

YouthLink Scotland's Research Ethics Policy

YouthLink Scotland is the national agency for youth work. We are a membership organisation, representing more than 100 youth organisation members across Scotland, including national third sector youth organisations and all 32 local authorities. We champion the role and value of youth work and represent the interests and aspirations of the voluntary and statutory sector. Our vision is of a nation which values its young people and their contribution to society and that they are supported to achieve their potential. We are an equality conscious organisation and as a sector we place the rights of children and young people at the heart of what we do. Our work encompasses a variety of national programmes; funding streams; workforce development; research & policy and communications.

At YouthLink Scotland we understand that we have a collective responsibility as a youth work charity to conduct research and evaluation ethically and responsibly. We are dedicated to developing an evidence base for the impact of youth work on the personal, social and educational development of young people in Scotland. We do this through externally commissioning, internally conducting and working in partnership on high-quality research projects, through a range of youth-led research initiatives; and through regular meetings of the Scottish Youth Work Research Steering Group. YouthLink Scotland also regularly conducts evaluation activities through the national programmes and supports the youth work sector in both evaluation and demonstrating impact through the National youth work outcomes.

Our approach to research and evaluation at YouthLink Scotland is two-fold: we will consider our internal practice, policies and procedures and our outward facing support to the youth work sector. It is our ambition to lead the sector by example and be a model of how a youth work organisation conducts research ethically.

The following document pulls together evidence from two key sources:

Third Sector Research Forum. (2021) Guide to Applying Ethical Research Principles <https://evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/DRAFT-TSRF-guide-to-applying-ethical-research-principles-for-conference-pack.pdf>

Social Research Association. (2021) Research Ethics Guidance <https://the-sra.org.uk/common/Uploaded%20files/Resources/SRA%20Research%20Ethics%20guidance%202021.pdf>

Key Principles of Research Ethics

Having a set of principles is at the heart of making good ethical decisions about how to undertake research.

This document is designed to provide some research principles and basic additional supporting materials to help you think about how to ensure your research process will keep both participants and researchers safe. (The term 'researcher' is used throughout the document, this encompasses those with a specific research remit as well as any member of staff who is undertaking pieces of research or evaluation activities e.g. conducting a focus group.)

While the guidance aims to be comprehensive, it does not claim to provide an answer to every ethical dilemma you may face. While it's important to identify and resolve ethical issues and concerns before research gets underway, it's not always possible to anticipate these, nor fully resolve them.

Also, rather than impose a rigid set of rules to stick to, the guidance aims to inform in order to enable a researcher's individual ethical judgements and decisions to be set in the context of the shared values.

What the guidance hopes to achieve is to give you some tools and the confidence to plan ethically sound research, remain responsive throughout, and to be reflective at the end to continuously learn and improve for future research. Planning research and evaluation activities effectively will also help demonstrate to others, including funders, that ethics have been considered and followed.

The four Key Principles we will follow when conducting ethical research are:

Need

We recognise the value of new knowledge and carry out research where there is a clear evidence of need for the research

Integrity & accountability

We ensure that the research we conduct and commission is undertaken in an honest, open, and respectful way, and that our research is accountable to participants and stakeholders

Consent & confidentiality

We ensure all participants fully understand and consent to the research, and any research we conduct or commission ensures the confidentiality and anonymity of participants

Safety

We ensure the safety and wellbeing of both participants and researchers, and we understand that research should aim to maximise benefit and minimise harm

CHECKLIST – Ethical questions to consider when conducting research (however big or small)¹

Need

- Why is this research needed?
- What do you want to know?
- Will the proposed research or evaluation activity answer your need/question?
- Is there existing research which will tell you what you want to know?
- What potential benefits and harms could be caused to participants?

