UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE | Institute of Metabolic Science | University of Hertfordshire UH | GLADIOLI

Participant Information Sheet- Local Authority Key Informant

Group model building to assess dietary health inequalities in English Local Authorities- The GLADIOLI study

Summary

You are being invited to be a Local Authority Key Informant in the GLADIOLI study, a research project led by the Universities of Cambridge and Hertfordshire. The study aims to understand how English Local Authorities can be better supported to reduce dietary health inequalities — unfair differences in diet and diet-related health between more and less disadvantaged communities.

People living in more deprived areas are more likely to experience barriers to accessing healthy food and to develop diet-related conditions such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and poor dental health. These inequalities are shaped by wider social, economic, and environmental factors, not just individual choice alone.

Local Authorities play a key role in shaping these systems through policy and partnership working, but the complexity of dietary health inequalities can make effective action challenging. Many people find that approaches based on 'systems thinking' can help address these complex challenges. Systems thinking emphasis complex inter-relationships between factors, rather than simple cause and effect. In this study we are testing whether a systems thinking workshop can help address dietary inequalities.

- Please take the time to read the following information carefully. Discuss with your colleagues if you wish to do so.
- Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.
- If you or your organisation would no longer like to take part you can tell us by email or telephone.
- Thank you for your support with our research so far.

Contents

1 Why we are doing this study
2 Why am I being asked to take part?
3 What will happen to me if I take part?
4 Possible benefits and disadvantages of taking part
5 More information about taking part
6 Contact for further information

How to contact us

If you have any questions about this study please talk to:

GLADIOLI study team
gladioli.study@ims.cam.ac.uk
GLADIOLI study webpage

Why we are doing this study

People living in more disadvantaged circumstances tend to have poorer diets and higher rates of diet-related disease. These dietary health inequalities are influenced by many interacting social, economic and environmental factors.

Local Authorities play a key role in shaping local food environments through policy, planning, public health and partnerships. However, there is limited robust evidence on which local-level approaches are most effective in supporting action on dietary health inequalities.

This study aims to evaluate whether a systems-thinking approach can help Local Authorities to increase policy action with the potential to reduce dietary health inequalities.

2 Why am I being asked to take part?

You have been invited because you work within a participating Local Authority and have been nominated as having a core responsibility for food-related policy, public health or a closely related area. In each Local Authority we recruit for the study we will need one Key Informant.

Around 60 Local Authority Key Informants are expected to take part across England.

3 What will happen to me if I take part?

All Local Authorities will be randomised to either an intervention group or a control group. The intervention group will participate in a workshop where we will use a method known as group model building. Group model building (GMB) is a structured approach that uses systems thinking to achieve a shared understanding of a problem and identify potential solutions. GMB can support cross-sector collaboration. Both groups are just as important for the conduct of the study.

In all Local Authorities, we will ask the Key Informant to:

- Provide consent electronically
- Participate in two, virtual, data collection interviews - one relatively soon and one in around 12 months

In all Local Authorities randomised to the intervention group, we will also ask the Key Informant to:

- Work with us to plan a one-day workshop including
    - deciding on a focus topic for the workshop and presenting an introduction to this at the beginning of the workshop (approx. 5 minutes)
    - identifying and inviting around 15 external stakeholders to attend the workshop
    - identify and secure space and catering for the workshop
- Attend the workshop
- Debrief with us on outcomes and actions resulting from the workshop across 3x post workshop phone calls and 1x 12 month follow up interview.

In some Local Authorities randomised to the control group, we will also ask the Key Informant to:

- Help us identify local meetings that we can observe to understand how stakeholders interact
- Help us identify local stakeholders to take part in interviews telling us their thoughts about dietary inequalities

4 Possible benefits and disadvantages of taking part

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

- Dedicated time and structured support to reflect on dietary health inequalities locally
- Opportunities to strengthen cross-sector collaboration
- Enhance meeting convening and facilitation skills
- Opportunity to learn about and apply systems thinking tools and skills
- Contribution to national evidence to support more effective policy-making

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

There are no anticipated risks. Some discussions may involve organisational challenges, which you may find uncomfortable, but you can skip questions or withdraw at any time. Participation in the study will also require some of your time.

