Who are the researchers?

The research team is made up of Jim Rogers and Lucy Bright (Senior Lecturers in the School of Health and Social Care), who both have a strong interest in this area and who have been delivering the BIA (Best Interests Assessor) training programme at the University of Lincoln for a number of years. Lucy is also a practicing BIA.

What is this research about?

This research project aims to explore the different factors that influence decisions around capacity in relation to the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DOLS) and how these may differ depending on the role of those involved. There has been limited research undertaken in relation to the DOLS and we wish to focus on what influences the fundamental decision as to whether or not a person has capacity to consent to their stay in a hospital or care home for the purposes of receiving care and treatment. We think this area is important to explore, since the outcome of the capacity assessment has significant implications and existing research shows that professional decision making in relation to mental capacity remains quite variable and not well understood.

In the proposed draft legislation to replace the DOLS (Liberty Protection Safeguards) a capacity assessment remains central to the legal process and therefore we believe this project has relevance both now and in the future.

We hope that outcomes from this research will help to inform future practice guidance for those working in this challenging area.

What are the benefits and/or risks of taking part?

We anticipate that you will find this an interesting exercise in relation to reflecting on your practice and what you think best practice is in relation to capacity assessments for DOLS authorisations. The scenarios and questions should prompt you to develop awareness about how you currently make decisions in this area and ways you may wish to change and/or develop. We do not envisage any significant risks arising from your participation, but do appreciate that you are likely to be a busy practitioner and therefore may lose up to 2 hours out of a working day.

What will this involve?

If you choose to take part, you will be asked to available for a telephone interview at a convenient time. 30 minutes before the interview you will receive an email containing 4 short vignettes outlining scenarios where a capacity assessment for a DOLS authorisation is necessary.

You will be asked to read these in the thirty minutes and then answer 6 identical questions on each vignette during the recorded telephone interview. Your answers will then be transcribed and the data analysed to inform the research findings. Your personal information will not be used in the research and the only identifying feature retained will be that of your role i.e. as a BIA, Mental
Health Assessor or Signatory. We anticipate that in total this should take no longer than 2 hours of your time.

**Do I have to take part?**

You do not have to take part in this study, because as with any research project your participation is entirely voluntary.

**I do not actually undertake the capacity assessment for a DOLS assessment so why are you approaching me?**

We are aware that local authorities have different commissioning arrangements for who undertakes the capacity assessment for a DOLS authorisation and so we wish to capture the views of all those involved. We are interested in your deliberations around capacity in relation to a DOLS authorisation, whether you are responsible for this assessment or not, but have oversight of or are involved in the other assessments necessary for an authorisation.

**What happens next?**

If you express an interest in taking part in this project, we will contact you to give you opportunity to ask further questions. You will be asked to sign a consent form. You can choose to withdraw your interest or consent at any time and no reason will be sought for your decision. Once the data has been analysed it will not be possible to remove this information (but this is anonymised). The latest date for withdrawal of data will be 31/07/2018

**What happens to the answers I give?**

All of the recorded telephone interview, your consent form and paper recorded data will be kept locked in a secure filing cabinet and on a password protected computer in accordance with the University of Lincoln’s data storage and management policies. Data are stored for 5 years and are destroyed by shredding paper copies and deleting e copies.

Raw data will only be seen by the research team. It will be analysed for significant themes by the research team as well as statistically for any variants between the different roles of those questioned.

No formal identification, other than your professional role, will be used on the electronic or paper data. The data themes and direct quotes will be completely anonymous. If, however, you say something that gives the researcher serious cause for concern in relation to your professional practice with vulnerable adults, we are duty bound to break this confidentiality, where we believe that you are putting such adults at risk of harm.

**Who do I contact if I have further questions about this project?**

Please contact Lucy Bright or Jim Rogers if you would like further information or wish to discuss this project further:

lbright@lincoln.ac.uk 01522 837307
jrogers@lincoln.ac.uk 01522 837762

**What if I have a complaint or concern?**

If you have any complaints or concerns, you are free to express these. You are welcome to contact the Chair of the ethics committee in the School of Health and Social Care. The details are below:

University of Lincoln research project. Decision making in relation to mental capacity. Participant information sheet. Version 3 19th December 2017