

## Consent to Participate in Research:

### “Discretion and the Child’s Best Interests in Child Protection”

You have been asked to participate in a research project whose purpose it is to investigate decision-making in the child protection system from a multi-level perspective as a part of a project about decision-making and the child’s best interest. In this document, we provide you with information about the aims of the project and what participation will mean for you.

#### Project aims

The research project aims to unlock the black box of discretionary decision-making in child protection cases by doing a comparative empirical study of how discretionary decisions are made and justified in the best interests of the child.

The main objectives for this project are to reveal the mechanisms for exercising discretion, and to improve the understanding of the principle of the child’s best interests. These objectives will be reached by systematically examining the role of institutional, organizational and individual factors, including regulations of best interests principles; professions involved; types of court; types of child protection system; demographic factors and individual values; and the populations’ view on children and paternalism. For further information, please see the project website: <https://www.discretion.uib.no/projects/discretion-and-the-childs-best-interest-in-child-protection/>

#### Who is responsible for the research project?

The research center *Center for Research on Discretion and Paternalism*, Department of Administration and Organization Theory at the University of Bergen is responsible for the project. The person responsible is Principal Investigator Professor Marit Skivenes.

The funding for this project is provided by the European Research Council (grant agreement nr. 724460). The project is reported to and is approved by the Data Protection Officer at the University of Bergen.

#### Why are you asked to participate?

We would like to invite you to contribute to our cross-national study of decision-making in child protection, examining the exercise of discretion in a number of European countries. As a part of this study we plan to conduct online survey of child protection staff at the front end and of court decision-makers in order to better understand the processes of reasoning and decision-making in these systems.

You have been invited to participate in an interview in order to help us design this survey. We will ask you to describe typical practices and cases with regard to decisions in relation to the principle of the child's best interests. We will also ask about specific characteristics of the child protection system you are a part of, in order to adjust the survey to participants in your country.

### **What does it mean for you to participate?**

If you choose to participate in the project, it means that you conduct an interview with a researcher associated with the project (via telephone/Zoom). The duration of the interview will be approx. 60 -90 minutes. The questions, which will be sent to you before the interview, will be related to topics that address your experiences and your knowledge about decision-making in child protection cases.

The study presents minimal risks to you. We do not anticipate that any of the questions will cause discomfort as they focus on typical aspects of professional practice in child welfare. All questions are optional – you do not have to answer any questions you do not want to. You should also be informed that we are ethically obligated to report issues of misconduct (etc.), in accordance to national and local legislation and guidelines in the involved countries.

We would like to make audio recordings of the interview and ask for your permission to record.

### **Participation is voluntary**

Participation in the project is voluntary. If you choose to participate, you may withdraw your consent at any time without giving any reason. All information about you will then be deleted, provided it is possible to identify you in the data material. It will not have any negative consequences for you if you do not want to participate or later choose to withdraw. You can withdraw your consent by contacting the Principal Investigator (see contact information).

### **Your Privacy - How We Store and Use Your Information**

We will only use your information for the purposes we have stated in this writing. We treat the information confidentially and in accordance with the privacy policy.

- Only researchers employed at the University of Bergen who are associated with the project will have access to information about you. All researchers on the project have signed a declaration of confidentiality.

- We will use the University of Bergen's service for the processing of sensitive personal data (SAFE). SAFE means that no unauthorized person will have access to personal data. Recordings and notes will be transferred to SAFE immediately after the interview.
- We will anonymize the information we collect on a continuous basis and code keys will be deleted at the end of the project.
- Neither your name nor any other information that identifies you will be included in publications that follow this project.

### **What happens to your information when we finish the research project?**

The project is scheduled to end in November 2022. By the end of the project, information we have collected will be deleted or anonymized. It will not be possible to ask information back to you as a person.

### **Your rights**

The information you give will be handled as confidential material and in accordance to regulations set by the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), and Ethics EU. As long as you can be identified in the data material, you have the right to:

- have access to what personal data is registered about you,
- to have your personal data corrected,
- to have your personal data deleted,
- to obtain a copy of your personal data provided (data portability), and
- to file a complaint with the Privacy Ombudsman or the Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data.

### **What gives us the right to process personal information about you?**

We process information about you based on your consent.

On behalf of the University of Bergen, NSD - Norwegian Center for Research Data AS has considered that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with the privacy regulations.

### **Where can I find out more?**

If you have any questions about the study, or wish to exercise your rights, please contact:

- Professor (Principal Investigator) Marit Skivenes at the University of Bergen: [Marit.Skivenes@uib.no](mailto:Marit.Skivenes@uib.no) or telephone +47 55 58 25 87 / +47 959 24 979.
- Data Protection Officer Janecke Helene Veim at the University of Bergen: [personvernombud@uib.no](mailto:personvernombud@uib.no) or telephone +47 55 58 20 29 / +47 930 30 721.

- NSD - Norwegian Center for Research Data AS: personal protection [services@nsd.no](mailto:services@nsd.no) or telephone +47 55 58 21 17.

If you have considered all the information in this form and wish to participate in my research, you may indicate agreement by signing at the indicated place below. Please keep a copy of this form for your records.

Sincerely,

Prof. Marit Skivenes  
Centre for Research on Discretion and Paternalism  
Faculty of Social Science  
University of Bergen

### Statement of consent

I have received and understood information about the research project "Discretion and the Child's Best Interests in Child Protection" (DISCRETION) and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I agree with this to participate in an interview, and that my information is processed until the project is completed, approx. November 2022.

**I consent to participate in the DISCRETION research project**

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Name (capital letters)

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Signature

Place

Date