Supporting flexible working in health and care – Participant Information Sheet

We would like to invite you to take part in a pilot project to support and embed flexible working within health and care settings. Before you decide whether you would like to take part, it is important that you understand why this project is being undertaken and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read the following information carefully and do ask us if anything is unclear or if you would like more information.

What is the purpose of this project?

Supporting flexible working is a key part of the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan (2023), whereby an individual's choice in when, where and how they work is balanced with patient and service user experience, service delivery and colleagues' work-life balance. This project aims to contribute towards improving workplace flexibility, inclusivity and employee wellbeing by supporting managers to develop the knowledge and confidence to understand and navigate diverse employee perspectives and circumstances and to explore ways of embedding flexible working.

Why have I been invited to take part?

You are a health and care professional in a clinical role with line management responsibilities.

What will happen if I take part?

You will be invited to participate in a facilitated online group discussion lasting 1-2 hours with a maximum of 6 people. Drawing on action learning principles, you will take it in turns to share a challenge that you are facing in relation to flexible working in your role as a line manager within health and care. Other participants and facilitators will then ask questions to help you to explore your beliefs and assumptions, test out new ways of thinking and doing, develop ideas, and decide on an action to take forward in the workplace. You will also be invited to test out some resources to support flexible working based on research by the University of Liverpool.

3-4 weeks after the group session, you will be invited to take part in a short 30–45-minute conversation with the facilitator to reflect on any actions you have taken and provide feedback on your experience of testing out the flexible working resources.

The group discussion and individual conversations will take place on Microsoft Teams at a time and date to suit you and will be recorded for transcription purposes with your permission.

Who is conducting this project?

This project is being conducted by NHS R&D NW in collaboration with the University of Liverpool. The group discussion and individual conversations will be facilitated by Kate Bulpin, an NHS R&D NW associate. University of Liverpool researchers may also take part in the group discussions.

What will happen to the information I provide?

The transcripts will be analysed and the results written up as a report for NHS R&D NW and the University of Liverpool. This project will generate impact data for use in the Research Excellence Framework (REF) by the University of Liverpool. Findings may also be used to inform a proposal to extend the scale and scope of this work and inform the development and adaptation of flexible working resources tailored to the health and care sector. The report and associated presentations may also be communicated to other interested stakeholders.

All data will be destroyed once no longer necessary for the purposes of this project, which is scheduled to be completed by the end of Summer 2024. On request, if you choose to withdraw from the project, we will remove and destroy any data you have provided up to the point of incorporation into the report

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

Your responses will remain confidential. Only the NHS R&D NW associate will have access to the transcripts, which will be access-restricted and password protected. Each file will be saved under an anonymised reference and will not be attached to any files containing contact details of participants. Any identifiable data in the transcripts will be anonymised as soon as practical. Anonymised extracts may be published and reproduced as part of reports or presentations.

Do I have to take part?

Participation in the project is completely voluntary. You can choose not to participate in part or all of the project and you can withdraw at any stage without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way. You do not have to give a reason.

What are the benefits of taking part?

We hope that taking part in these discussions and using the resources will provide an opportunity for you to develop your knowledge and confidence in supporting and informing how best to embed flexible working within the health and care sector.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

No disadvantages or risks of taking part have been identified.

Who can I contact for further information?

If you have further questions or concerns, you can contact Kate Bulpin, NHS R&D NW Associate: katebulpin@outlook.com

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