**Social Connectedness at University**

**Debrief**

Thank you for participating in this study.

**Study background**

Improving the mental health of university students is a priority in the Higher Education sector. Loneliness is associated with mental ill-health in the general population, and it has been identified as a main cause of mental ill-health in students (McIntyre et al., 2018). Therefore, the Student Mental Health Charter highlights the importance of improving social connectedness at university (Hughes & Spanner, 2019). It is important to improve social connectedness in all students, not just those who experience mental ill-health. This is because social connectedness plays a role in *preventing* the onset of mental ill-health (Kleiber et al., 2018).

**Study rationale**

This study sought to investigate students’ experiences of social connectedness, loneliness, and wellbeing at university. We gained some in-depth insights into students’ experiences from a recent focus group, and this study aimed to see whether the themes identified in the focus group data would apply to a larger sample of students. Eventually, we would like to use these insights to inform the development of a social campus app for students.

**Anonymity and confidentiality**

All data you provided will remain completely anonymous. We may want to disseminate or publish data, but 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 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 chose to enter the prize draw, you provided 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.

If at any point you wish to withdraw your data, please contact us with your participation code and we will destroy your data. Please note that accepting a voucher (if you win the prize draw) does not negate your right to withdraw your data.

**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.

**Help or advice**

If you would like help or advice regarding mental health, you should contact your GP. Some other points of contact:

University Student Services: <https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/student-life/services/student-services/counselling>

Mind Mental Health Charity: [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk) 0300 123 3393

Samaritans: <http://www.samaritans.org/> 116 123

**Amazon voucher prize draw**

At the end of the survey, you had 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 participated in this online survey. 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. Please note that accepting a voucher (if you win the prize draw) does not negate your right to withdraw your data. Good luck!

**Thank you very much for taking part.**