**Participant questionnaire guidance for staff**

**What do I need to know before I use the tools?**

Before working with participants you must ensure you understand and are able to carry out processes for:

* Assessing participant capacity to consent to taking part in the research;
* Obtaining informed consent for everyone completing the full or light touch questionnaire, using the participant information sheet and consent form; and
* checking for continued consent at each stage of the survey (when using the follow-up questionnaires) and understanding the procedure for if participants withdraw their informed consent.

**How should I use the tools with participants?**

All participants should be given a copy of the information sheet and time to read and understand it. You should ask them to read, sign and return the consent form to ensure they understand the research and agree to providing you with their information. Participants should be encouraged to keep the information sheet.

The questionnaire is designed for self-completion and this should be encouraged as far as appropriate to guarantee the validity of the responses. Some participants may request support to read the questionnaire and record their answers. If participants are unable to read, you may offer to support them by reading aloud the options and asking for their response. Please ensure that you do not to try to explain questions, suggest a response or influence their response in any way. If you have agreed to read out questions for participants, please try to do this in a private space as many questions are personal in nature. If at any time you feel participants are becoming adversely affected by the questions you should end the questionnaire.

If someone does not wish to answer a question they can choose to skip it. Alternatively participants may want to ask a friend or relative to assist them. If they take the self-completion survey away from the project / delivery venue you will need to provide them with a return envelope to send the survey back to you for data entry.

If at any time participants reveal information that leads you to have concerns that they are at risk, then you should report this in line with local safeguarding protocols.

**What should I do with the completed forms?**

All completed forms handed over by participants should be stored securely for data entry and for audit purposes, as agreed between your programme manager and the national evaluation team at Ecorys.

All information should be treated confidentially except where there are safeguarding issues. These should be handled according to your local safeguarding policy.