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Description automatically generated**Voicing Loss: A study of bereaved people’s experiences of inquests**

**Participant information sheet & consent form**

We are inviting you to take part in the *Voicing Loss* research project. This information sheet tells you about the research. Please take some time to read it carefully and think about taking part. The research team will be happy to discuss this with you and answer any questions you might have before you decide whether to participate.

**Who is carrying out the research?**

This is an independent study is being carried out by a team of researchers from Birkbeck, University of London and the University of Bath. The researchers are: Professor Jessica Jacobson, Dr Penny Cooper, Dr Camillia Kong, Alex Murray, Dr Hannah Rumble, and Lorna Templeton. The study is running over 32 months and is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), a government body that supports social research.

The study has been approved by Birkbeck’s College Ethics Committee (ref. 10.1.22) and the University of Bath’s Social Science Research Ethics Committee (ref. S22-018).

**Why have I been invited to take part and what is the purpose of the study?**

You have been invited to take part because you have had experience of a coroner’s investigation and/or an inquest into the death of a family member, partner, or friend. The study aims to explore and understand bereaved people’s experiences of inquests and the coronial process. This includes looking at which aspects of the process are particularly difficult or challenging for bereaved people, and which aspects may be more helpful. This is an important area of policy and practice, on which little recent research has been conducted to date. We will be collecting data from both bereaved people and a range of professionals.

**Do I have to take part in the study?**

No: whether you take part in the study is entirely your decision. If you decide to take part, you can change your mind and withdraw from the study (without giving a reason) at any time until 31 March 2023. Any decision that you make about taking part in the study, or stopping your involvement, will not affect any help you are receiving from services.

**What does taking part involve?**

Taking part in the research means being interviewed by an experienced researcher. In the interview, you will be asked to tell the interviewer about your experiences of the coroner’s investigation and inquest; whether and in what ways you were involved in the investigation and inquest; and how these experiences affected you. If you agree to take part, you will be asked to sign a consent form to say that you have agreed to be interviewed, and that you understand what the interview involves.

Interviews will be carried out in person, by phone, or using a video call conference platform such as MS Teams or Zoom.  We will discuss with you what will work best for you, and when would be most convenient for you to take part in the interview. If the interview is to be conducted face-to-face, we will apply any social distancing and other measures required to minimise risks of Covid infection, in line with university and government rules or guidance that are in place at the time, and applicable in the location in which the interview is being conducted.

Interviews will take place at a time that is convenient for you. The length of the interview will largely depend on how much you want to tell us, but it is likely that it will take up to 1 to 1.5 hours. You can choose to be interviewed on your own or with someone else who has shared your experience of the inquest and would like to take part in the research. You can also have someone with you to support you during the interview.

**What are the benefits of taking part? What might be difficult about taking part?**

We hope that you will find it helpful to talk about your experiences. We also hope that, through our research, we will identify ways in which policy and practice relating to inquests can be improved.

We will be talking about very personal and sensitive issues, so the interview may be difficult for you. We can take breaks during the interview or continue at another time. If there are things that you do not wish to talk about then that is fine: you can choose not to answer certain questions, and you can also choose to end the interview at any point. We can also help you to access a relevant support service if needed.

**Will my participation in the research be confidential?**

Yes: we will not tell anyone that you have taken part in the study, and your personal data will be kept confidential. Information will be shared between members of the research team, but any information that is shared more widely will be fully anonymised. We will not include your name or any other details that could identify you in any reports on the research.

The only time when we might have to pass on confidential information is if you say anything that raises concerns about a possible risk of serious harm to yourself or anyone else. If this situation arises, we will have a duty to report it to the relevant authorities and will discuss this with you.

We will also ask for your permission to contact you about any opportunities to get involved in other parts of the study (for example, discussions about policy and practice) or to respond to possible media enquiries. On the other hand, you can let us know if you would prefer not to be contacted again.

**How will you record the interview?**

If you decide to take part in the research, we will ask you first to confirm that you understand what this involves and that you are happy to proceed. We will also ask you if you are happy for the interview to be audio-recorded.

If your interview is audio-recorded, the recording will be held in a secure SharePoint folder to which only the research team will have access. The team will arrange for the recording to be transcribed by an external company, UK Transcription (<https://www.uktranscription.com/>), which has a secure and encrypted system for uploading audio and downloading transcripts. The company will delete the recording after transcription.

