

Social and Economic Research Group: Research Ethics

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1. Introduction

Green and Thorogood (2004) remind us that the positivist view of science as an investigative endeavour which lies outside of human values, is of course an ideal, because all science is rooted in social values. The issues involved in the process of social and economic research are becoming more complicated as contemporary research approaches, methods, and data management procedures, rely on more sophisticated techniques involving ever more diverse populations, at a time when capacity for

electronic data sharing and manipulation is increasing. According to the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC 2009) research ethics are the moral principles which provide guidance in how to deal with this complexity at all stages in the research cycle, from the inception of a research project, through to completion, publication and to the archiving and storage of data and samples. Research ethics apply equally to all kinds of social research from the more quantitative survey-based approaches through to the use of qualitative and action research-based methodologies.

Systems of research governance and the application of ethical codes of practice are becoming an increasingly important focus of attention for research organisations and funders of research. This has been brought about by an increased concern for accountability in research and the generation of influential data and analyses, and demands for information sharing and systems open to public scrutiny. In addition to this is the recognition that research is conducted in an era of advanced information and communication technology which present researchers with new challenges around the collation, access and management of information.

Within this complex research landscape, there is national level legislation that must be complied with during the course of research. Privacy, fair representation, health and safety, and intellectual property are particular issues of relevance to research that have associated legislation. The most important are the Data Protection Act 1998, the Freedom of Information Act 2000¹, and the Equality Act 2006. These pieces of legislation place duties on public agencies and apply not only to the conduct of research and treatment of research participants during the initial collection of information, but also to subsequent storage, analysis and use of data. There are also further legal commitments and ethical issues around the presumed consent and disclosure of sensitive information in the case of secondary use of datasets supplied by a third party or from other parts of the Forestry Commission. Third party data suppliers such as the Office for National Statistics or the Economic and Social Data Service will need to be consulted on their particular ethical and data management requirements. Ethical standards also need to be taken into account when using third parties through research commissioning processes.

Social research is conducted in different settings, using different qualitative and quantitative research methods and different sampling techniques and different forms of interaction with research subjects. The social researcher is therefore required to make ethical judgements based on the context in which they are working. This being the case, it is not really possible, nor appropriate to prescribe a single set of ethical 'rules' to be followed when conducting social research (De Vaus 2004; Social Research Association 2003). Members of the Social and Economic Research Group (SERG) will need to make

¹ Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002

such choices on the basis of an agreed set of principles and values, and on balancing the sometimes conflicting interests of those involved (British Sociological Association 2002).

In short, the social scientists in SERG will be making informed and deliberative decisions about their ethical practice and research design and management in accordance with the key principles outlined below. Decisions made will be justified with reference to these principles.

2. National Legislation: Issues and advice

2.1 Key Issues

2.1.1 Data Protection

The **Data Protection Act** establishes eight main principles in relation to the processing (i.e. the collection and management) of personal data. Those of particular relevance to social research include:

- That personal data should only be obtained for specified purposes and should not be further processed in a manner incompatible with these purposes;
- Personal data should be adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purposes for which they were collected;
- Appropriate measures should be taken against unauthorised or unlawful processing or destruction of personal data;
- Personal data should not be transferred outside the boundaries of the European Economic Area.

Following these principles should be enough to comply with the Act, but the The Forestry Commission provides more information about the details of the **Data Protection Act 1998** here:

<http://alpacorn.forestry.gov.uk:7777/pls/portal/url/ITEM/4F781DEEF50F4074E04012D309805CCD>

In addition there are plans to produce a Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) about data and record keeping which will clarify appropriate actions and procedures.

2.1.2 Freedom of Information

The **Freedom of Information Act** provides the right for individuals and organisations to request information from public bodies and covers information and data in a variety of forms from emails, handwritten notes, photographs, audio and video recordings as well as other documentary evidence. However, there are exclusions to the data which can be released as part of a Freedom of Information request e.g. where this would be in conflict with confidentiality under the Data Protection Act, where it might harm commercial interests or endanger the protection of the environment. In either case the procedural issues of particular relevance to research are the need to maintain an organised system of record keeping and accurate process notes, as well as providing clear information about who to contact about a particular piece of research.

