
3.6 Focus Group Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form

We are inviting you to take part in a focus group to discuss your views and experiences of interpersonal safety issues. This is to supplement the data that was captured through the online *Equally Safe in Higher Education* survey. As the survey is completely anonymous it is impossible to match participants to their survey once it is submitted. Please take the time to read the following information.

Who we are?

We are a team of researchers based in the [name of dept.]. The research is funded by the [name]. The Principal Investigator, [name] can be contacted: [tel and email].

What is the research being conducted?

Recent media stories have highlighted the issue of interpersonal safety in Universities. This project aims to develop our understanding of the issue and to create more effective reporting and responses. The research is being conducted for the Scottish Government on behalf of the Scottish Higher Education (HE) sector and is a platform for future development which will result in a national HE Toolkit. That is why it is essential to get the views of all staff and students.

What will you do in the focus group?

You will be invited to a private room in the University for a group interview with your peers, which will be led by two of the named researchers. The group will last no more than 60 minutes and with permission, we will audio record it.

What else should I know?

While we are not asking about personal experiences, the focus group will expand on some of the sensitive issues raised in the survey. We will provide two information sheets. The first sheet has contact information for a range of relevant support services. The second is a Factsheet which offers information about the issues being discussed. Whilst we aim to keep the focus group confidential, if it is revealed that you or someone else is

at risk of serious harm we have a duty of care to tell someone about this; this decision will be made with you.

What happens to the information?

The information gathered will be used to inform other support and development in this area and a summary of the anonymised findings will be made available to all [name] University students and staff. We may use some of your words from the interviews in the report that we will write for the [funders/name] other outputs (e.g. publications and presentations), but no names or identifying details will ever be used. You have up until seven days after the focus group to withdraw and we will destroy the interview, although in a group interview this is not always possible.

Who can access the information?

Only the research team will have access to the full data, which will be securely stored on the university server. The audio files will be destroyed once the focus group has been transcribed, anonymised and checked. At the end of the project, the data will be archived in the UK Data Archive repository (www.data-archive.ac.uk). The [name] University is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office who implements the Data Protection Act 1998 and all data will be processed in accordance with this.

What happens next?

Participation is entirely voluntary. If you would still like to take part, please read and complete the consent form. Thank you for your consideration.

Principal Investigator & Researcher contacts:

Details: _____

Consent Form – Equally Safe in Higher Education Focus Group

- I confirm that I have read and understood the information above.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time, without having to give a reason and without any consequences.
- I understand that I have up until seven days after the focus group to contact the research team to exercise my right to withdraw and have my data removed and destroyed, where possible.
- I understand that the focus group interview data will remain confidential.
- I understand that information which suggests that there is risk of serious harm to myself or other cannot be kept confidential and a joint decision will be taken regarding who to tell.
- I understand that my anonymised words may be used in reports and other publications including for our funder [name].
- I understand that the anonymised transcript of the focus group interview will be stored at the [name] University and that on completion the data will be stored in the UK Data Archive repository.
- I consent to being a participant in the project.
- I consent to the focus group being audio recorded as part of the project.

(PRINT NAME) _____

Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____

Principal Investigator & Researcher contacts:

Details: _____