

## INFORMATION SHEET



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**STUDY TITLE:** Evaluation of the Autism Centre for Employment assessment tools

**SFEC Reference No:** 2016-022

We would like to invite you to take part in our research study. Before you decide we would like you to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. If you would like any more information or you have any questions, please contact us (contact details given above)

### **What is the Autism Centre for Employment (ACE)?**

The Autism Centre for Employment (ACE) was developed to address the gap in provision for adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in terms of employment. ACE also aims to facilitate job retention by developing tools to support employers in the process of making work adaptations tailored to their employees with ASD.

### **What is the purpose of the study?**

This study aims to evaluate a new version of an online questionnaire identifying individual needs in the workplace of people with ASD. For this purpose, you will be randomly assigned to one of two types of assessment. Either you will complete a short version of a questionnaire (30 minutes) plus you will be interviewed (40 minutes) or you will complete a new version of the questionnaire alone (45-90 minutes).

### **Why have I been invited?**

You have been invited to take part because you have a diagnosis of ASD and you are either in employment or about start a new job.

### **Do I have to take part?**

No, taking part in this research is entirely voluntary. It is up to you to decide if you want to volunteer for the study. We will describe the study in this information sheet. If you agree to take part, we will then ask you to sign the attached consent form.

### **What will happen to me if I take part?**

If you take part in the study you will be asked to either (i) fill a short version of the questionnaire and be interviewed (personally, by phone or by skype), or (ii) fill a longer version of the questionnaire. The short version of the questionnaire takes about 30 minutes to complete and the interview about 40 minutes. The longer version of the questionnaire takes between 45 and 90 minutes to complete.

Once you have completed the questionnaires, and interview if applicable, we will prepare a 20-page individual report summarising your strengths and areas in which you may need support. The individual report will be then sent to you and, if you agree with its contents, to your employer.

You will be then asked to fill in a few questionnaires relating to your confidence, well-being and job satisfaction at two times with an 8 week interval. This is so we can assess whether the training to your employer, using the reports, is effective at identifying your needs. These questionnaires should take no longer than 20 minutes to complete. During the 8 week interval, you will be asked to fill a feedback sheet weekly about how things are going. This should take no more than 15 minutes maximum per week.

### **What measurements will be taken?**

The online questionnaire has two sections, one relating to the cognitive profile associated to ASD (e.g. social and communication skills, sensory issues and flexibility) and another questionnaire about employability factors (e.g., career preferences, self-perceived employability skills). Additional questions will be asked regarding specific needs or strengths either in the longer version of an online questionnaire or in the interview. There are no wrong or right answers to those questions.

The weekly feedback sheets will be asking which satisfactions and challenging situations have you encountered at work during the week. Finally, the evaluation questionnaires will assess different areas of job satisfaction and quality of life in the beginning and in the end of the study.

### **What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?**

There are no risks identified with participating in this study. Completing the online questionnaire takes between 45 minutes to 90 minutes depending on which version you do, weekly feedbacks around 15 minutes and the two other questionnaires 20 minutes each. You will be able to complete it entirely at your own pace and on different sessions. If you feel the questionnaire is too long and decide not to complete, you may stop at any time and we will destroy all data collected until that point.

### **What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

The outcomes of this study will benefit employees with ASD as well as their employers. It will help develop more efficient tools to help people with ASD to maintain their job as well as the satisfaction with a job. We also hope that the reports we produce regarding your areas of strengths and needs will have a positive impact on your job satisfaction.

### **Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?**

The raw data, which identifies you by your name, will be kept securely in a double-password protected online database. Hard copies will be kept securely in a locked filing cabinet at the Autism Centre for Employment office. Only the Principal Investigator and Tomas Rubin, who works as a research assistant in this project, will have access to the online and hardcopies of your raw data.

The data, when made anonymous, may be presented to others at scientific meetings, or published as a project report, academic dissertation or scientific paper or book. It could also be made available to any sponsor of the research. Anonymous data, which does not identify you, may be used in future research studies approved by an Appropriate Research Ethics Committee.

The raw data, which would identify you, will not be passed to anyone outside the study team without your express written permission. The exception to this will be any regulatory authority who may have the legal right to access the data for the purposes of conducting an investigation in exceptional cases. The raw data will be retained for up to 10 years. When it is no longer required, the data will be disposed of securely (e.g. electronic media and paper records / images) destroyed.

**What will happen if I don't want to carry on with the study?**

As a volunteer you can stop completing the questionnaire at any time without giving a reason. If you decide not to complete the questionnaire, we will destroy all data collected from you until that point. We will however keep any data provided by your employer as we would still be interested in whether your employer may have found our training beneficial. After you have completed the questionnaires, you have up to 7 days to withdraw from the study. If you do so we will delete all data collected from you.

**What if there is a problem?**

If you have a query, concern or complaint about any aspect of this study, in the first instance you should contact the Principal Investigator (PI) if appropriate. The contact details of the PI are detailed at the front of this page.

If your concern or complaint is not resolved by the PI you should contact the Head of Department:

The Head of Department  
Department / School of Psychology  
University of Portsmouth  
King Henry Building  
Portsmouth, PO1 2DY

Dr Sherria Hoskins  
023 9284 6321  
[Sherria.Hoskins@port.ac.uk](mailto:Sherria.Hoskins@port.ac.uk)

If the complaint remains unresolved, please contact:

The University Complaints Officer  
023 9284 3642  
[complaintsadvice@port.ac.uk](mailto:complaintsadvice@port.ac.uk)

**Who is funding the research?**

This research is funded by Research Autism, a national charity. You can find information about this charity at <http://researchautism.net>. None of the researchers or research assistants will receive any financial reward by conducting this study, other than their normal salary as an employee of the University.

**Who has reviewed the study?**

This study has been scientifically reviewed within the Department of Psychology and then ethically reviewed and been given favourable ethical opinion by the Science Faculty Ethics Committee.

**Thank you!**

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for considering volunteering for this study. If you do volunteer for this study please follow this link:

Before you start completing the questionnaire, you will be asked to consent to taking part. Please read carefully the consent form and feel free to ask any questions if you have any doubts.