



Participant Information Leaflet

Study Title	An exploratory study of the experiences, perspectives and decision-making processes surrounding retention among allied healthcare professional workforce in Ireland.
Research Site(s)	Virtual Focus Groups
Principal Investigator(s) and Co-Investigator(s) (Study Team) (insert names, titles and contact details including Trinity School/Department/Unit)	Principal Investigator: Hollie O’Sullivan, MSc Student, Centre for Health Policy and Management, Trinity College Dublin. +353851846894; osullih7@tcd.ie Co-Investigators: Dr Liz Farsaci PhD, Research Fellow with RESTORE, Centre for Health Policy and Management, Trinity College Dublin. farsacil@tcd.ie
Data Controller	Trinity College Dublin (research data)
Data Protection Officer (Research Data)	Data Protection Officer Secretary’s Office Trinity College Dublin Dublin 2



Introductory Statement

We would like to invite you to take part in a research study that is being carried out by Hollie O'Sullivan, Master's Student, under the supervision of Dr Liz Farsaci from the Centre of Health Policy and Management at Trinity College Dublin.

The purpose of this study is to **explore the experiences, perspectives and decision-making processes surrounding retention among allied healthcare professionals within the healthcare workforce in Ireland**. Should you choose to participate, you will be asked to take part in a virtual focus group, along with three to four other participants from the same profession, which will be facilitated by the principal investigator. This virtual focus group will be audio recorded and is expected to take around 60 minutes to complete.

Before you decide whether or not you wish to take part, please take time to read this information leaflet carefully. If there is anything which is not clear, or if you would like more information, please ask the researcher. You should understand the benefits and any risks of taking part in this study so that you can make a decision that is right for you.

Do I have to take part?

No, you do not have to take part; participation in this study is completely voluntary. There is no obligation to participate, and should you choose to do so, you can refuse to answer specific questions, or decide to withdraw from the focus group. If you decide not to take part, it won't affect your current or future professional career. You can change your mind and opt out at any time even if the study has started, without reason.

This leaflet has five parts:

Part 1 - The Study

Part 2 - Data Protection

Part 3 - Approval, Organising and Funding

Part 4 - Further Information

Part 5 – Next steps



Part 1 - The Study

Why have I been invited to take part?

- For the purpose of this research, we have focused on the allied healthcare/health and social care professions from the ‘therapeutic’ domain, who are commonly found in both the acute and community setting. These include Dietitians, Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists and Speech and Language Therapists.
- You are being invited to participate in this study because you are a registered healthcare professional from these professions and working in the healthcare workforce in Ireland.
- We aim to recruit a total of 12-20 participants for the study, with 3-5 participants from each of the four professions and a sample that will represent a variety of roles and grades from each of the four professions.

Why is this study being done?

We are conducting this research to gain insight and understanding of the experiences, views, and decision-making processes among allied healthcare/health and social care professionals in Ireland, in support of their retention within the workforce. Retention of the nursing and medical workforce is well researched, but less is known about factors, circumstances and events surrounding retention of the allied healthcare professional workforce. A key objective of this research is to generate evidenced based insights that can inform policymakers on retention strategies for the allied healthcare workforce and social care professions.



What does taking part involve?

- 1) If you decide to take part, you will be required to click the link provided in the recruitment poster or email, which will prompt you to complete a brief questionnaire, enter your contact details and submit.
- 2) The principal investigator will then get in contact to discuss this information leaflet and the consent form with you. You will be given a copy of your signed consent form and this leaflet to keep.
- 3) Once you are recruited you will be sent a link to a short questionnaire to complete, so the researcher can gather demographic characteristics for each participant, that will remain anonymous.
- 4) A suitable date and time for the virtual focus group will be arranged for early-mid May, which will be conducted by the principal researcher, which will last approximately 60 minutes.
- 5) With your permission, the interviews will be audio recorded. During the interview you will be asked questions about your experiences, perspectives and decision-making processes in support of your intention to stay in or leave the healthcare workforce in Ireland.
- 6) The interview will then be transcribed. Participants will have the opportunity to review the transcript if they wish. No further input will be required from you following this.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Taking part in this study may not directly benefit you. However, we hope that this research will generate valuable insights that may help us to better understand factors surrounding retention and inform policymakers on potential retention strategies for the allied healthcare workforce in Ireland.

Are there any possible disadvantages or risks from taking part?

- There are no known risks involved in this study. At all times, the well-being of participants takes priority over research activities.
- While we take many measures to ensure the confidentiality of all participant data, a potential breach of participant confidentiality has to be considered a risk, however a



this breach of confidentiality risk is considered very low, due to the data protection measures in place as outlined below.

- All opinions are valued and there are no wrong answers. However, some may find it uncomfortable to share their thoughts, experiences and opinions in the focus group setting, which participants should consider before choosing to participate.

What will happen to the results of the study?

The results of the research will be included as part of the principal investigator's MSc dissertation, and may be published and reported in a medical/scientific/educational journal. Some quotations from the focus groups will also be used. However, no information which reveals your identity will be disclosed.

Part 2 - Data Protection

What information about me (personal data) will be used for this study

Only information and data that is relevant and necessary for this research will be collected and used. All demographic information collected will be anonymised and focus group discussions will be coded for analysis.

Contact information:

Your contact information will be available to the researcher if you apply to participate. This is to facilitate the recruitment process and completion of consent forms, sending a link to the demographic questionnaire and enabling the researcher to circulate the virtual focus group invite.

