



## **The ARISE Project: Activity and Recreation in an Inclusive Sensory Environment**

### **What is the study about?**

This study aims to identify the design requirements for an inclusive outdoor activity and recreation space to support health and well-being for everyone. We have a particular focus on the needs of young autistic people, autistic adults, older people and their families and carers. We would like to know about your experiences of outdoor exercise and recreation and your ideas for how to enhance accessibility of these spaces.

### **Who can take part in this study?**

If you are a member of any of the following groups:

- Autistic young person (aged between 13 and 18 years)
- Autistic adult (aged 18 plus)
- Older adult (aged 65 plus)
- Family member or carer for any of the previous groups

You must have a good command of English to participate.

### **What will I have to do?**

If you wish to take part in the study, we will contact you to set up a time that works well for you for a focus group or semi-structured interview, depending on your preference. We have options to take part online and in person.

Focus groups will involve up to 4 other people. The focus groups and interviews will be audio recorded and will last for about an hour.

In order to participate you will have to read this information and other documents referenced, and if you are happy, tick the box to indicate you consent to participate. We will begin with a brief written questionnaire. This will ask you some details about yourself (age, nationality, location).

Next, you will answer some questions related to your experiences in outdoor exercise and recreation spaces, your preferences and your ideas on how to make these spaces inclusive.

Your data will be pseudonymised which means that a code will be used to identify you, not your name. We will transcribe the focus group/interview within 2 weeks and then delete the audio recording. We will remove any identifying text from the transcripts that might indicate that it is you. You will not be identifiable in any of the results that are published from this study. You can choose not to answer any questions, and we can stop/pause the recording at any time if you feel uncomfortable.

Next, you will answer some questions related to your experiences in outdoor exercise and recreation spaces, your preferences and your ideas on how to make these spaces inclusive.

### **What are the benefits of participating in this study?**

This study aims to develop a set of design requirements. These will be used in a design process for an inclusive outdoor space in Limerick city. The ARISE project team are working with Dóchas Midwest Autism Support and Limerick City and County Council to inform the design of a site that is based on community needs. The design requirements will also inform future design projects in Limerick and will also be published in an academic journal to inform design in other regions.

### **What are the risks of participating in this study?**

Minimal risk is involved with this study. Some topics might be upsetting in the focus group. If this happens, you can decide not to answer a given question or ask the recording to be paused or the focus group to be stopped altogether. There may also be some minor risks associated with participation in the focus groups. This will require you to express your thoughts in the presence of other group members. We will ask all focus group members to maintain confidentiality and not discuss the contents of the discussion or the identity of the group participants with anyone. Confidentiality by other focus group members cannot be monitored after the conclusion of the focus group, so participants should weigh this information when deciding whether to participate.

### **What if I do not want to take part?**

Taking part in this study is purely voluntary. There is no obligation to participate. If you don't want to be in the study, you don't have to be. It won't affect you if you want to take part in other studies.

### **What happens to the information?**

The information that you provide to the research team will be kept confidential. Information from interviews and focus groups will be pseudonymised, meaning that we will use a code

and not your name to record your data. The code will be stored separately from the other data, so no one will know who you are. All information will be stored securely on the cloud-based OneDrive server in the University of Limerick. Only the people running the study will look at this information. After seven years all electronic data will be electronically deleted from the servers.

### **What if I change my mind about participating in the study?**

If you participate in the focus group/interview, you can withdraw your data up to 2 weeks after these events. After that stage, we won't be able to identify your data anymore. You can contact the lead investigator listed below for more information.

### **What happens at the end of the study?**

After all the information is collected, a set of design requirements will be shared with staff at Limerick city and county council to inform the development of an inclusive outdoor space in Limerick, an academic paper may be written up for publication in a journal about inclusive design and findings may be presented at conferences. All the data will be stored and destroyed as outlined above. You will not be identifiable in any of these outputs.

### **What if I have more questions or do not understand something?**

If you have any questions, you can contact the principal investigator at the details listed below at any time before, during or following the study.

Principal investigator:  
Dr Michelle O'Donoghue  
[Michelle.ODonoghue@ul.ie](mailto:Michelle.ODonoghue@ul.ie)

***This research study has received Ethics approval from the Education and Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee (2026\_02\_20\_EHS)***

***If you have any concerns about this study and wish to contact someone independent you may contact: Chair Education and Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee, EHS Faculty Office, University of Limerick, Tel (061) 234101***