

Older Adults and Social Inclusion: Exploring the perceptions of and attitudes towards using social media in later life.

Social Media Users Focus group Participant Information Sheet

You are being invited to take part in a Research Study. Before you decide whether you would like to take part or not, it is important for you to understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take your time and read the following information carefully.

Please ask if there is anything that is not clear to you or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

What is the purpose of the study? What are we looking at?

Over the last decade the growth of Social Media has added a new dimension to the way in which we communicate with each other. However the older population do not appear to be as digitally engaged as their younger counterparts and therefore may be at risk of social exclusion and disengagement from society as such technologies take off. The aim of this proposed study is to examine the perceptions and attitudes of older adults to using social media in later life and determine whether its use supports social inclusion.

We would like to look at some areas in more detail and will be asking questions in an online focus group discussion via Twitter as follows:

1. What do you understand by social media and what are your views on its use?
2. What do you consider to be the Benefits and disadvantages of using social media?
3. What motivates use of social media?

The study will comprise of a social media users focus group(1) carried out on Twitter and a non users focus group(2) comprising of older adults with little or no experience of using social media. The findings from group 1 will be presented to group 2.

Both groups will comprise of a mixture of participants over the age of 50 and we want to hear your views, learn more about your experiences, and find out what you believe are older peoples' perceptions, attitudes and views on using social media in later life.

The research is being conducted by Carol Cleary as part of her Masters Degree in Ageing Studies at Swansea University. Her Dissertation Supervisor is Dr. Charles Musselwhite who is an Associate Professor in Gerontology at the Centre for Innovative Ageing (CIA) at Swansea University. Carol is employed by Abertawe Bro Morgannwg Health Board as a Discharge Liaison Nurse specialising in complex and long term care of the older person.

Why have I been chosen?

We are inviting you to take part in this study, because it is very important to us that we gather the views, opinions and experiences of people from a wide range of ages, backgrounds and computer literacy. You have been selected to take part as you are a social media user

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part, you can change your mind at any time up to the start of data analysis (one month after the focus group has concluded) and withdraw without giving us a reason. If you wish, we would destroy any information (data) that you have given us.

What will be required of me if I take part?

We will be hosting an online Twitter discussion for older users of social media @ILCUK. The live Twitter discussions will run for 2 hours on 3 consecutive days and you will be able to contribute to the discussion by using #SocMediaChat. There will be an opportunity for you to make any

additional comments after that as the Twitter feed will remain open for 24 hours after each discussion.

As you will be participating in the social media users group, your data will be collected during the live twitter discussion. We need to record this so that we know exactly what it is that you have told us.

The Twitter feed will be then used to write up the information for us to examine in detail. This typed copy will be anonymous and securely stored after the interview in a locked cabinet in Abertawe Bro Morgannwg Health Board. After project completion, the copy will be destroyed. You will keep this copy of the information sheet along with a signed consent form.

This written version will be analysed to identify key areas and issues that you have raised with regard to social media use in later life. After the discussion has been written up, you will receive an e-copy of what we've found. We would welcome it if you were to read these through and provide us with your comments. We would take these into consideration during the final write-up stage.

What are the possible disadvantages, risks and benefits of taking part?

You may consider the inconvenience of giving up some of your time for the interview to be a disadvantage. However, we hope that participants will find the experience interesting and rewarding. If you choose to withdraw from the study, we can destroy all the information collected and will not use it, unless you are happy for us to retain it.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

Yes. All the information gained during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. Your personal details will be accessible to the main researcher on the project, Carol Cleary, only. All computers will be password protected and all collected data anonymised. Procedures for handling, processing, storage and destruction of your data will be compliant with the Data Protection Act 1998.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results will form the basis of an MSc Dissertation at Swansea University and will be shared with Academic institutions, Welsh government and organisations that support older adults such as Age UK and International Longevity Centre (ILC). We hope that our research findings will add to the growing body of knowledge relating to social media use in later life and help to inform policy makers.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information and choosing to participate. If you have any further queries please contact Carol, who will do her best to answer any questions you may have. Her contact details are:

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