**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET**

***Public perspectives on inequalities and their impact on public mental health***

*Version 2: 13/08/2021*

We invite you to take part in a project that aims to understand people’s experience of inequalities (e.g. racism and discrimination, unequal access to housing or healthcare, and other forms of exclusion) and how these impact mental health.

This project is led by a team of ‘peer’ researchers from the McPin Foundation that have had experience of mental health challenges and are aiming to bring the public’s experience of inequalities to the forefront of research.

This sheet provides information about the research project and how you can get involved.

**Do I have to take part?**

No. It is completely up to you if you want to take part in our project or not. If you decide that you would like to, please let us know that you are interested via phone or email using the contact details provided at the bottom of this sheet.

**Note:** You can choose to stop taking part at any time and you do not have to give a reason.

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

There are three parts to our project:

1. Inviting you to take photos to communicate from your own point of view what the term *inequality* means to you.
2. In-person or online interview with one/two researchers to talk about your pictures and your interpretation of inequality in more detail, including your own experiences.
3. After the interview a number of people will have the chance to meet with other people who are taking part, to help us make sense of the information we collect and decide how best to share our work with others, getting involved in this step is completely optional.

**What do we mean by inequality?**

Our understanding is that in society some people have certain advantages in comparison to others and find it easier to feel included, while others face marginalisation or exclusion.

Examples of such inequality includes:

* Discrimination on the basis of race, gender identity, sexuality, ability, age or health condition
* Lack of financial resources, struggling with money or debt
* Unequal access to good education, employment, housing and/or healthcare
* Exclusion from the internet, digital devices and technology

**First part: ‘Photovoice’ creative reflection**

In the first part of the project, we are asking participants (you) to take some photos using your own device (or we will send you a disposable camera). This is what we call a ‘Photo-voice’ a way in which people can creatively have their voice heard. If you prefer to communicate in a different way – writing or drawing, you can do so instead of taking photos.

Examples include:

* Taking photographs with a camera or phone
* Drawing or painting
* Writing a poem, or a diary

Over a **two-week** period participants will be encouraged to express their thoughts, feelings and ideas on what inequalities mean for them and their mental health. Afterwards, you would share what you have taken or made with us, the peer researcher team. We would arrange to collect your work or you can send it to us. We will only ask you to share what you feel comfortable doing, there is no expectation or requirement to share personal details or distressing/sensitive information in the creative reflections. We want all participants to feel comfortable and confident with what they share with our peer researcher team.

**Second part: Talking to a peer researcher in a research interview**

In the second part of the project, participants will be invited to take part in a conversational interview with a peer researcher to talk about their ‘photovoice’ (e.g. photos). This is an opportunity to say what is most important to you in your own words.

Interviews will be approximately **1.5 hour long** with time for a break. We will record the interview (using a digital recorder) so it can be transcribed. Once we have a written version of the interview we will delete the recording. The options available for how the interview will take place will be dependent on what is convenient for both you and the researcher. Interviews online via videoconferencing software such as Zoom, or interviewing over the phone will always be offered as options, but there may also be an option for interviews to take place in-person. Participants taking part in in-person interviews will be expected to follow the most recent government social distancing guidance.

**Third part: Helping us with making sense of what people tell us**

After 40 people have completed an interview, we will look at people’s photos and the transcripts from interviews to identify important themes, similarities, and differences. We will invite you and other participants to a workshop to look at the findings and talk about our conclusions. This workshop is optional. We will then write up the findings and share them through publications on our website [www.iampublicmentalhealth.org](http://www.iampublicmentalhealth.org) and in research journals. You will be offered a copy of the results of the study once it is completed, if you wish.

**How will I benefit from taking part?**

We hope that you would find taking part in the study interesting, and we hope you will enjoy the chance to tell your story. This experience can be empowering and is also an opportunity for reflection.

We know that your time is valuable so we would like to give you a £100 gift voucher as a thank you for taking part in our study when you complete the interview.

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

There are no known disadvantages to taking part in this study. However, reflecting on inequality and talking about how it affects your mental health may be distressing. You will be in control of what you wish to share or not, but you may still find this difficult. Please only take part if you feel emotionally and physically safe to do so.

**Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?**

Yes. Sections and/or photos of your reflections and some of what you say in the interview may be published in the final report in an anonymized form. Your name and any key identifying information will be removed in everything that is made public. This means that no-one other than the peer researchers will know that you have taken part in this project unless you choose to tell someone about it. The information you share with the peer researchers will be stored securely and will be kept confidential, unless there are concerns about harm to yourself or others in which case we will follow a safeguarding procedure.

**Who is funding the study?**

The study is funded by the National Institute of Health Research, School of Public Health.

**What if there is a problem?**

If you are upset or distressed about anything concerning the research or if you want to complain about any aspect of the way in which you have been approached or treated during the course of this project then you would be welcome to speak to Alex Lewington alexlewington@mcpin.org Senior peer researcher or Vanesa Pinfold, McPin research director, vanessapinfold@mcpin.org.

**Who is organising and funding the research?**

The study is organised by peer researchers at the McPin Foundation, supported by University College London and FUSE the Centre for Translational Research at Durham University, and funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) School for Public Health Research.

**Who has reviewed the study?**

The study has been reviewed by an independent group of people, called a Research Ethics Committee, to protect your safety, rights, wellbeing and dignity. This study has been reviewed by the Durham Ethics Committee.

**I’m interested! How do I get involved?**

Please contact:

Alex Lewington Senior Peer Researcher

Email: alexlewington@mcpin.org

