###### Participant Information Sheet

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Lead Researcher: Sasha Johnston

University of Oxford

Department of Experimental Psychology

Anna Watts Building

Woodstock Road

OX2 6GG

University email: [sasha.johnston@psy.ox.ac.uk](mailto:sasha.johnston@psy.ox.ac.uk)

**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET**

**Integrating Mental health support in Partnership with Ambulance Clinicians, for enabling time-to-Talk (IMPACT) [NIHR302983]: Qualitative interviews**

We are inviting you to take part in our research study. Before you decide, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read this information and discuss it with others if you wish. If there is anything that is not clear, or if you would like more information, please ask us.

The study is funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research and National Health Service England.

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

Ambulance work can affect mental health and wellbeing. The current organisational support system relies on individuals to ask for help when they need it. However, this can be at odds with evidence of widespread avoidant-coping and cultural stigma about mental health identified in ambulance populations. This overall aim of this programme of research is to see whether it is possible to provide time within working hours for staff to think and talk about how their work makes them feel, to discuss support options, and be signposted to further help or resources when needed. We want to make time bring back the feel of and opportunity for crew room and office chats for sharing stories, offloading stress and learning from each other. This study builds on a systematic review of the existing literature and is the first step of our research where we seek to understand why some employees are happy to ask for help from organisational support services and why some are not. This information will be used to help minimise any barriers and to enhance any enablers to ambulance employees looking after themselves and their colleagues at work and accessing support when needed.

1. **Why have I been invited?**

You have been invited to take part because you are over 18 years old and you are a South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust employee. All employees are invited to participate in this study, regardless of their job role, as all staff can be affected by what they see, hear, and read at work. We particularly welcome employees who wouldn’t use organisational support for themselves but would be happy to talk about the topic to help support their colleagues. We would like to talk to around 20 members of staff; clinical and non-clinical and those with managerial duties. This will help us to understand different perspectives about what would be useful to help support colleagues at work and what the barriers and facilitators to accessing and using organisational support for mental health and wellbeing are.

1. **Do I have to take part?**

No, taking part is entirely voluntary. You can ask questions about the study before deciding whether you want to take part or not. If you do agree to take part, you can withdraw yourself from the study at any time up until the point at which data analysis is completed, without giving a reason and without negative consequences, by letting the researchers know your decision.

1. **What will happen to me if I decide to take part?**

You will be invited to join a group of peers to discuss why some employees are happy to seek support for mental health and wellbeing and why some are not. These focus groups will be held via Microsoft Teams at flexible times, depending on what suits you. You can also ask for a one-to-one interview if you would prefer not to be part of a group. We expect the focus groups (or one-to-one interview) to last approximately one hour. Previous research suggests that some ambulance employees may not feel comfortable talking about mental health and organisational support in front of managers and vice versa. Therefore, for this study we will design the focus groups so that those with line management responsibilities are in separate groups to allow everyone to speak freely. Lead research Sasha Johnston will facilitate all the focus groups and interviews.

1. **Are there any possible disadvantages or risks from taking part?**

Talking about employee mental health and the reasons to why some will access organisational support and others don’t, may be upsetting for some. SWASFT’s Staying Well Service team support this work after reviewing the proposed research. Access to the Staying Well Service, as well as external support services (such as the Ambulance Staff Charity) will be available to study participants if required.

1. **What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

Your participation in this research will help us to understand how people feel about dedicated time at work for employees to look after themselves and each other and what this may look like, and why different people will want to access organisational support, whilst others won’t. This will help us to minimise any barriers to support services and help us to design a supportive approach at work to ensure all staff are given time to consider their own needs and access any help they may need. You will be contributing to research that aims to tackle cultural stigma about employee mental health and to help colleagues to thrive at work.

1. **Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?**

Yes, we will ask for your preferred contact details which will be stored on a restricted access folder on a University of Oxford Nexus365 Microsoft Teams Excel file. This folder will be deleted after all incentive vouchers have been offered, all participants have been given the opportunity to check the final thematic analyses, and everyone has been sent a report of the findings. It is anticipated that contact details will be deleted within 18 months of completing data collection**.**Any participant data will be de-identified by taking out names and any identifying details and by allocating a designated study code. We will ask your permission to audio-record the focus group or interview using Microsoft Teams auto transcribe function. A Dictaphone will also record the focus group discussion as a back-up, to aid the revision and accuracy of the auto-transcription and to safeguard the data in case of MS Teams software failure. The researchers will combine the scripts and any handwritten notes and undertake thematic analysis to identify themes in the information provided. These themes will be sent to you to check that they represent your focus group or interview discussion. After any adjustments are made in response to your review of the themes, the analysis will be considered complete and de-identified, and you will no longer be able to withdraw your data after this point. The audio-recording will then be permanently deleted by the researchers. Responsible members of the University of Oxford and SWASFT’s research team may be given access to data for monitoring and/or audit of the study to ensure that the research is complying with applicable regulations.

1. **Will I receive an incentive for taking part?**

Yes, you will be sent a £40 gift e-voucher after you have taken part in a focus group or interview, to thank you for contributing to this study. If you are not offered an interview, you will be entered into a prize draw for a £40 gift voucher to thank you for completing the expression of interest.

1. **What will happen to my data?**

Data protection regulation requires that we state the legal basis for processing information about you. In the case of research, this is ‘a task in the public interest.’ The University of Oxford is the data controller with respect to your personal data and is responsible for looking after your information and using it properly. We will be using information from your focus group or interview in order to undertake this study and will use the minimum personally identifiable information possible. The University will process your personal data as outlined the purpose of the research. Research is a task that we perform in the public interest. Further information about your rights with respect to your personal data is available from <https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/individual-rights>.