The Forestry Commission provides a statement about the **Freedom of Information Act 2000** and Internal Guidance at these two locations:

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/foi>

http://alpacorn.forestry.gov.uk:7777/portal/page?_pageid=33,1251043&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL

The relationship between the Data Protection Act and Freedom of Information Act can be complex. There are also variations in interpretations of the legislation between Scotland, England and Wales. Some Guidance is given here, although it will always be best to seek advice on specific issues

<http://alpacorn.forestry.gov.uk:7777/pls/portal/url/ITEM/EF860B9F5866E2CEE03012D30980BC75>

Detailed advice on any data protection or freedom of information issues should be taken from, The Data Security Officer, Silvan House (currently Allan Dun)

2.1.3 Equality and diversity

The **Equality Act** means that as a public agency Forest Research has a duty to ensure equality of access to its goods and services by all members of society regardless of their social characteristics. This includes considering diversity and equality issues within research. The Forestry Commission's Equality and Diversity Strategy promises the development of effective programmes of social research which not only explore diversity and equality issues, but which:

- Engage with and include the views of people from diverse backgrounds particularly minority and under represented groups;
- Understand the needs and embed behaviours which support the inclusion of different groups of people in research activity.

The Government Social Research Unit suggests ways to provide equal access to the research process, for example:

- assistance with costs incurred in research participation;
- providing appropriate services, e.g. transport for those with accessibility/mobility problems, or interpretation facilities for interviews or induction loops for those with hearing impairment;
- using different methods of data collection, e.g. offering a choice between self completion and interviewer assisted interviewing in projects where respondents have difficulty reading or comprehending written material;
- applying appropriate sample design, e.g. considering the implications of excluding sparsely populated areas in highly clustered sample designs and considering the case for over-sampling under-represented or hard-to-reach groups;
- and seeking greater user-involvement, e.g. asking specific representative groups about improvements to research designs.

The Forestry Commission has an **Equality and Diversity** strategy and a range of equalities guidance which can be found at the following locations:

[http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/Equality_Diversity_Strategy.pdf/\\$FILE/Equality_Diversity_Strategy.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/Equality_Diversity_Strategy.pdf/$FILE/Equality_Diversity_Strategy.pdf)

http://alpacorn.forestry.gov.uk:7777/portal/page?_pageid=33,293009&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL

For more detailed information about equality and diversity issues the right person to contact is, The Diversity Manager, Silvan House (currently Kate Fielding)

2.1.4 Working with children and vulnerable people

Working with children and vulnerable people of any age is subject to a number of different protection measures. As a general rule, where research involves children or other vulnerable groups, an appropriate level of disclosure should be obtained from the Criminal Records Bureau for all researchers in contact with participants. However, the legislation regulating contact with children and vulnerable adults is complicated and evolving and the issues involved should be discussed with the relevant persons. The key principles involved which have a bearing on research include:

- protecting the **child, vulnerable person, yourself** and the **Forestry Commission** from harm, and accusations of inappropriate behaviour

- ensuring **children and vulnerable people** have a safe and positive research experience
- reassuring **parents, guardians and others** responsible for **children and vulnerable people** taking part in research
- ensuring informed consent or assent is given by **children, vulnerable people** and/or their **parents, guardians and others** responsible for them.

Research that brings us into contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults will need special attention. In some cases a CRB check maybe needed. The Forestry Commissions **Child Protection Policy** and further internal guidance can be found at these locations:

<http://alpacorn.forestry.gov.uk:7777/pls/portal/url/ITEM/7A4D800D8BAFBE5AE04012D309807DF8>

http://alpacorn.forestry.gov.uk:7777/portal/page?_pageid=33,300122&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL

Further information or advice can be sought from HR Projects Manager (currently Stephen Gray).

