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**Participant Information Sheet**

**Study Title**: Exploring perceptions of widening participation and student diversity in UK medical schools

**Researcher**: Heather Mozley, Postgraduate researcher in Medical Education

**Southampton Ethical approval ERGO number**: 47542

**Aberdeen Ethical approval number:** 1850

You are being invited to take part in the above research study. To help you decide whether you would like to take part or not, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the information below carefully and ask questions if anything is not clear or you would like more information before you decide to take part in this research. You may like to discuss it with others but it is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you are happy to participate you will be asked to sign a consent form.

**What is the research about?**

I am a PhD student at the University of Southampton, and I am carrying out this research as part of my PhD project.

The PhD is part of a project to explore how people involved in the medical school degree programmes perceive diversity within the student body. It will examine students’ and staffs’ understanding of different medical degree programmes, and their experiences with different groups of students on these pathways. I have conducted similar focus groups with students and staff at the University of Southampton and plan to compare the responses between institutions.

**Why have I been asked to participate?**

You have been asked to participate because you are enrolled onto a medical degree programme at the University of Aberdeen. Students from each programme will be asked to participate in the study, as well as some staff involved with the programme.

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

If you are interested in taking part in this focus group, you will be emailed with the time and location of the focus group. A consent form will also be emailed to you, and will be available at the focus group itself. Please do email me if you have any questions.

When you arrive, there will be time to ask questions, then you will need to sign the consent form to show that you understand what the study is and that you’re happy to be involved.

Before we begin, all participants will be introduced to each other and I will explain some ground rules. You will then take part in a focus group; discussing your ideas about questions I will ask to the group.

I expect that the focus group will last 45-50 minutes, but please allow 1 hour to accommodate for lateness or over-running. I will ask the group about your understanding of the different medical degree programmes that are run at the university, and about your experiences of working or socialising with students from the different programmes. The interview will be audio recorded and transcribed – you will need to agree to this in the consent form.

The transcripts from each focus group will be analysed and compared to find out if there are any difference in participants’ thought and opinions.

**Are there any benefits in my taking part?**

Yes! Your contribution will help us to better understand the impact of diversity on the medical school education experience.

As the focus group will be held over lunchtime, lunch will be provided. Please do get in touch on the contact details below if you would like to take part and have any dietary requirements or allergies

**Are there any risks involved?**

The focus group will take around an hour of your time, but every effort will be made to minimise inconvenience and to ensure your comfort.

Some people feel uncomfortable sharing their personal experiences and issues with a group, and/or a researcher. Please be aware that you do not have to answer or contribute to any question or disclose any information if you don’t wish to do so.

Every participant who consents to taking part is also agreeing to keep the discussion confidential: that means that you, and everyone else involved, should not discuss the content of the focus group with anyone in a way that might identify any individuals who took part. Nothing said during the focus groups will impact on your progress at the university.

If any of the data collection process brings up issues you wish to discuss further, we will be able to refer you on to more expert sources of support.

**What data will be collected?**

Background data on your ethnicity, gender identity, age and medical programme you are enrolled on will be collected to identify how representative the research sample is.

Audio recordings of the interviews will deleted once they have been transcribed (written). The transcriptions and your background data will be kept confidential and handled securely; hard copies will be kept in a locked cabinet in the University of Southampton. Electronic data will be kept on a password-protected sub-folder of my University of Southampton network in accordance with the Data Protection Act. Consent forms will be kept separately from your background data and the transcriptions so that you cannot be identified.

The recordings will not be held on any computers or servers at the University of Aberdeen, or be accessed by any researchers or other members of staff at the University of Aberdeen.

**Will my participation be confidential?**

Your participation and the information we collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential.

Only members of the research team and responsible members of the University of Southampton may be given access to data about you for monitoring purposes and/or to carry out an audit of the study to ensure that the research is complying with applicable regulations. Individuals from regulatory authorities (people who check that we are carrying out the study correctly) may require access to your data. All of these people have a duty to keep your information, as a research participant, strictly confidential.

Some audio recordings may be accessed by a trusted external transcription service who will destroy recordings after completing transcription. The audio recordings and transcripts are exchanged securely using a protected document dropping service.

