

## **Participant Information**

'Where is the emergency exit?' – co-creating appropriate and clear COVID-19 messages for the most vulnerable

We invite you to participate in the above research project. This research is being conducted at the University of St Andrews in partnership with NHS Fife, Fife Council and Fife Voluntary Action. The research is led by Dr Mara van Beusekom (mbv4@st-andrews.ac.uk) a Research Fellow from the University of St Andrews, with Co-investigators Jo-Anne Valentine, Dr Andrew Williams, Gill Musk and Dr Gozde Ozakinci.

### **What is the research about?**

'Wash your hands' and 'stay inside' - two messages that have played a central role in managing the COVID-19 outbreak. However, the scale and nature of the pandemic means that messages have not been universally successful. Some people have been avoiding seeking medical attention for urgent non-COVID-19 health needs to not overload the NHS. Others may struggle to cope with the imposed isolation guidelines due to their circumstances.

While high-risk individuals who are advised to 'shield' receive targeted information, central resources are lacking for others who are also at risk. Within communities, voluntary groups often have an insight into needs and ways to offer support. The proposed work aims to develop methods for 1) co-developing effective messages with community groups and 2) identifying channels to ensure these messages reach the intended groups. Such methods will be essential to support the rapid development of relevant, clear messages to support everyone.

### **Why have I been invited to take part?**

A group with representatives from Public Health, Health Promotion Service, Fife Council, Fife Voluntary Action and University of St Andrews are working together to investigate how people in Fife are making sense and understanding the current public health messages around Covid-19.

We're contacting you as someone who works with people who provide support, or as a moderator or member of a Facebook group or community service that is providing support and assistance through this crisis.

### **Do I have to take part?**

This information sheet has been written to help you decide if you would like to take part. It is up to you and you alone whether you wish to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be free to withdraw at any time without providing a reason, and with no negative consequences.

**What would I be required to do?**

You would be asked to complete a short survey.

**Are there any risks associated with taking part?**

We do not foresee any associated risks with this project, however, if you have any concerns, you are welcome to contact the research team whose details are at the top of this sheet.

**Informed Consent**

It is important that you are able to give your informed consent before taking part in this study and you will have the opportunity to contact us if you have questions in relation to the research before you provide your consent.

**What information about me or recording of me ("my data") will you be collecting?**

We are interested in the name of your support group and your views and opinions. We are also interested in some brief demographics, for example your age, gender, history of chronic illness, ethnicity, postcode and whether you shielded and/or have had your vaccine for Covid 19. If you are interested in hearing about or helping with the project in the future, you will also have the opportunity to provide contact details, for this purpose only.

**How will my data be securely stored and used, and who will have access to it and how will it be shared further?**

Your data will be stored in anonymised form. It will not be possible to identify you from the data provided, all possible identifiable data (e.g. age, gender, history of chronic illness, ethnicity, and postcode) will be anonymised and stored separately to any contact details provided. This anonymised analysis will be published in research publication(s) and shared at conferences. Participants can access the outcome of study from the University of St Andrews website and media sources in around 6-9 months.

**When will my data be destroyed?**

5 years after the last point of access.

**Will my participation be confidential?**

Yes, your participation will only be known to the project team.

**Use of your personal data and data protection rights**

The University of St Andrews (the 'Data Controller') is bound by the UK 2018 Data Protection Act and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which require a lawful basis for all processing of personal data (in this case it is the 'performance of a task carried out in the public interest' – namely, for research purposes) and an additional lawful basis for processing personal data containing special characteristics (in this case it is 'public interest research'). You have a range of rights under data protection legislation. For more information on data protection legislation and your rights visit <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/terms/data-protection/rights>. For any queries, email [dataprot@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:dataprot@st-andrews.ac.uk).

**Who reviewed this study?**

This research proposal has been scrutinised and subsequently granted ethical approval by the University of St Andrews Teaching and Research Ethics Committee.

**What should I do if I have concerns about this study?**

In the first instance, you are encouraged to raise your concerns with the Principal Investigator, Mara van Beusekom E: [mvb4@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:mvb4@st-andrews.ac.uk). However, if you do not feel comfortable doing so, then you should contact the School Ethics Contact (Dr Morven Shearer - [medethic@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:medethic@st-andrews.ac.uk)). A full outline of the procedures governed by the University Teaching and Research Ethics Committee is available at <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/research/integrity-ethics/humans/ethical-guidance/complaints/>