the Social Impact Storyteller

FREE TEMPLATE FOR CHARITIES AND SOCIAL IMPACT TEAMS

Story and photography consent form

A consent form that protects the person, not just the organisation.

Most consent forms are signed once and never looked at again. This one is built around a different idea: that a yes today is a yes for now. It asks for separate permission for each use, lets people see their story before it goes out, explains what can and can't be taken back, and sets a date to check in.

How to use this template

- Delete this cover page.
- Replace everything in [square brackets] with your own details, and delete anything that doesn't apply to your project.
- Talk the form through with each person in person. The form records the conversation. It doesn't replace it.
- Ask away from the moment of support. Don't ask anyone while they're receiving support from you, unless telling their story is part of that support and you've agreed it with them.
- Have it checked by your safeguarding and data protection leads before you use it. This template isn't legal advice.
- Remove the notes page at the end before you give the form to anyone.

Before you use it, check you've decided:

- who will ask, and who will own the check-ins (one named person, not a team)
- how long you'll keep original files, and who keeps them
- how quickly you can take something down if someone changes their mind
- what you'll do for anyone under 18, or anyone who can't give informed consent themselves

Created by Matt Mahmood-Ogston, documentary photographer and social impact storyteller, for The Social Impact Storyteller. Free to use and adapt for your organisation. To edit it, choose File > Make a copy. More on ethical storytelling at ogston.com/impact/ethical-storytelling

[ORGANISATION NAME] · [PROJECT NAME]

Consent form

Please read this with someone from [Organisation]. Ask us anything you're unsure about, and only sign if you're happy.

About this project

[Organisation] is asking [you / a small group of the people we support] to help tell the story of [project or service], in your own way.

This might involve [a conversation with us / being photographed or filmed / taking your own photographs]. Some of what you share may be used in [campaign or appeal name] and in other [Organisation] materials.

[Name of photographer, writer or filmmaker] will be with you while we [interview / photograph] you, and a member of the [Organisation] team will be there too.

Because it's your story, we need your permission before we use any of it. This form explains what you're agreeing to.

What taking part involves

1. **A conversation or a few questions.** There are no right or wrong answers, and you can skip any question.
2. **Being photographed or filmed.** Only if you say yes below. You can take a break or stop at any time.
3. **Taking your own photographs.** [Delete if not relevant.] We'll show you how, and you choose what to photograph.
4. **A look at the final choice.** Before anything is published, you'll see the photographs and words we'd like to use.

How your story will be used

If you agree, [Organisation] may use your words and photographs in the ways you choose in the table below. Your words may be shortened or lightly edited to fit. We won't change their meaning, and you'll

see them before they're used.

Your story will **not** be sold, or given to journalists, partners or other organisations, without asking you first.

Keeping you anonymous and safe

- **Your name.** We'll only credit you in the way you choose below.
- **Where you live.** We won't publish your address, your area, or anything that shows where your home is, such as house numbers, street signs or post.
- **We'll check everything.** Before anything is used, we'll check it for details that could identify you or other people, such as letters, family photographs, or things seen through a window.
- **Other people.** We'll only use photographs of other people if they've agreed and signed their own form.
- **Your files.** Original photographs and recordings are stored securely and kept for [retention period] by [who].

How we'll describe you

We'll only describe you in words you're comfortable with. Nothing about your health, sexuality, gender identity, religion, or why you came to [Organisation] will be shared unless you choose to share it.

- **Your pronouns.** We'll use the pronouns you give us below, and only share them if you're happy for us to.
- **The words around your story.** Captions will describe what's in the photograph, using your own words, not a label about you.
- **Over time.** Once you've moved on, anything about your time with us will be written in the past tense, with the year, never as if it's still true.
- **You can change it.** If you'd like a description changed or removed, tell any contact on this form and we'll do it within [two] working days.

Your choices

Please tick Yes or No for each one. You can say yes to some and no to others, and still take part.

