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**Participant information Sheet**

**Study Title:** The Work with Pain Research Project

**Introduction**

You are invited to take part in a research project which is being led by Dr Joanna McParland at Glasgow Caledonian University and funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR). Before you decide whether to take part, it is important for you to understand what participation in the study will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. If you are interested in participating and/or would like more information, then please contact the study team (contact details at end of this sheet).

**What is this research project about?**

About one in three adults in the United Kingdom has persistent or recurring pain lasting for three months or more, called chronic pain. Chronic pain is a symptom of many health conditions. Many people with chronic pain can’t work. Those at work can struggle and are at a higher risk of sick absence and leaving the workplace permanently, than those without pain. This research is about gaining a better understanding of how to support people with chronic pain who feel able to work, to be in work. There are two phases to our project. In Phase 1 we conducted an in-depth review of research studies that included psychological interventions (talking therapies) to help people with chronic pain get into work, return to work, and stay in work. In Phase 2, we are looking to speak to people living with chronic pain and professionals who support them, to interpret the review findings and consider strategies to support people with chronic pain to be in work.

**Why is this study important?**

This research is important because good work is more beneficial for physical and psychological wellbeing than being out of work for those able to work and can help raise living standards. If you decide to take part, you will be helping to identify strategies to support people with chronic pain to be in work that can be implemented into policy, research, and practice.

**What will I have to do if I decide to take part?**

If you decide to take part in the study, you will be invited to attend one 2-hour online group discussion with up to around 7 other people. There will be separate groups for (1) people with chronic pain who have an experience of work and (2) professionals who have a role in supporting people with chronic health conditions, including chronic pain, to get into and stay in work, including those who can provide an employment, healthcare, and policy perspective.

Before the group discussion, you will be asked to complete a study consent form and indicate your availability to meet. You will also be emailed a brief video and written summary of the findings from the review. The group discussion will take place using the zoom online platform. You will be sent a link to the meeting ahead of the meeting and should join from a private space with access to hardware with a microphone, camera, and internet connection. We would be happy to provide support with accessing zoom as needed.

During the discussion you will be asked to discuss the findings of the review in relation to strategies to support people with chronic pain to be in work. The discussion will be video and audio-recorded to help us with the transcription (typing up) of the discussion and the analysis, but please be assured your participation will remain confidential and output will be anonymised. Following the group discussion, you will be asked to complete an anonymous 5-minute follow-up questionnaire.

**Will I be reimbursed for my participation?**

You will receive a £25 voucher as a thank you for your participation at the end of the project.

**Are there any study inclusion or exclusion criteria?**

We are looking to speak to UK-based adults aged 18 years or over with persistent or recurrent pain for at least three months (chronic pain) who have an experience of work, whether they are currently out of work, on sick leave, at work or retired. We are also looking to speak separately to professionals aged 18 years or over who have a role to play in supporting people with chronic health conditions, including chronic pain, such as policymakers, employers, employment support organisations, as well as clinicians and occupational health providers. Part of this professional role should involve some aspect of looking at ways to support people to be in work.

**Do I have to take part?**

No. You can stop taking part in the study at any time, without giving a reason. Withdrawing from the study will not affect your employment or legal rights. However, if you decide to withdraw, your data collected up to that point may still be included in the study because it will not be possible to identify someone from anonymous questionnaire data or remove specific parts of a group discussion.

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

All studies involve some level of risk and inconvenience. Taking part in this research will use some of your valuable time and it is possible that the discussion may raise issues that are unpleasant or upsetting. However, a key advantage of participating in a group discussion is that there is an opportunity to learn from the experiences and practices of others, which may be useful to you.

**How is my data protected?**

All the information that you provide will be handled in confidence by the investigator team. The recording of your group discussion will be transcribed confidentially by a professional transcribing service and the anonymised transcription will be shared among members of the investigator team and may be made available to other researchers with an interest in this field. You will not be identifiable from this data. The video recording will also be deleted once the analysis is completed. The audio and video recordings will be downloaded onto a password protected university laptop and will be stored in Onedrive, the secure online storage area used by Glasgow Caledonian University. Your anonymous questionnaire data will be collected using Microsoft Forms, a secure user-friendly web-based application which is supported by Glasgow Caledonian University. The files will be downloaded from Microsoft Forms and stored in a password protected file on OneDrive. The anonymous questionnaire results will be shared with the investigator team and may be shared with other researchers who have an interest in the field of pain and work.

All sensitive research data will be deleted once it is no longer required for the project, whilst anonymised versions of the data will be archived in a data repository and referenced in data sharing statements when publishing the findings of the research, in line with NIHR’s open access policy.

The study complies with the Data Protection Act (2018) and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). GDPR also gives study participants the right to ask for their personal data to be erased. If you would like us to stop using your personal data, then you can contact the study team (contact information below) and ask for your personal data to be erased. However, it will not be possible to erase data that has been anonymised, published, or is integrated with other data (e.g., the data from the group discussion).

Further information about your rights can be found at: [Your rights | Glasgow Caledonian University | Scotland, UK (gcu.ac.uk)](https://www.gcu.ac.uk/aboutgcu/universitygovernance/data-protection/rights). The data controller is Glasgow Caledonian University. Information is being processed on the basis of Article 6(1)(e) of the General Data Protection Regulation and to perform a task carried out in the public interest.

Enquiries specifically relating to data protection should be made to the University’s Data Protection Officer (DPO). The DPO can be contacted by email: [dataprotection@gcu.ac.uk](mailto:dataprotection@gcu.ac.uk). If you are unhappy with the response from the University, you have the right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO). The ICO can be contacted by email: [casework@ico.org.uk](mailto:casework@ico.org.uk).

**What will happen to the information that you give?**

Anonymous quotes from all the group discussions and anonymous questionnaire results will be made available to a range of people including people with chronic pain, employers, policymakers, health professionals, researchers, and the public, through written reports, national/international presentations, media and social media output and peer reviewed journal publications. It may also be used in future funding applications. A brief summary of the research findings will also be made available to you.

**Who has approved the study?**

Ethical approval for the group discussions was obtained from the School of Health and Life Sciences at Glasgow Caledonian University (approval code HLS/PSWAHS/23/247, date: 13/05/2024). If you are concerned about your participation in the study and would like to speak with someone outsideof the research team, please contact: the Chair of the ethics committee, Dr Phil Dalgarno at [P.Dalgarno@gcu.ac.uk](mailto:P.Dalgarno@gcu.ac.uk) (Telephone: 0141 331 3196).

**What happens next?**

If you are interested in participating or would like to know more then please contact the study team members Joanna McParland and Lorna Booth at: [workstudy@gcu.ac.uk](mailto:workstudy@gcu.ac.uk); Telephone: 0141 331 3831.

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