

Care experience as a protected characteristic: Scoping and peer knowledge exchange – Online Focus Groups Information Sheet 2026

You are being invited to take part in an online focus group as part of Research in Practice’s study on care experience as a protected characteristic. This work is funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation.

Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important to understand why the research is being carried out and what it will involve. Please take time to read this information carefully. If you do want to take part, please use the focus group sign-up link at the bottom of the page.

Research information

Purpose of the research:	Over 100 councils have passed motions to give legal protection against discrimination on the basis of care experience. This research is a scoping study to learn more about the ways in which care is recognised as a protected characteristic and impacts for care-experienced people in these local areas.
Why have I been invited to participate?	You are invited to take part because you are interested in examining the implementation and impact of local recognition of care experience as a protected characteristic in England. You may work in, or with, a local area in England that has recognised care experience as a protected characteristic, or you may work in an area that has not recognised care experience as a protected characteristic. In the online focus groups we will explore how local recognition of care experience as a protected characteristic is being implemented and experienced in different areas. You should not share identifiable, personal details about the families and individuals you have worked with during focus groups. Specific issues (such as complaints or safeguarding concerns) should be raised through your services’ appropriate channels.
How can I take part?	If you would like to take part in the online focus groups, you can complete the sign-up form at the bottom of the page.

Do I have to take part?	No. You can decide whether or not to take part. You can answer some questions and leave others. Your job and role at work will not be affected whatever you decide. No identifying information will be used in reporting or shared outside the research team.
What are the possible benefits of taking part?	Your contributions will add to the sector's understanding of uses and impacts of recognising care experience as a protected characteristic; and share learning around the challenges and opportunities of meaningful implementation. Furthermore, by attending you will have the opportunity to share learning, explore challenges and hear from others working across local systems.
Will what I say in the study be confidential?	We will report on themes and key issues from the focus groups. Short quotations from your comments may also be used in reporting the research. We will remove identifiable information (e.g. names, job roles) and highly specific details.
How will you keep my information safe?	The information you give us will be kept safe as our research follows the law on data protection. These laws are the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. All personal information like names and contact details and research data will be stored securely. It will be deleted 6 months after completion of the project. Our privacy notice is available here.
What if I change my mind?	If you change your mind, please contact us at any of the addresses below. We will work with you to find and withdraw your information from the research where possible.
Who will see the end results of this research?	Anonymised information and findings from the research may be used in published reports, presentations/events, and shared in other communications.

Research title:	Care experience as a protected characteristic: Scoping and peer knowledge exchange
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[Sign up to focus groups here](#)