TAKING PART

	Yes	No
I'm happy to share my story in a conversation or interview	☐	☐
I'm happy for my words to be used, credited in the way I choose below	☐	☐
I'm happy to appear in photographs or film	☐	☐
If I appear, I'm happy for my face to be shown (if No, only hands, the back of my head, objects or spaces will be used)	☐	☐
I give permission for [Organisation] to use photographs I take myself, as described on this form	☐	☐

WHERE IT CAN BE USED

	Yes	No
Inside [Organisation] only, for example staff training or board papers	☐	☐
Funding applications and reports to funders	☐	☐
Our annual or impact report	☐	☐
Our website	☐	☐
Our social media	☐	☐
Printed materials, such as leaflets and posters (these can't be recalled once printed)	☐	☐
Press and media (we'll always ask you again first)	☐	☐
[Photographer's name] may show photographs they took in their own portfolio, without my name or anything that identifies me	☐	☐

How you're credited (tick one)

☐ "A person supported by [Organisation]"

☐ My first name: _____

☐ A name I choose: _____

☐ My full name: _____

My pronouns (optional): _____

The best way to reach me for check-ins: _____

Your rights

- **Two separate permissions.** Appearing in a photograph and letting us use photographs you took are different things. This form asks about each one separately.
- **Your photographs stay yours.** If you take photographs yourself, you keep the copyright. By ticking Yes, you give [Organisation] permission to use them in the ways you've chosen, until you tell us otherwise. Photographs taken by [photographer's name] stay their copyright, and [Organisation] can use them on the same terms.
- **You see it first.** Before anything is published, you'll get the photographs and words we'd like to use, on your own, with [five] working days to look. Anything you take out stays out, and you don't need to give a reason.
- **You can change your mind at any time.** Before [launch date], anything you withdraw won't be used at all. After that, tell any contact below and we'll take it off our website and social media within [two] working days, stop using it in anything new, including funding applications, and delete it from our files. Then we'll tell you exactly what we've done.
- **What we can't undo.** We can't recall printed materials or broadcasts that have already gone out, or copies someone else has already downloaded or shared. We're telling you now so it isn't a surprise later.
- **Taking part is your choice.** Saying no, or stopping part way, will not affect the support you get from [Organisation] in any way.

We'll check in with you

Your yes today is a yes for now. Life changes, so we won't wait for you to come to us. We'll come to you.

- **Regular check-ins.** We'll contact you every [12] months, whether you're still getting support from us or have moved on. Each time, you can tell us to leave it, change it, or take it down.
- **Sooner if things change.** We'll also check straight away if you stop getting support from us, if anything changes that could make being seen less safe for you, or if you ask us to.
- **If we can't reach you.** If we try and can't get hold of you, we'll stop using your story in anything new.

Your first check-in date: _____ ([12] months from the date you sign)

Signatures

By signing, I confirm that I'm 18 or over, that this form has been explained to me, that I've had the chance to ask questions, and that I agree to the choices I've ticked.

	Name	**Signature**	**Date**
You			
[Organisation] staff member (witness)			
Photographer, writer or filmmaker (if external)			

You'll be given a copy of this form to keep.

Questions, or want to change your mind? Speak to anyone on our team, or contact:

- [Named contact for this project]: [email and phone]
- A second contact who isn't your support worker, if you'd rather not ask them: [name, email and phone]
- [External photographer or storyteller, if any]: [email]

REMOVE THIS PAGE BEFORE GIVING THE FORM TO ANYONE

Notes for your team

Check every item before you use the form. This template isn't legal advice, so please have it reviewed by whoever normally signs off consent forms, alongside your safeguarding and data protection policies.

☐ Fill in every [square bracket], and delete anything that doesn't apply to your project

☐ Add two contacts, one of whom isn't the person's support worker

☐ Name one person (not a team) who owns the check-ins, and put every first check-in date in a calendar

☐ Keep one record per person: what they agreed, everywhere their story is used (including file names), their check-in dates, and a log of each check-in

☐ Confirm the [two] working days for take-downs and description changes is a promise you can keep, or change it

☐ Confirm how long original files are kept, and by whom

☐ Agree a separate process for anyone under 18, or anyone who can't give informed consent themselves

☐ Decide whether staff who appear in photographs sign a separate staff consent form

☐ Agree a simple separate form for anyone else who appears in a photograph

☐ Check the form against your privacy notice (identifiable people are personal data, and details about health, sexuality or religion are special category data under UK GDPR), and add a line linking to it

☐ Book the review period before publication, so people have time to look before your launch date

The final check before anything is published. Ask: *"If this person were standing behind me right now, reading every word, would they feel safe, respected and accurately represented?"* If the answer is anything other than a clear yes, stop. This is the Naz Rule. Read more at ogston.com/impact/ethical-storytelling