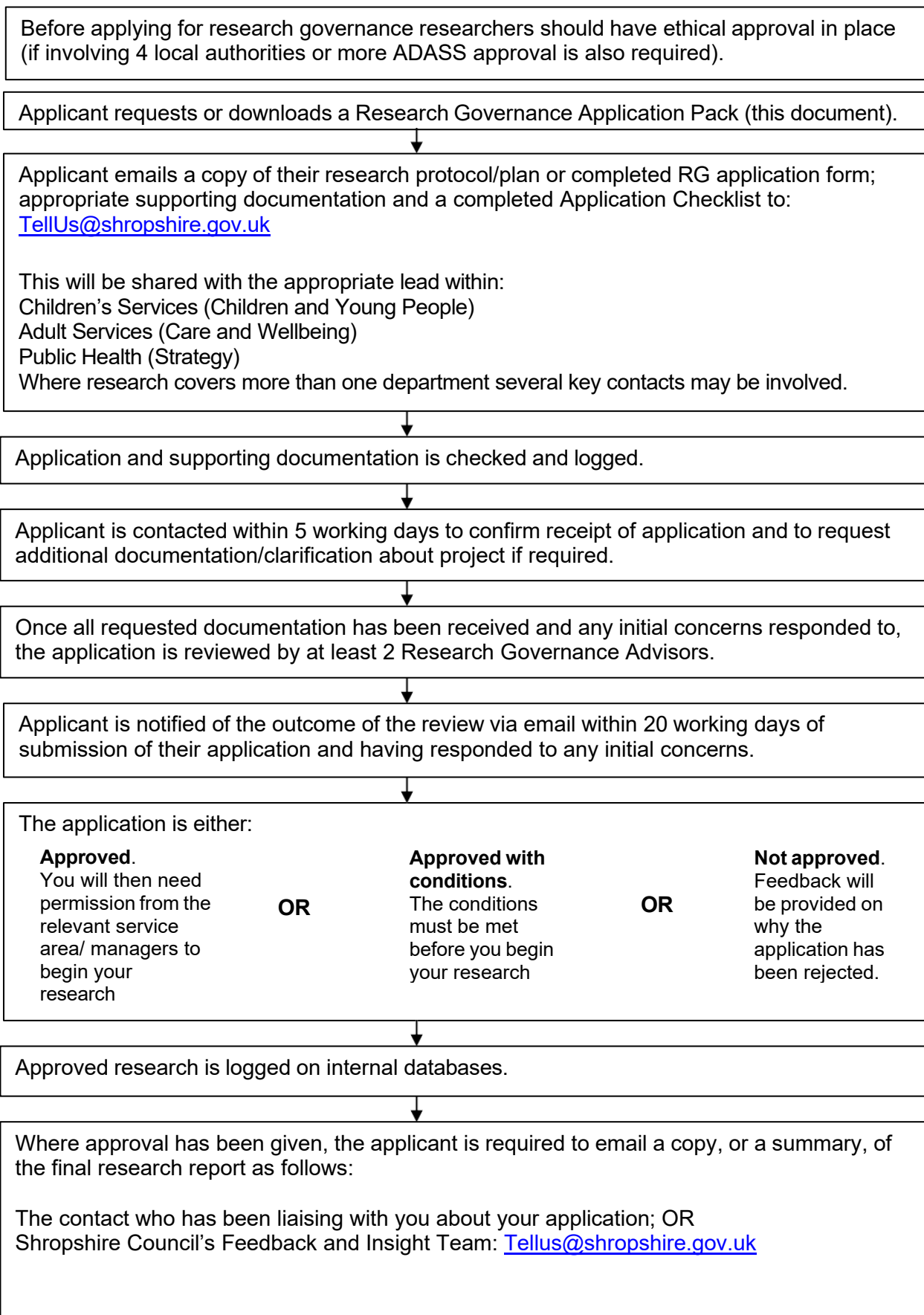
## **Registering your research**

Once your application is approved, we will record the details on internal databases.