Demographic questionnaire:

Information relating to age, location, gender, level of education, employment status, sector of employment and years of professional experience will be collected via an anonymous Microsoft Forms questionnaire and represented as descriptive statistics in the thesis.

Focus group discussion:

No names will be used and each participant will be provided with a unique number or code to maintain confidentiality and anonymity. Your contributions to the discussion will be audio recorded and later transcribed and any identifiable information will be removed.



Who will access my personal data?

All the information and data that we collect about you during the research will be kept anonymised, coded and strictly confidential for the duration of the study, available only to the principal researcher and research supervisor. The research supervisor will require access to the research data to ensure academic rigour. Your information will not be shared with anyone else or any third parties.

How is the information kept confidential and secure?

Your privacy is important to us. We take many steps to make sure that we protect your confidentiality. The Principal Investigator and co-investigators are governed by a professional code of ethics to maintain your confidentiality and both have completed training on data protection.

Any information or data which is obtained during this research which identifies you will be treated confidentially. All the data and information collected will be stored securely on the principal researchers institutional One Drive account where it will be stored and accessed. Other TCD secure systems that will be used include, Microsoft Forms for the initial screening and demographic questionnaire for recruited participants, and a faculty provided Zoom account to complete the audio recorded focus groups.

The data and information collected will then be coded and pseudonymised to hide your identity. Any files containing identifiable information, including the focus group audio recording will then be deleted off from One Drive once transcribed, so that only pseudonymised, coded data and transcripts remain. The demographic data collected via the Microsoft Forms questionnaire is completely anonymised. All files will only be accessible by the principal researcher and research supervisor, if required.

How long will my personal data be needed?

In accordance with GDPR, Trinity College Dublin requires the retention of your personal data for as long as necessary to serve the processing objectives and deleted when no longer required by the principal investigator. Anonymised and pseudo anonymised information



relating to this research project will be retained for 7 years in line with the recommended data retention guidelines.

What is the lawful (legal) basis to use my personal data?

We will only use your personal data for this research project, which we hope will inform retention strategies for the allied healthcare professional workforce in Ireland¹. We will also ask for your explicit consent to use your data as a requirement of Irish law (Health Research Regulations), but we do not rely on this as our legal basis under GDPR.

What are my rights under Data Protection law?

You are entitled to:

- object to our use of your personal data or any further use;
- request access to your personal data and to receive a copy of it;
- request inaccurate personal data be corrected or deleted;
- request restriction of our use of your personal data;
- request deletion of your personal data.

By law you can exercise the above rights in relation to your personal data, unless the request would make it impossible or very difficult to conduct the research. For example, if the study is about to be published then we may not be able to delete data as it would impact on the results. It is important to note these rights are not absolute and are subject to certain restrictions.

You can exercise these rights by contacting the principal investigator, Hollie O'Sullivan, at osullih7@tcd.ie or the Trinity College Data Protection Officer, Secretary's Office, Trinity College Dublin, Dublin 2, Ireland. Email: dataprotection@tcd.ie. Website: www.dataprotection.ie.

¹ (Article 6(1)(e) and 9(2)(j) of the GDPR.



Part 3 - Approval, Organising and Funding

Has this study been approved by a research ethics committee?

Yes, this study has been approved by Trinity College Dublin Research Ethics Committee (REC). Approval was granted on the 10th April 2024; REAMs No: 3196.

Who is organising and funding this study?

This research study is being undertaken by Hollie O’Sullivan to fulfil their academic Master’s studies. There is no funding for this study.

Will I be paid for taking part?

No, we are not paying participants to take part in the study.

Part 4 - Further Information

What happens if I change my mind?

- Your participation in this study is voluntary and you can change your mind even if the study has started. You do not have to give a reason for changing your mind. This will not affect your employment or professional career in any way.
- If you would like to withdraw from the study, please contact the principal investigator, Hollie O’Sullivan, at osullih7@tcd.ie who can organise this for you. We will discuss if you are happy for us to continue to use information about you (personal data) which has already been collected. If you do not consent to your personal data being retained for this study, we will delete any information that could identify you.
- Please note that we will not be able to remove personal data which has been shared or pooled for use in publication before your request for deletion.
- If you request to withdraw from the research, we will not contact you again.



Who should I contact for information or concerns?

If you have any concerns or questions, you can contact the principal investigator: Hollie O’Sullivan – osullih7@tcd.ie.

If you have any questions in relation to your rights under data protection law, you can contact the Data Protection Officer, Trinity College Dublin: Data Protection Officer, Secretary’s Office, Trinity College Dublin, Dublin 2, Ireland. Email: dataprotection@tcd.ie. Website: www.dataprotection.ie.

Under GDPR, if you are not satisfied with how your data is being processed, you have the right to raise a concern with the Office of the Data Protection Commission, 21 Fitzwilliam Square South, Dublin 2, Ireland. Website: www.dataprotection.ie

Part 5 - Next Steps

Will I be contacted again?

If you would like to take part in this study, please follow the link in the recruitment email or poster, alternatively you can contact the principal researcher at: osullih7@tcd.ie. If we do not hear back from you, then you will not be contacted again.

Thanks

Thank you for taking the time to read this Participant Information Leaflet. You will be given a copy of this Leaflet and the signed consent form to keep if you participate. Please retain these in case they are needed for future reference.



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin