Appendix 1    Model participant information form

You are invited to take part in a research project which will investigate the effectiveness of an internet-delivered psychological pain management programme- called Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) for people who suffer with chronic pain.

Before you decide whether you would like to be part of this research project, it is important that you understand why we are carrying out this research and what it will involve. Thank you very much for taking the time to read this.

Background information

The aim of this research is to examine whether an internet-delivered psychological pain management programme is effective among people who suffer with chronic pain in Ireland. This has not been investigated to date in Ireland.

Who is suitable to take part in the study?

You are suitable to take part in the study if the following are true:

- You are aged 18 years or more
- You have pain for at least three months’ duration
- You are resident in Ireland
- You have regular access to a computer and to the internet
- You are willing to abstain from any new psychological treatment for chronic pain during the active phase of this study
- You are not currently experiencing a psychotic illness
- You are not experiencing chronic pain due to malignancy
- You have adequate English language ability

What will happen if you volunteer to take part?

Firstly, you will be randomly assigned to one of two groups- one group will undergo the online pain management programme and the other group will act as the comparison group who will wait for 3 months before being offered the treatment. This is so we can carefully work out if the treatment is effective.

This internet-delivered psychological pain management programme is based on a programme that has been used widely by psychologists during one-to-one and group therapy sessions among people with chronic pain. Our research group, which includes clinical psychologists, a physiotherapist, health economist and health promotion expert, designed this specific online pain management programme for use in the Irish context. The assigning of people to groups is completed automatically and completely at random. Upon completion of this sample survey you will be able to register to access the online pain management programme. All materials are tailored for those wishing to learn effective ways of managing chronic pain. Your participation in and access to the programme is designed to last for 8 weeks. Use of the programme will be at your convenience. However, you will be given instructions on
how you are to progress through it. Each session should last approximately 30-50 minutes to accommodate your busy schedule while still being of benefit to you. You will be encouraged to proceed through the programme from week one to week eight successfully; you will also be asked to listen to and practice mindfulness exercises and to complete questionnaires before and after your participation.

The people who are assigned to the control group will not participate in the online intervention programme at this time. However, if you are assigned to the control group, you will be offered the opportunity to participate in the online pain management programme after the study has been completed. Therefore, everybody who signs up to this research project will have the opportunity to benefit from the online pain management programme.

**Are there any benefits from my participation?**

Benefits to the participants include: access to a free online psychological pain management programme; informational benefits relating to the management of chronic pain; a greater understanding of the individual’s role in pain management and training in mindfulness techniques tailored for chronic pain. When this research project is concluded, all participants who have completed the programme will receive a summary of the main findings. Of note, it could be up to 2 years before final results are published.

**Are there any risks to me by taking part in this study?**

No, we do not anticipate any risks as a result of participating in this study. If you have any issues to discuss at any time throughout the duration of the study, please feel free to contact the researcher involved in the study.

**Confidentiality**

Your identity will remain confidential. Your name or personal details will not be published and will not be given to anyone outside the study group. You will be assigned a number, and referred to by this.

**Voluntary participation**

You should understand that your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that you can cease your involvement in this study at any time.

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

If you would like more information before you decide, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher involved in running the study. At ANY point in the study, any queries that you may have can be answered by contacting:

- Dr. XX (Tel: XX, Email: XX)