



Participant Information Sheet for

'Work without bosses, housing without landlords, and nothing about us without us: researching disabled people's involvement in co-operatives in the UK'

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully, and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

About the project

My name is Steve Graby and I am a Visiting Researcher at the University of Leeds, funded by the Independent Social Research Foundation (ISRF). I am researching disabled people's involvement in co-operatives in the UK. This is a one-year research project which started in September 2021 and will end in September 2022.

By **disabled people** I mean anyone who is disabled by society according to the Social Model of Disability. This includes:

- d/Deaf people and other people with hearing impairments
- blind people and other people with visual impairments
- wheelchair users and other people with mobility impairments
- people with learning difficulties, including dyslexia
- autistic or otherwise neurodivergent people
- people who experience mental or emotional distress
- people with chronic pain, fatigue or other chronic illnesses
- anyone else who considers themselves to be a disabled person.

By **co-operatives (co-ops)** I mean businesses which are collectively owned and controlled by their members. This includes:

- workers' co-ops
- housing co-ops
- other consumer co-ops
- multi-stakeholder co-ops (co-ops with more than one group of members)
- any other business which is owned by its members and run according to co-operative principles.



There are 3 parts to this research:

- a **survey** of co-ops in the UK to see how many co-ops have disabled members and how they meet their disabled members' needs.
- **interviews** with disabled people who are or have been members of co-ops about their experiences of living, working or otherwise being involved in co-ops.
- **case studies** of co-ops which were started by disabled people or have many disabled members, and/or whose business is to do with disabled people's needs. These will be done by interviewing people from those co-ops and/or studying documents produced by the co-ops.

This information sheet is meant for people taking part in the **interviews** and/or the **case studies**.

You have been chosen to take part in this research because you answered my call for participants and you are either:

- a disabled person who is or has been a member of a co-op, or
- a member of, or otherwise involved with, one of the co-ops chosen for the case studies.

Do I have to take part?

Taking part in this research is entirely voluntary (at your own choice). You can choose not to take part and you will not lose anything. If you do decide to take part you will be asked to sign a consent form, and you can keep this information sheet. You will still be able to withdraw from the research at any time without it affecting any benefits that you are entitled to in any way. You do not have to give a reason for withdrawing.

What will I have to do if I take part?

If you are a disabled person who is or has been a member of a co-op, I will interview you about your experiences of being involved in the co-op(s). The interview is likely to take at least 1 hour, but can be longer if you have more to talk about. It can also be split into shorter parts if that would be better for your access needs.



Interviews can be done online (using Zoom) or by phone. Depending on safety and accessibility conditions, it may also be possible to interview you face-to-face in a location of your choosing.

The interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Zoom interviews will be automatically recorded in Zoom. You can see the terms of service for Zoom at <https://explore.zoom.us/en/terms/> ; note particularly section 3.3 'Recordings'.

Face-to-face and phone interviews will be recorded with a digital audio recorder. Transcription will be done either by me or by people who I pay to do it (probably a workers' co-op).

In the interview, I will ask you about your experiences of living, working or otherwise being involved in co-ops. This may include:

- ways in which the co-op(s) you have been involved with did or did not meet your access needs
- your thoughts on the advantages and disadvantages of co-ops compared to more mainstream equivalents (housing co-ops vs. social or privately rented housing, workers' co-ops vs. non-worker-owned businesses, etc.)
- whether you feel issues around disability are understood in co-ops
- your thoughts on the values and principles of the co-operative movement
- your thoughts on what co-ops could do better to support disabled members and disabled people in general
- anything else you want to talk about on the subject of disability and co-ops.

You can choose to talk about all these things in as much or as little detail as you want.

If there is anything that you want to tell me that you didn't think of in the interview but think of or remember afterwards, you can contact me and tell me by email or phone.

If I am interviewing you as part of one of the case studies, I may want to interview you either alone or together with others from your co-op. I may also ask to see documents from or about your co-op (such as its governing documents, policies, advertising materials, etc). You can choose not to show me these documents and can still be interviewed. Safety and accessibility conditions permitting, I may also want to visit your co-op if it has premises (such as a shop or workshop). This will be discussed with each case study co-op.



