# **Participant Information Sheet**

1. **Research Project Title:** Understanding Anxiety and Autism
2. **Background, aims of project:** This study aims to explore mental health, in particular anxiety, and how mental health relates to how accurately someone can assess their own confidence. The study is interested in exploring whether autistic and non-autistic adults with differing levels of anxiety make confidence judgements in a particular way (e.g., being consistently unsure about their confidence, or being consistently underconfident). Understanding the relation between mental health and confidence accuracy is particularly important. For example, one’s ability to assess one’s own confidence likely influences the effectiveness of several therapies that aim to alleviate levels of anxiety or depression.
3. **Why have I been invited to take part?** You have been invited to take part in this study, as you are aged between 16-85 and English is your first language. Some participants invited to take part in this study will have a formal diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Condition (and some will not).
4. **Do I have to take part?** No. You do not have to take part. If you do decide to take part, you can withdraw your participation at any time without needing to explain and without penalty, by advising the researcher of this decision. You can also withdraw your data from the study (even after completing it), within 1 month after data collection. To withdraw your data email [catherine.grainger@stir.ac.uk](mailto:catherine.grainger@stir.ac.uk) with this number: [participant code], that can be used to identify your data. You will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form to confirm you are happy to participate in the study.
5. **What will happen if I take part?** If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete one computer-based task, during which you will be asked several times to judge which of two boxes contains the most dots, and how confident you are that you made this decision correctly. You will also be asked to complete a battery of questionnaires assessing a range of mental health conditions (including generalized anxiety, social anxiety, depression, obsessive compulsive behaviours and schizotypy). Finally, you will be asked to complete a short self-report measure of autistic traits the Ritvo Autism and Asperger Diagnostic Scale). The study will take approximately 2-2.5 hours to complete, with several opportunities for breaks and refreshments during the session. The study will take place in our Stirling Autism Research (STAR) room, on the ground floor of the Cottrell building at the University of Stirling, or online via a Microsoft video call (if preferable or in the instance that face-to-face participation is against government COVID guidelines).
6. **Are there any potential risks in taking part?** Some of the questions in the mental health questionnaires will ask about your emotional experiences. If you feel worried at any time during the study, please speak to the researcher. We can suggest a few options for well-being support. Please note, you can also stop participation at any time if you feel uncomfortable or skip any questions that you do not wish to answer.
7. **Are there any benefits in taking part?** Participants will be reimbursed£30for their time, in the form of an EGiftPay voucher. This can be used in 100s of online stores (please click [here](https://www.giftpay.co.uk/egift/infowhere.aspx?gift=TG3HS6K6DC&value=9000) to see where the voucher can be used). Additionally, we are able to reimburse participants up to £10 in travel expenses and ask that participants provide a receipt for any travel expenses they encounter.
8. **Legal basis for processing personal data** On the consent form you have the option to provide personal contact details. This data will be processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
9. **What happens to the data I provide?** The research data will be stored anonymously on OneDrive and kept anonymous using a specific participant code. Any personal contact information that you provide will be stored separately from your study data and will not associated with your unique participant code. Only the research team will have access to your personal contact details (if provided) and your research data. Your research data will be kept for 2 years on OneDrive and then will be lodged in DataSTORRE. If you have provided your contact details, to be contacted by STAR about participating in future studies, you will be contacted on an annual basis to see whether you would like us to remove your contact details from our mailing list, and permanently delete them.
10. **Will the research be published?** We hope to publish the research may in an academic journal. Please note, you will not be identifiable in **any** research report or publication. The University of Stirling is committed to making the outputs of research publicly accessible and supports this commitment through our online open access repository STORRE. This research will be publicly disseminated through our open access repository.
11. **Who has reviewed this research project?** The ethical approaches of this project have been approved via The University of Stirling General University Ethics Panel. You have the right to request to see a copy of the information we hold about you and to request corrections or deletions of the information that is no longer required. You have the right to withdraw from this project at any time without giving reasons and without consequences to you. You also have the right to object to us processing relevant personal data, however, please note that once the data are being analysed and/or results published it may not be possible to remove your data from the study.
12. **Who do I contact if I have concerns about this study or I wish to complain?** In the future, if you would like to discuss the research in more detail, please email Dr Catherine Grainger at [catherine.grainger@stir.ac.uk](mailto:catherine.grainger@stir.ac.uk). You have the right to lodge a complaint against the University regarding data protection issues with the Information Commissioner’s Office (<https://ico.org.uk/concerns/>). The University’s Data Protection Officer is Joanna Morrow, Deputy Secretary. If you have any questions relating to data protection these can be addressed to [data.protection@stir.ac.uk](mailto:data.protection@stir.ac.uk) in the first instance. You will be given a copy of this information sheet to keep.

**Thank you for considering taking part in this research.**

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