

---

## COMbination Prevention Approaches for reducing Sexually transmitted infections (COMPASS)

### Community Engagement Workshop - Participant Information Sheet

#### We are inviting you to take part in a study

---

- Please take time to read the following information carefully. Discuss it with friends and family if you wish. Take time to decide whether you wish to take part.
- You are free to decide whether to take part in this study.
- You can stop taking part in any part of the study at any time, without giving a reason.
- Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

---

#### Important things that you need to know

- In this study, we want to understand how gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (GBMSM) make decisions about sexual health. This includes attitudes towards different ways of preventing sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
- We are inviting you to take part in a workshop. In the workshop, we will explore how peoples' lived experiences, relationships and sexual networks influence decisions about STI prevention. We are also interested in whether these choices differ with different types of partners.
- Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. It is your choice whether you take part in this study.
- The information collected in the workshop will be used to improve our understanding of how STI prevention works in real life. This will help us develop tools to help guide future STI prevention policy and planning.

- Everyone involved in the study will keep your data safe and secure. Only approved members of the research team will have access to your data. We will make sure no one can work out who you are from any reports we write about the project.
- The project is led by University College London (UCL). The Chief Investigator is Dr Liz Fearon.

---

#### Contents

- 1 Why are we doing this project?
- 2 Why am I being asked to take part?
- 3 What do I need to know about taking part in this project?
- 4 What will I need to do if I take part?
- 5 What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?
- 6 What are the possible benefits of taking part?
- 7 More information about taking part
- 8 Contacts for further information

---

#### How to contact us

If you have any questions about this project, then please contact one of the researchers from the study team:

##### **Dr Liz Fearon**

University College London,  
311, Mortimer Market Centre, London, WC1E 6JB

E-mail: [e.fearon@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:e.fearon@ucl.ac.uk)

##### **Dr Luxsena Sukumaran**

University College London,  
Royal Free Hospital, Rowland Hill Street,  
London NW3 2PF

E-mail: [luxsena.sukumaran.19@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:luxsena.sukumaran.19@ucl.ac.uk)

##### **Dr Roeann Osman**

University College London,  
311, Mortimer Market Centre, London, WC1E 6JB

E-mail: [roeann.osman.20@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:roeann.osman.20@ucl.ac.uk)

---

## 1 Why are we doing this project?

---

COMPASS is a two-year NIHR Health Protection Research Unit in Blood Borne and Sexually Transmitted Infections (BBSTI) funded study which aims to understand how combinations of new and existing STI prevention strategies can work together in practice to reduce the spread of bacterial STIs among GBMSM.

As part of this study, we are running community workshops with members of the public who are GBMSM and from racially minoritised communities, or GBMSM aged between 18 and 25 years.

This study focuses on STI prevention strategies relevant to sexual networks among GBMSM. By involving people from these communities, we aim to develop tools to inform policy-making that reflect real-world experiences and test how different STI risk-reduction strategies might work together to inform effective STI prevention and policy.

---

## 2 Why am I being asked to take part?

---

You are being asked to participate in this workshop to share your lived experiences and attitudes towards sexual health, how you make decisions about STI prevention with different partners, and to help develop our tools that support policymaking which will reflect these real-world behaviours.

If you decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part, you are still free to change your mind and withdraw at any time by leaving the workshop, however, once the workshop has started you won't be able to withdraw your data.

---

## 3 What do I need to know about taking part in this project?

---

We invite you to take part in one in-person workshop held at The Love Tank. The workshop will last approximately 2 hours and will include 8-12 participants.

We will hold this same workshop twice, once among GBMSM identifying as racially minoritised and once among GBMSM aged 18-25. You can pick the one you prefer if both of these characteristics apply to you. We include trans and non-binary individuals in our definition of GBMSM. In particular, we are focusing on working with people and communities who have multiple sexual partners and may be more likely to come into contact with STIs.

