

## **Participant Information Sheet**

**Study Title:** The “true value” of Devon’s financially-supported bus network

**Researcher:** Chris BurrIDGE-Barney

**ERGO number:** 56708

You are being invited to take part in the above research study by participating in an online interview (using Microsoft Teams). To help you decide whether you would like to take part or not, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the information below carefully and ask questions if anything is not clear or you would like more information before you decide to take part in this research. You may like to discuss it with others but it is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you are happy to participate you will be asked to electronically sign a consent form.

### **What is the research about?**

This research is being undertaken to inform a dissertation in Transportation Planning and Engineering at the University of Southampton. I am a part-time student working towards a Master’s degree in this subject, which is sponsored by my employer, Devon County Council.

The primary motive of this study is to better understand the impacts of bus services, in particular where councils provide financial support (subsidies) for ‘socially necessary’ services that are not considered commercially viable by operators. The main outputs will be a Benefit-to-Cost ratios for subsidising individual services, categories of services and the whole network.

Interviews with bus users are to be used to supplement the existing literature on the impacts of bus services. They will also be used to develop case studies on impacts such as health and wellbeing benefits.

Evidence from interviews and other sources will be presented in anonymised form in the dissertation. Summaries of the data collected will also be provided to colleagues in the Transport Coordination Service at Devon County Council, for the purpose of better understanding the impacts of the network they manage and facilitating future improvements. However, this study is not linked to any specific proposals for service changes, and no personal data will be shared with these colleagues.

### **Why have I been asked to participate?**

You have been approached on the understanding that you use or have used Devon’s bus services, so will be able to provide valuable insights on the impacts of the services. It is expected that up to 25 people will take part in similar interviews.

### **What will happen to me if I take part?**

If you decide to take part, you will be asked a series of questions about your personal characteristics, your use of bus services and the impacts they have on you. Unless you would prefer otherwise, the interview will be recorded for the purposes of producing a transcript to draw upon when producing the dissertation. The interview should last approximately 20 minutes.

### **Are there any benefits in my taking part?**

There will be no direct material or financial benefits to you for taking part. However, as discussed above, this study aims to improve understanding of the impacts of bus services, and inform measures to enhance their benefits. Therefore, it may be that you indirectly benefit from improvements to the services you use in light of this study’s findings.

### **Are there any risks involved?**

The only foreseeable risk is the slight possibility of emotional distress or anxiety, as this interview may explore emotive subjects such as mental or physical illnesses. With that in mind, please let the interviewer know if there are any subjects that are likely to cause you distress, so they can be avoided, and please let them know if there are any adjustments they could make to ensure the interview experience is as comfortable as possible. Please also be assured that there will be no compulsion for you to discuss anything you are uncomfortable with.

If you begin to experience any negative feelings during the interview, please let the interviewer know, so that topics that are causing distress can be avoided in future questioning, or the interview can be suspended or curtailed.

If you continue to experience negative feelings following the interview, and would like to discuss your concerns with the interviewer, please feel free to contact them at [cgbble18@soton.ac.uk](mailto:cgbble18@soton.ac.uk). Alternatively, you may like to contact a mental health helpline or support group. Details of some such helplines are given below:

- Anxiety UK (for people affected by anxiety disorders), <https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/>, 03444 775 774
- Mind (for people affected by any mental health problem), <http://www.mind.org.uk/>, 0300 123 3393
- Papyrus (for young people considering suicide), <http://www.papyrus-uk.org/>, 0800 068 4141
- Samaritans (for people experiencing distress or despair), <http://www.samaritans.org/>, 116 123

Details of additional support services, including operating times, are available at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mental-health-helplines/>

### **What data will be collected?**

When filling out the consent form, you will be asked to provide your name and an electronic signature. The completed consent form will be stored for the duration of this study, to provide evidence that interviews have been conducted with participants' consent. It will be stored securely in a password-protected OneDrive folder which only the researcher has access to.

Unless you would prefer otherwise, a recording of this interview will be made by the interviewer, and will be used to produce a transcript to draw upon when producing the dissertation. Following the production of the transcript, the audio recording will be destroyed. The audio recording (before destruction) and transcript will both be stored securely in a password-protected OneDrive folder which only the researcher has access to.

It is not intended to collect any personal data (data which would enable you to be uniquely identified) during the interview, though some general data about your characteristics (e.g. age range and gender) will be collected. Any personal data that is inadvertently referenced during the interview will be removed during the process of transcription.

If you wish the data relating to your interview to be amended, e.g. if you wish to clarify a response to a question, please contact the researcher at [cgbble18@soton.ac.uk](mailto:cgbble18@soton.ac.uk)

### **Will my participation be confidential?**

Your participation and the information we collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential.