## **Complaints process**

Complaints regarding the research governance process in either children's social care services or in adult social care services or public health should be sent to [CustomerFeedback@Shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:CustomerFeedback@Shropshire.gov.uk)

## Flowchart of the research governance approval process



## 5. Sources for further information

UK Policy Framework for Health and Social Care Research:

[UK Policy Framework for Health and Social Care Research - Health Research Authority](#)

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:

[Research support - ADASS](#)

The Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) Research Group:

[Research – ADCS](#)

ADCS Guidelines for Ensuring Effective Research Projects and Evaluating Research Proposals:

[ADCS\\_RG\\_Guidelines\\_May24.pdf](#)

## Appendix 1:

### Shropshire Council Social Care and Public Health Research Governance Application Form

If you are a student, you should obtain ethics committee approval from your university (if this process is available and relevant to the proposal) before applying to us. You should send your application form via your university supervisor's email account, to show that it has been checked by a member of staff at the university.

Some research studies may also need approval from the [NHS Health Research Authority](#) before you send your application.

#### [Check whether you need NHS Research Ethics Committee approval](#)

Research studies involving four or more Local Authorities will also need [Association of Directors of Adult Social Services \(ADASS\) approval](#).

Please complete this application form and/or submit a copy of your research proposal/plan if it covers all the information required within the form.

#### Your details:

##### **Title of project or study:**

##### **Name of main researcher:**

Status / job title:

Organisation address:

Department / Location:

Office phone:

Work mobile:

Email:

Please summarize your research experience:

##### **Names of any other researchers:**

Organisation Address:

Department / Location:

Phone:

Email:

##### **Name of research supervisor or Shropshire Council supervising manager:**

Job title:

Organisation address:

Phone:

Email:

##### **Name of research sponsor:**

Sponsor's address:

Phone:

Email:

## Finance and insurance

1. What is the total budget/ source of funding for the project?

2. Will anyone benefit financially from the project?

Yes  No

If yes, who and how?

3. Is your organisation insured should they need to pay compensation or insurance?

Yes  No

4. If applicable for this research project, do you have a current Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check?

No  Yes Standard  Yes Enhanced

If yes,  
issue date

Registration number

5. Is this your first research governance application for this project?

Yes  No  If no, date of previous application

6. Are you also applying to any other local authority for research governance for this project?

No  Yes  If yes, name of authority/ authorities

## Project background

1. What is the purpose of your project and why is this topic important?

2. What is your particular area of interest?

3. What other projects / studies have been carried out in this area (if any?)

4. How will your research add to any previous work?

### **Aims and Objectives**

1. What is the main question you want to answer?

2. What specific questions will you ask to address the main question?

### **Participants: Scope and Sample**

1. Who will be your participants? (Inclusion / exclusion criteria)

2. How will you select your sample?

3. How many people do you need to recruit to take part?

4. Where will the research take place?

5. What experience do you have of working with this particular group of participants?

### **Collecting your data**

1. How in detail, are you going to collect your data? For example: questionnaire, interview.

2. Will you be recording or taking video of participants?

3. What are your reasons for choosing these methods?

4. What experience do you have of using these methods?

5. What sort of data will you be collecting? (Quantitative and /or qualitative)

6. How will you analyse your data?

## **Ethics and Safeguards**

1. How are you going to recruit your participants?
2. How will you comply with equal opportunities when recruiting and communicating with participants?
3. How will you obtain informed consent?
4. How will you comply with the requirements of the Mental Capacity Act?
5. Are you going to involve your participants in planning the way the research will be carried out?
6. Will you be paying your participants?
7. What potential risk of harm is there to your participants or yourself?
8. How will you give participants details about how to complain should they need to?
9. How will participants be given the opportunity to withdraw from the study if they feel the need to do so?
10. Will your data be used for any purposes other than your project?
11. How do you propose to store your data? For example: on a database, hard files, paper records.
12. How long will you keep the data?
13. How will you ensure the data is kept confidential and anonymous?

## Sharing the research findings

1. Who will have ultimate ownership of the data?
2. How and to whom will you present the findings of your research? For example: presentation, report, publication in journal.
3. How will you ensure you present the findings of your research in an appropriate format for your participants?
4. How will you give participants the opportunity to view the findings of your research?