Integrity & accountability

- Does the person doing the research have the appropriate skills and knowledge to undertake the research?
- If you are commissioning the research have you seen examples of their previous work?
- How will you engage with participants throughout the research?
- Are you being honest about the commitment you expect from participants and how they will be acknowledged in the research?
- Are you incentivizing your participants, if so how, and is it appropriate to do so?
- Will your research and its findings be reported accurately, honestly and within a reasonable time frame?

Consent & confidentiality

- How will you ensure when recruiting participants for research that they understand what's involved and are giving informed consent?
- How will you ensure confidentiality or anonymity for participants?
- How will data, including electronic data, be stored securely and for how long?
- How will you ensure that your findings are reported and disseminated in ethical ways?

Safety

- What arrangements are in place to keep the researcher safe?
- Have you done a risk assessment about risks to wellbeing of participants and researcher?
- Have you put support in place, for participants and researchers to be accessed if needed? For example, through working with a partner organisation or agency?
- If you are working with children or vulnerable people do you have an enhanced disclosure?

¹ Questions are adapted from Third Sector Research Forum. (2021). This is not an exhaustive list for further questions to consider see <https://evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/DRAFT-TSRF-guide-to-applying-ethical-research-principles-for-conference-pack.pdf>

NEED

We recognise the value of new knowledge and carry out research where there is a clear evidence of need for the research

We understand that social research is fundamental to a democratic society, and that **new knowledge is intrinsically and practically valuable**. For example, our research should help organisations to find evidenced based ways of providing services or meeting its mission.

But we **only carry out research where there is a clear evidence of need for the research**. For example, you should explore whether there is existing research that answers your questions and seek not to replicate research unnecessarily. It is worth considering if any existing research can be improved upon, for example if enough time has elapsed since it was conducted or if the data set was small etc.

Research should not unduly burden respondents, and the risks of over-researching particularly vulnerable groups should always be laid against any anticipated benefits of the research.

Evidence resulting from research should be widely and appropriately disseminated so that the maximum impact resulting from this contact with the public is generated.

To help with this important stage in the research process it is necessary to address all the above points in a **research plan**. This plan should also articulate why the research is being undertaken, what the benefit will be to participants, the organisation, and if possible then even researchers.

INTEGRITY & ACCOUNTABILITY

We ensure that the research we conduct and commission is undertaken in an honest, open, and respectful way, and that our research is accountable to participants and stakeholders

Appropriate skills

Research should be done by **skilled and knowledgeable staff** who employ the most appropriate methods for the research and evaluation purpose. Knowing which research methods to apply to address which research questions, and the strengths and weaknesses of each, is how social research can produce valid findings and deliver benefits.

Research should also **be reported fully and accurately**. This means fully describing the methods and approaches used, but also being upfront about the potential limitations, inaccuracies and uncertainties of the research.

Researchers should work to ensure that their findings are presented reasonably and they should consider how to best protect any results from distortion or misinterpretation in communication. Any findings that are discovered to be false will undermine public confidence, with long-term negative impacts. By being open and honest about the research process, our organisation can preserve and promote such confidence of the public and stakeholders.

Recruiting and informing participants

When recruiting participants it is crucial to explain what participation entails for people's time and effort. It is also **essential to remind participants before and during the study that they are not obliged to answer questions or take part in activities if they prefer not to**. This applies to all forms of social research and should always be adhered to.

Participants are often **incentivised to take part in research**. Using incentives provides participants with a modest benefit in appreciation of their time and effort, but are used more as a 'token of thanks' rather than any attempt to pay a notional hourly rate. Incentives also may improve the accuracy of a study's findings by encouraging respondent groups that are typically under-represented to take part, for example, young people and those facing barriers as a result of inequality.

Throughout the recruiting process **there is a need to always be aware of the power relationships** that exist, for instance where a potential respondent may think that they are obliged to take part. This is a particular concern for situations where a participant is in a vulnerable situation, for example, a prison or school.

It is also good practice to sharing power by **giving participants choices and a say in the research process**. For example, there may be room to collaboratively consider on the time and location of the research interview, the terminology and language used, the

appearance of the researcher and the identities of the researcher and participants (for example, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, socio-economic background).

