



Interview Participant information sheet

Plain English and Easy Read versions of this information sheet are available at:
<https://link.medact.org/CriminalisingDistress>.

Thank you for your interest in this research. This document gives you details about:

- Who is doing this study and what we aim to find out
- What taking part in an interview would involve
- How your confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained
- The possible risks and benefits of taking part in this study
- The types of expenses you can claim
- Your right to withdraw
- How we will use the research findings
- What to do next if you would like to participate

Please read through the information below and take some time to decide if you would like to take part. Feel free to talk to other people about the research if you would like to.

What is the title of this research project? The title of this project is 'Criminalising distress: empowering patients, challenging police in mental health care'.

What are the aims of the research? Serenity Integrated Mentoring (SIM), also known by other names, is a model-of-care utilised by some NHS mental health trusts which involves police officers in planned (non-emergency) 'therapeutic' interventions and/or community mental health teams. Their role in managing individuals deemed 'high intensity users' of mental health services has been controversial. This project explores the evolution and impacts of, accountability around, and alternatives to SIM. It aims to document and contribute to greater understanding and awareness of the impacts of police involvement in mental health care, and to amplify the voices and lived experiences of those most affected.

Who is doing this research? This project is led by Medact, a health justice charity. Support is being provided by Dr Ryan Essex at the University of Greenwich, which has granted ethical approval for the research. A Steering Committee composed of experts-by-experience - former members of the StopSIM coalition - are overseeing the project. The contact details for the lead investigator, Medact Research Manager Dr Hil Aked, are at the end of this form. You can read [Medact's research policy here](#).

Who is funding this research? This study is part-funded by a Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust grant to Medact. The remaining funding is currently coming from Medact's core budget though we are seeking a second ethical funding source.

How will the research be done? This research will involve interviewing participants (including service users, their families, and health workers) about their knowledge of and experiences with SIM. Separately, we will also be filing freedom of information requests to a range of public bodies and doing a literature review of materials relating to SIM and the broader issues of criminalisation of distress.

Who can take part in this study? You can take part in this research if you:

Criminalising distress: empowering patients, challenging police in mental health care

- Are at least 18 years old
- Have experience with SIM or a programme with a different name based on the SIM model (eg. JET, HIP, PHIM, SHIPP etc) at an English NHS trust
- This experience could be as a service user, a member of their family / friend / other supporter, a health worker, or another relevant stakeholder.

What will happen if I agree to take part? If you agree to take part, we will ask if you have any further questions about this information. We can explain the answers via email or a phone call, to ensure you understand everything. Then, we will ask you to fill out a Wellbeing and Safety Questionnaire and a Consent Form. Then, we will schedule a time for you to participate in an interview, likely in late June, July, August or possibly early September 2023. This could be conducted either online via a Teams video call or in-person, depending on your preference. We estimate that the interview will take about 60 minutes.

We will share with you the questions we plan to ask in advance of the interview. These questions are designed to guide the conversation. However, the interviewer will give you the space to talk about your experiences and perspectives freely, including using language that makes you most comfortable. We would like to record the interviews so that we can fully capture your experiences in your own words. Recordings will be stored securely (further details below). If you are not comfortable with the interview being recorded, the interviewer can take written notes instead.

What about confidentiality and anonymity? The information you provide to us will remain confidential and will not be shared with anyone beyond the research team. Personal data will be stored securely on a restricted-access, password-protected University of Greenwich drive in line with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and destroyed after a maximum of 5 years. Raw audio files will be deleted once interview transcripts have been checked for accuracy and de-identified. Only these de-identified transcripts will be used for analysis, meaning that no information which could potentially identify you (for example, specific people, places or actions) will be included in any outputs - though some non-identifiable contributions, such as quotations, may be used anonymously.

Please note that while we will ensure all personal data is confidential and is not shared, there may be exceptions on very rare occasions: for example, if your responses indicate you or a third party are at serious risk of harm, or if a serious safeguarding incident occurs, we may need to break confidentiality. If this happens, we will discuss this with you first. Further information is provided on the Wellbeing and Safety Questionnaire which we will make available to people who express interest in taking part in the study via the form linked to below. In particular, it includes a transparency statement explaining that while we will seek to avoid calling emergency services - and have put in place measures to avoid the need to do so - we cannot guarantee that we will never deem it necessary to do so.