The research team will fully anonymise the transcript provided by the transcription company, meaning that all names and other details that could identify you or any other individual will be removed or amended. The audio-recording will be permanently deleted from SharePoint after analysis of the data has been completed.

**What will happen to my data?**

Your name and contact details will not be shared with anyone outside the research team and will be handled in accordance with data protection regulations. This information will be securely held in a SharePoint folder to which only the research team have access and will be deleted 6 months after completion of the project.

The fully anonymised interview transcript or notes will be retained by Birkbeck and the University of Bath for ten years after the study has been completed. Subject to your agreement, the fully anonymised interview transcript or notes will be submitted to the online UK Data Archive (<https://www.data-archive.ac.uk/>), along with other transcripts and notes from this study. This will allow other researchers to access the data and use it in future research.

**What will happen to the results of the research study?**

We will share the findings from the study in a wide range of ways, such as reports, journal articles and conference presentations. All findings that are in the public domain will be fully anonymised. We plan to engage with a wide range of stakeholders to develop recommendations for improving policy and practice, and to inform better provision for bereaved people during the inquest process.

**What do I do if there is a problem with my involvement?**

If you are unhappy with any aspect of your involvement in the study, please contact the study’s Principal Investigator, Professor Jessica Jacobson: [j.jacobson@bbk.ac.uk](mailto:j.jacobson@bbk.ac.uk) or call 020 3926 1698.

If that does not resolve your concerns, you can contact the Head of Research Strategy Support at Birkbeck, Dr Sarah Lee: sarah.lee@bbk.ac.uk.

**A ‘thank you’ for taking part**

If you decide to take part in the research, you will be given a £20 gift voucher (valid for use in a wide range of high street stores) as a small ‘thank you’ for your contribution.

Research team use only: interviewee ID code:

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**Participant interview consent form**

**I confirm that:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Please check boxes, as applicable** | |
| I have read the information sheet for this study, I understand the study, and I agree to take part. |  |
| I have had the opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered. |  |
| I understand that: |  |
| * My participation is **voluntary**. I am free to end the interview at any time, and do not need to answer all the questions. I am free to **withdraw** from the study by 31 March 2023, without giving a reason. |  |
| * **Personal information** about me, such as my name and contact details, will only be used for purposes of arranging the interview and any follow-up as agreed (see below). This information will be held securely and deleted within 6 months of the end of the project. |  |
| * What I say is **confidential**. This means that the researchers will not include any details that could identify me or anyone else in any published report or other output of the research. However, if I say anything that suggests I or someone else is at risk of serious harm, the researchers have a duty to report this to a relevant person or authority. |  |
| * The **anonymised** transcript of the interview or interview note will be held securely by Birkbeck and the University of Bath for 10 years after completion of the study. |  |
| *For face-to-face participation only*  I agree to the specified measures for **reducing risk of Covid-19 transmission** during the interview. |  |
| *Please select:*  **I agree** to the audio-recording of my interview. I understand that the recording will be transcribed by an external transcription company, and that the research team will anonymise the transcript. I understand that the recording will be deleted when data analysis is complete.  **I do not agree** to the audio-recording of my interview. I understand that the interviewer will take notes of the interview, which will be anonymised. | |
| *Please select:*  **I agree** to a fully anonymised version of the interview transcript/notes being stored in the UK Data Archive, where it may be accessed by other researchers.  **I do not agree** to the interview transcript/notes being stored in the UK Data Archive. | |

Participant’s name & date: Enter text here

Interviewer’s name & date: Enter text here

**Follow-up**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Please check all boxes that apply** | | |
| I am interested in being involved in discussions or events about the findings of this project. | Y |  |
| N |  |
| I would like to receive information about the findings of this project when it is complete. | Y |  |
| N |  |
| I am happy for a member of the research team to contact me in relation to inquiries from the media about this project. | Y |  |
| N |  |
| **Please complete for preferred method of contact:**  Email: Enter text here  Telephone: Enter text here  Postal address: Enter text here  **How would you like to receive the £20 gift voucher? This is a ‘thank you’ for taking part in the research.**  Received in person  Please send by email to above address  Please send by post to above address | | |

**Please note: We are aware that taking part in an interview to discuss your experiences of an inquest may be difficult for you. If you would like the researcher to follow up with you after the interview to check how you’re feeling about it, or to help you to access a relevant support organisation, please let us know during the interview.**