We will delete any identifiable information about you, including any recordings of focus groups and interviews, as soon as data analysis has been completed, you have had the opportunity to review the findings to check for accuracy and that they reflect your experience of the interview, and you have received your incentive voucher. This excludes any research documents with personal information, such as consent forms, which will be held securely at the University of Oxford for three years after the end of the study.

1. **How will my data be stored?**

**Contact details**

Your personal contact information and interview mode, date and incentive voucher preferences will be stored under a unique ID to enable us to link your name and preferences to your data/ID code. This will be stored on a restricted access folder on a Nexus365 Microsoft Teams Excel spreadsheet on the University of Oxford network, separately from the rest of the study data, such as your focus group transcripts and consent forms. This list will be retained until all data is collected, checked, analysed, reviewed by the participants and the themes are ready to inform the next stage of the research and all participants who have accepted an incentive voucher have received it. We anticipate this list will be destroyed within 18 months of completing data collection.

**Consent forms**

Once we received your completed consent form, we will store the digital copy on a restricted access folder on the University network. This will be kept in a separate location to other research data (such as your contact details) and stored for three years after the end of the study. These forms and records will then be permanently deleted.

**Audio-recordings and transcriptions of qualitative interviews**   
Audio-recordings and transcriptions of qualitative focus groups/interviews will be stored by the research team on a restricted access folder on the University of Oxford network until the interviews are transcribed and thoroughly checked for accuracy and the findings have been published. Thereafter, the audio-recordings will be permanently deleted.

**Publications**

Any data or findings from this research that is published, presented, or shared with other researchers, will not identify you. We will use quotes from interviews in publications but this will not include any information that could identify you. In order to support transparency in research, Journals may request that the anonymised data collected during a study are deposited within a data archive, such as the UK data archive or Ox-data. If we choose to publish this study’s findings in a Journal that requires this, then the anonymised data would be submitted to the relevant repository. Please be assured that no personal identifying information relating to any study participant would be held in the repository.

1. **What will happen to the results of this study?**

The findings from this research will be shared at relevant conferences, written up for publication, and will contribute to the fulfilment of the lead researcher’s Doctoral thesis. Any journal submission will include fees to enable open access publication and a copy of the completed thesis will be deposited both in print and online in the [Oxford University Research Archive](https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/finding-resources/theses/theses), to provide public availability of the findings for use in future research. You will remain anonymous in all outputs of this research dissemination and your data will be unidentifiable.

1. **What if there is a problem?**

If you wish to complain about any aspect of the way in which you have been approached or treated, or how your information is handled during the course of this study, you should contact Professor Jennifer Wild ([Jennifer.wild@psy.ox.ac.uk](mailto:Jennifer.wild@psy.ox.ac.uk)), Professor Polly Waite ([polly.waite@psy.ox.ac.uk](mailto:polly.waite@psy.ox.ac.uk)), or Sasha Johnston ([sasha.johnston@psy.ox.ac.uk](mailto:sasha.johnston@psy.ox.ac.uk)) from the University of Oxford, or Dr Sarah Black, Head of Research and Audit for South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust ([sarah.black@swast.nhs.uk](mailto:sarah.black@swast.nhs.uk)). Alternatively, you may contact the University of Oxford Clinical Trials and Research Governance (CTRG) office on 01865 616480, or the head of CTRG, email [ctrg@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:ctrg@admin.ox.ac.uk).

1. **How have patients and the public been involved in this study?**

Patient and public involvement and engagement (PPIE) have played an important part in developing this study. A group of twenty ambulance employees working in the South West and SWASFT’s PPIE in Research Group have helped develop the research topic and what research questions should be asked, and will help to identify themes from the information provided during the focus groups and interviews.

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

The National Institute for Health and Social Care Research (NIHR) awarded the Lead researcher (Sasha Johnston) funding to undertake a Doctoral Research Fellowship (DPhil) to examine the acceptability and feasibility of integrating time for ambulance employee mental health and wellbeing into everyday working practice. This study forms the second step in a five-step research programme ([1] systematic review of evidence > [2] staff focus groups > [3] consensus exercise with experts > [4] feasibility trial > [5] process evaluation interviews with trial participants). The NIHR award will fund costs associated with this programme of research.

1. **Who has reviewed the study?**

All research in the NHS is looked at by an independent group of people, called a Research Ethics Committee, to protect participants’ interests. In addition to peer-review by the NIHR Doctoral Research Fellowship committee, this study has been reviewed and given favourable opinion by the South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust Research and Development Group and the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee.

**Further information and contact details:**

If you would like to discuss this research with someone beforehand (or if you have questions afterwards), please contact:

Sasha Johnston, DPhil candidate, and SWASFT Research Paramedic and Academic Support Lead.

Email: [sasha.johnston@psy.ox.ac.uk](mailto:sasha.johnston@psy.ox.ac.uk)

Professor Jennifer Wild, Principal Investigator, and Consultant Clinical Psychologist

Email: [jennifer.wild@psy.ox.ac.uk](mailto:jennifer.wild@psy.ox.ac.uk)

Associate Professor Polly Waite, Secondary Supervisor, and Honorary Clinical Psychologist

Email: [polly.waite@psy.ox.ac.uk](mailto:polly.waite@psy.ox.ac.uk)

**Thank you for reading this information and for thinking about taking part.**