

Informed Consent Form Template

How to use

- This is a template, make a copy of it and adapt it for your research
- This is a long form because it contains explanations, examples and other comments
- Check [why we ask for consent](#) before using this template
- Send this to participants prior to the research so they have time to digest
 - [Inform participants the sent version is for them to read prior to the research and that on the day they will be given a physical copy also](#)
- Allow the participants to ask questions about this form
- Make sure the participant understands this form and highlight them of key sections such as voluntariness involvement and use of data
- Keep a record of the participants consent in a secure place
- This is not a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA). Consent and an NDA are separate things. Not all research requires an NDA, but all research requires consent
- This has been adapted from the [Informed Consent form template developed by Projects by IF](#)

Informed Consent Form

This informed consent form is for ____ who we are inviting to participate in ____ research, titled “____”

Name the group of individuals for whom this consent is written. Because research for a single project is often carried out with a number of different groups of individuals - for example customers, community members, clients of services - it is important that you identify which group this particular consent is for.

Example: This informed consent form is for people who have experienced a boiler breakdown who we are inviting to participate in interviews as part of our research project , titled “Understanding what people need when their boiler breaks down”.

[Name(s) of Researcher(s)]

[Name of Project]

This Informed Consent Form has two parts:

- Information Sheet (to share information about the research with you)
- Consent (to indicate if you choose to participate in this research)

Information Sheet

Introduction

- Briefly state who you are and that you are going to be giving them some further information about the research. At this stage that participant probably knows a little about the research from the advertisement of the opportunity.
- Remind them that information is here to make them informed about the research and they can choose at any point to not take part if they wish.
- Assure the participant that if they do not understand some of the words or concepts, that you will take time to explain them as you go along and that they can ask questions at anytime.

Example: We are Jess and Karen, researchers working for OVO energy. We are doing research to understand people's experiences of when their boiler has broken down. We are going to give you some further information about the research that you are going to be taking part in. This is so you know what will be asked of you and to help you decide if you would still like to take part.

Hopefully this will answer any questions that you may have. However, if there is any information in here that you are unsure of, do not understand or just want to know more about then please ask us. You can ask questions at any time during this research or even afterwards.

Purpose of the research

- Explain the research question in simple terms which will clarify rather than confuse. Use local and simplified words rather than scientific terms and professional jargon.
- In your explanation, consider local beliefs and knowledge when deciding how best to provide the information.

Example: What happens when a boiler breaks down? What impact does this have on the house? How is it resolved? These are questions we've been asking ourselves at OVO. We want to understand what people need once their boiler breaks down because we think there might be a better way to help people at that time. We believe that you can help us by sharing your experience of when your boiler broke down and what you did to resolve

it. We want to learn about how you went about resolving the issue and why that method. This knowledge might help us to understand what people need when there is an issue with their boiler and think about ways we can help.

Example: People need to be confident the products they buy aren't going to break or to cause them any harm. We want to find ways of giving people that confidence when they buy products that connect to the internet. We believe that you can help us by telling us about the digital products you recently bought and how you made the decision to buy it. We want to learn how people decide to trust a product and how their relationship with it changes after they've bought. This knowledge might help us to learn how to design better tools to help keep track of products people have already bought.

Participant Selection/Why you've been asked to take part

Indicate why you have chosen this person to participate in this research. People wonder why they have been chosen and may be fearful, confused or concerned.

Example: You have been invited to take part in this research as we feel that because you have recently experienced a boiler breakdown you will contribute much to our understanding of what people need when there is an issue with a boiler.

- Example of question to check participant has understood: Do you know why we are asking you to take part in this study? Do you know what the study is about?

Voluntary Participation/Your participation is voluntary

- Indicate clearly that they can choose to participate or not.
- State, if applicable, that participating or not participating will have no effect on their account with OVO.
- It is important to state clearly at the beginning of the form that participation is voluntary so that the other information can be heard in this context.
- It's important to make clear that the decision to participate can be made and changed at any point. For example, after the interview a participant can decide that they don't want their data to be used in the research.

Example: It is your choice whether you want to take part in this research or not. You may change your mind later and stop participating even if you have agreed earlier.

- Example of question to check participant has understood: If you decide not to take part in this research study, do you know what your options are? Do you know that you do not have to take part in this research, if you do not wish to? Do you have any questions?

Procedure/The research will involve taking part in an interview

Provide a brief introduction to the format of the research study. Explain the type of questions that the participants are likely to be asked. If the research involves questions or discussion which may be sensitive or potentially cause embarrassment, inform the participant of this.

Example: We are asking you to help us understand what people need when their boiler breaks down. If you agree to take part it will involve you answering questions about your experience in a interview format. There will be a lot of questions, but don't worry there are no wrong answers, we just asking questions to help us learn.

During the interview we will sit down in a comfortable research studio at User Viewing, QC30, Queen Charlotte Street, Bristol, BS1 4HJ. This venue has lots of experience in hosting research sessions and we find that due to the central location it's easy to get to.

If there are any questions that you wish not to answer during the interview just let the researcher know and they will move on to the next question.

