Participant Information Sheet

**Staff Wellbeing Project**

We would like to invite you to take part in a project where you can choose to undertake one of two evidence-based wellbeing courses. Before you decide whether you would like to take part, please read the following information about the study and ask if there is anything that is unclear or if you would like more information. If this is the case, please email Clara Strauss (clara.strauss@nhs.net) or Jenny Gu (jenny.gu@sussex.ac.uk).

**Brief summary**

We are investigating the effectiveness of two different courses for improving wellbeing and reducing stress in NHS staff. As part of this project, you will be able to **choose one of the two courses** to undertake and you will be randomised to either receive your preferred course in the immediate future (within the next 3 months), or at a later time (in 6 months’ time or later). The two courses on offer are: 1) a Mindfulness course (Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy/MBCT), and 2) a Staff Wellbeing workshop (Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy-based stress management workshop). Details of these courses, including time commitment required for each, are given below (under the question ‘What would taking part involve?’). To evaluate the courses, we will invite participants to complete self-report questionnaire measures before randomisation and 3-5 months later. Participants randomised to receive their preferred course in the immediate future will also be invited to complete measures 6 months after the course. It should take around 15 minutes to complete measures at each time point.

**What is the purpose of the project?**

The purpose of the study is to evaluate the effectiveness of two courses for improving wellbeing and reducing stress in NHS staff. Findings from this study will help us to find out which kind of wellbeing courses are most helpful for NHS staff and this will inform the courses we offer in the future.

**Am I eligible to take part in this project?**

You are eligible to take part if you:

1. Are employed by (or working in an honorary/voluntary capacity for) one of the following Trusts: 1) Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, 2) Surrey and Borders NHS Foundation Trust, 3) Kent and Medway Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, or 4) Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust.
2. Are currently in work (i.e. not currently on sick leave).
3. Have sufficient English language ability to understand course information and questionnaire content.
4. Are aged 18+ years.

**Do I have to take part?**

Participation is voluntary. Take your time to read the information on this page and on the consent page (next page) before deciding whether or not to give consent to participate (next page). Whether or not you decide to take part will have no effect on your employment. If you start the study but change your mind, you can withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. You can also remove any existing data you’ve provided by contacting the research team by 31st October 2018.

**Do I need to inform my manager if I decide to take part?**

You will need to inform your manager if you choose a course which will occur during working hours. Details of the two courses you can select, including time commitment required for each, are given below (under the question ‘What would taking part involve?’).

**What would taking part involve?**

If you decide to take part in this project after reading this information sheet, you will need to provide consent by completing the consent form on the next page. The next page will also ask you to select your preferred course. After completing the consent form, the research team will e-mail you within 2 working days with a unique identifier code and a link to complete the first set of self-report questionnaire measures, which should take around 15 minutes to complete. You will be asked for this identifier code whenever you complete a set of measures.

Once you have completed the first set of measures, you will automatically be randomised to receive your preferred course in the immediate future (within the next 3 months), or at a later time (in 6 months’ time or later). The research team will also be in touch with next steps for your allocated course. The research team will send you another e-mail in 3-5 months’ time to complete questionnaire measures and again 6 months later. All measures will take around 15 minutes to complete.

The first 10 participants per course who complete all the measures will be invited to take part in an optional, 30 minute telephone interview with a research team member about their experiences of their selected course. This interview will be audio recorded to aid data analysis.

At the end of the project, the research team may contact Human Resources (HR) for information on staff sickness absence for the three months following the intervention period and the same three-month period in the previous calendar year. You can opt out of providing your sickness absence data on the consent form (next page) without this affecting your participation in this study.

Below are details of the two available courses. You may select only one of the two courses (next page).

1. **Mindfulness course**: This is a group-based Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy course consisting of 8 or 9 weekly 2 hour sessions (includes orientation session). Between sessions, participants will be invited to complete approximately 45 minutes per day of homework. Content in the sessions will include guided mindfulness meditation practices, inquiry into experiences following practices, weekly homework review, and teaching/discussion of cognitive-behavioural therapy skills. Groups will consist of up to 15 people and will be led by trained and experienced mindfulness teachers. Details of the dates, times, and locations of available Mindfulness courses are given on the consent page (next page) if you select this option. We encourage participants to attend at least 6 out of the 8 or 9 weekly sessions.  
     
