The Information Sheet is used to explain clearly to participants the aims of the research project they have been asked to take part in and states the manner in which the information and/or the clinical samples they supply is to be used.

An Information Sheet must include the following:

* A description of the project’s aims
* A description of what information will be required from the subject together with any potential risks that may be involved
* A statement outlining participants’ rights under the Data Protection Act 1998, and the fact that they:
	+ can withdraw their permission at any time
	+ can ask to access the information at any time
	+ know who to contact and how to do so
* A statement informing the subject of their rights to confidentiality and outlining the commitment to upholding this
* A description of how the information will be published
* A statement outlining the secure storage of the information during and after the project has completed and a description of how the information is to be securely stored. i.e. password protected, or locked away, disposed of
* An explanation of the procedure for advising participants in the event of an abnormal test result. It is Northumbria University policy to provide participants with their own individual test results and the relevant normal ranges.
* Any other information deemed relevant to the project

As the information sheet outlines the rights of the individual and the contact details of the researcher should they wish to withdraw their consent, it is often useful to provide a copy of it for each person to take away with them.

The National Research Ethics Service website (http://www.nres.nhs.uk/)) has good examples of information sheets (and consent forms) and is worth looking at even if you do not need REC approval. It is suggested that you use the first person to help the participants feel the form is for them. If you choose this method then do stick to it for the whole of the information sheet and consent form.

If your study involves more than one group of participants and those participants have different levels of understanding or need to know about different aspects of the research, for example NHS staff and clients, or teachers, pupils and parents, you must include separate information sheets for each sample group.

Where your sample involves children or young people then you should include information for parents or guardians and age appropriate information for children. You will need to address the information needs of participants who may not be able to read, write or understand English or to communicate (e.g. marginal/minority groups, disabled and prisoners) should they be involved in your research.

If you require help writing information sheets, please contact the University Records and Information Manager, Duncan James(duncan.james@northumbria.ac.uk).