



## **Participant Information Sheet (Individual Interviews)**

### **Locked Down, Locked Out? Local Partnership Resilience in the Covid-19 Pandemic**

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#### **About the research team and this study**

The research team for this study are members of staff at Edinburgh Napier University. The three Investigators are Lecturers in Criminology with extensive experience researching local partnerships including but not limited to criminal justice partnerships. The Research Assistant – who will be conducting this interview – is an experienced practitioner and researcher in the fields of criminal justice, health and social care.

‘Wicked’ problems like unemployment, addictions and criminal (re)offending are increasingly seen as requiring input from a range of organisations. Partnership at the local level is increasingly seen as essential to this, particularly given continuing pressures on public sector budgets; in Scotland, this has been informed by the work of the Christie Commission (*Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services in Scotland*) and the principle of prevention of rather than reaction to adverse outcomes. However, the Covid-19 pandemic and associated lockdown restrictions have created significant pressures for local authorities. We are interested in the impact of the pandemic on local partnership working arrangements, but we have also read stories of successful adaptations in the face of the pandemic – so we are particularly interested in how partnerships have adapted to the pandemic and related restrictions, and the implications for local resilience in Scotland, the wider UK and beyond.

The study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. How has Covid-19 affected Scottish local partnership arrangements, in the short and medium term?
2. How has Covid-19 affected efforts to implement the recommendations of the Christie Commission (particularly the prevention principle) in Scottish local government?
3. How have Scottish local partnerships changed their practices to meet the challenge of the pandemic, and how can any progress be built upon?
4. What are the implications of these for existing social inequalities?
5. What are the potential lessons for other countries, particularly in terms of local partnership responses to crises?

#### **Whose help are we looking for?**

We are looking to speak to people who work in partnerships at the local authority level, including but not limited to Community Planning Partnerships, Community Safety Partnerships, Health and Social Care Partnerships and Community Justice/Reducing Reoffending Partnerships. This includes people working for local authorities in various

capacities, but also employees of relevant third sector organisations, Police Scotland, the NHS, Skills Development Scotland and other organisations. To gain a 'deep' picture of partnership working, we are focusing our interviews on a small number of local authority areas in Scotland.

[If relevant] [name of organisation] You are being contacted because your name has been suggested to us as a possible interviewee. [or] You are being contacted because you have supplied your contact details in the first stage of the study (the online survey) and indicated you might be willing to be interviewed. In cases where someone else has passed on your contact details to us, they will not know who we have decided to approach, nor will they - unless of course you choose to tell them.

If you kindly agree to participate in the study, you will be asked to take part in an on-line, semi structured interview with me at a time and date suitable to yourself. During the interview you will be asked about your experiences of partnership working (including during the various stages of the Covid-19 crisis) and adaptations made by partnerships to the pandemic, including any 'success stories' of adaptation to the pandemic and lockdown.

The whole procedure should take no longer than 90 minutes and will be digitally recorded (subject to your approval) to ensure accurate transcription. This recording will be used to fully transcribe the interview and will be erased once transcription has been completed and assessed as being accurate. During the study, the recording, transcript and notes will be kept securely on University storage systems. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown measures, we will need to conduct the interviews online using Cisco WebEx Meetings. You will receive a link to join the meeting, which can be done in your internet browser so does not require downloading the software.

### **Ethical Issues and Data Security**

You are under *no obligation* to participate in this study and your consent must be not only fully informed but freely given, free of any coercion. Should you agree to be interviewed, but subsequently change your mind either before the interview or (for a limited time) afterwards, you are perfectly entitled to withdraw from the entire process, without giving a reason. Please be assured that your choosing not to participate, at any stage, will not affect relationships with any other organisation or individual. Nobody beyond the research team will know that you either declined this invitation, or that you subsequently withdrew from it. If you do agree to be interviewed, you may still stop the interview at any time.

