
VOICES INTO ACTION: ETHICAL GUIDANCE FOR INVITING PARTICIPANTS TO JOIN ACTIVITIES

When preparing a participatory activity, it is important to ensure all potential participants are aware of its purposes and processes and agree to be involved. The following lists offer suggestions for organisers to reflect upon as they plan activities, keeping ethical considerations in mind.

When sharing information with participants

- Explain the details of the activity to all those who may participate, so they are able to make an informed decision about their participation. This includes outlining what participants will do, where the activity will take place and who will be involved.
- Provide information about the activity for all participants in accessible formats, using different media or languages, as suitable for individual participants.
- Clearly state the purposes and expected outcomes/benefits of the activity and participation.
- Ensure all statements are clear and unambiguous to the recipients of the information.
- Offer support and clarification on an individual basis. This includes providing contact names and details of the organisers to allow for follow-up questions.

When seeking agreement from participants

- Clarify the implications of participation. For example, in a school or class project, participants might need to stay late in school on one afternoon a week, or there might be timing conflicts with another activity.
- Seek agreement from each individual participant, even if general agreement has previously been obtained (such as in schools where parents/guardians have agreed in writing to their child's participation in any school activities).
- Ensure documents used for written agreement are in accessible formats and use clear language. This may mean simplifying statements or replacing Yes/No answers with symbols.
- Be aware of any potential bias or pressure when discussing participation in an activity. Clarify that participation is voluntary and that participants have the right to withdraw from the activity at any point, without the need for explanation and without negative consequences.

-
- If a professional is engaged to support participants in accessing information about the activity and understanding participation, provide that person's name and role in writing. In the school context, this might be a teacher, teaching assistant, support worker, sign language interpreter or any other specialist.
 - Make sure all statements on written documents are clear and unambiguous. The wording should be fully accessible to the individual participant.
 - Offer support and clarification on an individual basis. This includes providing contact names and details of the organisers to allow for follow-up questions.