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**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET**

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**Title:** Experiences of Care Concerns in Foster Care Settings

**Lead Investigator**

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**Researchers**

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**Description of the study**

Care concern notifications are a common aspect of foster care for many people involved in the foster care system. In 2019-2020, over 183,000 care concern notifications were made, with nearly 49,000 of the 70,000 direct abuse claims being substantiated following investigation. However, despite this overwhelming number of care concerns, there is little research to date on the lived experiences of carers and foster children who have been involved in a care concern process. This study aims to gain a better understanding of the care concern notification and investigation process, and the impact that involvement in this process has on both foster children and their carers.

This project is led by Professor Damien Riggs (Flinders University) and Kelly Ryan (UniSA). The interviews will be conducted by Shoshana Rosenberg, and all data will be analysed by the research team.

**Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study is to document lived experiences of the care concern process,

including the details of the notifiable incident, subsequent foster care agency actions, and any immediate or longer-term effects that involvement in the process has had on participants. The study also aims to add to the body of knowledge surrounding foster care experiences more broadly, in particular the effect of foster care agency processes on the wellbeing of foster children, as well as the ways the foster care system can better manage care concerns and their emotional, relational, and/or legal ramifications. By gaining better insight into these processes and their impact on involved parties we aim to create best practice guidelines on care concern management which could be used to improve how these processes are carried out by foster care agencies and the foster families they are assigned to work with.

### **What will I be asked to do?**

You are invited to take part in this study as you are someone who is either a current or previous foster carer who has been involved in a care concern notification. The study will involve an audio-recorded 60-minute interview which will be conducted over Zoom or Microsoft Teams at a time that is convenient for you. Participation in the interview is voluntary and you may withdraw any time before or during the interview. You will also be given a month-long period following the interview to withdraw.

### **Benefits of Study**

Participants are not expected to directly benefit from the study, however each participant will receive a \$25 voucher from Connecting Foster and Kinship Carers South Australia as recognition of their time.

### **Confidentiality and Privacy**

If you choose to participate, your participation will be anonymous to everyone other than yourself, and all information provided will be treated as strictly confidential. Only the investigators listed on this form will have access to the individual information you provide. An external transcription service will transcribe the audio recorded interviews, but will not have access to any personal information about you recorded in the demographic form. Publications arising from this study will protect your anonymity, including by removing any identifying or personal information. The only exception to this anonymity is in the case that information is disclosed which indicates a potential risk of harm to a person, in which case the research team is bound by the state's mandatory reporting laws.

### **Data Storage**

Information collected will be stored securely on a password protected computer at Flinders University and on the Flinders University computer server during and after the study. On project completion, all data will be securely stored on the Flinders University computer server for at least five years after publication of the results. Only members of the research team will have access to the transcribed interview data. Following the required data storage period, all data will be securely destroyed according to university protocols.

### **Are there any risks or discomforts if I am involved?**

As this study is aimed at gaining an understanding of care concern incidents and subsequent notification processes, there will be topics of discussion which are difficult or potentially

triggering, including questions about experiences of violence, abuse, and/or distress. You are not obligated to divulge any information or discuss any topics which you find difficult, and can request to skip a question at any time during the interview.

The researchers do not expect the interview questions to cause any significant emotional harm or discomfort to the participants. We do, however, ask that you consider whether there is any chance that the study focus might be significantly upsetting for yourself, and if there is any chance that participating may cause excessive or unnecessary distress, to determine whether participation is appropriate for you and your mental wellbeing. If you do choose to participate and subsequently experience feelings of emotional discomfort or distress as a result of participation, the following phone services are available should you wish to speak to someone other than the research team:

#### *Helplines*

Lifeline – 13 11 14, [www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au)

Beyond Blue – 1300 22 4636, [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)

QLife – 1800 184 527, [www.qlife.org.au](http://www qlife.org.au)

MensLine – 1300 789 978, [www.mensline.org.au](http://www.mensline.org.au)

#### *Foster Care Support*

Connecting Foster & Kinship Carers (SA) - 1800 732 272, [www.cfc-sa.org.au](http://www.cfc-sa.org.au)

#### **Agreeing to participation**

If you consent to participating, please indicate your consent on the final page of this document. By participating in an interview, you are consenting to your interview responses being used in this study. You may, at any time, terminate the interview without providing any reason, and if after participating in an interview you decide to revoke consent, any audio recordings will be destroyed. You can withdraw by emailing the project email at [contact@fostercarestudy.com](mailto:contact@fostercarestudy.com) and will be given four weeks to withdraw from the study. You will be remunerated for your time regardless of whether your data will ultimately be used for the project.