The workshop will be co-facilitated by a facilitator from The Love Tank and a researcher from UCL. The session will involve guided group discussion. You will be invited to reflect on topics such as your lived experiences and attitudes towards sexual health, and how you make decisions about STI prevention with different partners.

You do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to. You can also choose to leave the workshop at any time without giving a reason.

---

## 4 What will I need to do if I take part?

---

You do not need to do anything in preparation for the workshop except turn up at the appointed time.

A member of the team will send you a reminder before the workshop and give you specific instructions on how to join.

---

## 5 What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

---

During the workshop, it is possible that we will discuss difficult or sensitive topics related to your personal life, sex life and lived experience. It is up to you how much information you would like to share. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to, and you can take a break or leave the workshop at any time without giving a reason.

What you share will be kept confidential and your name will not be included in any reports. However, there are limits to confidentiality. If you tell us something that suggests you or someone else is at serious and immediate risk of harm, we may need to share this information with appropriate services to keep people safe. Wherever possible, we would discuss this with you first.

Sharing information such as past drug use, non-violent illegal activity, or experiences from the past that do not suggest current risk would not normally be reported. Each situation would be assessed proportionately in line with safeguarding guidance.

If you find any of the topics difficult or upsetting, a dedicated support team member from The Love Tank, Benjamin Weil, will be available during the workshop to provide practical support if needed.

This support may include:

- following The Love Tank's distress protocol if a participant becomes upset or distressed during the session
- signposting to relevant information on sexual health and STI prevention (including resources on DoxyPEP, Bexero vaccination, and digital HIV PrEP tools)
- signposting to appropriate services such as NHS sexual health clinics and community support services.

Benjamin Weil is not part of the research team. However, he will be leading the workshop discussions. His role will also include ensuring participants have access to appropriate support and information. Participants may also contact

Benjamin after the workshop if questions or needs arise. This post-workshop support consists of information-sharing and signposting only; it does not include counselling, therapy, or clinical care. Support is available on an ongoing basis, and participants can contact him at [research@thelovetank.info](mailto:research@thelovetank.info).

Taking part is completely voluntary. Choosing not to take part, or deciding to withdraw, will not affect any services, support, or guidance you receive from The Love Tank.

---

## 6 What are the possible benefits of taking part in this study?

---

You will be paid £27.50 per hour (£55.00 total via vouchers) for taking part in the workshop, and your travel expenses will be paid. Beyond this, you are unlikely to benefit personally from taking part in this study. However, you might enjoy sharing your experiences and meeting other attendees.

---

## 7 More information about taking part

---

### Do I have to take part?

No, it is up to you to decide whether to take part in the workshop. If you decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and you will be asked to sign a consent form.

If you decide not to take part in this study, this will not have any impact on you.

### Can I stop taking part?

You can stop taking part in this study at any time, without giving a reason and without any consequences to you. You can do so by contacting one of the researchers named on this sheet.

If you stop taking part in this study before attending the workshop, we will delete any data we may have already collected. During and after

the workshop, it will not be possible for you to withdraw your data due to the nature of the group discussion. However, you are free to leave the workshop at any point.

If you withdraw from the project after it ends, we will keep the information about you that we have already obtained.

### What will happen to information about me collected during the study?

If you agree to take part, the following will happen:

- An online consent form will be signed by you and a member of the research team, using a link provided by the researcher. This form will contain your name (or pseudonym), telephone number and/or email address (depending on your preferred method of contact), and will be stored in a password protected folder on the Data Safe Haven (DSH), which is a secure drive, at UCL.
- We will ask for your permission, and the permission of other attendees, to record the workshop (sound only). The recording will be held on an encrypted digital voice recorder until it is transferred to the DSH.
- The workshop facilitator or another member of the research team will make notes during the workshop. The audio recording will be deleted from the DSH once we have checked our written notes for completeness.
- All information collected will be kept confidential and stored securely at UCL. Your data will not be shared with other researchers or organisations outside of the named research team.
- Any notes taken during the workshop will only be identified by a project number, and not your name.

