**Barriers and facilitators to online engagement with support for carers**

**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET**

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether you would like to take part, it is important that you understand why this research is being done and what it will involve. Please take the time to read this information carefully and to discuss it with others. If you would like any further information, please contact the research team (contact details are at the end of this leaflet). The decision to take part in the research study is up to you. Please take your time to decide if you wish to take part or not.

**Why is the study being done?**

Carers provide essential care and support to people living with a wide range of conditions. Providing support to carers to sustain their own health and wellbeing is very important. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, a lot of face-to-face support options were cancelled or postponed. This has highlighted the possible role of online and virtual support. The study we are carrying out will explore how people feel about accessing online support. The study results will be used to develop future support options that are as easy as possible for people to access.

**Why have I been asked to take part in this study?**

You have been invited to take part in this study because you have identified as a carer.

**Do I have to take part?**

No. Participation in this study is voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether you want to take part or not. Please take your time to decide. If you have any questions about the study, please contact the research team using the details at the end of this information leaflet. You are free to withdraw from this study at any time, without giving a reason.

**What will I have to do?**

If you choose to participate, you will be asked to fill in a short survey about your views around online support for carers. The survey should take no more than 20 minutes to complete. You can either post this back to us in the freepost envelope provided, or complete the survey online at **https://sunduni.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\_eD9ZoVjkBcBqivs**. You do not have to complete this survey if you don’t want to.

Following the survey, some people will be invited to take part in a follow-up interview about your views around online support for carers. Completing the survey does not mean that you have to take part in an interview if you do not want to.

**What are the possible disadvantages/risks of taking part in the study?**

There are no anticipated risks of taking part in this study. If you are concerned by anything during the study, please speak to the research team.

**What are the benefits of taking part in the study?**

Whilst there will be no direct or immediate benefits to you, the information you give will help us to develop future support options for carers.

**Will I be paid for taking part in the study?**

There is no payment for taking part in this study. Everyone who takes part in the survey will be offered the chance to be entered into a prize draw to win:

* A tablet
* One of four £25 prizes

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

All information gathered for this research will be kept confidential. No names or personal information will be shared at any point. All information collected will be kept in a secure location at the University of Sunderland. The only people who will have access to this information is the research team. It may be necessary for certain staff at the University of Sunderland to be given access for monitoring or audit of the research study, but no identifiable information will be present. All monitoring and audit processes will follow confidentiality procedures. The study data will be destroyed after five years.

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

Once the research is complete, a summary of the main findings will be available to everyone who has taken part. If you would like to receive a copy of the findings of the study, please indicate how you would like to receive this information (by post or email) together with your contact details at the end of the survey. The findings will also be written up for publication in peer-reviewed journals and presentation at conferences.

**What if I decide not to take part?**

Taking part in the study is voluntary. You do not have to take part if you do not wish to. If you agree to take part and have started the survey online but not finished it, exiting the survey will mean your responses aren’t included. If you complete the survey and change your mind, it will not be possible to withdraw your data, as we will not be able to tell which survey is yours.

**What happens next?**

If you would like to take part, then please either post the completed survey back or complete this online. If you would like to find out more about the second stage of the research, and potentially take part in an interview, please fill in your contact details at the end of the survey. Alternatively, you can contact the research team directly using the details below. **This does not commit you to taking part in an interview.** Please feel free to contact the research team (contact details below) to discuss any queries or concerns you may have.

**Who has reviewed the study?**

This research has been reviewed and approved by the University of Sunderland Research Ethics Committee. The Chair of the Committee is Dr John Fulton john.fulton@sunderland.ac.uk.

**How do I contact you if I would like more information or have any questions?**

If you have any questions or would like more information at any time, please contact:

**or**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Nick Ainslie**Sunderland Carers CentreThompson ParkThompson RoadSunderlandSR5 1SFNick@sunderlandcarers.co.uk  | **Dr Heather Yemm**University of SunderlandFaculty of Health Sciences and WellbeingSciences ComplexChester RoadSunderlandSR1 3SDheather.yemm@sunderland.ac.uk |

***Thank you for taking the time to read this information leaflet*.**