3. The SERG Ethical Statement

Forest Research has committed us to adopt the contents of the UK's Universal Code of Ethics for Scientists (<http://www.dius.gov.uk/policies/science/science-and-society/public-engagement/ethical-code>.) However, this code is not designed to replace codes of conduct specific to particular disciplines and professions.

In the first instance, as members of Government Social Research (GSR) our point of reference will be the

Government Social Research, 2008, Professional Guidance and Ethical Assurance

http://www.gsr.gov.uk/professional_guidance/ethical_assurance.asp

We will follow this guidance as it applies to all stages of the research cycle including the publishing and dissemination of information and research data in a timely (normally within 12 weeks) and appropriate manner. More information on this aspect of research is included in the following GSR guidance:

http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/Assets/GSR%20Publication%20Guidance%20-%2029%20Jan%202010_tcm6-35775.pdf

Because of the complexity of contemporary social research work, SERG will refer to established codes of professional practice and ethical guidelines to provide further detailed advice. As stated in the introduction to this document the most relevant code of practice to use will be dictated in some measure by the by the subject and scope of the research being undertaken. So, for some of the details of our ethical and professional obligations in particular subject areas we will need to use additional sources. Those codes of practice and ethical guidelines that have greatest relevance to our work are:

Sociological Research Association, 2003, Ethical Guidelines

<http://www.the-sra.org.uk/ethical.htm>

British Sociological Association, 2004, Ethical Guidelines

<http://www.britsoc.co.uk/equality/Statement+Ethical+Practice.htm>

Market Research Society, 2005/2008 Code of Conduct and Professional Standards

<http://www.mrs.org.uk/standards/codeconduct.htm>

http://www.mrs.org.uk/standards/mrs_guidelines.htm

Economic and Social Research Council, 2008, Research Ethics Framework

http://www.esrc.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/Images/ESRC_Re_Ethics_Frame_tcm6-11291.pdf

3.1 Our Ethical Responsibilities

SERG researchers recognise their ethical responsibilities towards different stakeholders in research (Bryman 2004; Bulmer 2001; Social Research Association 2003). These include:

- Ourselves and our own professional integrity
- Other members of our research group
- Forest Research and the Forestry Commission
- Sponsors and funders of particular pieces of research work
- Individuals and organisations playing a role in locating, contacting or recruiting research participants (including community gatekeepers)
- Research participants
- Users and readers of our research and the wider public.

This means that we shall be working to:

1. Share information appropriately, guard privileged information, open ourselves to collegial review and discussion concerning research design and management as well as providing practical support to good practice amongst the group and within the organisation.
2. Ensure appropriate and impartial design, analysis, recommendations and dissemination techniques with respect to wider society, funders and users of research.
3. Treat research partners and research participants with respect, and protect them as far as possible from commercial and individual harm or disadvantage.

3.2 Our Key Principles and Values

There are six key ethical and professional principles that SERG researchers will use to guide their research design and professional conduct, as follows:

1. Integrity and quality

Good quality research is based on intellectual honesty and professional integrity. It is an “attitude of mind that becomes an attitude to work”. It is about the way in which research is planned and conducted, how results are recorded and reported, and how the results from research are disseminated, applied and exploited. Good research practice will allow ready verification of the quality and integrity of research data, provide a transparent basis for evaluation and lead to better research. Forest Research has a Quality Assurance (QA) scheme which supports the research process and research quality at various stages in the research cycle. SERG researchers will maintain high personal research standards as well as comply with the agency’s QA processes.