Please send us:

1. A copy of your research protocol/plan or completed Research Governance Application Form (Appendix 1);
2. A completed copy of the Application Checklist (Appendix 2);
3. Appropriate supporting documentation as listed on the Application Checklist.

Please email your application to: [TellUs@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:TellUs@shropshire.gov.uk)

- For research involving **children's social care services**, the application will be shared with the Service Manager Quality, Performance and Assurance.
- For research that will involve **adult social care services, public health or both adults' and children's social care services**, the application will be shared with the Principal Social Worker Adult Services.
- For research that will involve **public health** your application will be shared with the Intelligence Manager.

## Appendix 2:

### Research Governance Application Checklist

To help us process your application for research governance approval as quickly as possible, please remember to include supporting documents as applicable, and a completed Application Checklist when submitting your research protocol/plan.

Documents	Included <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Copy of research protocol/plan or completed RG application form	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contact details of lead researcher	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contact details of research sponsor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Name of research supervisor/ Shropshire Council manager, if applicable	<input type="checkbox"/>
Confirmation of indemnity insurance	<input type="checkbox"/>
Copy of independent ethics approval	<input type="checkbox"/>
Copy of DBS certificate	<input type="checkbox"/>
Copy of independent methods review. (In the case of student projects, we require confirmation from the research supervisor that methods have been approved)	<input type="checkbox"/>
A copy of the project timetable	<input type="checkbox"/>
Letter(s) of information for participants	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consent form(s) for participants	<input type="checkbox"/>
Copies of questionnaire(s), topic guides, interview schedules	<input type="checkbox"/>
Copy of research contract	<input type="checkbox"/>
ADASS/ADCS approval	<input type="checkbox"/>
Funding confirmation letter	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Declaration</b> – I have read Shropshire Council’s Social Care and Public Health Research Governance Application Pack. I agree to carry out my project in accordance with the Council’s research governance requirements and understand that failure to do so may result in approval for the research being withdrawn.	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Appendix 3:

### Privacy notice for research governance application form

Shropshire Council has a public duty to protect its staff and service users – particularly vulnerable people. The personal information that you provide on the Research Governance form (Appendix 2, including the associated attachments) will be used by the team of officers at Shropshire Council assessing Research Governance Applications. They will ensure that everyone who is involved in the research is deemed to be suitable to carry out the research, and that the research meets ethical and methodological norms.

We work in line with Information Governance legislation and the General Data Protection Regulation which applies across the European Union (including in the United Kingdom). We are responsible as ‘controller’ of that personal information for the purposes of those laws. To find out more about Privacy at Shropshire Council please use this link:

[Privacy | Shropshire Council](#)

Your name and contact details will be shared with other departments within Shropshire Council in order to facilitate your application for Research Governance Approval and the research project itself. They may also be shared with other relevant organisations such as the NHS Health Research Authority, NHS Research Ethics Committee, Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS), Association of Directors of Children’s Services (ADCS) and other Local Authorities in order to ensure that the research has been suitably vetted by these organisations where appropriate.

We rely on public task as the lawful basis on which we collect your personal data as we consider facilitating university based research within our discretionary powers and in the exercise of our official authority.

We rely on legitimate interests of third parties as the lawful basis on which we process your data. We understand that it is in the legitimate interests of universities and researchers to carry out research projects. We will not process your data where your individual rights and freedoms override those legitimate interests. Our processing of your personal information is necessary in order to facilitate your research using our data. We have a duty to safeguard the welfare of children and adults receiving services from the council.

If we require your DBS certificate information we will only use that for the specific purpose for which it was requested, which is to safeguard the welfare of children and adults receiving services and staff working for Shropshire Council. Submission of DBS certificates anyone involved in the research is deemed to indicate consent to this purpose.

You may exercise your rights under the General Data Protection Regulations including withdrawing consent at any time. You can do this by sending an email to [TellUs@Shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:TellUs@Shropshire.gov.uk).

Please contact the Information Governance Team at Shropshire Council by email [information.request@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:information.request@shropshire.gov.uk) to exercise any of your rights, or if you have a complaint about why your information has been collected, how it has been used or how long we have kept it for.

