



Answers: Assessing Consent Form Statements

The points raised below aim to flag up the considerations one would wish to have around the use of statements like these on consent forms.

1. What do statements like this actually mean? What is 'totally anonymised', what do we mean when we say, 'strictest of confidence'. Best practice is to be clear with participants what steps will be taken to anonymise the data and how confidence is proposed to be maintained.
2. Statements like this can prohibit the reuse of data for teaching and learning purposes, and what 'information' do we mean specifically here? Statements such as 'for research, teaching and learning purposes' are better, in permitting other uses of the data.
3. Depending on the project it may be more appropriate to break this down into sub-categories offering the participant more choice, such as to have their data used for analysis and reports but not in presentations. This statement also does not explain whether the data will directly identify them or be a direct quotation from them. It is therefore important for the information sheet to provide more context and guidance here.
4. This is similar to statement 1, are these assurances realistic and the type we should be making to participants?
5. What data? Do we mean data which will be contained in the research dataset as well? What about funder requirements to deposit and share data? Here, again it is about providing clarity to participants around which data will be deleted specifically and which will be archived.
6. How easy is it too fully anonymise photos of people's rooms in practice? How will this information be kept confidential? Again, are these kinds of assurances the right ones to be making to participants? It is better to explain how you will help protect confidentiality and how the photos are proposed to be anonymised.
7. What about data sharing or archiving? Again, it is important to clarify with participants what data will be shared and who will have access to this and what information will only be seen by the research team.



8. What message is this statement trying to convey? Can we provide more clarity about specifically what information will be used in the report? Do we mean personally details? Direct quotes?
9. Again, which information will be shared here? Can we break this down, so participants have the option to granularly consent to certain parts of the project being archived e.g. the de-identified transcripts, the non-anonymised photos. What is meant by 'fully anonymised' here? Again, can we – and should we – be giving these types of guarantees and assurances?