See Appendix 4 and 5 for examples of information sheets provided to young people and parents/guardians when conducting focus groups and surveys.

Encouraging participation

When designing research, consideration should be given to issues likely to act as a barrier to participation, and reasonable steps taken to address these. For example, ethnic minorities, those with caring responsibilities, and those with physical or mental impairment, are all cohorts who have, for various reasons, been under-represented in past social research.

Possible measures to facilitate participants include:

- Assistance with costs incurred in research participation: e.g. help with childcare, or transport costs etc.
- Appropriate venues for research if relevant: e.g. accessible locations for focus groups
- Provision of services: e.g. transport to and from the venue for those with accessibility/mobility problems; provision of interpretation facilities/foreign language interviews; induction loops for those with hearing impairment etc.
- Methods of data collection: e.g. offering a choice between self-completion and interviewer assisted interviewing in projects where respondents have difficulty reading or comprehending written material.
- Sample design: e.g. considering the implications of excluding sparsely populated areas in highly clustered sample designs; and considering the case for over-sampling under-represented or hard-to-reach groups.
- Co-production/User-involvement: e.g. consulting hard-to-reach groups and/or their representatives on research design to ensure that possible barriers to participation are identified and minimised.

CONSENT & CONFIDENTIALITY

We ensure all participants fully understand and consent to the research, and any research we conduct or commission ensures the confidentiality and anonymity of participants

Informed consent

Informed consent is the cornerstone of ethical social research.

The UK Information Commissioner advises that there should always be at least some **active indication that consent has been given** in the research process. In practice this means that information can be collected, from or about people, only if they have understood the purpose of the research and what their participation entails, and have freely agreed to participate in it.²

Consent is also best viewed as a **continuous process** rather than as a discrete and irreversible decision: participants need to be aware that they can withdraw at any point, for any or no reason. The use of recording equipment requires explicit consent of the participant.

The method of getting consent from participants can vary according to context and researchers must decide what is appropriate. For example, it may not be practical to get written consent for a telephone interview, but it will have to be verbally agreed and recorded. However in a face-to-face interview or an online or postal survey you could consider the use of leaflets.

Although the principle can be straightforwardly stated, ensuring that individuals are both informed and genuinely consenting requires considerable care and attention to detail. Consent plans and processes are often a major focus of ethics review panels or committees.

Consent via gatekeepers or proxy

It can be permissible to gain consent via a gatekeeper or proxy, but only when a reasonable attempt has been made to explain to the intended participant the purpose of the research and to secure their consent directly.

A simple example is in the case of a vulnerable adult who would not be able to understand what was being asked of them. When negotiating consent via gatekeepers or proxies, reasonable care should be taken to safeguard the relationship between gatekeeper/proxy and participant and protect the participant's privacy.

² Further information on consent is available from the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/consent/what-is-valid-consent/>

Children and Young People

The UN Convention of the Rights of the Child³ Article 12 (respect for the views of the child) and Article 13 (freedom of expression) clearly outlines the rights of the child to have their views and freedom of expression respected. Children and young people aged under 16 should be able to provide their own consent for taking part in research, as well consent from their parents/guardians.

There are two types of consent in this context: active and passive.

Active consent means ensuring for each participant that they and their parent/guardian has consented to the research, and has informed the researchers of this. The advantage of active consent is in the clarity it provides to the researcher, and the unequivocal assurance that it gives to parents/guardians. However it may also significantly depress response rates. See Annex 3 for example consent form.

Passive consent assumes participation unless, after being properly informed of the research, the parent/guardian chooses to withdraw the child from the research. The advantage of passive consent is that it will significantly enhance response rates, but potentially at the risk of that message requesting consent not reaching the correct parent/guardian.

