



Research Governance Framework (RGF) Procedure

1. Local Arrangements

- 1.1 All potential researchers should contact RBK's Research Governance coordinator. The RGF coordinator will check if the project is covered by the RGF (i.e. whether it meets the criteria for research and related activities and whether it requires the Department to grant access to staff, service users, carers or data).
- 1.2 If the project is covered by the RGF the RGF coordinator will ensure the project has management agreement. This should be at Head of Service or Principal Manager Level. This agreement should include the appropriateness of the research and commitment of any resources monetary or time.
- 1.3 If the project is covered by the RGF and had management agreement the RGF coordinator will assess the level of risk involved and direct researchers to the relevant application form on the website.
- 1.4 The completed research application is e-mailed back to the RGF Coordinator.
- 1.5 The RGF Coordinator will review the proposal and assess the level of approval required (see Chart Below).

Level	Type of Project	Reviewed by	Timescale (Working days)
1	Projects that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only involve re-analysis of secondary data • Require limited contact with social services staff/service users (e.g. surveys) • Have received approval from an independent ethics and methods review process (unless there are concerns about issues identified as level 3 above) 	RGF Co-ordinator	10 days

Level	Type of Project	Reviewed by	Timescale (Working days)
2	Projects that involve outside agencies (particularly NHS trusts, PCTS)	External panel (e.g. health R&D Panel)	Panels own timescales
3	All projects where there is potential for high levels of harm arising from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Characteristics of participants (e.g. in the approaches taken for gaining consent) • Skills and experience of the researcher(s) • Nature of information being sought • Methods/nature of data collection • Level of privacy to participant • Relationship between investigator and participants (e.g. direct care providers) 	The South West London Research Governance Consortium (SWLRGC)	20 days

- 1.6 If the research is a level one project, is not high risk or has received approval from an independent ethics board and been approved by another recognised organisation then the RGF Coordinator will review the proposal and decide whether approval should be given or whether the research needs to be approved by the SWLRGC .
- 1.7 If the research is a level 2 project and has received Research Governance approval from the PCT then the RGF Coordinator will recommend to the Director of Community Services that approval should be given without a need to go to the SWLRGC for approval.
- 1.8 If the research is a Level 3 project it will need to be submitted to the South West London Research Governance Consortium (SWLRGC) for approval. (See SWLRGC procedure below)

2. The South West London Research Governance Framework Consortium

- 2.1 The researcher must ensure that the project has been appropriately peer reviewed. The RGF Coordinator can offer advice and assistance if necessary.

- 2.2 The research must have received ethics board approval or the proposal needs to have addressed any ethical issues relating to the research. The RGF Coordinator will advise which of these is required on a case-by-case basis.
- 2.3 The research proposal and application form are then submitted to the South West London Research Governance Framework Consortium (SWLRGC) for approval recommendation.
- 2.4 The SWLRGC is committed to giving a response within 20 working days.
- 2.5 The SWLRGC will recommend approval, recommend approval subject to amendments or reject the research project.

3. Approval and beyond.

- 3.1 If a project plan is approved, the Director of Community Services will formally sign it off and work on the project can begin. Information about the project will be entered on a research directory to be maintained by the RGF Coordinator. Researchers will be required to make it clear that their projects have been through the Research Governance process in any information they give to potential participants.
- 3.2 If the project plan is felt to need amendment before approval, suggestions will be made to help the researcher rewrite the plan. Proposals may need to be resubmitted to the SWLRGC or simply seen by the RGF Copordinator, depending on the extent of the changes required.
- 3.3 In rare cases, it may be necessary to reject proposals completely.
- 3.4 Research is often an `evolving' process and things may change on a day-to-day basis, especially when people are involved. Important issues may come up which had not been thought about before. For this reason, as part of the approval process, an agreement will be reached about ongoing monitoring arrangements, which will need to be made according to the scope and topic of the project. The SWLRGC and the RGF Coordinator will need to be informed about major changes to research plans.
- 3.5 Plans for the dissemination of findings will need to be built into the project proposals. Clear statements about who will hold intellectual property rights over the findings will also need to be included on the proposal form, so that publication and communication of findings can be undertaken without delays or conflict. Again, these plans will vary considerably, depending on the scope and topic of the work.
- 3.6 All research reports should be submitted to the RGF Coordinator who will circulate as necessary and keep electronic copies for reference.

- 3.7 When a proposal has been received and approved by the Director of Community Services, details about the project will be passed to the Complaints Manager. This will enable the Complaints Manager to respond appropriately to any complaints from service users that arise as a result of the project. Staff who have concerns about a project or the conduct of the researcher should contact the RGF Coordinator.
- 3.8 Complaints about the conduct of research that are upheld may result in the suspension or cancellation of the project. This will need to be decided, on a case-by-case basis, by the Complaints Manager and the RGF Coordinator. It may be necessary to pass on the details of the complaint to the organisation employing the researcher and the project sponsor or funder. All participants will need to be informed of these arrangements and given the Complaint Manager's contact details.
- 3.9 Those undertaking studies will be expected to pass on, with the prior agreement of the service users involved, any complaints about services or the conduct of staff to the complaints team.