

Study information sheet

Introduction and study purpose

You are invited to take part in a research study. The research is being carried out by Ronald O’Kane under the supervision of Dr Joanna McParland, Professor Dawn Skelton and Dr Lorna Booth of Glasgow Caledonian University. The project spans 3 phases over 3 years. Phase 1 will interview employers and employees to assess work-related needs. Phase 2 will bring employees and employers together to develop a health intervention protocol for SMEs. Phase 3 will involve assessing the protocol’s feasibility. You are invited to take part in Phase 1 of the study. You will be offered the opportunity to be contacted about future phases of work if you meet eligibility criteria and provide informed consent. The aim of the present study (Phase 1) is to understand the experiences of employees of small-to-medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) who have chronic pain and to assess what is needed to facilitate sustainable working practices. SME’s are defined as companies with less than 250 employees. Before you decide whether to take part, it is important for you to understand what participation in the study will involve for you. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please contact us at the address below, for more information.

What will I have to do if I take part?

If you are interested to take part after reading this information sheet you will be asked to take part in an interview lasting up to 60 mins. At the start of the interview you will be asked a few questions about your experience of pain and subsequent questions will be focused on your experience of work as someone with chronic pain. The interview will be audio-recorded with your permission.

Are there any inclusion or exclusion criteria?

Yes. **Inclusion criteria** are being an adults aged 18 and over, who has been in chronic pain for at least three months and is currently working at an SME (an organisation that has less than 250 employees). Additionally, you must be working in any capacity (full-time, part-time or zero-hour contracts) for any length of time and fluent in English. **Exclusion criteria:** Being on sick leave currently, diagnosis of a mental health condition, alcohol or drug addiction, or leaving a job/being made redundant before participation.

Do I have to take part?

No. It is up to you to decide whether to take part. If you do decide to take part, you can stop taking part in the study at any time, without giving a reason, e.g., you can decide not to answer any items on the questionnaire or any questions asked during the interview.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

Yes. Ethical and legal practice will be followed. Your data will be anonymised. Only the research team will have access to the data. However, in the event of the researcher publishing the thesis report or if the research team seeks to publish the study in an academic journal or present data at a presentation or conference for example, then the data may be made available in physical or digital formats to other researchers, the public and those interested in the research. You would not be identifiable from the data.

Are there any advantages or disadvantages/risks of taking part?

While there are no direct advantages of taking part, the study aims to increase research knowledge about what is needed for employees with pain to remain at work despite their pain in the context of working at a SME. Possible disadvantages of taking part include disclosure of sensitive personal information during the interview which may be distressing or uncomfortable. However, you have the right to decide not to answer any question, without giving a reason. You may also take a break or withdraw from the study at any time, without giving a reason. If you seek further assistance, you may contact Dr Joanna McParland using the contact details listed at the end of this document.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

All interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed verbatim for the purposes of data analysis. Your anonymised results will be analysed, stored on a password protected and encrypted storage device and laptop. Results will be presented within a PhD thesis, presentations, postgraduate research reports, posters/conference presentations, publication in academic journals and all data will be stored on encrypted storage devices. Anonymised quotes from interviews will be used thus preserving the anonymity of all participants. If you wish to withdraw during or after the study, you may request to have all of your data withdrawn from the study up to 4 weeks after your participation date by emailing the researcher using the contact details provided on this information sheet. All collected data will be securely destroyed and will remain anonymised via encryption storage devices. The data controller for this study is Glasgow Caledonian University. Information for the study is being processed to perform of a task carried out in the public interest and on the basis of Article 6(1)(e) of the General Data Protection Regulation. Enquiries specifically relating to data protection should be made to the University's Data Protection Officer (DPO). The DPO can be contacted by email: dataprotection@gcu.ac.uk. If you are unhappy with the response from the University, you have the right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). The ICO can be contacted by email: casework@ico.org.uk. No individual participant will be identifiable at any stage.

How long is participant data kept for?

All presentations, information sheets, consent forms, raw and statistical demographic data are held will be securely destroyed in 2030 - 5 years after the 3 phases of work are completed in 2025. This is to allow time for the researcher to complete formal academic processes (e.g., seeking journal publication) once the thesis is completed in October 2025. The thesis report submitted by the researcher is part of PhD research and is thus held indefinitely by Glasgow Caledonian University.

Will I be able to find out about the study results?

Yes. If you would like a report of the study findings, we will make this available to you. A summary of the findings is anticipated to be available by February 2024. Please contact the principal researcher at ronald.okane@gcu.ac.uk

What if there is a problem?

If you are concerned about your participation in the study and would like to speak with someone, please contact the research supervisor Dr Joanna McParland at j.mcparland@gcu.ac.uk

Who is organising the research?

This research is being organised by Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU).

Who has reviewed the study?

The Department of Psychology at Glasgow Caledonian University has granted ethical approval for the study. Consent to take part in the study will be obtained following British Psychological Society guidelines.

Further information and contact details

You can get more study information from the primary researcher Ronald O’Kane.

Email: ronald.okane@gcu.ac.uk

Thank you for taking the time to read this study information sheet.