Central Bedfordshire Council
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Research Governance Framework Information and Guidance

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Research Governance Framework

Principles of Research Governance

Research Governance is the means by which the quality of research into services in Central Bedfordshire is assured, and the rights of those involved are protected.

The central purpose of research governance is to protect everyone involved (researcher, service user or sample group) ensuring there are clear arrangements to identify and manage any risks associated with a study.

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. The Council will consider the application based on if the study is achievable and ethically viable and does not interfere with the rights of residents of Central Bedfordshire.

Whilst the Council will consider each application it reserves the absolute right to impose conditions on the research as a requirement of granting approval or to decline any application for research for any reason.

Background information – Research for Health and Social Care

The Department of Health's Research Governance Framework for Health and Social Care 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.

Ethics

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 framework and work in line with the duty of care to social care clients, and the professional and ethical standards of Central Bedfordshire Council and to comply with the Safeguarding Adults Multi Agency Policy Practice and Procedures.

Benefits of Research Governance

Some of the benefits of Research Governance are:

- Knowledge of research projects will prevent certain groups of service users or staff from being over-consulted.
- Unnecessary replication of research or reviews.
- Checking proposals for ethical considerations will help minimise the effects of potential risks to individuals or the organisation.
- It will provide a central system for recording and monitoring research.
- Work can be checked for validity; thus ensuring that any subsequent decisions are well informed.

Procedure

It is the responsibility of the researcher to obtain Research Governance approval for the study before the research begins.

Step	Action
1	Complete and send Research Governance application and supporting documents to Central Bedfordshire Council.
2	Delegated officer in the relevant service area reviews documents. Missing or incomplete documents will be requested.
3	Application submitted to the relevant Director at CBC.
4	The Director agrees or declines the research proposal.
5	If approved, the Research Project commences.

Each study will need to have an identified sponsor. A sponsor takes overall responsibility for confirming that everything is ready for the research to begin.

Their role will include ensuring:

- the research complies with the law
- the study has ethical approval
- that arrangements will be kept in place for monitoring and reporting on research, including prompt recording of suspected serious adverse incidents.

For internal studies the sponsor would normally be fulfilled by the line manager.

Risk Assessment

Each study will have a level of risk attributed to it; the information for this assessment is contained within the body of the application form.

Monitoring and Review

The Sponsor will undertake regular reviews of the research study. This review will include how the researcher is managing the project's progress.

The frequency of these will depend on the risk assessment identified within the application; high risk projects will be monitored more frequently than low risk projects. The type of review will also vary depending on the level of risk the project was awarded.

Completed Research

Before dissemination of the results, the completed research will be presented to the Director. Copies of the final reports will be held in a central archive.

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