

## **Experiences and perceptions of classification processes in wheelchair rugby: Athlete and Athlete Support Personnel Perspectives**

### **INFORMED CONSENT FORM Participant Information Sheet**

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We would like to invite you to take part in our study. Before you decide we would like you to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. One of our team will go through the information sheet with you and answer any questions you have. Talk to others about the study before making a decision if you wish.

#### **What is the purpose of the study?**

To date, there is very little research that has explored the experiences and impact of classification on para-athletes and their wider team. The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions and experiences of athletes and athlete support personnel when going through the classification processes in wheelchair rugby. We aim to understand how classification may impact upon athlete and ASP wellbeing, sports performance and continued participation in the sport. We would like to understand how to support athletes and ASP through the classification processes, and in navigating the outcomes of classification.

#### **Who is doing this research and why?**

This study is part of a PhD student research project supported by Loughborough University. The study will be undertaken by Ellie-May Storr and supervised by Dr Jamie Barker, Dr Carolyn Plateau and Professor Vicky Tolfrey. The study is funded by The Peter Harrison Centre for Disability Sport at Loughborough University.

#### **Are there any inclusion or exclusion criteria?**

You must be over the age of 18 and have the capacity to fully understand and consent to this research.

You must:

- Play wheelchair rugby to a club, national or international standard
- Have been classified in the last 18 months
- OR be an athlete support personnel associated to a wheelchair rugby team or organisation, with experience of the classification processes

### **Exclusion Criteria**

- Any athlete or athlete support personal who may find discussing classification distressing will be excluded from the study.

### **What will I be asked to do?**

You will be invited to provide written informed consent before participating in the study. You will be asked to attend a 1-1 online interview (MS teams) to discuss your experiences and perceptions of classification processes. The interview will be audio and video recorded and will take around an hour.

### **Once I take part, can I change my mind?**

After you have read this information, asked any questions you may have and decided that you are happy to participate we will ask you to complete an Informed Consent Form. However, if at any time, before, during or after the study you wish to withdraw from the study, please just contact the main investigator (Ellie-May Storr [E.Storr@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:E.Storr@lboro.ac.uk)). You can withdraw up until data collection has finished (expected to be by 1st June 2024), for any reason and you will not be asked to explain your reasons for withdrawing.

### **Are there any disadvantages or risks in participating?**

Some people may find discussing their experiences of classification mildly uncomfortable. As previously mentioned, you are free to stop the interview at any time, or skip any questions that you do not wish to answer.

Should you wish to discuss any issues that arise as a result of taking part in this study, please contact a member of the research team (Dr Jamie Barker; 01509 226363; [J.B.Barker@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:J.B.Barker@lboro.ac.uk)) (Ellie-May Storr; 01509 225945; [E.Storr@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:E.Storr@lboro.ac.uk))

If you have wider concerns about yours or others mental health and well-being, do consider seeking support via your GP or team doctor. You can also make contact with the following services, or contact your GP.

Samaritans: To talk about anything that is upsetting you, you can contact [Samaritans](https://www.samaritans.org) 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. You can call [116 123](tel:116123) (free from any phone), email [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

For more information on mental health and wellbeing, please visit the Mind website: <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/crisis-services/helplines-listening-services/>

## **Data Protection Privacy Notice**

Loughborough University will be using information/data from you in order to undertake this study and will act as the data controller for this study. This means that the University is responsible for looking after your information and using it properly.

### **What personal information will be collected from me and how will it be used?**

Identifiable personal information including your name and contact details will be collected. We need your name as part of the consent process and your contact details to arrange the interview. Other personal information collected will be your level of classification (athletes) or job role (ASP).

The information collected in this study will not be passed on to any third parties: it will be kept securely in a password-protected folder at Loughborough University for the purposes of the research and will only be accessible to the researchers. Names and contact details will not be made public and will be destroyed at the end of the project.

### **What is the legal basis for processing my personal information?**

Personal data will be processed on the public task basis. For further details on the data protection legislation see: <https://ico.org.uk/your-data-matters/>

### **How long will my identifiable personal information be retained?**

We will keep identifiable personal information about you until the study is completed and no longer than one year (expected to be by 1<sup>st</sup> October 2025).

### **Will my identifiable personal information be shared with others?**

Your identifiable personal information will only be shared with the investigators involved in the study.

### **Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?**

No identifiable personal information will be included in any of the project submissions or shared beyond the investigators. No individual will be identifiable in any report, presentation, or publication. A pseudonym will be used.

### **How will the anonymised data/results collected from me be used?**

Your anonymised data will be used as part of a PhD thesis and subsequent research publications in journals.

All information will be securely stored on the University IT systems (OneDrive).

**How long will the anonymised data/results be retained?**

Anonymised data will be kept for 6 years after the end of the research project (1st October 2031)

**I have some more questions; who should I contact?**

If you have any further questions, please contact *Ellie-May Storr* [E.Storr@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:E.Storr@lboro.ac.uk)

**What if I am not happy with how the research was conducted?**

If you are not happy with how the research was conducted, please contact the Secretary of the Ethics Review Sub-Committee, Research & Innovation Office, Hazlerigg Building, Loughborough University, Epinal Way, Loughborough, LE11 3TU. Tel: 01509 222423. Email: [researchpolicy@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:researchpolicy@lboro.ac.uk)

The University also has policies relating to Research Misconduct and Whistle Blowing which are available online at <https://www.lboro.ac.uk/internal/research-ethics-integrity/research-integrity/>.

If you require any further information regarding the General Data Protection Regulations, please see: <https://www.lboro.ac.uk/privacy/research-privacy/>.