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# Research Guidelines for External Researchers

This document details some key considerations when proposing research involving clients of the Helen Bamber Foundation and the expectations we hold for researchers.

## Our research commitments

- We prioritise research that has the potential to bring about impactful and positive changes in practice and policy affecting Survivors, asylum-seekers and refugees and that bears witness to the policies and practices that impact this population in the UK.
- We place a real importance on publishing and disseminating research that involves our clients and staff in order to maximise its impact on policy and/or practice. We can support researchers to reach different audiences and expect researchers to prioritise this. In the case of student projects, students are asked to agree to submit their research for publication within 12 months of completing their project, unless otherwise agreed. We also strongly encourage sharing and disseminating findings in non-academic accessible forms.
- We are committed to conducting research that moves away from extractive approaches towards research that prioritise capturing data and stories over the benefit or well-being of participants or communities. Research has the potential to replicate unequal power dynamics that our clients will have experienced in other contexts. It is therefore of the upmost importance to us that the research involving our clients is conducted in a way that is trauma-informed and where mutual benefit is prioritised.

## Expectations of researchers

- Understanding of what research is or can be varies widely across our client group. We have found that some clients can agree to participating in research before fully understanding what the project is about or what exactly they would have to do. We emphasise the need to explain research vocabulary, purpose, process and implications to clients clearly. Some clients have reservations about participating in research or sharing information with new people, and particular concerns about whether the Home Office will have access to information shared during research. Researchers should prioritise making it clear to potential participants where and how information will be stored and how it will be used or shared.

- Trauma-informed research requires careful consideration of the issues around consent.  Any consent procedure should make it clear that deciding not to take part is a valid and reasonable choice, and that this is understood and respected by researchers. Furthermore, researchers should seek consent again immediately before starting any research process such as an interview and be ready to offer alternative dates.

- Clients' right to withdraw at any time must be clearly emphasised at multiple stages of the research, with a transparent and accessible withdrawal process. The participant information sheet should explain not only the right to withdraw data, but also the practical steps participants can take if they decide to do so. Not all our clients have access to email, so it may be easier for them to call HBF on 0203 058 2020 or WhatsApp on +44 7871 757049 and ask to talk to the Research Coordinator or another known member of staff.

- Researchers should be mindful about not replicating any aspect of adversarial interview/interrogative techniques that survivors may have experienced in other contexts. Researchers should facilitate participants' agency over when, where and how and to whom they choose to revisit the past.

- Having research shaped and led by people with lived experience of the research topic is an important part of shifting unequal power dynamics in research and of ensuring research is asking relevant and appropriate questions. HBF encourages researchers to integrate lived-experience expertise into all stages of the development and implementation of their research and prioritises projects where there is clear EBE involvement.

- If researching a sensitive topic, we expect researchers to have had previous experience of conducting interviews with vulnerable clients and/or previous experience of supporting people with mental health difficulties. We also expect the researcher to have access to adequate clinical supervision to be able to address clinical issues that may arise during the project.

- As there is often a long gap between data collection and dissemination, please ask participants if they would like to receive updates on the progress of the project and be given the research findings once completed.

## Practical requirements

- Many of our clients require interpreters. We think it is essential to try and provide equal access to research for people with varying English levels and for researchers to budget for interpreter fees. This includes a) fees for using our on-demand phone interpreting service to recruit participants and obtain informed consent and b) freelance interpreters fees for research interviews. We suggest a service fee of £54 multiplied by researcher's maximum sample size to be paid to HBF, which includes all interpreter fees and admin costs.
- For research participants, we ask for a standardised compensation voucher amount of £20 for up to 90 minutes of participants' time, to be given as a thank you for and a recognition of their time and emotional labour. For Experts-by-Experience consultation, the standard compensation rate is £25 per hour, as recommended by NIHR.
- You will need to have a valid DBS (for adults) to conduct research with clients.

**How recruitment works at HBF:** once a research project is approved by the Research Committee, the HBF research team will draw on clinical experience with clients to manage initial recruitment, explaining the study to potentially suitable participants to gauge interest. With client consent, we will share their contact details with the researcher, who will then explain the study in full, obtain informed consent, and arrange an interview - online or in-person at the HBF offices, according to a client's preference.