# Information sheet for research participants

## Volunteering together: Inclusive volunteering and disabled people

We would like to invite you to be a peer researcher in our project.

Before you decide to do so, it is important you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish.

Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Thank you for reading this.

## Who is conducting and funding the research?

This research project is conducted by a team coordinated by Mikey Erhardt from Disability Rights UK (DR UK), and Rushaa Hamid from Toynbee Hall. It is supported by money granted to DR UK by [the Trust for London.](https://trustforlondon.org.uk/what-we-do/housing/temporary-accommodation/)

Mikey Erhardt (He/Him) is a policy officer and campaigner at Disability Rights UK. Mikey is Disabled (neuro-developmental impairment & mental ill-health and distress) and has been involved in housing campaigning and advocacy through his work at DR UK and tenants’ union organising.

Rushaa Hamid (she/her) is Toynbee Hall’s Research Manager and leads their participatory action research programme. Rushaa is disabled (with multiple impairments), has lived experience of housing insecurity, and has also been involved in housing advocacy for many years through the London Renters Union.

## What is the purpose of the research?

The purpose of the research is to generate new knowledge and increase understanding of what can be done to improve safety and quality of temporary accommodation and ultimately prevent Disabled people from ending up in it.

Doing this as a PAR project will empower young Disabled people to be part of the movement for change.

## What is PAR?

We are planning to do a type of peer research called Participatory Action Research - essentially that means that we will work with people who have lived experience of the issue to design the project, carry out the data collection, and analyse the results. PAR is composed of three parts:

* Participatory - We involve the community in our research from the beginning and value everyone's knowledge.
* Action - We work to make meaningful changes with the research we do.
* Research - We produce high-quality research to give us and others a deep insight into the topic at hand.

## Why have I been invited to take part?

You are being invited to participate in this research because you have experience of temporary accommodation as a disabled person.

## What will happen if I take part?

Once you have expressed interest in taking part, you will be asked to share a little about yourself, including in which borough you are currently houses, and to which local authority you made your application for support.

We will get in touch if you are able to take part – unfortunately we have a maximum number of participants, with limited capacity so you are not guaranteed to take part if you apply. At this stage we are looking to fill 10 spaces as active peer researchers. However, there may be other avenues by which you can take part.

We are hoping to start our project in August 2025 and for the rest of 2025 we will be working together to decide how we want to do our research. From January 2026 we will start to speak with other young disabled people in temporary accommodation to find out their views and to work on figuring out solutions to the problem. We then want to talk to those in power to get them to change. The project will wrap up aim to finish in Summer 2026.

## Do I have to take part?

Participation is completely voluntary. You should only take part if you want to. If you decide to take part, you will be asked to indicate your agreement in the consent form below or by giving consent at the start of the project. You are free to withdraw from the project at any stage of the research, without having to give a reason.

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

While being involved in participatory research can be rewarding, there are some risks to consider. Talking about personal experiences, especially difficult ones, can sometimes be upsetting or emotionally tiring. If you are paid for your involvement, it could affect your benefits, so it’s important to get advice.

We will do our best to create a supportive and safe experience for you. Should reflecting on your experiences bring up distressing memories or feelings during the interview, you can take breaks, or end the interview if you would like. We can also give you information about services that are available to you if you would like to access support.

## What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Being involved in participatory research can have several benefits. If you take part, you will be helping us to make the Temporary Accommodation system better. You will be participating in innovative and exciting research where you will gain new skills and meet new people. Your involvement can help make our research more relevant and meaningful, and you will have a chance to meet decision makers to push for positive change. You will also receive a thank you for your time at a rate of £20/hour.

Some of the skills you will learn include:

* Research ethics
* Research methodology
* Facilitation and/or interviewing
* Public speaking
* Campaigning

## What will happen to your information?

We will not talk to anyone else about you or the information you have given us, it is confidential.

Under the Data Protection Act 2018, you have rights over how your personal data is collected, used, and stored. This means you have the right to know what data is being collected about you, why it is being used, and who it will be shared with. You also have the right to see your data, correct it if it’s wrong, and ask for it to be deleted in some cases. Any personal information you share will be kept secure, used only for agreed purposes, and handled in line with the law to protect your privacy.

For this project any personal information that can identify you will be removed and will not be included in any reports we produce. In accordance with data protection legislation, your personal details will never be given out to anyone not involved in this research, and any recordings we may take will be safely stored and permanently deleted at the end of the project.

## What will happen to the findings of the research?

We intend to produce:

* A full report (with an executive summary) drawing together the research findings, stories and experiences from the organisational case studies, key learning points and practice considerations/recommendations for government, local councils and others. This will be made publicly available.
* An alternative creative way of sharing this information, such as videos, zines, or art productions.

## I receive state benefits, how does this impact them?

We know that some people may be concerned that their benefits will be affected by joining this project. Payment can affect means-tested benefits like Universal Credit and Employment and Support Allowance (ESA).

If you are categorised in limited capability for work and/or work-related activity you are allowed some earnings before your benefit payments are reduced – this is called a work allowance and is normally at least a few hundred pounds. In ESA you can continue to receive payments so long as you work less than 16 hours a week and your earnings are below a certain amount (currently £195.50). You should make sure to speak to an advice organisation such as Citizens Advice to understand how payments from this project might affect your benefits.

When you work on this project you should inform your work coach, who will decide if this work counts as income. We can provide a letter that explains what we are doing, and how it is similar to service user involvement and how it should not be mistaken as capacity for work.

## Who should I contact for further information?

Please contact TAResearch@disabilityrightsuk.org for further information and to ask any questions you might have.