#### **How will I receive feedback?**

The consent form below contains tick boxes to indicate whether you would like to approve your interview transcript prior to being included in the study, as well as whether you would like to be kept up to date on any publications which will come out of this study. You are not obligated to tick either box.

#### **Ethics Committee Approval**

This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Human Research Ethics Committee (Project Number 6400). For more information regarding ethics approval of the project the Executive Officer of the Committee can be contacted by telephone on (08) 8201 2543, or by email [human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au](mailto:human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au)

#### **Queries and Concerns**

Queries or concerns regarding the research can be directed to the research team via the contact details listed at the top of this information sheet. If you have any complaints or

reservations about the ethical conduct of this study (project 6400), please contact the Flinders University Human Research Ethics Committee via telephone (08) 8201 2543 or email [human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au](mailto:human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au)

**Thank you for your time. We hope you will accept our invitation to participate.**

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## CONSENT FORM

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### Consent Statement

- I have read and understood the information about the research, and I understand I am being asked to provide informed consent to participate in this research study. I understand that I can contact the research team if I have further questions about this research study.
- I am not aware of any condition that would prevent my participation, and I agree to participate in this project.
- I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time during the study.
- I understand that I can contact Flinders University's Research Ethics & Compliance Office if I have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this study.
- I understand that my involvement is confidential, and that the information collected may be published. I understand that I will not be identified in any research products.

I further consent to:

- participating in an interview
- having my information audio recorded
- my data and information being used in this project

I would like to:

- receive a copy of my transcript to approve prior to being included in the study
- receive updates on the study, including any works published from the research

**Signed:**

**Name:**

**Email:**

**Date:**

## Demographic Details Sheet

Date of Birth:	
Country of Birth:	
Home postcode:	
How many foster children do you have/have you had?	
Do you have any other children?	
Gender:	
Sexuality:	
Race/ethnicity:	
Marital status:	
Occupation:	
What kind of foster care have you provided?	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergency <input type="checkbox"/> Respite <input type="checkbox"/> Short-Term <input type="checkbox"/> Long-Term <input type="checkbox"/> Kinship <input type="checkbox"/> Other: .....
Work Status (please tick):	<input type="checkbox"/> Full time <input type="checkbox"/> Part time <input type="checkbox"/> Homemaker <input type="checkbox"/> Retired <input type="checkbox"/> Other: .....
Highest level of education completed (please tick):	<input type="checkbox"/> Year 10 <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary <input type="checkbox"/> Apprenticeship <input type="checkbox"/> TAFE (please specify which level): ..... <input type="checkbox"/> University (bachelor level) <input type="checkbox"/> University (honours level) <input type="checkbox"/> University (masters level) <input type="checkbox"/> University (doctoral level) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: .....
Are you currently studying? (if yes, please provide details):	
Your <i>household's</i> net (after-tax) income per year (please tick):	<input type="checkbox"/> \$0-39,150 <input type="checkbox"/> \$39,151-51,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$51,001-64,650 <input type="checkbox"/> \$64,651-79,950 <input type="checkbox"/> \$79,951-95,850 <input type="checkbox"/> \$95,851-141,900 <input type="checkbox"/> \$141,901+
How did you find out about the study?:	<input type="checkbox"/> Instagram <input type="checkbox"/> Facebook advertisement <input type="checkbox"/> Twitter <input type="checkbox"/> Online support group <input type="checkbox"/> Friend <input type="checkbox"/> Partner/spouse <input type="checkbox"/> Family member <input type="checkbox"/> Other: .....