# Study on the wellbeing of healthcare and hospital workers during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Participant Information Sheet

The purpose of this information sheet is to provide you with sufficient information so that you can then give your informed consent. It is thus very important that you read this document carefully, and raise any issues that you do not understand with the investigator.

**Name of Principal Researcher:** Associate Professor Wendy Pollock

**Project Title:** The wellbeing of healthcare and hospital workers during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

***What is the purpose of the study?***

The purpose of this study is to explore the experience and impact of COVID-19 on the wellbeing of healthcare and hospital staff working in hospitals during and after the pandemic. We want to understand how working in an acute hospital during a pandemic has affected staff wellbeing. We also want to know what has helped staff with their wellbeing and what changes occur to staff wellbeing in the next few months. Further, we want to estimate the cost of staff being on sick/special leave because of COVID-19 and to changes in wellbeing. Finally, we want to compare the impact on staff wellbeing for critical care workers in the UK with Australian critical care workers, where the COVID-19 pandemic has not been so severe.

***Why have I been selected to take part and what are the exclusion criteria?***

Any staff member working in an acute general hospital during the COVID-19 pandemic is invited to participate. This includes support and ancillary staff, cleaners, food services staff, security, nurses, doctors, allied health professionals, pharmacists, paramedics and staff re-deployed to work in an acute hospital.

Unfortunately, for this survey, we are not able to invite staff of care homes and social services, or other health services e.g. psychiatric hospitals.

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

Participation in this study, by completing the survey, is completely voluntary. It is up to you whether you would like to take part in the study. This information sheet is to help you make that decision. You are completely free to decide whether to take part, or to take part and then leave the study before completion.

***What will I have to do?***

If you choose to take part, click on the link to open the online survey and then answer the questions. The online survey has three sections covering: 1) Demographics; 2) Wellbeing; and 3) Pandemic Specific Questions. The survey should take about 7-10 minutes to complete.

There is a question in the survey that asks if you would like to participate in an online interview, and if you would like to, add your contact details in the section provided. We will only contact someone about an interview if they have indicated a willingness to participate. The interview will be organised for a mutually suitable time and be conducted by a video call. The call will be recorded to assist with our data analysis. The purpose of the interview is to be able to discuss the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on staff wellbeing in more detail and is expected to last up to 60 minutes in duration.

Part of our study is looking at what happens after the peak phase of the pandemic is over. We would like you to complete a survey early next year so we can compare your wellbeing then, to now. However, you do not have to complete the survey next year if you do this survey now. You can choose whether or not to complete the survey and/or be interviewed, either now or later.

***Consent to participate***

If you agree to participate in this survey, you give us your consent by clicking on the link and completing the survey. If you want to participate in an interview, you give us your consent by attending by video call and confirming your consent verbally before the interview begins.

***Will my participation involve any physical or psychological discomfort, or embarrassment?***

Answering questions about working during the COVID-19 pandemic may feel uncomfortable to answer. However, studies on people who participate in studies on topics that cover difficult topics, have found that being part of a study has been a positive experience, even when answering uncomfortable questions. If completing this survey brings up feelings of distress, please consider calling the NHS Mental Wellbeing Helpline, phone 0300 131 7000; or get in touch with a specialist support body - https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mental-health-helplines/

Information to seek help is also listed at the end of the survey.

It is also important to know that your answers to the survey questions and any interview data will be non-identifiable.

***How will confidentiality be assured and who will have access to the information that I provide?***

Only the research team will have access to the information provided. Your year of birth and the last four digits of your phone number will be used to identify your data and enable us to link your responses should you complete the follow-up survey in about six months time. Your personal data will not be identifiable in any analysis or published results. Your name will not be written on any of the data we collect; your name will not be written on the recorded interviews, or on the typed up versions of your discussions from the interview, and your name will not appear in any reports or documents resulting from this study. For anyone participating in an interview, we will not use your real name when communicating results. We will use a pseudonym, a made up name, to report on individual experiences and impact.

If you are interviewed, a person external to the research team may also listen to the interview as part of the transcription process. A non-disclosure agreement will have been signed to ensure that what you tell us remains confidential.

We plan to compare some of the data in the survey with data from a similar survey conducted in Australia on critical care staff. Only completely non-identifiable data will be shared with our Australian research team member.

***What will we do with the study results?***

We plan to publish the results in professional forums, such as, as health journals, and provide reports to the organisations that have supported us to do the research e.g. funding body, professional bodies, unions. We also plan to share the key results with managers and policymakers in the NHS.

***Will I receive any financial reward for taking part?***

There are no financial rewards to take part in this study.

***How can I withdraw from the project?***

To withdraw your information, please contact the researcher via email (wendy.pollock@northumbria.ac.uk) within 2 weeks of completing the survey/interview to ensure that data analysis has not started. When contacting, please state your year of birth and last four digits of your phone number as entered on your survey – as this is the only way we can identify your data. Additionally, if you change your mind after indicating that you would like to participate in an interview and providing your email address, please contact us by email (wendy.pollock@northumbria.ac.uk) to tell us that you no longer wish to be interviewed.

***Data Protection and Confidentiality***

Any personally identifiable information and data gathered during this research is subject to and will be stored in line with EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the UK Data Protection Act (2018). The legal basis for the study's personal data processing is that the research is being conducted in the public interest, and/or is necessary for scientific and historical research purposes (Article 6(1) (e)). For more information on how research data is processed by Northumbria University, and your rights under the GDPR, please see our Research Participant Privacy Notice

Personally identifiable information will be destroyed as soon as it is no longer needed (e.g. email addresses used to keep in contact with you will be destroyed as soon as they are no longer required). Any IP addresses collected via online survey systems will be deleted as soon as data collection is complete. The research data will be stored for 7 years by secure means in keeping with good research practices, the university's policies and as required by the funding body.

***Who is organising and funding the study?***

Northumbria University is leading the research with co-investigators from City, University of London; Teesside University; Dundee University; and The George Institute of Global Health, Australia. Applications for funding are under way.

***How were members of the public involved in the development of this study?***

Potential participants were involved in reviewing the content of the survey, the study protocol and the Participant Information Sheet. An eligible participant is also part of the study Advisory Panel.

***Who has reviewed this study?***

The research project, submission reference 23794, was reviewed in order to safeguard your interests and has been approved in Northumbria University's Ethics Online system. Additionally, the HRA/NHS reviewed the study and determined that their approval was not required for NHS staff to participate in this study. Any funding body will also have reviewed the study.

***If I require further information who should I contact and how?***

If you require confirmation of the permission to conduct the study, please contact Vikki Smith, by email at vikki.smith@northumbria.ac.uk stating the title of the research project and the name of the researcher. If you would like more information about the study, please contact the researcher Wendy Pollock, at wendy.pollock@northumbria.ac.uk.

**Contact for further information:**

Researcher email: wendy.pollock@northumbria.ac.uk

Ethics concerns or complaints: vikki.smith@northumbria.ac.uk

Name and contact details of the Records and Information Officer at Northumbria University: Duncan James (dp.officer@northumbria.ac.uk).

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*or by contacting a member of the research team*