Participant Information Sheet

## What is the study about?

The aim of this research is to understand more about hidden homelessness and other forms of housing insecurity experienced by people in Scotland. It aims to understand what leads to those situations, what impact they have on people, and what if any assistance has been provided.

We want to hear from people who have experienced housing problems, to learn more about what they went through and the challenges they faced in getting help. The people that we want to hear from may have spent some time sleeping on a friend's or family member’s sofa. They may also have lived or are living in overcrowded households, sleeping in cars, or living in a place that feels unsafe or unsuitable.

Before you decide whether to take part in the study, it is important that you understand why it is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take your time to read the following information and ask the research team if you have any questions or if you would like any further information.

**Why take part?**

We want to hear the stories of people and use real-life experiences to inform the future of support for people in Scotland. This research relies on the voices of you and others to understand what has worked well, less well and the impacts of hidden homelessness on people’s lives.

**What will I be asked?**

You will be asked about:

* Your experiences of hidden homelessness or housing insecurity;
* What impact this experience has had on your life;
* Whether you’ve asked for or received help (and if so how useful it has been);
* What if any challenges you’ve encountered in getting help; and
* How support services might be improved.

**What’s involved?**

You will be invited to take part in an interview either in person at a location of your choosing, via telephone or videoconference (MS Teams) with a trained interviewer from the research team. If you would like, you can ask a trusted person to accompany you for support, such as a friend, a family member or someone from a support service that you trust.

**What are the risks and benefits?**

Before deciding whether to take part in the research, please look at the risks and benefits outlined below:

Risks would include:

* Taking up your personal time and
* You might find topics discussed in the interview distressing.

Benefits would include:

* Helping to advance knowledge on this topic;
* Helping to shape policy approaches in this area; and
* Receiving a £20 voucher for participation

**Do I have to take part?**

It is entirely your decision whether you take part. Your decision about whether or not to participate will not have any effect on your eligibility for services. You can also decline to answer particular question or ask for an interview be stopped at any point without having to give a reason and with no effect on your rights or services. You can ask to withdraw from the study at any point up until the data is analysed.

**Will I be identified in any research outputs?**

We will use the findings from the research to produce a report and infographic that will be publicly available. We will disseminate the report findings through presentations.

You will not be identified in the research report or any other outputs. Nothing in the interview will be attributed to you – the only exception being if you were to tell one of the researchers that you or someone else was at risk, in which case any concern would be shared with an appropriate professional. We would tell you if that were to happen.

**Who is conducting the research?**

RSM UK Consulting LLP (RSM) and Institute for Social Policy, Housing, Equalities Research at Heriot-Watt University (I-SPHERE) have been commissioned by Scottish Government.

**What form will the vouchers take?**

You will be supplied with a £20 Love2Shop Voucher as a thank you for taking part in this research. This will not affect your entitlement to benefits, however if you are concerned, we can provide a letter from Scottish Government to present to a benefits officer to confirm that the voucher is not in payment for work and does not impact your entitlement to any benefits.

**How will my data be handled?**

Scottish Government is the Data Controller for this study which means that it is responsible under data protection law for making sure your personal information is kept secure, confidential and used only in the way you have been told it will be used. More information is available in the Privacy Notice.

This interview will take approx. 45 minutes, and be delivered through one of the following formats. We would find it valuable to use transcription and recording services to ensure we accurately capture your own words but if you would prefer not to be recorded that is completely fine and we are still able to proceed with the interview, with researchers taking notes.

In Person

* For in-person interviews we would like to take a recording using a secure device, the recording will then be transcribed by the team using a pseudonym (ID number that won't be tied to your real identity and the recording will be deleted after seven days. If you choose not to be recorded the team will take notes which will be stored securely.

MS Teams

* For online interviews using MS Teams we would like to take a transcript and video recording of the discussion for the purpose of note taking. However, it is also possible to have the interview transcribed without recording video if you prefer. If a recording is taken, it will held by RSM, used to check the transcription for accuracy, and deleted after seven days. If you choose not to be recorded the team will take notes which will be stored securely.

Telephone

* For telephone interviews we would like to take a transcription of the discussion. If you choose not to be transcribed the team will take notes which will be stored securely.

All data collected will be treated in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations, data will be held for a maximum of 6 years before being deleted.

**Support services available?**

If you feel like you would like to seek support for any difficulty that you are currently facing or have faced in the past the following support services are available:

Housing services:

Crisis: phone number: 0131 209 7700, <https://www.crisis.org.uk/about-us/scotland/>

Shelter: Helpline: 0808 800 4444, <https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/>

General advice:

Citizens advice Scotland: Helpline: 0800 028 1456, <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/about-us/get-advice-s/>

Other support services:

Scottish Woman’s aid: helpline number: 0800 027 1234, <https://womensaid.scot/>

Scottish Families Affected By Alcohol and Drugs: Helpline: 08080 10 10 11, <https://www.sfad.org.uk/>

Terrence Higgins Trust Scotland: Helpline: 0141 332 3838, <https://www.tht.org.uk/our-work/about-our-charity/scotland>

**Further information**

If you have any further questions or require any more information, please contact emma.sutton@rsm.com

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST IN THE STUDY**