

Appendix C: Staff Participant Information Sheet



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Date:

Dear Participant,

Thank you for your interest in this project: *The Situation and Experiences of Disability Support Workers in Ireland*. You are invited to participate in this study because you are a disability support worker in community based dispersed housing/ supported accommodation/ independent living setting with adults with intellectual disabilities. Before you decide to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being undertaken and what it will involve. This information sheet will explain the purpose of the study, the benefits and risks so you can make as informed a choice as possible. If you need me to explain or clarify anything, please do not hesitate to ask. If you agree to take part, you will be asked to read and sign a consent form. You should only give your consent when you feel you understand fully what is being asked of you. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

1. What is the research about?

I am undertaking this research in IT Sligo for the purposes of completing my MA by research in the School of Business and Humanities. My research question is: What is the situation and experience of disability support workers and how are the specific challenges faced by workers in this sector addressed? You have been selected as a possible participant because you work as a disability support worker in community based dispersed housing/ supported accommodation/ independent living setting with adults with intellectual disabilities. You have been employed in this position for at least one year and are aged 25-65 years. From this study, I hope to learn about the experience of disability support workers with adults with intellectual disabilities, the contextual influences on their practice and the specific challenges

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of the work. The study will involve interviews where participants will discuss the work and the observations. Managers will also be interviewed individually about the management of the organisation and the implementation of policies. This will enable me to increase my understanding of disability support work.

2. Why is this research being undertaken?

The care and support received by adults with learning disabilities is largely dependent on the staff. Little is known about the experience of managing care needs with the promotion of independence. To this end I am particularly interested in exploring your personal experience 'on the floor', how you manage tensions and interact with service users and the extent to which conditions in your workplace enable or impede you.

3. How will the data be used?

Written or verbal extracts from the interviews will be used in the written dissertation, which I will submit as part of my Masters study. I may present the findings to future conferences in the learning disability sector. Your confidentiality and anonymity and that of all people and places mentioned in the interview will be preserved at all times. Tape recordings, field notes and written transcripts will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the research office in IT Sligo. All data will be de-identified in transcription and any necessary identifying data will be kept in a separate place to transcripts of interviews and field notes. While my supervisor will have access to analysis she will not view raw data. Data will be destroyed after 3 years.

4. What will happen if I decide to take part in this research study?

If you decide to take part, you will be asked to read and sign a consent form. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. The research will involve you participating in a one to one interview with me. The topics we will look at during the interview are; your role and responsibilities, challenges you face, your experience of the job and any other topics raised.

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I am undertaking this research on a full time basis over 2 years. The interviews will take place between May and June 2014. The interview will last no more than one hour.

5. How will my privacy be protected?

The data will be kept strictly confidential. The interviews will be electronically recorded, which I will transcribe. All electronic and written data will be securely stored. The data will be stored for up to 3 years and then destroyed. I will discuss my findings with my research supervisor Majella Mulkeen but she will not have access to the raw data. The identity of all participants will be kept anonymous in the written dissertation and if findings are presented at conferences. Any potentially identifying information (such as place names) will be changed removed.

6. What are the benefits of taking part in this study?

The benefits of participating in this study are that you are contributing to filling a significant gap in Irish research on the experiences of disability support workers. The interview will provide you with an opportunity to engage in discussion about your role and the challenges and opportunities associated with your work. The research is also likely to have a broader benefit to the Irish disability sector.

7. What are the risks of taking part in this study?

The risks of participation in this research are minimal. You may fear that I am examining your practice. I view my role as simply talking about the work and your experiences of managing situations that arise in the practice.

8. Can I change my mind and withdraw from the study?

Yes. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you have the right to say no. You may change your mind at any stage and withdraw without consequence or the need to provide a reason. You may also choose not to answer a specific question or to terminate the interview at any time.

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9. How will I find out what happens with this study?

You may request to see findings and to read the final written dissertation. I am willing to come to your agency and do a presentation of my findings. If you have any questions about this study you may contact me using my details provided above. If you have any questions about your role and rights as a research participant, you may contact my supervisor Majella Mulkeen at mulkeen.majella@itsligo.ie.