**FORM EC6: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET**

**Title of study: Public Health Interventions Responsiveness (PHIRST) Study - COVID DASE Project**

**Introduction**

The PHIRST initiative is funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) and aims to provide evaluation research for real-world public health interventions. NIHR has funded four PHIRST teams, based in different parts of the country, to work with local authorities over the next 30 months to help evaluate local public health initiatives.

‘Central PHIRST’ is one of the four PHIRST teams. It is led by the University of Hertfordshire and is working in partnership with Leeds City Council and local partners to conduct an evaluation of the remote delivery of drug and alcohol services (‘Leeds COVID DASE’) since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The study you are being invited to participate in is the first phase of qualitative data collection for this evaluation. It aims to explore the changes in service delivery since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, and staff experiences of remote working (for example, delivering drug and alcohol services with significantly reduced face-to-face contact with service users or team members).

Before you decide whether to take part, it is important for you to understand why the study is being conducted and what is involved.

Please take the time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish.If anything is not clear, or if you would like more information, please contact a member of our study team (details provided at the end).

Thank you for taking time to consider taking part in our study.

**What is the purpose of this study?**

The main purpose of the COVID DASE evaluation study is to enable services to understand how best to configure and deliver services in the future, taking account of the range of pros and cons experienced through remote delivery of services required during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Do I have to take part? Can I withdraw later?**

It is completely up to you whether or not you decide to take part in this study. If you decide to take part, you will be given a copy of this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign an online consent form. Agreeing to join the study does not mean that you have to complete it.

If you decide to take part in the study, you can still withdraw from it at any time without giving a reason as to why you have chosen to withdraw. We will withdraw your personal data.

If you choose to withdraw after four weeks from the last interaction with the research team, we cannot guarantee we will be able to remove some of the material you have provided (for example, a quote from your interview may have already been published). This material will not identify you.

**Are there any age or other restrictions that may prevent me from participating?**

Our main eligibility criteria for participation in this study is that participants should be a staff member or volunteer within a service delivering Drug and Alcohol services in Leeds and must be aged over 18 years.

**What will I be asked to do if I take part in the study?**

If you agree to take part in the study you could be invited to take part in up to three aspects of the evaluation (not everybody who agrees to take part will be invited to take part in all three aspects). These are:

Activity 1: Individual timeline. You will be asked to complete a timeline of the way that the drug and alcohol services that you help deliver have changed since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, and your experiences of this. You will be asked to complete the timeline using a simple, online timeline tool, which we email you a link to. You will then be able to complete the timeline when you have time, and it should take you no more than one hour in total. Once you have finished, the timeline will be available for sharing with the research team.

Activity 2: Focus Groups. After you complete the timeline, you will be invited by the research team, to take part in a focus group discussion with other participants (who may be members of your organisation or from other organisations that also deliver drug and alcohol services in Leeds). This would be a small group of no more than six people, and if invited, you would be asked to participate remotely from the comfort of your home or from any other setting convenient for you.

The focus group will involve you taking part in a group discussion about COVID-19 and the changes it necessitated for service delivery; what your experience has been and your thoughts about service users’ experiences of service delivery during the pandemic. This will involve discussing any examples or anecdotes you want to share, coming up with ideas for future delivery, etc. The discussion will be interactive and informal.

Focus groups will take no more than a 1¼ hours in total.

Activity 3: Interviews. Following the ‘individual timeline’ and ‘focus group’ activities, you may also be invited to take part in a remote one-to-one in-depth semi-structured interview.  Taking part in an interview will involve a one-to-one conversation with one of the research team about your personal experiences of delivering drug and alcohol services, how this worked in practice, and what your experiences were. For example, you might be asked about how remote delivery impacted how you work with other team members or service users. Interviews will take no longer than one hour.

In the case of both focus groups and interviews, we would like to record the discussions, as we need an accurate record of what is discussed to help us understand everyone’s views. The ‘How will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?’ section below outlines the process we will use to anonymise the information you provide.