2. Enabling Participation

The potential impact of choices in research design (such as sample design, data collection method and so on) on participation will be considered. Care and thoughtfulness of design will be applied in all cases, but particular attention will be given to the effect of research design on what are described as the ‘protected characteristics’ in Equality legislation. This would include different faith and belief backgrounds, sexual orientation, transgender, age, ethnicities, and disabilities including those with caring responsibilities, and those with physical or mental impairment. If barriers are identified, measures will be taken where possible to overcome these. For example: ensuring research venues have suitable access and other facilities; providing research participants with transport or allowances for the costs incurred taking part; organising research events at appropriate times of the

day; adjusting sample design to over-sample under represented or minority groups (where considered appropriate in consultation with FR statisticians); considering the gender of the researcher/facilitator; providing a translation service or signer.

3. Informed consent

We understand that respondents must participate voluntarily and their participation must be based on a clear understanding of the objectives and nature of the research including who the sponsors are, an understanding of what the data collected will be used for and how this might be achieved. Researchers will need to exercise professional judgement about how this is expressed, recognising that in some circumstances a full explanation of all aspects of the research may influence the answers provided.

We will ensure that participants are made aware of their right to refuse participation or withdraw from participating in the research. Wherever possible and practicable participants will be offered feedback on findings, for example in the form of a summary report or given the opportunity to comment on draft publications. Participants will also be told about how their data will be kept / used / shared / and destroyed.

Consent may be given verbally or in written form. Consent applies to:

- Taking part in the research
- The storage and use of data
- The secondary use of data

Please note that the FR meta database requires a clear statement of the consent status of every research project and every associated dataset.

Example consent forms can be found in Appendix 1.

Further detailed advice on the ethics of consent and data can be found here:

<http://www.data-archive.ac.uk/create-manage/consent-ethics>

If working with children Child Protection status (CPS) and informed consent will be a specific concern that takes these ethical principles further. Careful thought needs to be given to how information is given to the child and parent, explaining: what will happen; what is being asked of the child; that the child can agree or disagree to take part, without any adverse consequences; that the child may withdraw at any time; that the research methods and questions will be given in clear language at a level that the child can understand, using visual aids if necessary. Young people between 16-18 years of age with sufficient understanding will be considered able to provide consent. The situation for children under 16 will vary. The power to consent, in law,

remains that of the parents or legal guardian. SERG researchers agree in the case of children under 16 years of age that no research shall be conducted without a specified means of gaining their informed consent (or assent in the case of young children) and the consent of their parents or guardians, or persons acting *in loco parentis*.

Informed consent from vulnerable adults and people with mental health and learning difficulties also presents similar issues. When planning research with vulnerable people additional advice will be taken to ensure appropriate measures have been taken to achieve informed consent.

Where participants are involved in longer-term data collection, the use of procedures for the renewal of consent at appropriate times will be considered.

4. Confidentiality and Data Protection

Personal data, opinions and statements expressed by participants during research will be used and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act. The anonymity of respondents will be maintained unless it has been agreed otherwise, and the identity of those providing particular responses will not be revealed to others taking part in research.

5. Avoiding harm

SERG researchers will uphold the individual rights of participants and respondents and treat them in such a way as to ensure they are neither harmed nor disadvantaged as a consequence of taking part in research. This is a particularly important consideration when planning research with vulnerable and marginal groups in society. It is also important to acknowledge that taking part in research can be a very positive experience for some, but for others the experience may be disturbing. Even if not harmed, participants might perceive apparent intrusions into their private and personal worlds, build false hopes or expectations, or find themselves open to uncalled for self-knowledge. Researchers will take special care to avoid and manage any such effects.

6. Independence and impartiality

Maintaining confidence in research as well as providing useful research rely on the ability of SERG researchers to maintain high scientific standards in the methods employed in the collection and analysis of data, and the impartial assessment and dissemination of findings. We will consider the available methods and procedures for addressing a proposed inquiry and ensure that an impartial assessment of the respective merits and demerits of alternatives is included in our research design. We will also ensure that we do not pre-empt research outcomes. As members of a government research agency we will ensure the evidence emerging from our work will be brought to the attention of policy makers and other users in a way that is clear

and accessible, as well as conforming to professional and ethical standards to protect against distortion and bias in the interpretation of findings.