   Please note that this course may not be appropriate for people experiencing high levels of distress or for people who have recently experienced a significant negative life event, e.g., bereavement of a loved one. For this reason, if you select this course, we may contact you to ask further questions.
2. **Staff Wellbeing workshop**: This is a one day cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT)-based stress management workshop facilitated by two mental health practitioners. The one day workshop will introduce a CBT approach for understanding stress, and helpful ways to improve wellbeing and reduce stress. Each workshop will consist of around 10 to 20 people. You will be given complementary self-help resources to take away after the workshop.

**How much time is involved in taking part in the project?**

Each set of questionnaire measures should take around 15 minutes to complete. Depending on the course chosen, time participating in the courses could vary between 1 day and 18 hours (over a max. of 9 weeks).

If you are one of the first 10 participants per course to complete the full set of measures and agree to take part in an optional interview with a research team member about your experiences of your selected course, this will take an additional 30 minutes.

**What are the possible advantages and disadvantages of taking part?**

The techniques included in the courses offered have been found to promote positive mental health and wellbeing. By participating in this study, you will also contribute to findings which will inform the implementation of such courses across the NHS to improve wellbeing in other staff.

Some course techniques may involve reflecting on your thoughts, feelings, and experiences, which can sometimes be distressing. You can stop taking part at any time, without having to give a reason. If you experience any distress, you can contact your GP or Mind (08457909090; www.mind.org.uk) for information, advice, and support. You may also wish to discuss your concerns with your manager.

**Will my taking part in the project be kept confidential?**

All data collected will be strictly confidential and stored securely in line with ethical and legal practice. No identifiable data will be published. Personal data provided as part of the consent form (next page) will be stored in a password-protected folder on a password-protected NHS computer separately from all other data (e.g., questionnaire responses, interview transcripts, names of audio files). So that you can remove your data at any time, personal data and other data will be linked using unique identifier codes. Other data will contain only unique identifier codes and will be stored separately from consent information on a password-protected University of Sussex or NHS computer.

Personal data will be deleted within 3 months of study completion. Anonymised research data will be stored securely for 10 years. Members of the research team and regulatory authorities will have access to data gathered during the study. Your contact details will also be passed on to the person/people facilitating your chosen course. This will allow the person/people facilitating your course to contact you with any further information about the course.

**What will happen to the results of the project?**

The results of the project will be written up for publication in a scientific journal. No data that may allow identification of an individual will be published. Anonymised data may also be shared with collaborators of the research team, for the purpose of answering additional research questions. If you would like a summary of the findings or a copy of the write-up, please e-mail Clara Strauss (clara.strauss@nhs.net) or Jenny Gu (jenny.gu@sussex.ac.uk).

**Who is organising and funding this project?**

The project is funded by Health Education England Kent, Surrey, and Sussex and organised by Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust in partnership with Surrey and Borders NHS Foundation Trust, Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust, and Kent and Medway NHS Partnership Trust.

**Who has reviewed the project?**

This project has been reviewed and approved by the NHS Health Research Authority and the Research Governance team at Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust as the study sponsor. This indicates that there are no substantial risks or disadvantages associated with taking part in this project.

**What happens if there is a problem?**

If you have a complaint about participating in this project, firstly speak to the principal investigator, Clara Strauss (c.y.strauss@sussex.ac.uk). You can also speak to the Research Governance team at Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (ResearchGovernance@sussexpartnership.nhs.uk). In the unlikely event that something goes wrong and you are harmed during the research, Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust has insurance in place to cover their legal liabilities in the event of injury or damage to the research participants arising from this project.

**Further information and contact details**

If you have any questions or concerns about the project, please email Clara Strauss (clara.strauss@nhs.net) or Jenny Gu (jenny.gu@sussex.ac.uk).

Thank you for taking the time to read this information page. Please click on the ‘**>>**’ button below to select your preferred course, view the Consent Form, and register your consent to participate in this project.