**Guidance on cases of ethics approval involving participants under 18**

**Low Risk Cases**

Low risk cases are defined as those where the research is taking place in an institutional setting (e.g. school, young offender institution, hospital, ‘looked after’ children in local authority care).

**Under 16s**

You must ensure that -

* When conducting interviews, a professional is present at all times.
* Parental/gatekeeper consent is obtained.
* Appropriate measures are in place for informed consent/involvement of participants where competent.
* Survey design is appropriate to the age group, and use of non-adult participants is warranted.
* You have considered the potential for distress/adverse effects among non-adult participants, e.g. embarrassment, non-understanding, fear of authority etc.

**16-18 year olds**

You must ensure that -

* When conducting interviews, a professional is present at all times.
* Written informed consent is obtained.
* Parental/gatekeeper knowledge has been obtained. Formal consent may be required in some settings.
* Participant information and participant consent documentation is appropriately drafted.
* Survey design is appropriate to the age group, and use of non-adult participants is warranted.
* You have considered the potential for distress/adverse effects among non-adult participants, e.g. embarrassment, non-understanding, fear of authority etc.

**High Risk Cases**

High risk cases are defined as those where the research is taking place in a non-institutional setting – for example, in the child’s home.

You must ensure that –

* When conducting interviews, a professional is present at all times.
* Parental/gatekeeper consent is obtained.
* The interviews are conducted in an externally observable space (for example, a room with a glass window open to view from the outside) or with an appropriate adult in an adjacent room.
* Written informed consent is obtained.
* Participant information and participant consent documentation is appropriately drafted.
* Survey design is appropriate to the age group, and use of non-adult participants is warranted.
* You have considered the potential for distress/adverse effects among non-adult participants, e.g. embarrassment, non-understanding, fear of authority etc.