Children who are 16 or over will usually be able to give their own consent but even where this is so, researchers should consider whether it is also appropriate for parents, guardians or other appropriate organisations who have a duty of care to the young person (e.g. youth work organisations or schools) to be informed when their child has been invited to participate in research.

Note under GDPR regulations, any personal data collected that allows an individual to be identified should be collected using active consent/opt-in measures

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Researchers have a responsibility to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of participants, at all stages of the research process, and – as far as possible – to address and resolve any concerns before the research gets under way.

The principle of **confidentiality** is concerned with limiting access to personal data – defined in the Data Protection Act 2018 as data that identifies a living person or that could identify them in combination with other data. In the context of research, it means that researchers do not share information gained from research participants that may disclose their identities to any unauthorised parties.

When gathering and processing data for research and evaluation purposes it is an ethical issue as well legal requirement as outlined by General Data Protection Regulations.

³ <https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/>

In order to adhere to these guidelines researchers should check the following:

- that data is kept confidential when in transit from research site to office, or to sub-contractors such as transcribers (by using sealed envelopes, encrypted memory sticks, secure platforms etc.)
- that all datasets (qualitative and quantitative) to ensure they are non-disclosive.
- Ensure all personal data is password protected or encrypted. This includes folders where personal data is stored, accounts used to access this data (eg Office365) and devices (laptops, phones etc).
- Restrict access to data to those directly involved in the research
- Ensure all co-researchers understand [basic GDPR security principles](#) and follow best practice

We also understand that according to the principles of the 2018 Data Protection Act the processing of data must be fair, lawful and transparent. We understand that personal data must be:

- Collected for specified purposes and not further processed in a manner incompatible with those purposes. This does not apply if the further processing is statistical.
- Be adequate, relevant and not excessive.
- Be accurate and (if necessary) kept up to date.
- Be kept in a form that permits identification of individuals for no longer than is necessary for the purposes of the processing. Researchers have an exemption that states personal data may be stored for longer periods when used for statistical purposes only.
- Be kept secure.

It is important to review any data you hold periodically and ensure that it is still necessary to keep it⁴. As there is no set time period for how longer data should be stored, the following is a general indication of the process we will follow.

We will keep:

- Signed consent forms for at least 3 years following the end of the research/project
- Personal data – Personal data in which you can identify the individual may be kept for no longer than is necessary for the purposes the data was collected. Any personal data where an individual cannot be identified may be kept for 5 years.

Closely related to confidentiality, but distinct, is the principle of **anonymity**. This means concealing the identities of participants when their data is shared beyond the immediate

⁴ [Principle \(e\): Storage limitation | ICO](#)

research team, by removing the name (and/or other identifying information) from a research participant's data.

There are a few specific circumstances when confidentiality and anonymity may be limited and conditional, and when researchers have a duty of care to report possible harm/danger to participant or to others to the relevant authorities, for example, if a respondent reveals that they intend to harm themselves or others.

SAFETY

We ensure the safety and wellbeing of both participants and researchers, and we understand that research should aim to maximise benefit and minimise harm

You should ensure the physical, social or psychological wellbeing of the **participant and researcher** is not adversely affected by the research process.

Not all risks can be anticipated, but it is possible to minimise them by careful planning, and by responding promptly in the event of harm arising.

Key to this is doing a **risk assessment** at the design stage (see Appendix 1). The outcome of which should then be laid out in the research proposal/brief and the mitigating steps embedded in the research process. A thorough risk assessment will also raise the **legal responsibilities and standards** required to follow i.e. enhance disclosure when working with children, young people or vulnerable adults.

Physical harm:

While physical harm to **participants** in social research is rare, it is possible. An example is the environment in which the research takes place: does the research site pose any safety risk to participants? Can the participant travel to and from it safely? (SRA)

For the **researcher**, visiting unfamiliar environments may create possible risk to personal safety. Examples include interviewing in high-crime areas, people's homes, or in low, medium and high-risk surroundings such as residential facilities for people with forensic histories, or in correctional facilities. In these circumstances it would be worth considering

- Taking a colleague
- Letting someone know where and when you are going and coming back
- Reporting to a local police station that you are interviewing in the area.