What will I get for taking part?

Everyone who is interviewed for this research will get a £15 shopping voucher. Where possible, this will be for a co-operative local to you; if not, it will be for a major supermarket or online retailer. I will contact you about this after your interview.

If you have travelled by public transport for a face-to-face interview, your travel expenses will be paid.

What are the risks and other possible consequences of taking part?

There are no major risks associated with this research. It is possible that interviews might touch on topics that may be distressing, such as experiences of exclusion or unfair treatment within co-ops or of access needs not being met. If you find anything that we talk about in the interview upsetting or feel like you need to talk further about any issues that are brought up by the interview, I will, with your consent, put you in touch with appropriate support services.

There are no immediate material benefits to participants from this research. However, I hope that you will find the interview enjoyable and you may gain useful information or insights about how co-ops could do things better or about your experiences.

I hope that this research will, in the longer term, have positive impacts that will benefit participants, as well as other disabled people who are involved in co-ops, and co-ops in general. These may include the impact of publications, such as advice for co-ops on how to improve accessibility and engagement with disabled people, and opportunities for networking between disabled people involved in co-ops (possibly including, if conditions allow, a conference about disability and co-ops in 2022).

What will happen to the data produced by your interview(s)?

The audio and/or video recordings of your interview(s) for this research, and the transcripts of them, will be used for data analysis and may be quoted in the research report and any other publications or presentations produced from it. The data collected during the course of the project may be used for additional future research. If so, you will be informed of this.



No other use will be made of the data without your written permission. You may withdraw your data from the research project by contacting me at any point up to one month after your final interview, with no further consequences for you.

No one other than me and anyone who I employ to transcribe them will be allowed access to the original recordings. Anyone else who I employ to transcribe the recordings will have to sign a confidentiality agreement. All transfers of data (audio/video files and/or transcripts) will be done securely and in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the University's protocols for data storage and transfer. Data will be stored securely for 10 years in accordance with the University of Leeds Records Retention Schedule.

The report produced from this research, and any other publications that result from it, will be made freely and openly accessible, including in accessible formats (such as audio, Braille, British Sign Language and/or Easy Read) on request. All participants will be sent copies of the report and any other publications resulting from the research, unless you tell me that you do not want to.

Will my data be identifiable to me?

You can choose whether you want your real name to be used if you are quoted in any reports or publications, or a pseudonym of your choice. If you choose a pseudonym, I will replace your real name with the pseudonym in the stored research data wherever possible.

It may not be possible to use your real name if quotes from your interview could be used to identify other people or co-operatives. In this case I will contact you and ask you to choose a pseudonym.

If you are interviewed as part of a co-op case study, your co-op can choose whether it will be identified by its real name or a pseudonym, but all co-op members who are interviewed must agree for the real name of the co-op to be used. If your co-op decides to be named, you can still choose to use a pseudonym for yourself, but it may be possible for others to identify you from quotes and information about your co-op.

If you and other members of your co-op are interviewed as a group, it will not be possible for your data to be fully confidential because the other participants in the group interview will know it. This may mean that



you will not be able to use your real name if other participants in the group interview want to use pseudonyms.

I will not tell anyone that you participated in this research without your prior consent. You may still choose to tell other people that you participated in this research or to talk about anything you mentioned in your interview with others.

In the unlikely event that something is disclosed that I cannot legally keep confidential (e.g. information about criminal offences that is mandatory to report) I will inform you before reporting this information.

What will happen to my contact information?

All the contact information that is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential and will be stored separately from the research data.

After the interviews are completed, and if participants have said that they would find this useful, it may be possible to put you and other participants in touch with each other, if for example you have had similar experiences in different co-ops and would appreciate discussing them, or if your co-op might provide a service or have information that could be useful to another co-op or vice versa. I will only put participants in touch with each other if I have consent from both or all the participants first, and will not pass on any more information than you ask me to.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet, and for agreeing to take part in the research!

If you have any questions or would like any further information about this research, you can contact me:

- by email: **s.graby@leeds.ac.uk**
- by phone or text: **07539 754 529**
- via the [contact form on the project website](#).