



Designing Homes for Healthy Cognitive Ageing (DesHCA) Project Virtual Reality Design Consultations with Older People Participant Information Sheet

Background

The Designing Homes for Healthy Cognitive Ageing (DesHCA) project aims to identify housing designs that can support older people, including those living with cognitive change, to live well at home for longer. Improved housing design can enable better lives, by helping to postpone the impact of cognitive change, improve quality of life, and prevent admission to care settings.

Over the three-year lifespan of the DesHCA project, we will invite older people, including those living with cognitive change, to participate in a wide variety of research activities. These activities will include home mapping exercises to help us to better understand how people's homes work for them; using virtual reality to test potential design solutions; and creating demonstrators to test how the designs might be implemented.

The DesHCA project is led by a team of researchers at the University of Stirling, alongside partners including local authorities, building companies, and games developers, who are all helping to inform the research and implement the resulting design solutions.

We are also building a team of at least ten peer researchers to support the project. We want this group to include people living with cognitive change, as well as people who provide support or care for them. The peer researchers are working alongside the DesHCA project team to design the research, to collect and analyse data, and to share the study's findings.

Invitation

We would like to invite you to take part in research that involves reviewing home designs using virtual reality (VR) technology, and giving your feedback on the adaptations installed in these homes to support older people.

Collecting this information will help us to better understand potential changes that could be made to these home designs, and could help to inform better ways of designing housing for older people.

**Why have I been invited to take part?**

You have been invited to take part because you are an older person living in Scotland, who has expressed interest in taking part in the DesHCA project.

Do I have to take part?

No, you do not have to take part. You may also be invited to participate in other aspects of this study; however, you are not obliged to accept this or any other research invitations, even if you have participated in another part of the project.

If you decide to take part, you can withdraw your participation at any time, without needing to explain, and without penalty. You only need to tell the research team of your decision. The passive sensing devices can be removed easily and quickly by the research team, should you wish to withdraw.

If you decide to withdraw, we will not collect any more data from you. Any data collected up until the point that you withdraw will be kept and used in the data analysis. You may also withdraw any data that we have collected about you within the preceding 30 days. You can request to withdraw from the research simply by contacting the research team, quoting your participant number.

You will be given a copy of this information sheet to keep, and if you choose to participate, you will be asked to sign a consent form and/or asked to confirm your consent orally before taking part in the research.

Please note that choosing not to take part in this aspect of our research will not affect your ability to contribute to other parts of the study.

What will happen if I take part?

If you decide to take part, you will be asked to take part in a short preliminary interview to discuss your thoughts on housing adaptations for older people. We will then send you some equipment that we will ask you to use to review some house designs using virtual reality (VR). As part of this, we will record footage of where you go and what you look at in the virtual house, as well as recording your comments and conversation about the design of the house. You will also be asked to take part in a short interview after the virtual reality tour, to further discuss your thoughts and reflections.



All the activities we ask you to undertake can be undertaken in your own home, or another place that is convenient for you. You may be able to take part in this activity as part of a small group, if you wish.

Information about how your personal data will be managed, and your rights under GDPR legislation, can be found in the Data Management Information Sheet you have been given. Your responses will be anonymised to ensure confidentiality.

Under the conditions of the funding provider for the DesHCA project, the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), all data collected must be anonymised and archived as part of the UK Data Service. This is a database of anonymised outputs from previous ESRC-funded projects, which is accessible to fellow researchers. Your anonymised data will only be shared on this database with your consent. For further information, please see <https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/about>

Are there any potential risks in taking part?

The experience of virtual reality and VR-headsets can potentially make some people feel uncomfortable or disorientated. As it is an immersive, mostly visual experience, it is possible to lose balance, or accidentally bump into objects (such as furniture) in the immediate real-world environment. For this reason, it is essential that you ask a friend or family member to be present when you are using the VR equipment, to provide assistance should you need it. Alternatively, a member of the research team can be present to assist you if you wish.

To help prevent these risks, the researchers will provide guidance and will talk you through a practice session on how to use the equipment safely. It will be important to stop the activity and remove the equipment at any point, if you feel uncomfortable. The researchers will be communicating with you via video or telephone while you complete the activity.

Are there any benefits in taking part?

There are no direct benefits from taking part in this research. However, we hope that you will find it an enjoyable experience, and your contribution will be of great value to our work.

**Will the research be published?**

The research may be published in a variety of formats including journal articles, conference presentations, the project website, policy briefs, and professional training materials. The data we collect will be anonymised to protect your identity; however, some photos and/or videos of your home may be used in research presentations and/or publications. This makes it possible that people you know might be able to identify you as a participant. If you would prefer that your photos or videos are not used in such publications, you may opt out when signing the study consent form.

The University of Stirling is committed to making research publicly accessible. So, unless funder/publisher requirements prevent us, this research will be shared publicly through our open access repository, known as STORRE.

Who is organising and funding the research?

The research is funded by the UKRI Economic & Social Research Council, as part of their Healthy Ageing Challenge funding stream.

Who has reviewed this research project?

The ethical approaches of this project have been approved via the University of Stirling General University Ethics Panel.

Who do I contact if I have concerns about this study or I wish to complain?

If you would like to discuss the research with someone, please contact one of the DesHCA project Research Fellows, Dr Sarah Swift: sarah.swift@stir.ac.uk, or Dr Martin Quirke: martin.quirke@stir.ac.uk

If you have concerns or wish to complain about this research, you may contact Professor Liz Forbat, Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, by email at Elizabeth.forbat1@stir.ac.uk

Thank you for your interest in this project.