



Participant Information Sheet

Date: September 2020

Title of Study: **Prisons and Probation Ombudsman Fatal Incident Investigations: Towards a theory of change**

Name of Researcher(s): Dr Philippa Tomczak, Sara Hyde

We would like to invite you to take part in our research study. Before you decide we would like you to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. We will answer any questions you have. Talk to others about the study if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear.

What is the purpose of the study?

Improving health and safety in prisons benefits prisoners, prisoners' families, prison staff and societies. Higher quality of prison life correlates with lower reoffending rates. Prisoner ill health correlates with higher reoffending, and prison health is public health. Ombudsman fatal incident investigations have a vital role to play in improving prison health and safety.

This study is seeking to explore how the Ombudsman's work addresses, and could better address, failings in prisons and the criminal justice system. This part of the study examines how bereaved family members i) use Ombudsman reports and ii) think the work of the Ombudsman addresses, and could better address, failings in prisons and the criminal justice system.

Why have I been invited?

You are being invited to take part because your relative died in prison. We are inviting about 6 participants like you to take part. Unfortunately, if the inquest into your relative's death has not yet concluded, you cannot take part in the study at this time.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. This would not affect your legal rights.

What will happen to me if I take part?

We will talk to you about your experiences in a 'virtual focus group' with up to six other people like you. You will need to have internet in order to participate. You can participate from anywhere, but you might like to select a private, comfortable location. You can tell us as little or as much as you want about your experiences and opinions. We will not attribute anything you tell us directly to you. The findings will feed into our broader project, which has involved speaking to former prisoners, Ombudsman staff, Prison Service staff and Coroners. The whole project is funded by the University of Nottingham.



Expenses and payments

Participants will not be paid an allowance to participate in the study.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

You will lose two hours of your day. Whilst the discussion will not directly cover upsetting topics, the nature of bereavement and Fatal Incident Investigations may cause you distress, and talking about this may be distressing.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

The aim of this research is for Fatal Incident Investigations to make a greater impact on the functioning of the criminal justice system, although this outcome cannot be guaranteed.

What if there is a problem?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should ask to speak to the researcher who will do her best to answer your questions. If you remain unhappy and wish to complain formally, you can do this by contacting the School Research Ethics Officer. All contact details are given at the end of this information sheet.

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

We will follow ethical and legal practice and all information about you will be handled in confidence.

If you join the study, the data collected for the study will be looked at by Philippa Tomczak and Sara Hyde from the University of Nottingham who are organising the research. They may also be looked at by authorised people to check that the study is being carried out correctly. All will have a duty of confidentiality to you as a research participant and we will do our best to meet this duty.

All information which is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept **strictly confidential**, stored in a secure and locked office, and on a password protected database. Any information about you which leaves the University will have your name removed and a unique code will be used so that you cannot be recognised from it. Anonymised data may also be stored in data archives for future researchers interested in this area.

Your personal data (your consent form) will be kept for seven years after the end of the study so that we are able to contact you about the findings of the study *and possible follow-up studies*

(unless you advise us that you do not wish to be contacted). All research data will be kept securely for 7 years. After this time your data will be disposed of securely. During this time all precautions will be taken by all those involved to maintain your confidentiality, only members of the research team will have access to your personal data.

Although what you say in the interview is confidential, should you disclose anything to us which we feel puts you or anyone else at any risk, we may feel it necessary to report this to the appropriate persons.

What will happen if I don't want to carry on with the study?

Your participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason, and without your legal rights being affected. If you withdraw then the information collected so far may not be possible to extract and erase after September 2020 and this information may still be used in the project analysis.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

Anonymised results will be shared and developed with the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman and published in academic articles.

Who is organising and funding the research?

This research is being organised by the University of Nottingham and is being funded by the University of Nottingham.

Who has reviewed the study?

All research in the University of Nottingham is looked at by a group of people, called a Research Ethics Committee, to protect your interests. This study has been reviewed and approved by the School of Sociology and Social Policy Research Ethics Committee.

Further information and contact details

Researcher: Sara Hyde, sara.hyde@nottingham.ac.uk

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