Only members of the research team (the interviewer and their supervisor) and responsible members of the University of Southampton may be given access to data about you for monitoring purposes

and/or to carry out an audit of the study to ensure that the research is complying with applicable regulations. Individuals from regulatory authorities (people who check that we are carrying out the study correctly) may require access to your data. All of these people have a duty to keep your information, as a research participant, strictly confidential.

### **Do I have to take part?**

No, it is entirely up to you to decide whether or not to take part.

### **What happens if I change my mind?**

You have the right to change your mind and withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without your participant rights being affected.

If you contact the researcher before the submission of the final version of the dissertation (scheduled for 21 September 2020), it will be possible to destroy the records of your interview (i.e. the audio recording or transcript) and remove any data derived from the interview from text and summary statistics. However, if you contact the researcher after this date, it will only be possible to destroy the individual records of the interview, and not to modify the content of the dissertation or any summary statistics.

If you wish to withdraw, you should contact the researcher at [cgbble18@soton.ac.uk](mailto:cgbble18@soton.ac.uk), quoting the identification number you are provided with, which the records of your interview will be labelled with to allow deletion of the appropriate files.

### **What will happen to the results of the research?**

Your personal details will remain strictly confidential. Research findings made available in any reports or publications will not include information that can directly identify you.

The project will be written up in a dissertation, which will be submitted in partial fulfilment of a Master's Degree in Transportation Planning and Engineering at the University of Southampton. This report, along with summaries of the findings of the project, will be shared with other researchers and colleagues at Devon County Council. However, research findings made available to third parties will not include information that can directly identify you.

If you wish to receive updates regarding the project, please contact the researcher at [cgbble18@soton.ac.uk](mailto:cgbble18@soton.ac.uk).

### **Where can I get more information?**

You can contact the researcher, Chris Burridge-Barney, at [cgbble18@soton.ac.uk](mailto:cgbble18@soton.ac.uk)

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

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should contact the researcher, Chris Burridge-Barney, at [cgbble18@soton.ac.uk](mailto:cgbble18@soton.ac.uk), who will do their best to answer your questions.

If you remain unhappy or have a complaint about any aspect of this study, please contact the University of Southampton Research Integrity and Governance Manager (023 8059 5058, [rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk](mailto:rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk)).

### **Data Protection Privacy Notice**

The University of Southampton conducts research to the highest standards of research integrity. As a publicly-funded organisation, the University has to ensure that it is in the public interest when we use personally-identifiable information about people who have agreed to take part in research. This means that when you agree to take part in a research study, we will use information about you in

the ways needed, and for the purposes specified, to conduct and complete the research project. Under data protection law, 'Personal data' means any information that relates to and is capable of identifying a living individual. The University's data protection policy governing the use of personal data by the University can be found on its website (<https://www.southampton.ac.uk/legalservices/what-we-do/data-protection-and-foi.page>).

This Participant Information Sheet tells you what data will be collected for this project and whether this includes any personal data. Please ask the research team if you have any questions or are unclear what data is being collected about you.

Our privacy notice for research participants provides more information on how the University of Southampton collects and uses your personal data when you take part in one of our research projects and can be found at <http://www.southampton.ac.uk/assets/sharepoint/intranet/Is/Public/Research%20and%20Integrity%20Privacy%20Notice/Privacy%20Notice%20for%20Research%20Participants.pdf>

Any personal data we collect in this study will be used only for the purposes of carrying out our research and will be handled according to the University's policies in line with data protection law. If any personal data is used from which you can be identified directly, it will not be disclosed to anyone else without your consent unless the University of Southampton is required by law to disclose it.

Data protection law requires us to have a valid legal reason ('lawful basis') to process and use your Personal data. The lawful basis for processing personal information in this research study is for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest. Personal data collected for research will not be used for any other purpose.

For the purposes of data protection law, the University of Southampton is the 'Data Controller' for this study, which means that we are responsible for looking after your information and using it properly. The University of Southampton will keep identifiable information about you for 10 years after the study has finished after which time any link between you and your information will be removed.

To safeguard your rights, we will use the minimum personal data necessary to achieve our research study objectives. Your data protection rights – such as to access, change, or transfer such information - may be limited, however, in order for the research output to be reliable and accurate. The University will not do anything with your personal data that you would not reasonably expect.

If you have any questions about how your personal data is used, or wish to exercise any of your rights, please consult the University's data protection webpage (<https://www.southampton.ac.uk/legalservices/what-we-do/data-protection-and-foi.page>) where you can make a request using our online form. If you need further assistance, please contact the University's Data Protection Officer ([data.protection@soton.ac.uk](mailto:data.protection@soton.ac.uk)).

**Thank you for taking the time to read the information sheet and considering taking part in the research.**