School for Policy Studies

University of Bristol

8 Priory Road, Bristol BS8 1TZ

**A study of older men’s experiences of seeking social engagement and combating loneliness in later life:**

**Invitation to participate**

Dear colleague,

We are writing to invite your service to participate in a research study being conducted by researchers at The School for Policy Studies at the University of Bristol. It is funded by the National Institute for Health Research School for Social Care Research. We have been given details of your service by Age UK, our partner in the study. The main aim of this study is to develop an in-depth understanding of the formal and informal ways in which marginalised groups of older men (65+ years) seek to maintain social engagement in later life and combat loneliness. This includes their experiences of participation in groups and social interventions targeted at reducing loneliness among older men. These marginalised groups are:

* older men living in rural areas who are single or living alone;
* older gay and bisexual men who are single or living alone; and,
* older men who are carers for significant others (people important to them).

The project includes a fourth group, single older men (65+) who are single or living alone and do not belong to the above three groups, for comparison. Being single includes men who are widowed or whose partner has died.

We aim to work with services targeted towards some or all of these groups of men. We would value the input of your service in the following ways:

1. To support the recruitment of men to the study,
2. One staff member from your service may also be asked to take part in an interview to discuss how services can support the alleviation of loneliness and social isolation amongst these groups of men.

The study has received ethical approval from the NIHR Social Care Research Ethics Committee (REC ref 17/IEC08/0004).

**If you think you can assist us please email** **paul.willis@bristol.ac.uk** **or call 0117 3310640 and I will provide you with further information about the study to circulate to older men accessing your service. We would very much appreciate your assistance.**

We may follow this email up with a phone call around one week later, please let us know if you do not want us to contact you further.

Meantime if you would like to discuss the study, please get in touch with the research team by emailing omam-project@bristol.ac.uk or contact Dr Paul Willis, who is leading the study and would be happy to answer questions.

**Dr Paul Willis, Senior Lecturer in Social Work, School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol, 8 Priory Road, Bristol BS8 1TZ.**

**Email: paul.willis@bristol.ac.uk or Phone: 0117 3310640**

We look forward to speaking with you soon.

With kind regards,



Paul Willis

***On behalf of the OMAM research team.***