3.3 Standard Operating Procedures

The Quality Assurance system of Forest Research incorporates good research practice in the form of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) published and maintained by the Quality Assessment Manager (currently Carl Foster). Having been approved through a process of expert and peer review over 600 regularly updated SOPs are an integral part of the Forestry Commission's scientific and ethical research practice. There are many SOPs covering a variety of issues and SERG researchers will need to choose the most appropriate to the form and scope of their research as they develop the formal Study Plan. Whilst there will be variations, those generic SOPs that apply to most of our work and should be given due consideration are:

- SOP0132 Writing Plans for all social research studies
- SOP0133 Record keeping for studies of the relationships between people and woodlands
- SOP0134v2 Writing interim and final reports for Social Research studies
- SOP0067 Preparing and running participatory focus group and discussion group research
- SOP0119 Transcription of audio recordings for social research
- SOP0123 Conducting a literature review
- SOP0533 Interviewing for Social Research

3.4 Risk Assessments

There is a need to complete Risk Assessments in line with Forestry Commission Health and Safety Policy as well as part of good research practice. More detailed information on how to complete Risk Assessments can be found in the Forestry Commission guidance and the FR Risk Assessment formats which cover specific work areas. There may be risks associated with the job and tasks to be performed, and there may be risks associated with the site location and site condition, or there may be risks associated with the use of chemicals and materials. Each of these three categories will need to be considered and included.

General Guidance on completing Risk Assessments can be found here:

http://alpacorn.forestry.gov.uk:7777/portal/page?_pageid=33,304242&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL

Specific Risk Assessments of relevance to SERG include:

CHES/GEN/004 – Expectant mother

CHES/GEN/006 – Working in the forest [general]

CHES/EHS/064 – Lone fieldwork [2]

CHES/EHS/066 – Driving at work

CHES/EHS/068 – Visiting community forests, Greenfield sites, parklands and wetlands

CHES/EHS/070 – Working with the public

The Forest Research Principal Safety Policy Statement can be found here:

<http://alpacorn.forestry.gov.uk:7777/pls/portal/url/ITEM/ED552EE23A00A6E6E03012D3098002E3>

The CHES Safety Plan can be found here:

<http://alpacorn.forestry.gov.uk:7777/pls/portal/docs/PAGE/ECONNECT/FOREST%20RESEARCH/S4%20ECOLOGY/ECOLOGY%20DIVISION%20HEALTH%20AND%20SAFETY/CHESS%20SAFETY%20PLAN%20JUNE%202009.DOC>

The Risk Assessments connected with any research project will be kept in the Centre Health and Safety system and managed by the Centre Health and Safety Co-ordinator, (currently Mark Ferryman) for the Head of Centre, (currently Chris Quine).

4. A checklist for research planning and implementation

The following checklist is designed to act as a guide to implementing the principles and conditions of our ethical statement as laid out in this document. It is designed to be used at the outset of each research project or study, again at the data analysis and storage stage, when the study is complete, and also whenever members of SERG are asked for research advice or consultancy services.

The checklist should be used and kept alongside the Study Plan. There are three categories of question on the checklist.

1. Those where a Yes answer is mandatory because of our legal obligations. These are indicated using red shading. Research should not continue if the answer is 'No' in these cases. You will need to take additional advice and address the reasons for saying 'No'.

2. Those which are applicable to the study in question and where a Yes answer is recommended. If you answered No to any of these questions you will need to take additional advice to ensure appropriate action before continuing with the research work.
3. Questions that are inapplicable to the study in question (this will be the case for engagement and participation, informed consent, and avoiding harm questions, for example, if not obtaining survey or personal data from individuals), 'N/A' (i.e. not applicable) should be entered on the checklist.

