



This information sheet is to provide you with a rationale for the research study, information on confidentiality and complaints procedures, and relevant contact details. Please read this information and feel free to contact the researcher with any questions which you may have.

#### Part 1

The research study will be looking at the experiences of women who are waiting for delayed breast reconstruction following a full mastectomy for breast cancer. Previous studies have indicated that women who have had full mastectomies as part of their breast cancer treatment may have increased body image disturbance, as well as higher levels of psychological distress. Research has also suggested that the way in which women perceive their bodies and their overall psychological wellbeing is improved following breast reconstruction. As you may know, recent NHS policies have been implemented in 22% of Clinical Commissioning Groups to restrict breast reconstruction in what are deemed as being 'non-urgent' or 'non-clinical' cases. This means that many women may be waiting a long time, in some cases a number of years, for their breast reconstructions to be carried out. Based on previous research, it could be predicted that this period of waiting time can significantly affect the way in which a woman views herself and her body, as well as her psychological wellbeing. In addition, the psychological theory of 'waiting' has indicated that uncertainty about the length of time one needs to wait can in itself create anxiety and a fear of 'being forgotten'.

The current research study aims to explore this period of 'waiting' for breast reconstruction; what it means for you and how you feel during this stage. The research aims to generate new information and understanding about this topic area; highlighting the experience of what it is like to wait for breast reconstruction and the personal significance of the procedures being carried out. I believe that such information could be valuable to all women in this position, as well as clinicians working with women who have had mastectomies and NHS policy makers who may not comprehend the wider significance that their decisions may have.

If the information in Part 1 has interested you and you are considering participating in the study, please read the additional information in Part 2 before making a decision.

#### Part 2

All information collected during the study will be kept strictly confidential. Your name will not be mentioned; a pseudonym will be given to you so that anonymity is maintained. Interviews will last for approximately one hour and carried out in a location that is comfortable and convenient for you, or via Skype due to the current COVID-19 restrictions.

Interviews will be audio recorded and these recordings will be deleted once the research has been completed and the final study has been written up. Interviews will be transcribed by the researcher

and all material will be anonymised. The transcripts will be used solely for the purposes of the current research study. The transcripts will only be available to the researchers and their supervisors and will be stored on a secure and encrypted USB. The findings will be used in the researcher's Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology thesis and any related publications. You will not be identified in any report or publication.

If you wish to take part in the research, you will be asked to sign an informed consent form. This outlines that you have read and understood what the research will entail. No interviews will be carried out until you have signed this consent form. After you have signed the consent form, you will be under no obligation to continue with the study; you are free to withdraw at any time and will not be required to give a reason.

The researcher is aware that the topic of the research may be sensitive and personal to you. If at any time during the research process you wish to pause or discontinue the interview, you will be free to do so. The researcher will be mindful that the research may be potentially distressing for participants, and will pause or discontinue the interview if deemed to be necessary.

All research is reviewed by the independent group, the 'Research Ethics Committee'. This study has been reviewed and given favourable opinion by London Metropolitan University Research Ethics Committee.

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, please contact the researcher, Justine Frith on 07912030990, or via email [JUF0092@my.londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:JUF0092@my.londonmet.ac.uk). If you remain unhappy and wish to complain formally, you can do this via London Metropolitan University. Details can be obtained from the University website.

If you would like further information about this research project please contact the researcher, Justine Frith, or the researcher's university supervisor, Raffaello Antonino, [r.antonino1@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:r.antonino1@londonmet.ac.uk).

Further support related to the research can be found through the following organisations:

- Breast Cancer Care – [www.breastcancercare.org.uk](http://www.breastcancercare.org.uk) ; 03450771893
- Cancer Research UK – [www.cancerresearchuk.org](http://www.cancerresearchuk.org) ; 03001231022
- NHS Psychological Therapies Service – <https://beta.nhs.uk/find-a-psychological-therapies-service/>