**Social Connectedness at University**

**Study Brief and Information Sheet**

**Researcher:**

**Principal Investigator:** Dr Sophie Homer, School of Psychology, University of Plymouth

**What is this study about?**

This study is about your experiences of university life, including your personal and social experiences.

**What is expected of me as a participant?**

During this online survey you will be asked about your social and personal experiences at university. You will be asked to consider your social connections, your social activities, and your engagement with others in and outside of university. You will also be asked about your perceptions of social connectedness and belonging, and your perceptions and experiences of loneliness, isolation, mental health, and wellbeing. You will also be asked to complete some scales about mental health, wellbeing, loneliness, isolation, connectedness, and self-esteem.

The survey should take no longer than 20 minutes to complete. Please find somewhere quiet and free of distractions, so that you can complete it all in one go. You will have the chance to enter a prize draw for some Amazon vouchers at the end of the survey.

**How does the Amazon voucher prize draw work?**

At the end of the survey, you will have the opportunity to enter a prize draw for some Amazon vouchers. Available to win are one £50 voucher, two £20 vouchers and one £10 voucher. All of these vouchers will be won by people who participate in this online survey. If you would like to enter the prize draw, please indicate this at the end of the survey and provide an email address. Please see below for details about anonymity and confidentiality.

Once the study is complete, everybody who entered the prize draw will be entered into the draw. One email address will be selected at random for each of the voucher prizes. The winner will be contacted via email.

**Will my participation be anonymous and confidential?**

All data you provide will remain completely anonymous and you will not be asked to provide any identifiable information. We may want to disseminate the data and analysis by publishing it in academic journals and presenting it orally and/or via poster at conferences and events, including both academic and public events. Scores will be reported as totals or averages and so it will not be possible to trace individual responses back to you. Responses to qualitative questions may be reproduced or published but will remain anonymous. We will not publish or present names or any identifiable information, and it will not be possible to link any of the analysis, or any individual quotes, back to you.

We will store all data on secure systems (Jisc, Qualtrics, or Gorilla) during data collection. Once data collection is complete, we will remove data from these systems and store them on secure University systems (OneDrive) for ten years in line with university policy.

If you choose to enter the prize draw, you will be asked to provide an email address so that we can contact you if you win a voucher. Email addresses will be stored separately to the survey data, so it will not be possible to link email addresses to individual survey responses. Email addresses will only be used by the Researchers, and only for the purposes of the prize draw. Under no circumstances will we share your email address with anyone else. During data collection, we will store the email addresses on secure systems (Jisc, Qualtrics, or Gorilla). Once data collection is complete, we will remove the email addresses from these systems and store them on secure University systems (OneDrive) whilst we conduct the prize draw. Once the prize draw is complete and the winners have been contacted, we will destroy the database containing the email addresses.

**Is there any risk?**

You will be asked to consider your social and personal experiences at university, including your experiences of social connectedness, loneliness and isolation. You will also be asked about mental health and wellbeing in relation to these experiences. For some, these may be sensitive topics. There is no pressure for you to consider these topics if you do not wish to. If this is the case, please do not proceed with the study and close your browser window now. If you do choose to participate, you do not have to answer a question if you dot wish to. You can withdraw from the study at any time (see below).

**Can I withdraw?**

You may withdraw from the study at any time, without penalty. If you would like to withdraw, simply close your browser window. If you would like to withdraw your data after the study, please inform the Researcher within two weeks.

**Will this affect my relationship with the University of Plymouth?**

No. Participation is entirely voluntary and participating (or withdrawing) does not affect your relationship with the University in any way. You can participate or withdraw at any time without prejudice to your relationship with the University or any staff, and without prejudice to any assessment of your academic performance.

**Who do I contact with questions or concerns?**

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Researcher, [Researcher name], in the first instance [Researcher’s email address].

If you do not feel that your issue has been adequately resolved, you can contact the Principal Investigator, Dr Sophie Homer: [sophie.homer@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:sophie.homer@plymouth.ac.uk)

If you still do not feel that your issue has been adequately resolved, you can contact the University of Plymouth, Faculty of Health: Medicine, Dentistry, and Human Sciences Ethics Committee at [FOHEthics@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:FOHEthics@plymouth.ac.uk) or on 01752 586992.

Thank you for your interest in this study. If you choose to participate, you will now be asked to indicate your informed consent. If you consent to participate, you will be instructed throughout and debriefed at the end.