**What will happen to me if I agree to take part?**

If you agree to take part by signing the consent form, a member of the research team will email you and invite you to participate in an online ‘individual timeline’ task. You will be emailed a link to the online timeline and simple, clear instructions. You may then be invited to participate in a focus group and/or interview.

**What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?**

We do not foresee any risk in taking part in this study. The interview and focus group are voluntary, and you will not be expected to discuss any issue that you do not want to, or that you find sensitive or intrusive.

It is possible that some participants may become upset during an interview or focus group (for example, because you remember an upsetting memory), and if this is the case, the researcher will pause the interview or discussion until you are ready to continue. You will not have to continue if you do not want to.

**What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

You have been invited as we are interested in hearing the views of service providers from a range of organisations involved in the delivery of drug and alcohol services in Leeds.

Leeds City Council which commissions the services, the service providers (including your organisation), and those who engage in service use, will all benefit from this evaluation, as services can be optimised based on the knowledge produced from this programme of research. Beyond the local services, the wider national drug and alcohol service system will benefit from the knowledge produced.Our findings will make recommendations about how to configure and deliver services in future.

How will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

All the information that you provide for the evaluation will be kept strictly confidential. If you agree to participate in the study, you will be assigned a unique, anonymous study ID number, and this will be used, rather than your name, throughout the remainder of the project (including on interview transcripts and during data analysis). This is called ‘pseudonymisation’. The research data you provide will be stored by the researcher team, using this ID number, in a secure location and separately from the study data (recordings and transcripts). Access to the research data (recordings and transcripts) will be password protected and will only be able to be accessed by a limited number of research team members. All handling, storage and disposal of data will be GDPR compliant.

The focus groups will be recorded. The purpose of this is to make sure that all information is collected correctly and can be analysed. The recording may be sent to an approved transcriber to be typed up, and if this is the case, your identity will be pseudonymised prior to the recording being securely sent for transcription (using encrypted file transfer). Only the research team or transcriber will hear the recording or view the transcripts. Once the recording has been transcribed, it will be erased and any identifying information (e.g. names) will be removed from the document. It will be this document without identifying information that is used for analysis and from which quotes and material are extracted.

We will do everything we can to protect your identity, but we may not always be able to guarantee this if you mention details that are very specific to your organisation or personal context and work in a small organisation (of five or less).

However, in any reports or publications, we will remove or change any identifying information (such as colleagues’ names, organisation, etc.), to protect your identity.

**What will happen to the data collected within this study?**

In accordance with University of Hertfordshire guidelines, anonymised study data (for example, anonymised interview transcripts) will be securely retained on University of Hertfordshire services, for 10 years from the project end date.

Immediately upon completion of focus groups or interviews, recordings will be moved to secure storage on University of Hertfordshire servers.  At this point they will be deleted from Teams, Zoom or any other recording device/software.

All focus group and in-depth interview recordings will be immediately deleted once transcription of them is completed. 

Consent forms will be stored securely (on University of Hertfordshire servers) for up to five years, after which time they will be deleted, and all other participant personal data will be deleted within six months of the completion of the study.  This will include deletion of any ‘key/s’ to pseudonymised data.

**Will the data be required for use in further studies?**

The COVID DASE project is the first in a series of PHIRST projects (up to six may be conducted). Depending on the nature of, and findings from, other PHIRST projects undertaken, it may be necessary to re-analyse the data generated by the research work described above for comparison or learning across projects.

**Who has reviewed this study?**

This study has been reviewed by The University of Hertfordshire Health, Science, Engineering and Technology Ethics Committee with Delegated Authority

The UH protocol number is aHSK/SF/UH/04423(1).

**Contact for further information**

If you require any further information about the study, please contact:

Nigel Lloyd

Senior Research Fellow

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Life and Medical Sciences

University of Hertfordshire

Hatfield AL10 9AB

Email: phirst@herts.ac.uk

**Although we hope it is not the case, if you have any complaints or concerns about any aspect of the way you have been approached or treated during the course of this study, please write to the University’s Secretary and Registrar at the following address:**

Secretary and Registrar

University of Hertfordshire

College Lane

Hatfield

Herts

AL10 9AB

**Thank you very much for reading this information and giving consideration to taking part in this study.**