



## **Participant Information**

### **Study title: Understanding the impact of wearing facemasks and using virtual meeting platforms for individuals who stammer**

#### **What is this project about?**

We are exploring the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on communication for people who stammer. We are particularly interested in the impact (positive or negative) of having to wear a facemask when speaking, and the increased use of virtual meeting platforms, such as Zoom or Teams. We are using this survey to ask about your experiences. We do not ask for information that will identify you, and your responses will be kept confidential.

We have all been asked to change our behaviour and activities during Covid-19, to reduce the spread of infection. Some of these changes impact on how we communicate with each other. Wearing facemasks, for example, changes our interactions since we are no longer assisted by lipreading and facial expression. Use of virtual platforms (e.g. zoom) for formal and informal meetings also change the way we interact and make it more difficult to use non-verbal cues to indicate when we want to speak. In contrast a 'chat' box on a virtual platform potentially reduces pressure on communication. Whilst these changes to the way we communicate with each other affect all of us in different ways, little is known about how they affect people who stammer. This study aims to address some of these gaps in our knowledge

We aim to use the information from this survey to develop guidelines and recommendations to support people who stammer during periods of mask and virtual platform use and increase awareness of the impacts of Covid-19 for people who stammer. We also aim to publish in academic journals to reach health professionals and clinical researchers, and to deliver recommendations for speech and language therapists. We hope this will help health professionals meet the needs of people who stammer during and following the COVID-19 pandemic, and to plan for future events of this type.

#### **Can I take part?**

We are looking for people who stammer, aged 18 and over, to take part in this survey. You must also live in the UK.

#### **What would taking part involve?**

This is a survey including some tick box responses and some free text responses. All questions are optional, and you can exit the survey at any time, if you change your mind about taking part. Your responses will only be saved if you click the 'finish' button at the end of the survey. Once you have clicked 'finish', it will not be possible to withdraw your responses, as these are saved anonymously.



### **Are there any benefits or risks to taking part?**

You will have the opportunity to tell us about your experience of wearing face masks and using virtual communication platforms. There are no direct benefits to participants taking part in this study. However, it is hoped that the study findings may inform recommendations and guidelines to improve people's experience in the future. No disadvantages or risks have been identified. We would be happy to keep you informed about the outcomes of the study. Please email [Jennifer.chesters@nbt.nhs.uk](mailto:Jennifer.chesters@nbt.nhs.uk) if you would like us to do this. It will not be possible to link your email details with your survey responses, so your responses will remain anonymous.

### **How will my information be kept confidential?**

We will not be collecting any information that could be used to identify you. All data will be kept confidential and password protected on a secure system and only accessible by the research team. North Bristol NHS Trust is the sponsor for this study based in the United Kingdom.

North Bristol NHS Trust will keep data from this study for 5 years after the study has finished. You can find out more about how we use your information at: [www.nbt.nhs.uk/research-innovation/our-research/patient-information-health-care-research](http://www.nbt.nhs.uk/research-innovation/our-research/patient-information-health-care-research) or by contacting the study team.

### **Who is organising and funding this study?**

The study is being run by a team at the Bristol Speech and Language Therapy Research Unit, Dr Yvonne Wren is the Principal Investigator in the team. The study sponsor is North Bristol NHS Trust, and it is funded by The Underwood Trust for Research.

A group of people who stammer, Speech and Language Therapists and representative of the STAMMA charity have been involved in designing the survey, providing feedback on the aims of the study and piloting the survey.

### **Who has reviewed this study?**

The University of Bristol Faculty of Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee (FREC) has reviewed and approved all documents associated with this study (reference no. 117040).

### **Further information and contact details**

We would be very happy to answer any questions or provide further information to help you decide whether to take part. Please contact Dr Jen Chesters ([Jennifer.Chesters@nbt.nhs.uk](mailto:Jennifer.Chesters@nbt.nhs.uk)) or Dr Yvonne Wren ([Yvonne.Wren@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:Yvonne.Wren@bristol.ac.uk)). If you have any concerns about how your data will be used, please contact Dr Yvonne Wren in the first instance. If you are still not satisfied please contact the Information Governance Team at North Bristol Trust (Tel. 0117 4142019).