Appropriate advice is available from the other members of SERG, from the FC contacts listed at the start of this document, and from the recommended resources mentioned in this text.

SERG Ethical Checklist	YES	NO
Research Planning		
Have you following the relevant Code(s) of Practice most appropriate to the subject of your research?		
Have you discussed the ethical implications of your research with colleagues in the Social and Economic Research Group?		
Have you ensured ethical considerations have been incorporated into your research design?		
Engagement and Participation		
Have you thought how the research approach, sample design and the format of research materials will allow for the participation of people from different backgrounds and with different needs as outlined by the 'protected characteristics'?		
Informed consent?		
Does the study involve participants who are particularly vulnerable or unable to give informed consent (e.g. children, people with learning disabilities, people who do not speak English as a first language)?		
Have appropriate procedures been followed to deal with this?		
If the study will involve discussion of sensitive topics, have appropriate procedures and research methods been employed to deal with this?		
Have research participants been given the information they need to provide informed consent?		
Do participants know: <div style="text-align: right; padding-right: 20px;"> What the research is about? The purpose of the research? Who is sponsoring it? The nature of their involvement? What will happen to the data? That their participation is voluntary? That they can withdraw from participation at any time? </div>		

Continued over

SERG Ethical Checklist continued	YES	NO
Confidentiality and data protection		
Do you appreciate that you should not divulge information or views to your research participants that other research participants have given you? Please note there may be circumstances where views given to us by some respondents might be used anonymously in order to elicit responses as long as anonymity is not compromised i.e. "I've heard that one issue might be x, what is your view on that?"		
Once the data have been collected, have you taken steps to ensure that the confidentiality of data relating to your research participants will be maintained e.g. have you ensured the names of your research participants and the location of your research (such as the name of the organisation(s) in which it took place) are not identifiable?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Does your strategy for keeping data in electronic form comply with the data protection legislation?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Avoiding harm		
Have you taken steps to ensure that the study will not induce psychological stress or anxiety or cause harm or negative consequences beyond the risks encountered in everyday life?		
Independence and impartiality		
Have you thought through the issues involved in maintaining scientific objectivity through the course of your work and as it applies to qualitative and quantitative forms of enquiry?		
Have you circulated your research findings to other colleagues in SERG and within Forest Research and the Forestry Commission to check the integrity of your analysis and conclusions in any written reports or any research papers?		
Have you met obligations that were a required condition of conducting the research, or any promises made during the process (e.g. submitting reports, providing opportunities to comment)?		
Commissioning research		
Does the contractor subscribe to a recognised professional code of conduct and research ethics?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Have the ethical issues presented by a project been assessed at the outset and has this been included in the proposal?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Does the organisation undertaking the research have appropriate arrangements in place to ensure the day-to-day management of these risks?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

5. Resources

Resource	URL
Multi-Centre Research Ethics Committee	www.corec.org.uk/
Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice	www.ost.gov.uk/research/councils/safe.htm
Research Ethics Resources on the web	www.ethicsweb.ca/resources
Data Sharing for Statistical Purposes; A Practitioners' Guide to the Legal Framework.	http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_other/NSDataSharing.pdf
Doing the Right Thing. Working Paper 11 (2003) The Department for Work and Pensions.	http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/WP11.pdf
Guidelines for good practice in Evaluation (2003).	www.evaluation.org.uk
CCTA Government Information Service	www.direct.gov.uk/Homepage/fs/en
The Institute for Social Research	www.soc.surrey.ac.uk/isr.htm
Social Services Research Group	www.ssr.org.uk
European Social and Economic Research Group	www.respectproject.org

6. References

British Sociological Association 2002. 'Statement of Ethical Practice'.

Bryman, A. 2004. *Social Research Methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bulmer, M. 2001. 'The Ethics of Social Research' in Gilbert, N. (ed.) *Researching Social Life*. London: Sage.

De Vaus, D. 2004. *Surveys in Social Research*. London: Routledge.