**You can withdraw at any point up to the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2021 or two weeks after the interview, whichever is later, by emailing either the interviewer/Research Assistant Carmen Nogales, or the Principal Investigator Jamie Buchan ([C.Nogales@napier.ac.uk](mailto:C.Nogales@napier.ac.uk); [J.Buchan@napier.ac.uk](mailto:J.Buchan@napier.ac.uk) ).**

Although we will be asking you about your experiences *at work*, we recognise that the pandemic has been a distressing experience for people generally and for many individuals specifically impacted. A priority for us is to do all that we reasonably can to ensure that we do not cause you any harm during the interview. It is of paramount importance therefore, that if you believe that recalling your experiences of partnership work during the pandemic may cause you harm or distress, **you do not agree to take part in this study.**

Your identity and the data you provide will be treated in the strictest confidence with any names, or other means by which you might be identified (e.g. specific and less populous towns, villages and regions), being removed during transcription of the interviews and/or the subsequent write up and preparation of publications. Maintaining the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants in this project is fundamental to its design. You will be

pseudonymised with a 'code letter' (e.g. Participant A). During the interview, or after its completion, please flag any events or details which you believe may be identifiable or unique. We will work to disguise or exclude the information even where this weakens the evidence. Digital recordings will be deleted once interviews have been transcribed and checked.

All aspects of the study will be conducted in full accordance with the ethical principles set forth by the British Educational Research Association and by Edinburgh Napier University, observing procedures for ensuring informed consent, data security, confidentiality and right to withdraw.

All relevant Data Protection measures will be followed in accordance with the University's policies and procedures. All data collected will be stored digitally on secure, University databases to which only the research team will have access.

All data that could identify you will be removed in the anonymisation process. Anonymised data that substantiates research findings will be retained for 10 years.

A data protection Privacy Notice has been included with this Information Sheet should you require any further detailed information not only about the data protection measures we have put in place for this project, but also your rights with regards to accessing the personal data we will retain for the duration of the project.

The results of the study, based on the data that you and other participants provide to us, will be published in an academic peer reviewed journal and possibly presented at future academic conferences. They will also be shared in reports with those organisations and individuals who have been involved with the project, at their request. We would also be happy to share a transcript of your interview with you afterwards and to keep you updated with the progress of the project, if this would be of interest to you.

### **Exceptions to confidentiality and anonymity in this study**

All social researchers are bound by strict codes of research ethics and practice. We intend to keep your data in confidence, however there may be situations in which we would be required to disclose information to relevant authorities. These issues may have no relevance to you – indeed, we do not anticipate encountering them – but we want to be transparent about all our obligations. These include information about acts of terrorism or money laundering (which we would be required to disclose to Police Scotland); ethically, where we believe a child is at risk of abuse or neglect, or there is clear threat to someone's life (including suicide), we would also feel obliged to disclose this to relevant authorities. Where we discuss criminal offending, we would usually encourage you not to refer to specific details, particularly where the activity has not been prosecuted.

It is important to also be mindful that there are risks to participant confidentiality of using the internet more generally, for example targeted and mass surveillance. To address this, we will use protected and locked meetings on WebEx. You can find more information about risks to your privacy and anonymity online via the Electronic Frontier Foundation.

### **Written and Verbal Consent**

Also attached to this Information Sheet is a Participant Consent Sheet. If having read this information sheet you kindly agree to help us by being a participant in the study, please read the Consent Sheet. If you agree with each statement within the Consent Sheet, please sign and date it (a typed signature is fine) and return it to the research team by email. The team will ensure that your Consent Sheet is stored securely on University storage.

## **Complaints and Concerns**

If you worried about this research, or if you are concerned with how it is being conducted, please contact the Convenor for the School of Applied Sciences Research Integrity Committee via: School of Applied Sciences, Edinburgh Napier University, Sighthill Campus, Edinburgh, EH11 4BN, or email: [ethics.sas@napier.ac.uk](mailto:ethics.sas@napier.ac.uk)

If you would like to discuss this any further, please don't hesitate to contact the research team using one of the following address:

Jamie Buchan – Principal Investigator [J.Buchan@napier.ac.uk](mailto:J.Buchan@napier.ac.uk)

Carmen Nogales – Research Assistant [C.Nogales@napier.ac.uk](mailto:C.Nogales@napier.ac.uk)

## **Timescale:**

Many thanks for taking the time to read this information sheet. Should you kindly agree to participate in this study, and subject to your availability, we would like to interview you during March-July 2021. If that is convenient for you, please contact us at your earliest convenience so that we can arrange a suitable time and date for our discussion.

Jamie Buchan, Andrew Wooff, Katrina Morrison and Carmen Nogales  
Edinburgh Napier University.