If the researcher is concerned about the immediate safety and wellbeing of the participants or other students mentioned by the participants, she will disclose this to the faculty senior tutor only. The participants will be informed of this course of action before they give their consent to participate in the study.

All participants taking part in focus groups will sign a form to agree to keep the identity of all participants confidential, but this cannot be guaranteed. However, your participation and the information we collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential by the researcher.

All data will be stored securely as described above.

**Do I have to take part?**

No, it is entirely up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide you want to take part, you will need to sign a consent form to show you have agreed to take part.

You can inform me by signing up in person or via the below email address that you want to take part.

**What happens if I change my mind?**

You have the right to change your mind and withdraw any time before participating in the focus group without giving a reason and without your participant rights being affected. However, due to difficulty of removing an individual’s contributions to a focus group based on the sound of their voice, you will not be able to withdraw after the focus group has been conducted. You may leave at any time during the focus group, but we will keep the information about you that we have already obtained for the purposes of achieving the objectives of the study only

**What will happen to the results of the research?**

The results of the study will be written up and submitted in my PhD thesis.

Your personal details will remain strictly confidential. Research findings made available in any reports or publications will not include information that can directly identify you without your specific consent.

**Where can I get more information?**

If there is anything that is unclear, or you would like more information, please feel free to contact me (contact details below).

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

Contact details:

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**What happens if there is a problem?**

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should speak to the researchers who will do their best to answer your questions.

If you remain unhappy or have a complaint about any aspect of this study, please contact the University of Southampton Research Integrity and Governance Manager (023 8059 5058, [rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk](mailto:rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk)).

**Data Protection Privacy Notice**

The University of Southampton conducts research to the highest standards of research integrity. As a publicly-funded organisation, the University has to ensure that it is in the public interest when we use personally-identifiable information about people who have agreed to take part in research. This means that when you agree to take part in a research study, we will use information about you in the ways needed, and for the purposes specified, to conduct and complete the research project. Under data protection law, ‘Personal data’ means any information that relates to and is capable of identifying a living individual. The University’s data protection policy governing the use of personal data by the University can be found on its website (<https://www.southampton.ac.uk/legalservices/what-we-do/data-protection-and-foi.page>).

This Participant Information Sheet tells you what data will be collected for this project and whether this includes any personal data. Please ask the research team if you have any questions or are unclear what data is being collected about you.

Our privacy notice for research participants provides more information on how the University of Southampton collects and uses your personal data when you take part in one of our research projects and can be found at <http://www.southampton.ac.uk/assets/sharepoint/intranet/ls/Public/Research%20and%20Integrity%20Privacy%20Notice/Privacy%20Notice%20for%20Research%20Participants.pdf>

Any personal data we collect in this study will be used only for the purposes of carrying out our research and will be handled according to the University’s policies in line with data protection law. If any personal data is used from which you can be identified directly, it will not be disclosed to anyone else without your consent unless the University of Southampton is required by law to disclose it.

Data protection law requires us to have a valid legal reason (‘lawful basis’) to process and use your Personal data. The lawful basis for processing personal information in this research study is for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest. Personal data collected for research will not be used for any other purpose.

For the purposes of data protection law, the University of Southampton is the ‘Data Controller’ for this study, which means that we are responsible for looking after your information and using it properly. The University of Southampton will keep identifiable information about you for 10 years after the study has finished after which time any link between you and your information will be removed.

To safeguard your rights, we will use the minimum personal data necessary to achieve our research study objectives. Your data protection rights – such as to access, change, or transfer such information - may be limited, however, in order for the research output to be reliable and accurate. The University will not do anything with your personal data that you would not reasonably expect.

If you have any questions about how your personal data is used, or wish to exercise any of your rights, please consult the University’s data protection webpage (https://www.southampton.ac.uk/legalservices/what-we-do/data-protection-and-foi.page) where you can make a request using our online form. If you need further assistance, please contact the University’s Data Protection Officer ([data.protection@soton.ac.uk](mailto:data.protection@soton.ac.uk)).

**Thank you.**

Thank you for taking the time to read the information sheet and considering taking part in the research.