Reducing plastic packaging and food waste through product innovation simulation – Understanding product packaging innovation and development

Information Sheet - [7/10/22]

You are invited to take part in the ‘Reducing plastic packaging and food waste through product innovation simulation’ research project, based at the University of Sheffield. Before you decide whether or not you want to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it involves.

Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you need to. Feel free to ask us any questions if things are not clear, or if you would like more information. Take your time to decide if you would like to take part, and thank you for reading this.

The aim of the project is to understand how different types of households deal with plastic food packaging waste. Our colleagues at the University Sheffield recently developed a new version of a computer simulation model to estimate how much food people in the UK waste, based on different actions taken by industry and government. This was based on an understanding of how people deal with food waste and plastic waste in different households, informed by past social science research, and research with households conducted from November 2022 to January 2023.

Based on this new research, the new version of this model will be able to include plastic waste in its simulations. It will be possible to simulate potential product innovations to estimate the possible effects on food waste, household expenditure, and plastic waste. Trade-offs between these three types of effects can be identified for different household types and household scenarios, for each product innovation. This insight will aid decision makers that wish to introduce new products and innovations, but have multiple and potentially conflicting objectives (e.g. reducing food waste and plastic waste simultaneously).

However, there is no up to date, unified record of the packaging innovations and developments that are currently at a high level of readiness, nor is there a record of the packaging innovations and developments being developed for future deployment. This research is being conducted to understand the current range of packaging innovations and developments to enable our project to provide insight that will support the development and implementation of packaging innovations and developments which are currently being considered. We plan to interview packaging industry professionals, and other stakeholders in connected industries/sectors to build as complete a picture as possible of the options at play, to better target our simulation efforts towards industry needs.

The Natural and Environmental Resources Research Council (NERC) has funded this research project to provide this information, and we are currently contacting people to take part, and will be doing so until early 2023.

Taking part in the research is entirely voluntary and there are no consequences if you do not wish to take part. You can also choose to withdraw from the research at any time, without needing to give a reason, at any time by contacting the researcher at: [jack.pickering@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:jack.pickering@sheffield.ac.uk). The contact details of other members of the project team can be found at the end of this document.

While you can withdraw from the study at any point, the data you contributed up until that point will be included, unless you specifically request otherwise before the end of the data collection period, which will be at the end of January 2023. You can also choose to not answer any question, or decline to take part with no consequences. This is because we plan to publish the data from this research for other researchers to use. However, as we will explain, you will not be identifiable from the data that we collect.

If you choose to participate there is no legally binding contract, nor is there an employment relationship between you and the University of Sheffield.

If you decide to take part, please fill in the consent form that was included with this information sheet and return it to the researcher.

**What does the research involve? What do you want me to do?**

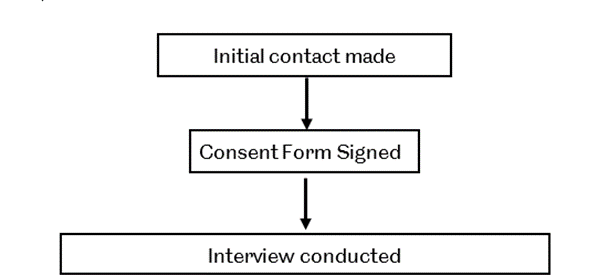
We would like you to take part in an online interview, which will be arranged via email.

We can also discuss when the interview will take place, and what it will involve further via email.

We will be using the transcripts of the interviews to identify common innovations and packaging developments which are being implemented or which are the subject of difficult decisions.

You are under no obligation to take part in the research, and may choose to withdraw from the research or interview at any time. You may also request for your interview recordings and transcripts to be deleted, up until the data collection period ends which you will be notified of.

**Research Process:**

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**Risks:**

We do not anticipate any significant risks to you from taking part in this research. However, we will let you know immediately if any become apparent. The proposed research has been designed to minimise the risks of COVID-19 infection, which is why it is taking place online.

