

Taking part in research about family finances, benefits and children's social care

Study information and consent for professionals: Round 2

Kingston University, Sussex University, and Research in Practice are carrying out research about families facing financial precarity (persistent concerns about money) and the impact this has on children's social care. This project has been funded by the Nuffield Foundation. We hope the findings will help make benefits and social care better for families in the future.

We are contacting you because you have professional expertise relevant to this work. As part of the study we are looking to talk with social workers and others working in children's services or similar services; other parts of the study will be using data about social care and benefits, and talking with young people and parents.

If you would like to take part, it is important that you understand what this will involve. Further information is set out below to help you decide.

Please read this and, if you are happy to take part, complete the consent form at the end of this document.

Expert panel discussions

We would like to talk with professionals in children's social care or other services such as health, education or the third sector who have experience of supporting (or managing those who support) families who face on-going financial difficulties and who access benefits such as universal credit, and who are referred to children's social care.

If you agree to take part:

- We will invite you to an online discussion with other professionals working with children's services. This is due to take place in Spring 2025.
- A member of the research team will contact you to answer any questions you have, and find out about any help you may need to take part.
- During the discussion sessions, our research team will ask you about things like:
 - Our early findings about how data on family finances, benefits and social care referrals might be linked and reflections on what this might indicate
 - How these early findings might align with your professional experiences and ways in which they might differ
 - How linking data in this way might be useful in your work, and what its implications might be for how families are supported
- In each session the researchers will ask for your input, views, and recommendations so we can make the research better.

- You will not have to answer any questions that you don't want to.
- The group discussion will be audio and video recorded using MS Teams.

What are the benefits of taking part in this project?

Recent rises in living costs are putting incredible pressure on both services and families. This study is designed to inform the development of evidenced based policies and support that improve families' financial circumstances and outcomes for children.

The discussions will be a chance to share your experiences with colleagues, and learn from others. As a token of appreciation for your time, you will be offered a £20 voucher that can be used online or in many shops.

Findings from this work will be directed at policy makers and commissioners, associations and professional bodies, as well as for social workers and managers in children's social care.

Your rights

Participation in the study is voluntary. You do not have to do it if you do not want to.

You also have a right to withdraw. If you change your mind about taking part you can choose not to join the discussion session, or leave during it. If you do this a member of staff from Research in Practice may contact you to confirm you wish to withdraw. You can ask us not to contact you again.

If you change your mind after taking part, please contact evaluation@researchinpractice.org.uk within **two weeks** of the discussion session and we will remove your information. After this point, the information will have been anonymised and withdrawal may not be possible.

We may contact you about helping with other parts of the study; there is no obligation to take part and you can decide if you want to do this later.

How information you share will be used

The recording of the interview, and any notes staff make, will be stored securely on Research in Practice's computer system. We will send the recording to a company that will write an anonymised transcript of the discussion. Research in Practice will share the information with staff from Sussex University and Kingston University who are also working on this study, but not with anyone else. We will delete the files when the study is finished. The original audio and video recordings will be deleted within three months of the study's completion. The anonymised transcripts and consent forms will be held for up to eight years after the study's conclusion.

We will not use identifiable information about you, your place of work, or any children and families you support in the reports from this work.

There are rare circumstances where we may need to share confidential information with others: if you say something that indicates you or others are at risk of harm, or information relating to illegal acts and corruption.

This research project involves the use of MS Teams. Details of the platform's privacy notice can be found here: <https://privacy.microsoft.com/en-gb/privacystatement>

Any questions?

If there are any parts of this information sheet you do not understand, or you would like to ask some questions, please contact us at evaluation@researchinpractice.org.uk.

This research has been approved by the Social Sciences Cross-Schools Research Ethics Committee (C-REC) at the University of Sussex, application number: ER/LJB49/4

If you have any concerns relating to this project, please contact Dr Liam Berriman (l.j.berriman@sussex.ac.uk) and/or the Chair of the Social Sciences and Arts Cross Schools Research Ethics Committee (c-recss@sussex.ac.uk)