Economic and Social Research Council 2009. 'Research Ethics Framework'. Swindon: ESRC.

Green, J. and Thorogood, N. 2004. *Qualitative Methods for Health Research*. London: Sage.

Social Research Association 2003. 'Ethical guidelines'. London: Social Research Association.

Appendix 1. Example of consent form

RECRUITMENT for FC EMPLOYMENT SURVEY



The Forestry Commission is working hard to diversify its workforce. Our diversity in terms of ethnicity is currently below the national average for the civil service. Evaluation and assessment of our working practices have shown that there is nothing discriminatory in terms of our employment procedures. However, one area we feel we could improve is that of recruitment. We appear to be attracting very few applications from ethnic minority individuals for the full range of positions that the Commission offers. This is true in both urban and rural settings. The objective of this piece of work is to understand how to address this challenge.

An important aspect of this study is to discover more about the aspirations, attitudes that people from ethnic minorities have about employment and their careers. We are also interested in finding out more about the methods people are likely to use to find employment, as well as opinions about the best way to attract applications for particular types of jobs. We believe this work will help us to understand better the way in which we can best target our advertising and recruitment procedures to attract greater interest and a higher rate of applications from people from ethnic minorities.

If you have any complaints or questions about today's research, you can contact the researcher directly (details below) or, if you are still not satisfied, contact the Head of the Social and Economic Research Group, Dr Anna Lawrence, at Forest Research, Tel. 01420 22255.

I understand that the discussion will be audio-taped YES NO

I understand that I can leave the session at any stage and I do not have to answer any/all the questions YES NO

I agree to participate in the study YES NO

I agree to the data I provide being stored, used, and analysed, as regulated by the principles of the Data Protection Act 1998. YES NO

Signature: Date:

Name in block letters:

Appendix 2. Example of consent form

Confidentiality and Consent Form

If you consent to being interviewed and to any data gathered being processed as outlined below, please print and sign your name, and date the form in the spaces provided.

This project Collaborative Deer Management is being conducted by research team sat the Macaulay Institute, Forest Research, Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, the Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology, and the Universities of York, Edinburgh and St Andrews. It is part of the Rural economy and Land Use Programme which is funded jointly by the Economic and Social Research Council the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council, and the Natural Environment Research Council, with additional funding from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department and the Forestry Commission.

- **All data will be treated as personal under the 1998 data Protection Act and will be stored securely.**
- **Interviews will be recorded by the research teams and transcribed by other workers in the participating institutions who have signed confidentiality agreements.**
- **Data collected may be processed manually and with the aid of computer software.**

Please indicate by ticking one of the boxes below, whether you are willing to be identified, and whether we may quote your words directly, in reports and publications arising from this research

I/my employer (delete which is not appropriate) may be identified in reports made available outside the research teams and thr RELU programme and in publications

Neither I, nor my employer, may be identified in reports made available outside research teams and the ESRC, nor in publications. My words may be quoted provided they are anonymised.

Neither I, nor my employer, may be identified in reports made available outside research teams and the ESRC, nor in publications. My words may not be quoted.

The ESRC prefer all data gathered during research projects to be archived at the ESRC data centre and made available for re-use by other researchers wherever possible. We will provide you with a tape or transcript of your interview free of charge on request.

Please indicate by ticking one of the boxes below whether you are willing for your words and the information you supply to be made available to other researchers via the ESRC data centres.

- I agree to copies of interview tapes and/or transcripts being made available for archiving at the ESRC data centres for re-use by other researchers in their raw (uncensored) form.
- I agree to copies of interview tapes and/or transcripts being made available for archiving at the ESRC data centres for re-use by other researchers, providing that they have been anonymised to maintain my confidentiality.
- I do not agree to copies of interview tapes and/or transcripts being made available for archiving at the ESRC data centres for re-use by other researchers.

Signature: Date:

Name in block letters: