

Community energy efficiency toolkit

Monitoring and evaluation part 5:

Data protection

Data protection and ethics

Basic principles

- Show respect for your audience and their data
- Protect privacy
- Social responsibility
- Minimising harm to customers, maximising benefit to project/customer
- Empathy

Get consent

- including for who will see the data
- Ensure that those are the only people who see it

Adherence to established principles¹ and guidelines² for conducting ethical social research

Respect for the autonomy and dignity of persons	<p>Researchers should demonstrate respect for the autonomy and dignity of persons. In the research context this means that there is a clear duty to participants. For example, researchers respect the knowledge, insight, experience and expertise of participants and potential participants. They respect individual, cultural and role differences, including those involving age, sex, disability, education, ethnicity, gender, language, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, marital or family situation and socio-economic status.</p>
Maximising benefit and minimising harm	<p>Researchers should consider all research from the standpoint of the research participants, with the aim of avoiding potential risks to psychological well-being, mental health, personal values, or dignity. You must maximise benefits and minimise risks of your research. Benefits include ensuring that the research is used to improve things, while risks include: harm - e.g. physical or psychological harm, devaluation in personal worth, social, economic or legal harms; discomfort - e.g. anxiety induced by an interview or minor physical discomfort; and inconvenience - e.g.. filling in a form or completing a research task. Reflecting on risks and benefits requires you to consider the welfare of participants as well as the broader social and cultural implications of the research.</p>
Valid Consent	<p>In accordance with the Code of Ethics and Conduct, researchers should ensure that every person from whom data are gathered for the purposes of research consents freely to the process on the basis of adequate information. They should be able, during the data gathering phase, freely to withdraw or modify their consent and to ask for the destruction of all or part of the data that they have contributed.</p>
Social responsibility	<p>Research is conducted within the context of human society. Accordingly, a shared collective duty for the welfare of human and non-human beings, both within the societies in which researchers live and work, and beyond them, must be acknowledged by those conducting the research. In whatever social context they work, researchers should acknowledge the evolution of social structures in relation to societal need and be respectful of such structures. Unwarranted or unnecessary disruption should be avoided.</p>
Preventing disclosure of identities	<p>Social researchers should take appropriate measures to prevent their data from being published or otherwise released in a form that would allow any subject's identity to be disclosed or inferred. The disclosure of identity in itself represents a potential risk of harm to a subject. Researchers cannot however be held responsible for any subject that freely chooses to reveal their participation in a study.</p>

Data protection statement

Inform the respondent what you will do with their data and stick to your promise

Include:

- Your organisation
- Any intermediaries you are working with
- Data collection/storage/passing on data
- What data will be used for

Sample Data Protection Statement

‘The Energy Saving Trust Limited (EST) will collect and process your details for the purpose of assessing and administering your grant payment and for purposes set out in our Data Policy*. EST may pass details (with exception of bank details) to DECC as funders of the Local Energy Assessment Fund scheme. EST may also use and retain data for auditing purposes and may need to contact you in future to assess customer satisfaction.

The Energy Saving Trust’s Data Policy is available at www.est.org.uk/policydata.cfm or you can request a copy from the Data Protection Officer at the address below.

Address here..’

What is 'sensitive information'?

- Benefit eligibility
- Health information
- Home address details
- Personal telephone numbers and e-mail addresses
- Energy use?!
- Photographs and videos

Data protection- things to remember

- Do not attach names to questionnaires (use ID numbers)
- Abide by the data protection rules
- Destroy all personal information of respondents after the evaluation
- Obtain consent from respondents (interviews, videos/pictures etc.)

For more information see the Information Commissioners Office Guide to Data Protection:

<https://ico.org.uk//for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/>