Are there any risks to me? There are some risks to taking part in the interview. We understand that asking people to share their experiences of SIM may be uncomfortable or distressing. If this is a major concern for you then you do not have to participate. If, having read this information, you still feel that you would like to be involved in the project, you are free to stop or cancel the interview if you begin to feel uncomfortable at any time. If you feel uncomfortable after the interview has taken place, contact hilaked@medact.org and we will delete the recording.

We have taken steps to minimise the distress you might feel as a result of participating in this study:

- We have consulted closely with former members of the lived-experience led Stop SIM coalition, who sit on our Steering Committee, to design the study including the interviews. We have consulted with the National Survivor User Network and Healing Justice London and have also convened an Ethics Advisory Committee consisting of several academics.
- We will send you the interview questions in advance. The interviewer will check-in with you approximately halfway through, remind you that they can withdraw at any time and/or omit any question that you prefer not to answer, and ask if you would like to pause for a break or to continue. Interviews will stop if you indicate you are distressed or show signs of distress. You can pause or withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without any detriment to you.

Criminalising distress: empowering patients, challenging police in mental health care

- The Wellbeing and Safety Questionnaire which we will ask you to fill out before scheduling the interview is designed to enable the research team to recognise and respond appropriately if you do become distressed. For example, it includes a request for you to provide us with the telephone number of a trusted contact who you can call, or we can call, should you need further support.
- After the interview, the researcher will also be available to discuss any questions you have as part of a short debrief (up to 30 minutes). We are happy to send you a transcript of your own interview on request and we will listen to requests to amend anything that you feel you may have misphrased or misunderstood so that you have editorial control.
- Further down the line, we will let you know in advance prior to publication of our report or other outputs (likely in April 2024) so that you know when to expect them.

What are the possible benefits? We hope that you find taking part in this research interesting and rewarding, and that you will feel positive about contributing to a project that aims to raise awareness of this issue. We plan to publish a report based on the findings of our research, which will foreground the voices of those most impacted by SIM and will be disseminated as widely as possible, so this is a chance to raise awareness and potentially influence policy change.

Will I get paid to take part? While we cannot pay participants, we will reimburse travel, care and/or internet access expenses. We can answer any questions about this on the phone or via email.

What will you do with the results of this study? We intend on publishing an open-access report and a shorter policy briefing based on our findings. Potentially, we will also produce infographics and submit papers to academic journals, as well as presenting the findings at conferences and events.

Do I have to take part / do I have the right to withdraw? You do not have to participate in this research. Participation is voluntary. Even if you decide to take part, you have the right to withdraw your data without giving a reason and without detriment, even after completing a Consent Form, up until the end of September 2023. After this point, data from your interview will have been analysed and combined with all other data so it will not be possible to remove your data.

If you have partially completed an interview but decide to withdraw from the study, we will retain and analyse these responses, unless you decide to withdraw this data. Contact hilaked@medact.org to remove your data. If you decide to withdraw from the project, a feedback/termination form will be sent to you to identify any issues or problems, without detriment to you.

If I want to take part, what happens next? If you would like to take part in an interview for this research, please register your interest by [clicking on this link and completing the short form](#). If you have any difficulties accessing this form or would like this or any other information in a different format, please contact hilaked@medact.org. We will then contact you to answer any questions you have about this Information Sheet, before asking you to fill out a Wellbeing and Safety Questionnaire and a Consent Form. After that, we will schedule an interview, likely in late June, July, August or possibly early September 2023. Please note that we are a small team with limited capacity and resources and cannot guarantee that we will be able to interview everyone who expresses interest.

What if I need to know more before I can decide? Please contact hilaked@medact.org if you would like to ask further questions before deciding whether to participate in this research.

What if there is a problem? If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, please contact tjchuah@medact.org and/or r.w.essex@gre.ac.uk.

Key contacts

Dr Hil Aked
Medact Research and Policy Manager
hilaked@medact.org
020 7324 4734

Dr Ryan Essex
Research Fellow
University of Greenwich
r.w.essex@gre.ac.uk