Emotional harm:

For **participants**, talking about and reflecting upon sensitive topics may cause emotional distress, embarrassment and/or anxiety. Avoid making the emotional stress a focus of the research unless absolutely necessary.

However, where emotional stress is likely to occur, or arises unexpectedly during the research, there are certain steps that should be taken to minimise any emotional distress of participants:

- Pay attention to verbal and non-verbal indicators of distress. If they do display signs of distress offer to pause, terminate or rearrange the interaction, and remind them their participation is voluntary.
- Taking time to actively listen to participants. Demonstrate that their story has worth, and ensure that interaction with a participant does not finish until there is some resolution of the emotional distress.
- Consider offering additional information and support. At the end of the research process, researchers could provide participants information about organisations offering advice and support, and how to get a copy of the research report.
- Be clear about the research aims. Do not overstate individual benefits in a way that misleads participants about the potential benefits and outcomes

For **researchers**, interviewing vulnerable groups on sensitive topics it can be difficult to balance empathy and the urge to help against professional neutrality. To minimise this:

- Be self-reflective
- Be aware of your own emotional responses
- Have systems (either formal or informal) for debriefing
- Seek support if necessary. For example, speak to a line manager, supervisor or counsellor after an interview

References

[A Code of Practice for the Safety of Social Researchers \(the-sra.org.uk\)](https://the-sra.org.uk)

[Social Research Association. \(2021\) Research Ethics Guidance](#)

[Annex to GSR Ethics Guidance - Social Media Research.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

[Principle \(e\): Storage limitation | ICO](#)

[The Aqua Book: guidance on producing quality analysis for government - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[The Magenta Book - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Third Sector Research Forum. \(2021\) Guide to Applying Ethical Research Principles](#)

[UN Convention of the Rights of the Child](#)

Annex 1: Risk template example

Is the risk eliminated, reduced or accepted?

Risk	Ref	Solution or mitigation	Result
<p>Example 1</p> <p>Some processing of data will be contracted out to a supplier – they have data storage centres outside of the European Economic Area (EEA).</p>	<p>ABC1</p>	<p>Example 1</p> <p>Put a Data Controller/Data Processor agreement* in place to make sure our duties under the Data Protection Act are clear to the supplier and they process data on our behalf in compliance with the Act.</p>	<p>Eliminate/reduce/accept</p>
<p>Example 2</p> <p>Completed reports, containing personal data, will be shared with another government agency.</p>	<p>ABC2</p>	<p>Example 2</p> <p>All data to be transferred securely via SFTP in accordance with IT Security procedures.</p> <p>Complete data sharing agreement.</p>	

Annex 2: Data processing template example

Explain how the risks and solutions or mitigation actions will be incorporated into the project/business plan, and how they will be monitored. There must be a named official responsible for addressing and monitoring each risk.

Risk	Ref	How risk will be incorporated into planning	Owner
<p>Example 1</p> <p>Data processing contracted out.</p>	<p>ABC1</p>	<p>Example 1</p> <p>Action in project plan for steering group to facilitate signing of contract by suppliers.</p>	<p>Project Sponsor</p>
<p>Example 2</p> <p>Data sharing with government agency.</p>	<p>ABC2</p>	<p>Example 2</p> <p>Project procedures updated to mandate consultation with IT Security team for all proposed data transfers.</p> <p>Complete Data Sharing Agreement</p>	<p>Project Manager</p>

Annex 3: Example young person consent form (taken from Boys and Young Men Project)

Your permission for taking part in a focus group for the Boys and Young Men Project

What is this research about?

No Knives, Better Lives are looking to complete research on what it is to be a boy or young man in Scotland today. The ultimate aim of the research is help create a toolkit and series of training sessions to support youth workers and others working with young people to challenge stereotypes and assumptions about what it is like to a boy or young man in Scotland today.

