

Dear parent/caregiver,

We would like to invite you and your child/person you care for to participate in this research project being conducted by **University of Surrey**. This project forms part of the **Cerebra Network** for Neurodevelopmental Disorders' multi-site research collaboration across University of Birmingham, Aston University, University of Surrey, and University of Warwick.

### **Our research**

Our research focuses on understanding how individuals with genetic syndromes process social information from the world around them, if this differs from typical development, and whether this is related to the presentation of autistic traits. This research is funded by Cerebra and the Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences, University of Surrey.

### **This study**

In the current study, we are interested in how individuals with Down syndrome process and understand social information such as faces, eyes and emotions. We would also like to know how social information processing relates to observable social behaviour skills that are central to navigating day to day interactions in individuals with Down syndrome. Since some individuals with Down syndrome also meet criteria for autism, we are interested in whether **individuals with Down syndrome with and without autism** process social information in a way that is similar to or different from autistic individuals without a genetic syndrome. We hope that this work will lead to improved understanding of the social-cognitive strengths and difficulties that are characteristic of individuals with Down syndrome, those with other genetic syndromes associated with intellectual disability and autistic individuals with and without a genetic syndrome.

### **Who are we looking for?**

We are looking for children and young people with **Down syndrome (with/without autism)**, aged **4-17-years-old**.

### **What does our research involve?**

- Tasks and activities that demonstrate a person's social skills, verbal, and non-verbal abilities.
- Eye-tracking assessments which show us where an individual is looking on a screen, giving us information about what that individual finds interesting.
- Parents will be asked to fill out some questionnaires and complete an interview over the phone.

We will complete our testing remotely wherever possible. Remote testing sessions can be conducted over multiple short test sessions. Overall, the whole study will take approximately **2-3 hours** to complete. However, we understand sitting for long periods of time can be difficult for children and the test session may take longer so that we can account for rest breaks. We will try and complete any face-to-face testing within one visit.

If you would like to take part, you can contact us, and we will arrange an appointment at your convenience at the University of Surrey. We will pay for your travel expenses if you choose to visit the University. If you would prefer not to travel, we can visit you at home, at school or



another place that is convenient for you. Researchers will be adhering to COVID-safe guidelines.

**Sounds like something you may be interested in or have any questions?**

If you would like to take part in this project, have any questions or would like to discuss the study in more detail, please do not hesitate to contact **Lauren**, from our University of Surrey research team, at [L.jenner@surrey.ac.uk](mailto:L.jenner@surrey.ac.uk).

Thank you for your time.

Yours Sincerely,

Lauren, Natalie, Rachel & Lucy

[www.ndevresearchlab.com](http://www.ndevresearchlab.com)

[www.cerebranetwork.com](http://www.cerebranetwork.com)