# Permanently Progressing?

## Building secure futures for children: Phase 2 Middle childhood

### Information Sheet for Carers and Adoptive Parents

We are inviting you to take part in a survey of children’s carers or adoptive parents for a research study called *Permanently Progressing?* To help you decide if you want to take part, this information sheet explains who we are, what the research is about, and what is involved.

#### About this research

The *Permanently Progressing?* study is about care experienced children and their families in Scotland. It focuses on all children who became ‘looked after’ in 2012-13 in Scotland when they were aged five or under. We want to understand more about where children are living, how they are getting on, what sources of support are available for them and their families, and how they keep in touch with people who are important to them.

We are using a mixture of research methods, including analysing national statistics, surveys of social workers and children’s carers or adoptive parents, and interviews with children and families. What we learn will provide important new information to help future policy and practice in Scotland and beyond.

The study is planned to have three phases. We carried out Phase 1 between 2014 and 2018, and you may have taken part then. Phase 2 is jointly funded by a philanthropic donor and the Nuffield Foundation and runs till 2024. Phase 3 is planned for 2026 to 2030. You can read more about the study on our webpage ([www.permanentlyprogressing.stir.ac.uk](https://stir.sharepoint.com/sites/PermanentlyProgressing/Shared%20Documents/Phase%202%20Surveys/Caregiver%20survey/Distribution/Caregiver%20survey%20information%20sheet/www.permanentlyprogressing.stir.ac.uk)).

#### Research team

The team – Helen Whincup, Linda Cusworth, Maggie Grant, Jade Hooper and Alison Hennessy – are based at the Universities of Stirling and Lancaster and the Association for Fostering, Kinship and Adoption Scotland (AFKA).

For this survey you will mostly be in contact with Linda (l.cusworth@lancaster.ac.uk) and Jade (j.e.hooper@lancaster.ac.uk) at Lancaster University (phone 01524 524455). There may also be some instances when you wish to contact Helen (helen.whincup@stir.ac.uk or 01786 467713) who leads the study.

#### Your invitation

You have been invited to take part as from anonymised information provided to us by local authorities, we think you are caring for a child who became looked after in 2012-13 when they were aged five and under. We would be grateful if you could complete a questionnaire about their development, progress, experiences and wellbeing. By taking part in this study, you will be contributing to research that may help other children in the future.

#### How do I take part?

If you took part in Phase 1 or provided your contact details then, you will have been sent the questionnaire with this information sheet by post or we will send it shortly by email.

If you were sent this information sheet via the local authority, and would like to take part, please complete and return the enclosed contact details request form. We will then send you a questionnaire.

The questionnaire can be completed online or on paper. If you would prefer to complete it electronically we will email a link to the online questionnaire. If you would rather complete it on paper, we will post a questionnaire to you, together with a stamped addressed envelope for you to return it.

The information the child’s local authority has given us about children is anonymised, so we do not know children’s names. However, the child’s month/year of birth and gender will be included in the email/letter and on the front page of the questionnaire, so that you can identify them. If you care for more than one child, you may receive more than one questionnaire. Please ensure your answers relate to each specific child.

We anticipate that the questionnaire should take up to one hour to complete. It is fine to complete it in more than one sitting. We would be grateful if you could respond to the survey within three weeks of receiving it.

#### Do I have to take part?

No - it is completely up to you. Your decision will not affect any services you receive. If you do take part and change your mind after completing the questionnaire, you can ask to be removed from the study before the end of April 2023. We cannot guarantee to remove data after that date as the analysis will be underway.

#### Are there any potential risks to taking part?

Completing a questionnaire about the child’s experiences and progress may elicit feelings of sadness, as well as joy. We provide details of support organisations at the end of the questionnaire.

#### What happens to the information I provide?

The information you provide will be completely confidential and will only be seen by the research team. The only exception, as with any study, would be if a child is at risk. No names or any information which identifies you or any children will be used when we write our report.

The paper copies of the questionnaires will be stored safely in a locked filing cabinet at Lancaster University only accessible to the research team. The online version of the survey uses Qualtrics survey software ([www.qualtrics.com](http://www.qualtrics.com)). This is UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) compliant in handling and storing data. Completed paper copies will be entered into Qualtrics by a member of the research team. Once downloaded from Qualtrics, data will be stored in password-protected files on a secure server at the University of Stirling only accessible to the research team. Your contact details will also be stored safely in this way, but kept separately from the questionnaires.

We will keep the information you provide for 10 years. We hope there will be a third phase of the study, so we would like to compare information from different times to understand how things change over time. If you agree, we would also like to keep your contact information so we can contact you again.

#### Will the research be published?

We will produce a publicly available report and academic peer-reviewed journals. The report will be easily accessible on the project website in autumn 2024. Any quotes from participants used in reports, academic publications, conferences or training will be anonymised.

#### Ethical Review

This study has been approved by the General University Ethics Panel at the University of Stirling and the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences ethics committee at Lancaster University.

#### Data Protection

The University of Stirling is the ‘data controller’ for this study, which means it is responsible for the information we collect. The research has to have a good reason, which is known as ‘public interest’. For our study, the reason is to help improve support for care experienced children and their families. If you have any questions about data protection, you can get in touch with the research team or read this guide: <https://www.stir.ac.uk/media/stirling/global-assets/documents/Data_Protection_Policy_and_Guidance.pdf>.

#### Who do I contact if I have concerns about this study or wish to complain?

Please tell us if you are worried about any part of this study, by contacting Helen. If you want to make a complaint you can also contact the University of Stirling’s Dean of the Faculty of Social Science, Derek McGhee (derek.mcghee@stir.ac.uk).

You have the right to lodge a complaint against the University regarding data protection issues with the Information Commissioner’s Office. Any questions about data protection can be addressed to the University of Stirling’s Data Protection Officer (Joanna Morrow, Deputy Secretary, data.protection@stir.ac.uk).

#### Any questions?

Please contact Linda or Jade, by email or phone, if you have any questions at any stage.

