**Project Information Sheet 2018**

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide to participate in the research or not, it is important for you to understand:

* why the project is being carried out,
* what it will involve,
* what will happen to the information you provide, and
* how and with whom it will be shared.

Please take time to read the following information carefully.

Please feel free to ask the Project Researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

**What is the project about?**

This research project sets out to examine legal requirements that exist in English law and, in particular, Accessibility Plans. The project seeks to test how well these duties encourage the development of inclusive education practice for Disabled pupils and students.

Accessibility Plans form part of the school reporting requirements placed on all education and training providers under the Equality Act 2010. These plans require educational institutions and places of training to show how they are engaging with Disabled pupils and students. This includes those with special education needs and disabilities (SEND), and education, health and care plans (EHCP) and their parents/families. The aim of these plans is to make the learning experience accessible and inclusive, with a specific focus on an accessible curriculum and access to the physical environment.

The project will focus on any problems which are becoming noticeable. First, we will examine the ways in which Accessibility Plans are intended to remove structural and other barriers to an inclusive learning experience for all. This will be then compared with what respondents indicate is happening in practice. By taking part, you will help local education and training providers and local authorities to be better equipped to guide families with Disabled children and young people when making choices about appropriate education and training settings. Better understanding of this area should enable you to challenge inadequate Accessibility Plans.

**Why have I been approached?**

Because you understand some of the challenging issues that this topic presents, based on your position in the English secondary school system. You may have been identified by an organisation run by Disabled people in your region. During the period of the study, around 100 people like yourself will be invited to take part in focus groups around the country. This will enable us to get an idea of how varied your shared experiences are and how different groups understand the issues.

**Who is involved in the study?**

The Alliance for Inclusive Education (ALLFIE) has received grant funding from Disability Research on Independent Living and Learning (DRILL) to lead this project. The Project Researcher, Dr Armineh Soorenian, has been employed by ALLFIE to conduct the research. The project also has an advisory group which includes a parent of a Disabled young person, a member of ALLFIE staff, a Disabled academic, and a researcher in the field of inclusive education as well as the Project Researcher. All the staff who contact you have been checked out by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to ensure they do not have criminal records, and ALLFIE has ensured they are appropriately qualified to undertake the research. The DRILL reference number for this project is 2C1\100031.

**What is involved?**

If you are willing, we would like to ask you to take part in a focus group with some other participants. This will be a safe space for you to share, listen, and discuss similarities and differences in each other’s experiences. The discussions will be about Accessibility Plans in schools where you or your children are involved, and how well you think Accessibility Plans encourage the development of inclusive education.

The focus group will be audio-recorded and will take around 2 hours. We have invited people to attend to try to reflect a range of experiences. Where possible, a member of an organisation run by Disabled people may be present to ensure transparency and aid the people taking part.

**Do I have to take part?**

No, your participation in the project is entirely voluntary. You do not need to give a reason for not wanting to take part. If you decide to take part, you will be asked to sign a consent form.

If you decide to withdraw part way through a focus group, and you wish for your information to not be used in the report, we will remove your contributions from the transcript as much as possible. However, it may not be viable to remove everything you have said if it contributes to a wider discussion, but we will endeavour to remove as much as possible, and where it is not possible, to keep you completely anonymous.

If you decide to withdraw after the focus group has been completed, your conversations will have been part of the larger group discussion and will have informed the researcher’s analysis. It would be impractical to exclude comments that have contributed to the wider discussion. In this case, we will still use your anonymised quotes for our study, but we will ensure any identifiable features within your comments are removed.

**What happens to the information?**

All the information is confidential. No one will be able to identify you or the school or organisation you represent when we report the findings of the project.

The audio-files from the focus groups are transcribed (listened to and typed up). Some of you will receive a copy of the transcript from your own focus group for you to check its validity and accuracy, with a set date for returning any comments. This process requires strict agreement not to share the transcript with anyone. Apart from participants accessing their own transcripts through this validation process, only the ALLFIE team will have access to the notes taken in the focus groups, the audio-files and the transcripts. This material will be kept safely in locked storage at a safe location. Notes, audio-files and transcripts will only be identifiable by codes. The anonymised information is used to inform the study. In order to safeguard confidentiality, no names will be mentioned. All data will be treated in accordance with the current Data Protection Act and any subsequent legislation.

You are invited to read the GDPR policy included in this pack to reassure you of our compliance with data protection requirements.

**What are the possible advantages of taking part?**

At the end of the project you will be given a briefing report summarising the results of the study with recommendations for improving the effectiveness of Accessibility Plans in creating inclusive learning experiences for all. We think it is important that research is participatory, and people have a say about issues that affect them.

**What are the possible disadvantages of taking part?**

Some of the subject matter may be distressing. In the event of this happening, we can put you in contact with professional organisations to offer you support.

**What other support can you offer?**

Should you wish, we will also provide you with resources where you can find information on the duties of your schools under the Equality Act 2010. Additionally, you will have the opportunity to speak further to a member of ALLFIE staff to discuss any issues you may have about the way the focus groups are conducted.

**What if something goes wrong?**

We do not foresee any harm coming to anyone as we will simply be having a discussion. All events will be risk assessed, and ALLFIE has public liability insurance in the event that something unexpected does go wrong.

**What will happen to the results of the project?**

The results will be made available following the completion of the project in October 2019. We will provide a summary, and you will be able to receive a copy of this in your preferred format if you wish.

The findings of this project will be disseminated through wide-ranging channels in a variety of accessible formats to stimulate campaigns and legislative action. These will include articles in journals, magazines, the popular press and summary leaflets.

The study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the DRILL Ethics Committee.

**Contact for further information**

If you would like any further information about the study, please contact:

Dr Armineh Soorenian

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Website: [www.allfie.org.uk](http://www.allfie.org.uk)

**What if I wish to complain?**

Please raise any difficulties or questions with:

Tara Flood

Chief Executive Officer

Alliance for Inclusive Education

336 Brixton Road

London SW9 7AA

Tel: 020 7737 6030

Mobile: 07932 750 667

Email: [Tara.Flood@allfie.org.uk](mailto:Tara.Flood@allfie.org.uk)

**Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet. We are very grateful to you for considering participating in this study.**

*This project is funded by the Disability Research on Independent Living and Learning (DRILL) grants programme (project reference number 2C1\100031).*

