



Participant Information Sheet (Online Survey)

Locked Down, Locked Out? Local Partnership Resilience in the Covid-19 Pandemic

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About the research team and this study

The research team for this study are members of staff at Edinburgh Napier University. The three Investigators are Lecturers in Criminology with extensive experience researching local partnerships including but not limited to criminal justice partnerships. The Research Assistant – who will be running the survey and analysing data – is an experienced practitioner and researcher in the fields of criminal justice, health and social care.

'Wicked' problems like unemployment, addictions and criminal (re)offending are increasingly seen as requiring input from a range of organisations. Partnership at the local level is increasingly seen as essential to this, particularly given continuing pressures on public sector budgets; in Scotland, this has been informed by the work of the Christie Commission (*Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services in Scotland*) and the principle of prevention of rather than reaction to adverse outcomes. However, the Covid-19 pandemic and associated lockdown restrictions have created significant pressures for local authorities. We are interested in the impact of the pandemic on local partnership working arrangements, but we have also read stories of successful adaptations in the face of the pandemic – so we are particularly interested in how partnerships have adapted to the pandemic and related restrictions, and the implications for local resilience in Scotland, the wider UK and beyond.

The study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. How has Covid-19 affected Scottish local partnership arrangements, in the short and medium term?
2. How has Covid-19 affected efforts to implement the recommendations of the Christie Commission (particularly the prevention principle) in Scottish local government?
3. How have Scottish local partnerships changed their practices to meet the challenge of the pandemic, and how can any progress be built upon?
4. What are the implications of these for existing social inequalities?
5. What are the potential lessons for other countries, particularly in terms of local partnership responses to crises?

Whose help are we looking for?

We are looking to hear from people who work in partnerships at the local authority level, including Community Planning Partnerships, Health and Social Care Partnerships and Community Justice/Reducing Reoffending Partnerships. This includes people working for local authorities in various capacities, but also employees of relevant third sector organisations, Police Scotland, the NHS, Skills Development Scotland and other

organisations. At this first stage we aim to get a 'wide' overview of partnership working under Covid-19, by getting data from as many of Scotland's 32 local authorities as possible. A second stage of the project will 'follow up' the online survey with in-depth interviews in some local authorities. If you would be interested in potentially taking part in the interviews, you will be able to indicate this by providing us with your email address for follow-up contact at the end of the online survey.

If you kindly agree to participate in the study, you will be asked to answer a series of questions on the survey page. The survey will ask you about your experiences of partnership working during the Covid-19 pandemic. It should take no longer than 20 minutes (depending on your answers).

Ethical Issues and Data Security

The survey is anonymous unless you choose to provide us with your email address.

You are under *no obligation* to participate in this study and your consent must be not only fully informed but freely given, free of any coercion. Should you agree to participate in the survey, you will still be able to withdraw at any point before the end by simply closing the browser tab/window without submitting your answers. Nobody beyond the research team will know that you either declined this invitation, or that you subsequently withdrew from it.

Although we will be asking you about your experiences *at work*, we recognise that the pandemic has been a distressing experience for people generally and for many individuals specifically impacted. A priority for us is to do all that we reasonably can to ensure that we do not cause you any harm in the study. It is of paramount importance therefore, that if you believe that recalling your experiences of partnership work during the pandemic may cause you harm or distress, **you do not agree to take part in this study**.

All aspects of the study will be conducted in full accordance with the ethical principles set forth by the British Educational Research Association and by Edinburgh Napier University, observing procedures for ensuring informed consent, data security, confidentiality and right to withdraw. All relevant Data Protection measures will be followed in accordance with the University's policies and procedures.

The survey uses the online platform Qualtrics, and some data will initially be stored on Qualtrics' secure servers located in the EU. For more information on Qualtrics and data protection please see <https://www.qualtrics.com/gdpr/>. All data collected will be transferred to secure, University databases to which only the research team will have access.

A data protection Privacy Notice has been included with this Information Sheet should you require any further detailed information not only about the data protection measures we have put in place for this project, but also your rights with regards accessing the personal data we will retain for the duration of the project.

Anonymised data that substantiate research findings will be retained for 10 years after completion.

The results of the study, based on the data that you and other participants provide to us, will be published in an academic peer reviewed journal and possibly presented at future academic conferences. These will be statistics from the survey results as well as possibly some anonymous quotes from the 'free text' questions on the survey.

Exceptions to confidentiality and anonymity in this study

All social researchers are bound by strict codes of research ethics and practice. We intend to keep your data in confidence, however there may be situations in which we would be required to disclose information to relevant authorities. These issues may have no relevance to you – indeed, we do not anticipate encountering them – but we want to be transparent about all our obligations. These include information about acts of terrorism or money laundering (which we would be required to disclose to Police Scotland); ethically, where we believe a child is at risk of abuse or neglect, or there is clear threat to someone’s life (including suicide), we would also feel obliged to disclose this to relevant authorities. Where we discuss criminal offending, we would usually encourage you not to refer to specific details, particularly where the activity has not been prosecuted.

It is important to also be mindful that there are risks to participant confidentiality of using the internet more generally, for example targeted and mass surveillance. You can find more information about risks to your privacy and anonymity online via the Electronic Frontier Foundation.

Written and Verbal Consent

At the start and end of the survey we will ask you for your consent to participate and have your data recorded and used for the study; you will still be able to withdraw at any point before submitting your data to us. Please note that it will **not** be possible to withdraw after the completion of the survey.

Complaints and Concerns

If you worried about this research, or if you are concerned with how it is being conducted, please contact the Convenor for the School of Applied Sciences Research Integrity Committee via: School of Applied Sciences, Edinburgh Napier University, Sighthill Campus, Edinburgh, EH11 4BN, or email: ethics.sas@napier.ac.uk

If you would like to discuss this any further, please don’t hesitate to contact the research team using one of the following address:

Jamie Buchan – Principal Investigator J.Buchan@napier.ac.uk

Carmen Nogales – Research Assistant C.Nogales@napier.ac.uk

Timescale:

Many thanks for taking the time to read this information sheet. Should you kindly agree to participate in this study, and subject to your availability, please complete the survey at your earliest convenience.

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Edinburgh Napier University.