### What will happen to information collected about me after the study?

This project is being undertaken by researchers based at UCL. Dr Liz Fearon (UCL) is responsible for the project and all the data. We will be using information from you in order to undertake this

project and we are responsible for looking after your information and using it properly.

Due to the nature of the group discussion, you cannot withdraw your data after the workshop.

Non-identifiable information for this study will be stored at a registered UCL archive facility for a minimum of 10 years after the end of the study.

If you have any questions about how data are handled in this study, please speak to the researchers listed on this information sheet. You may also contact the UCL Data Protection Office. The contact details for the researchers and the UCL Data Protection Office are provided at the end of this information sheet.

Once we have finished the study, we will keep some of the data so we can check the results. We will write our reports in a way that no-one can work out that you took part in the study.

### UCL Data Protection Privacy Notice

The controller for this project will be UCL. The UCL Data Protection Officer provides oversight of UCL activities involving the processing of personal data, and can be contacted at [data-protection@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:data-protection@ucl.ac.uk)

This 'local' privacy notice sets out the information that applies to this particular study. Further information on how UCL uses participant information can be found in our 'general' privacy notice.

The information that is required to be provided to participants under data protection legislation (GDPR and DPA 2018) is provided across both the 'local' and 'general' privacy notices.

The lawful basis that will be used to process your personal data are: 'Public task' for personal data and 'Research purposes' for special category data.

Your personal data will be processed so long as it is required for the research project. If we are able to anonymise or pseudonymise the personal data you provide, we will undertake this and will endeavour to minimise the processing of personal data wherever possible.

If you are concerned about how your personal data is being processed, or if you would like to contact us about your rights, please contact UCL

in the first instance at [data-protection@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:data-protection@ucl.ac.uk). More information on UCL's privacy notices are available at <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/legal-services/privacy>.

## What will happen to the results of the project?

Findings from the workshop will help us to explore the effectiveness of combination of STI prevention strategies to inform STI policy going forward.

When the study is complete, we will present the findings at academic conferences and publish the results in academic journals. We will also circulate findings to other stakeholders including policy-makers and community partners. No sound recordings or names will be used. Any quotes will be anonymous. We might take photos of workshop materials such as flipcharts to help us record findings, but we will not photograph participants. This information will not identify you and will not be combined with other information in a way that could identify you. You can ask the researchers for a copy of any future publications. Your identity and any personal details will be kept confidential. No named information about you will be published in any report of this study.

At UCL we use personally identifiable information to conduct research to improve health, care, and services. As a publicly funded organisation, we must ensure that it is in the public interest when we use personally identifiable information from people who have agreed to take part in research. This means that when you agree to take part in this project, we will use your data in the ways needed to conduct and analyse the work. Your rights to access, change or move your information are limited, as we need to manage your information in specific ways in order for the research to be reliable and accurate. To safeguard your rights, we will use the minimum personally identifiable information possible.

Health and care research should serve the public interest, which means that we must demonstrate that our research serves the interests of society as a whole. We do this by following the UK Policy Framework for Health and Social Care Research.

If you wish to raise a complaint on how we have handled your personal data, you can contact our Data Protection Officer ([research-incident@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:research-incident@ucl.ac.uk)) who will investigate the matter. If you are not satisfied with our response or believe we are processing your personal data in a way that is not lawful, you can complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>.

## Who is organising and funding the study?

The study has been designed by researchers at UCL in partnership with The Love Tank. The Love Tank is supporting the project by helping to shape the research, recruit participants through their networks, and co-facilitating the workshops.

The project has been reviewed and is being paid for by National Institute of Health and Care Research (NIHR) Health Protection Research Unit in BBSTI.

UCL is the study Sponsor and has overall responsibility for the conduct of the group discussion part of the project. They are responsible for ensuring the discussions are carried out ethically and in the best interests of participants.