The interview will be recorded, this is so that we can spend more time listening to you during the interview rather than scribbling down notes. The research team uses the recording after the interview in which pull out findings for the project. We also like to use recordings in our internal presentations in which to emphasis findings. At the end of this form you will have the chance to opt in for your recording to be used in this way. We will not identify you personally in any reports or presentations.

Duration/One hour interview

Include a statement about the time commitments of the research for the participant including both the duration of the research and follow-up, if relevant.

Example: Your research interview will take no longer than 1 hour. We are conducting 9 other interviews across the week which forms this research study.

- Examples of question to clarify understanding: If you decide to take part in the study, do you know how much time will the interview take? Where will it take place? Do you know how much time will the discussion with other people take? If you agree to take part, do you know if you can stop participating? Do you know that you may not respond to the questions that you do not wish to respond to? Etc. Do you have any more questions?

Risks

- Explain and describe any risks that you anticipate or that are possible.
- The risks depend upon the nature and type of research, and should be, tailored to the specific issue and situation.
- Especially important if the discussion is on a sensitive and personal topic
- If there is not an anticipated risk you can cover risk in the procedure section

Example: If the discussion is on sensitive and personal issues e.g. your health, personal habits etc. then an example of text could be something like "We are asking you to share with us some very personal and confidential information, and you may feel uncomfortable talking about some of the topics. You do not have to answer any question or take part in the research if you don't wish to do so, and that is also fine. You do not have to give us any reason for not responding to any question, or for refusing to take part in the interview"

OR

If for example, the discussion is on opinions on policies and community beliefs, and in general no personal information is sought, then the text under risks could read something like "There is a risk that you may share some personal or confidential information by chance, or that you may feel uncomfortable talking about some of the topics. However, we do not wish for this to happen. You do not have to answer any question or take part in the discussion/interview/survey if you feel the question(s) are too personal or if talking about them makes you uncomfortable.

OR

Example: [If there is not an anticipated risk then you can include this example in the procedures] We don't anticipate there are any risks to you taking part but if you feel uncomfortable in discussing any of the topics and don't want to answer a question please just let the researcher know.

To say thank you/£50 cash for taking part

- State clearly what you will provide the participants with as a result of their participation.
- These may include, for example, travel costs and reimbursement for time lost.

Example: For taking part we'll give you £50 on the day as a way of saying thank you and to cover any costs you may incur.

- Example of question to check participant has understood: Can you tell me if you have understood correctly the benefits that you will have if you take part in the study? Do you know if the study will pay for your travel costs and time lost, and do you know how much you will be re-imbursed? Do you have any other questions?

Confidentiality/Your data is secure

- Explain how the research team will maintain the confidentiality of data with respect to both information about the participant and information that the participant shares.
- Outline any limits to confidentiality.
- Explain what happens with their data
- If the research is sensitive and/or involves participants who are highly vulnerable - research concerning violence against women for example - explain to the participant any extra precautions you will take to ensure safety and anonymity.

Example: We will not be sharing information about you to anyone outside of the research team. Any information about you will have a number on it instead of your name. The information recorded is strictly confidential and stored securely on our research drive. After 6 months we will delete the recording.

Sharing the Results

Your plan for sharing the outcomes of the research with the participants should be provided. If you have a plan and a timeline for the sharing of information, include the details. You may also inform the participant that the outcomes of the research will be shared more broadly, for example, on your website, or through publications and conferences.

Example: The knowledge that we get from this research will help us to develop ideas on how we might help people who experience a boiler breakdown. In a couple of weeks we will share with you what some of the high level findings of the research were.

Who to Contact/Speak to us

Provide the name and contact information of someone who is involved, informed and accessible - a local person who can actually be contacted.

Example: If you have any questions or wish to add anything further to the research please get in contact with either Jess or Karen (research@ovoenergy.com).

- Example of question to check participant has understood: Do you know that you do not have to take part in this study if you do not wish to? You can say No if you wish to? Do you know that you can ask me questions later, if you wish to? Do you know that I have given the contact details of the person who can give you more information about the study? Etc.

Consent

- This section must be written in the first person.
- It should include a brief statement about the research.
- There are 2 sections to consent:
 1. Is to acquire the consent of the participant to take part in the research.
Consent is needed to these sections for the research to proceed.
 2. Optional opt in consent as to how the participants data will be used. This won't affect the participants involvement in the research.

Example: I have been invited to participate in an interview as part of research about understanding the experiences of when a boiler breaks down.

Please read the statements below and tick the box if you agree with them. Agreeing with these statements is you agreeing to take part in the research.

- ☐ I have read the information sheet, or it has been read to me.
 - ☐ I have had the opportunity to ask questions, and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.
 - ☐ I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this research.
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As described in the information sheet we will be recording this session. Please tick one of the boxes below to indicate how you'd like your recording to be used.

- ☐ I am happy for my recording to be used in presentations within OVO to emphasis findings from this research.
 - ☐ I don't want my recordings to be used in presentations within OVO.
-

Print Name of Participant _____

Signature of Participant _____



Date _____ (Day/month/year)

Print Name of Researcher _____