We are asking young people to share their views of what it is like to be a boy or young man in Scotland in a focus group. The focus group will take place either online (using Zoom) or in person. This focus group will be arranged through the youth or support workers at a time that is convenient for the young people taking part.

What is this form about?

The focus groups will be recorded so we can make sure what each young person says is accurately recorded. We may use the young people's quotes but we will ensure that each young person remains anonymous and cannot be identified in any way. The focus group may be stopped at any point and the young person is free to ask questions. A trained youth worker will be on hand if the young person would like to speak to them at any point.

All data and transcripts will be treated in strict confidence in accordance with the Data Protection Act. The information collected will be used for research purposes only and will only be viewed by the research team.

What if I change my mind?

Every young person has the right withdraw at any stage of the research. If you would like to withdraw. Here's how you can get in touch:

Email Amy Calder on acalder@youthlinkscotland.org

It's OK not to take part in the focus group. If you don't agree with what we've explained above, stop here and tell our team or your youth worker that you don't want to take part.

If you're not sure what any of this means, come and talk to us. We're happy to chat about it.

Your permission for voice recording as part of a focus group for the Boys and Young Men Project

Please check the box below and return this form to us to opt-in to the Boys and Young Men Project

I give permission for YouthLink Scotland to take audio recordings during a focus group. I understand this will be used for the activities that have been explained above.

NB: If you are under 16, a responsible adult has to sign this form with you.

My name:

Sign here:

My age (or over 16):

My email address (or address):

My parent/carer:

Email address (or address):

Sign here:

Please note, we will only use your contact details to contact you in regards to the focus group you take part in. You will not be added to any marketing communications.

Annex 4: Example focus group information sheet for young people (taken from Boys and Young Men Project)

No knives, better lives.

www.noknivesbetterlives.com



Boys and Young Men Project Information for participants

What is this research about?

No Knives, Better Lives are looking to complete research on what it is to be a boy or young man in Scotland today. The ultimate aim of the research is help create a toolkit and series of training sessions to support youth workers and others working with young people to challenge stereotypes and assumptions about what it is like to a boy or young man in Scotland today.

Why have I been asked to take part?

We are asking young people and practitioners who work with young people to share their views about what it is like to be a boy or young man in Scotland. We hope to speak to a broad range of people to learn as much as possible.

What is involved?

If you are able to help us with this research, the researcher from YouthLink Scotland, Amy Calder, will arrange a time to conduct a focus group with you, through your youth or support worker. **The focus group will last for no more than one hour, at a time that is convenient for you.** It will take place either in person (COVID-19 restrictions permitting) or online. There are no right or wrong answers; we are interested in your views and experiences. The focus groups will be recorded so we can make sure what you say is accurately recorded, but you will not be identified in any reports. **You'll be able to stop the focus group at any stage, take a break or pass on any question you would prefer not to answer.**

Who is carrying out this research?

The research is being carried out by YouthLink Scotland (National Agency for Youth Work in Scotland) on behalf of No Knives, Better Lives.

No Knives, Better Lives is funded by the Scottish Government and is a knife carrying prevention programme committed to exploring and responding to the causes of knife carrying and violence in Scotland.

Do I have to take part?

No – participation in this research is voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the project at any time. We hope that a broad range of participants take part in this research as this means we can better understand what it is to be a boy or young man in Scotland. We hope that you will take this opportunity to contribute to this research, and to share your views and experiences.

How will the data be used?

All data and transcripts will be treated in strict confidence in accordance with the Data Protection Act. The information collected will be used for research purposes only and will only be viewed by the research team.

We will use the data to write a report for No Knives, Better Lives. No one looking at the findings will be able to identify those who took part in the study.

Only the research team know who is taking part, and this information will not be shared with anyone else.

Will I receive anything for taking part?

Yes, each young person will receive a £10 voucher for taking part.