Due to limited research funds, we will ask the Local Authority to arrange and cover any costs associated with room booking and catering for the workshops. However, we will always work with you to keep costs minimal or find alternative arrangements.

5 More information about taking part

Do I have to take part?

No. Participation is entirely voluntary. Your Local Authority or you may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason.

If you do decide to withdraw from your role as Local Authority Key Informant, we would ask for a suitable person to be nominated to carry on the work if the Local Authority is keen to remain involved in the study.

What if there is a problem?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study you should ask to speak to the research team who will do their best to answer your questions on gladioli.study@ims.cam.ac.uk.

If you remain unhappy and wish to complain formally, the normal University of Cambridge complaints process is available to you through the University of Cambridge Clinical School Secretary: telephone: 01223 333543 or email: SchoolSec@medschl.cam.ac.uk.

What will happen to information about me collected during the study?

The University of Cambridge is the sponsor for this study based in the United Kingdom. We will need to use information from you to undertake this study. We will act as the data controller for this study – this means that we are responsible for looking after the information and using it properly.

This information will include your name, role within the Local Authority, your work contact information and information about relevant policies. People will use this information to do the research or to check your records to make sure that the research is being done properly.

Due to the novel nature of the intervention and the unique scenario of bringing numerous LA professionals together at the same time, consent will be obtained from the Local Authority Key Informant for all information collected throughout the day—including any involvement in the causal loop diagram (CLD) and connection circles—to be stored in fully anonymised form as research data, which may be used in future systems thinking research, including analysis, methodological development, and dissemination (e.g. publications or presentations).

People who do not need to know about your involvement won't be able to see your name or contact details. Your identifiable data will have a code number instead.

Once we have finished the study, we will keep some of the data so we can check the results. We will write our reports in a way that no-one can work out that you took part in the study.

We will keep your identifiable study data for the minimum period of time required to undertake the research and whilst we may need to contact you. The study data will then be fully anonymized and securely archived or destroyed.

How we keep the information collected secure

Electronic identifiable data be stored in the IMS Epidemiology Secure Research Drive (SRD) which has additional security measures in place to protect your data.

We have procedures in place to deal with any suspected personal data breach. We will tell you and applicable regulators when there has been a breach of your personal data when we legally have to. For further details about UK breach reporting rules visit the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) website.

What are your choices about how your information is used?

- You can stop being part of the study at any time, without giving a reason, but we will keep information about you that we already have
- You have the right to ask us to remove, change or delete data we hold about you for the purposes of the study. We might not always be able to do this if it means we cannot use your data to do the research. If so, we will tell you why we cannot do this (e.g. because we need to manage your information in specific ways in order for the research to be reliable and accurate).
- If you withdraw from the study, we will keep the information about you that we have already obtained. To safeguard your rights, we will use the minimum personally-identifiable information possible.

If you agree to take part in this study, you will have the option to take part in future research using your data saved from this study.

How will we use information about you after the study ends?

Once we have finished the study, we will keep some of the data so we can check the results. We will write our reports in a way that no-one can work out that your Local Authority took part in the study.

We will keep your study data for a maximum of 10 of years. The study data will then be fully anonymised and securely archived or destroyed.

You can find out more about how we use your information at: https://www.information-compliance.admin.cam.ac.uk/data-protection/medical-research-participant-data

What will happen to the results of the study?

When the study is completed, we will share with you a summary of results. The results will also be published in an academic journal. We may also present the results at scientific meetings and to interested stakeholders and policy makers. No information that could identify your Local Authority will be published in any report or presentation about this study.

Who is organising and funding the study?

This study is organised by the IMS Epidemiology Unit, part of the University of Cambridge. A team from the University of Hertfordshire will be conducting the qualitative data collection for the process evaluation part of the study. The funder is UK Research and Innovation (UKRI).

Who has reviewed the study?

This study has been reviewed by an independent group of people, called the Research Ethics Committee, to protect your safety, rights, well-being and dignity. The study has been given a favourable opinion by The Humanities and social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (University of Cambridge).

6 Contact for further information

If you have any questions regarding the study or how you might be involved further contact information can be found below.

GLADIOLI study team
gladioli.study@ims.cam.ac.uk
GLADIOLI study webpage

Thank you for taking the time to consider taking part in this study.