

## Supplementary File 1.

Topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Questions (●) &amp; prompts (○)</b></li> </ul>
<b>Welcome and introduction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wish welcome, briefly explain the study and the interview process. Ask if they have any questions about the study or the information leaflet (information and consent obtained prior)</li> <li>• What is the reason for you wanting to participate in this interview study?</li> </ul>
<b>Demographics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How long have you had pain?</li> <li>• How long have you been unemployed?</li> <li>• Are you, or have you ever been on WAA/DP?</li> <li>• How long on WAA (dates) and/or DP and what percentage?</li> </ul>
<b>Persistent pain</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can you tell me how your pain developed and how it has affected your life? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Can you recall any key events during this time? (Related to pain)</li> <li>○ How did that make you feel or think?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Thinking about the future, do you think your pain will get better, worse or stay the same?</li> <li>• Have you found anything that helps you to manage your pain / enables you to do more of the things you care about?</li> </ul>
<b>Previous work</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have you worked previously? Could you tell me a little about what you did when you used to work?</li> <li>• <i>During your time in work, before you stopped working due to your current health problem: did you encounter any health problems or pain? If so...</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Did you have any time out of work (sick leave)?</i></li> <li>○ <i>How did you cope with it? What were the obstacles at the time and how did you manage to overcome them?</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• How did you eventually come to stop working? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Can you recall any key events during this time?</li> <li>○ How did that make you feel or think?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>The 'Welfare system'</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can you share your experiences in dealing with government agencies (e.g., NAV) / case workers while managing your chronic pain and seeking employment support? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Can you recall any key events during this time?</li> <li>○ How did that make you feel or think?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Did your involvement with the welfare system present challenges or facilitators in your journey to return to work? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Can you recall any key events during this time?</li> <li>○ How did that make you feel or think?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Attempts of RTW</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can you share any thoughts and experiences on what you think hindered your return-to-work process? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Encourage them to discuss the nature of these challenges and how they attempted to overcome them.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• During an interview process (on application or in interview) or employment, did you have any reservation about disclosing/discussing your pain? <i>[Formulation depends on previous replies]</i></li> <li>• Explore any stigmatisation/discrimination/negative experiences and how this has influenced the return-to-work journey</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can you share any thoughts /experiences of what you think facilitated / might facilitate your return-to-work? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Encourage them to provide specific examples and elaborate on their thinking/experiences.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Are there any specific factors or personal characteristics you think contributed to your return to work?</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you think are / would be the most important obstacles or main challenges for not returning to work? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Encourage them to provide specific examples and elaborate on their thinking/experiences</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Personal characteristics 'me'</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will you describe your self-perceived strengths and weaknesses/limitations?</li> <li>• How do you define your ability to bounce back from challenges and setbacks?</li> <li>• How well have you been able to adapt to the limitations caused by chronic pain?</li> <li>• What coping strategies have you found most effective in managing pain? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Discuss any specific skills they developed or enhanced during their unemployment period.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Closing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there anything of importance that we have not covered or that you want to add?</li> </ul>