If the focus group is taking place online please let your youth worker know if you need any data for your phone or computer to allow you to take part. If the focus group takes place in person, please let your youth worker know if you need any travel costs to be covered.

Where do I get support for any of the issues raised?

If you need any support for any of the issues raised in the focus group please see <https://noknivesbetterlives.com/> where you can find details about how to access support and report crimes anonymously.

Your youth worker will also be close by when we are running the focus group in case you need any support at any point.

Any questions?

If you have any questions about the research, please contact Dr Amy Calder at acalder@youthlinkscotland.org

Annex 5: Example information sheet for young people, parents and guardians for completing a survey (taken from Boys and Young Men Project)

No knives, better lives.

www.noknivesbetterlives.com



Boys and Young Men Project Survey Information

What is this research about?

No Knives, Better Lives are looking to complete research on what it is to be a boy or young man in Scotland today. The ultimate aim of the research is help create a toolkit and series of training sessions to support youth workers and others working with young people to challenge stereotypes and assumptions about what it is like to a boy or young man in Scotland today.

Why have I/my child been asked to take part?

We want to understand what it is like to be a boy of young man in Scotland. As part of answering this question, we are asking all young people across Scotland to share views on gender identities and stereotypes, risk taking behaviour, attitudes to violence and community relationships and connections. We hope to hear from a broad range of young people to learn as much as possible.

What is involved?

We are asking young people aged 11 plus, to complete a survey which can be found here xxx The survey should take no longer than xx minutes to complete. All of the questions are closed, which means the young person will not need to write any text, they will just be asked to tick boxes that apply to them. The young person does not need to answer all of the questions, just the questions they are comfortable to answer.

The young people can either complete the survey with support from parents/guardians or during a youth group session, with support from their youth worker. Your youth worker will let you know when this session will take place.

Who is carrying out this research?

The research is being carried out by YouthLink Scotland (National Agency for Youth Work in Scotland) on behalf of No Knives, Better Lives. **ScotCen Social Research has been commissioned by YouthLink Scotland to design the survey and analyse the data.**

No Knives, Better Lives is funded by the Scottish Government and is a knife carrying prevention programme committed to exploring and responding to the causes of knife carrying and violence in Scotland.

Do I/ my child have to take part?

No – participation in this research is voluntary and if the young person or their parent/guardian does not wish for them to take part they can opt out.

The youth worker will let you know which youth group session they will be supporting young people to complete the survey in, so you have the option to opt out. Choosing to opt out will not impact on the young person being able to take part in the youth group session, other activities will be offered.

How will the data be used?

All data will be treated in strict confidence in accordance with the Data Protection Act. The information collected will be used for research purposes only and will only be viewed by the research team.

We will use the data to write a report for No Knives, Better Lives. No one looking at the findings will be able to identify those who took part in the study.

Only the research team know who is taking part, and this information will not be shared with anyone else.

Will I/my child receive anything for taking part?

Yes, if the young person is a Young Scot Member they can earn 200 Rewards points for completing the survey. If they are not a Member yet they can go to young.scot to sign up.

Where do I/my child get support for any of the issues raised?

If you need any support for any of the issues raised in the survey please see:

<https://noknivesbetterlives.com/> - for information on deterring young people from carrying knives, with information for young people and parents/guardians

[Home - Fearless](#) – a safe place to give information on crimes anonymously

[Get Support | Childline](#) - for young people to share any worries

[Bullying advice for young people | Bullying UK](#) – providing advice and support to anyone affected by bullying

[Disrespect NoBody | Find out about healthy relationships, relationship abuse, consent and more.](#) – helps you learn and understand what a healthy relationship is
[LGBT Youth Scotland | LGBT Youth Scotland](#) – supporting LGBT young people

You can also talk to your youth worker if you have any concerns about any of the issues raised.

Any questions?

If you have any questions about the research, please contact Dr Amy Calder at acalder@youthlinkscotland.org