## Who has reviewed the study?

All research at UCL is looked at by an independent group of people called a Research Ethics Committee, to protect your interests. This study has been reviewed and given a favourable opinion by UCL Research Ethics Committee (Ethics ID: 2513).

## What if something goes wrong for me?

If you have any concerns about the way you have been approached or treated during the project, please talk to the study team. If the problem is not addressed, you can email the UCL Research Ethics Committee on [ethics@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:ethics@ucl.ac.uk)

If you are harmed by taking part in the project, or if you are harmed because of someone's negligence, then you may be able to take legal action. The Sponsor of the study, UCL, holds an insurance policy, in case anything does go wrong.

## 8

### Contacts for further information

If you want further information about this study, contact:

#### Dr Liz Fearon

University College London,  
311, Mortimer Market Centre, London, WC1E 6JB

E-mail: [e.fearon@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:e.fearon@ucl.ac.uk)

#### Dr Luxsena Sukumaran

University College London,  
Royal Free Hospital, Rowland Hill Street, London NW3 2PF

E-mail: [luxsena.sukumaran.19@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:luxsena.sukumaran.19@ucl.ac.uk)

#### Dr Roeann Osman

University College London, 311, Mortimer Market Centre, London, WC1E 6JB

E-mail: [roeann.osman.20@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:roeann.osman.20@ucl.ac.uk)

#### UCL Data Protection Office

Tel: 0203 108 8764

Email: [data-protection@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:data-protection@ucl.ac.uk)

**Thank you for taking the time to consider taking part in this project**

## 9

### Resources for further support

#### a) Prepster

- Description: Service that offers inclusive information about HIV PrEP and sexual health.

- Website: <https://www.prepster.info/>

#### b) Queer health

- Description: Service that offers inclusive information about queer wellbeing more generally.

- Website: <https://www.queerhealth.info/>

#### c) SXT Sexual Health Services

- Description: Online service that helps you find your nearest sexual health clinic or services.

- Website: <https://sxt.org.uk/>

#### d) Sexual Health London

- Description: Service offering free, discreet at-home sexual health screening for anyone living in eligible areas of London. Test kits are sent in the mail in discreet packaging with no identifying markings or logos. You collect your samples at home and send the samples back in the provided freepost box. You'll then receive your results a few days later via your preferred contact details.

- Website: <https://shl.uk>

#### e) SH:24

- Description: Service offering free, discreet at-home sexual health screening for anyone living in eligible areas in the UK. Test kits are sent in the mail in discreet packaging with no identifying markings or logos. You collect your samples at home and send the samples back in the provided freepost box. You'll then receive your results a few days later via your preferred contact details.

- Website: <https://sh24.org.uk/>

#### f) Terrence Higgins Trust

- Description: HIV and sexual health charity which provides services relating to HIV and sexual health.

- General website: <https://www.tht.org.uk/>

- Direct helpline: 0808 802 1221

#### g) NAZ Project London

- Description: A sexual health charity in London offering culturally specific sexual health services and programmes for men and women from black, brown and global majority communities. They offer free and confidential HIV testing, support groups, and counselling for those needing to talk to someone.

- Website: <https://www.naz.org.uk/>

- Helpline: 020 8741 1879

- h) Switchboard: LGBT+ Helpline**
  - Description: Charity which provides a one-stop listening service for LGBT+ people on the phone, by email and through Instant Messaging. They describe themselves as a safe space for anyone to discuss anything, including sexuality, gender identity, sexual health and emotional wellbeing.
  - Website: <http://switchboard.lgbt/>
  - Helpline: 0300 3300 630
  
- i) The Survivors Trust**
  - Description: Charity that provides information, advice or emotional support to survivors of sexual violence.
  - Website: <https://www.thesurvivorstrust.org/>
  - Helpline: 08088 010818
  
- j) London Friend**
  - Description: support the health and mental wellbeing of the LGBT community in and around London.
  - Website: <https://londonfriend.org.uk/>
  - Helpline: 0800 0119 100