

**Participant Information Statement**

**What factors affect access, retention and graduate outcomes for students with a background of care or family estrangement?**

You are invited to participate in the research project identified above which is being conducted by researchers from Sheffield Hallam University, The University of Oxford and Stand Alone (Charity). The project has been funded by the UNITE Foundation.

# Why is the research being done?

The overarching aim of the research is to better understand the factors that affect access, retention and graduate outcomes for students with a background of care or family estrangement.

# What choice do you have?

Participation in this research is your choice. Whether or not you decide to participate, your decision will not disadvantage you. If you do decide to participate, you may decide to withdraw from the project up to one month after participation in a focus group without giving a reason.

# What will you be asked to do?

You will be invited to participate in a focus group exploring what you perceive to be the barriers to effective access to, retention and success in, and progression from HE. The focus groups will be held at a time and place to best suit the group. With your consent, an audio recording will be made, then transcribed and de-identified. Please note that the identity of participants will remain confidential and no one, except the researcher involved in conducting this part of the study, will be informed of who has participated. Following the focus group, a transcript will be provided to you if you wish to see one. You will be able to modify or withdraw your contribution up to one month after the interview was conducted.

# How much time will it take?

The focus group will run approximately 60-75 minutes in duration, but may be slightly longer if the discussion extends beyond that.

# What are the risks and benefits of participating?

This study offers you the opportunity to share your views and experiences. Whilst we cannot promise any immediate benefits, potential benefits of the study include a contribution to policy and practice and increased knowledge of factors affecting access, retention and graduate outcomes for students with a background of care or family estrangement.

# How will the information collected be used?

Findings will be disseminated through the development of a report to the UNITE Foundation and other research papers, articles, conference papers, and workshops/seminars which aim to communicate the research for professional development or academic purposes.

Individual participants will not be identified in any reports, presentations or publications arising from the project. These publications, along with a summary of key findings, will be made available to participants.

***How will your privacy be protected?***

Any information collected that might identify participants will be stored securely and only accessed by the researchers, except as required by law. Transcripts will be protected on a secure online server and stored on a password-protected computer, accessible only to the researchers.

Written consent will be sought from focus group participants. A research assistant or external professional agency will transcribe the interviews, store information securely and delete all files once transcription is completed. Participants will be able to review the transcript of the interview to edit or erase their contribution up to one month after data collection. Audio records and interview transcripts will be stored on a password-protected computer, accessible only to the researcher involved. All focus group interviews will be given a unique code and all identifying information removed. The key to the code will be retained in an encrypted file on a password-protected computer accessible only to the researcher involved. Research team members not involved in interviews will have access only to anonymised transcripts. Consent forms will be stored separately from data in an electronic file on a password protected computer accessible only to the researcher involved in the interview. Data will be stored for at least 5 years following publication of results, after which it will be disposed of by deleting relevant files.

The University undertakes research as part of its function for the community under its legal status. Data protection allows us to use personal data for research with appropriate safeguards in place under the legal basis of public tasks that are in the public interest.

A full statement of your rights can be found at <https://www.shu.ac.uk/about-this-website/privacy-policy/privacy-notices/privacy-notice-for-research> .However, all University research is reviewed to ensure that participants are treated appropriately and their rights respected. This study was approved by UREC with Converis number

 ER11411083. Further information at <https://www.shu.ac.uk/research/ethics-integrity-and-practice>

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| **You should contact the Data Protection Officer if:*** you have a query about how your data is used by the University
* you would like to report a data security breach (e.g. if you think your personal data has been lost or disclosed inappropriately)
* you would like to complain about how the University has used your personal data

DPO@shu.ac.uk | **You should contact the Head of Research Ethics (Professor Ann Macaskill) if:*** you have concerns with how the research was undertaken or how you were treated

a.macaskill@shu.ac.uk |
| Postal address: Sheffield Hallam University, Howard Street, Sheffield S1 1WBT Telephone: 0114 225 5555 |

# What do you need to do to participate?

To participate in the project, if there is anything you do not understand or you have questions about the research please contact Jacqueline Stevenson jacqueline.stevenson@shu.ac.uk

***Complaints about this research should be sent to ! DS Research Ethics***

Thank you for considering this invitation.

Kind regards,

Jacqueline Stevenson

Head of Research

Sheffield Institute of Education