## Best Practice Approach to Undertaking Research Projects using Personal Data

Can anonymised data be used to achieve the aims of the proposed project?

## Yes / No?

No – Can pseudonymised data be used instead with appropriate safeguards?

## Yes/No?

Proceed with proposed project ensuring that the key to a person's identity is retained by the data controller only and not revealed to third parties

Yes –

No – Patient consent is normally required

Has consent for research purposes been secured in relation to the files previously?

Yes/No?

## Yes –

Proceed with proposed project ensuring that the key to a person's identity is retained by the data controller only and not revealed to third parties

No – Specific, informed, freely given consent must be captured from individuals by the data controller Yes – Is this consent valid (specific enough) to cover this particular research proposal?

Yes/No?

Once valid consent is in place, the research project can proceed (subject to adequate safeguards being in place in relation to security etc)

Yes – Proceed with research project (subject to adequate safeguards being in place in relation to security etc)

Source: Data Protection Guidelines on Research in the Health Sector www.dataprotection.ie