There is a heightened risk in this research project, that certain participants may be identifiable to other industry professionals given the highly focused nature of the research, and the limited number of potential participants. For this reason we have a comprehensive anonymization plan in place, and will be discussing aspects of this with you and other participants as the research progresses. There will also be chance for you to view the completed, anonymized transcripts of your interview to assess the level of anonymization for yourself.

We are also happy to sign Non-Disclosure Agreements if necessary.

**Benefits:**

For this research we cannot offer you a financial reward. It is hoped that this project will help with future efforts to produce more sustainable packaging which uses less resources and is easier to recycle, which will contribute to overall efforts towards sustainability.

We may be able to offer simulation of the effects of particular packaging innovations and interventions, if you take part in the research and discuss these interventions in detail with us. These results would be sent to you as soon as we are able to confirm and summarize them. We may produce these simulations even if you do not specifically request this simulation.

There are no other immediate benefits for you.

**Confidentiality, Anonymity and Data Management:**

All the information that we collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential and will only be accessible to members of the research team. You will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications unless you have given your explicit consent for this. If you agree to us sharing the information you provide with other researchers (e.g. by making it available in a data archive) then your personal details will not be included unless you explicitly request this.

We plan to anonymise the data that we collect, so that none of it can be used to identify you. Names, places, and identifying details in the transcripts and diary entries will be changed, swapped or omitted (Anonymisation) so that you cannot be identified from the data. However, we will use some of your personal data from the initial questionnaire to categorise your household. Data protection legislation means that we are required to inform you that we have a legal basis for this under article 6(1)(e) of the GDPR legislation. Further information can be found in the University’s Privacy Notice <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general>.

Due to the topic of this research, we think that it is very likely that other researchers will find the data collected to be useful for answering other future questions about similar topics. This dataset produced from this research will be available from the UK Data Service data repository. This will include the questionnaire responses, interview transcripts, diary entries, images you take and send in, and any notes made by the researcher. We will ask for your specific consent for your data to be shared in this way on a separate form.

This research is funded by the Natural Environment Research Council and is led by a team of researchers and academics from the University of Sheffield and City University of London. The data controller for this study is the University of Sheffield, which means that the University of Sheffield is responsible for looking after your information and using it properly.

This project has been ethically approved via the University of Sheffield’s Ethics Review Procedure, as administered by the Management School.

**Complaints**

It you are dissatisfied with any aspect of the research and wish to make a complaint, please contact Professor Lenny Koh ([S.C.L.Koh@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:S.C.L.Koh@sheffield.ac.uk)) in the first instance. If you feel your complaint has not been handled in a satisfactory way you can contact the Head of the Department of the University of Sheffield Management School (Rachael Finn; [r.l.finn@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:r.l.finn@sheffield.ac.uk)). If the complaint relates to how your personal data has been handled, you can find information about how to raise a complaint in the University’s Privacy Notice: https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general.

If you wish to make a report of a concern or incident relating to potential exploitation, abuse or harm resulting from your involvement in this project, please contact the project’s Designated Safeguarding Contact Lenny Koh ([S.C.L.Koh@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:S.C.L.Koh@sheffield.ac.uk)) . If the concern or incident relates to the Designated Safeguarding Contact, or if you feel a report you have made to this Contact has not been handled in a satisfactory way, please contact the Head of the Management School (Rachel Finn; [r.l.finn@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:r.l.finn@sheffield.ac.uk))and/or the University’s Research Ethics & Integrity Manager (Lindsay Unwin; l.v.unwin@sheffield.ac.uk).

You will be given a copy of this information sheet, and a copy of the signed consent form to keep.

**Thank you for taking part!**

**Contact information**

Lead Investigator - Professor Christian Reynolds - City University of London ([christian.Reynolds@city.ac.uk](mailto:christian.Reynolds@city.ac.uk))

Research Manager - Professor Lenny Koh - The University of Sheffield ([S.C.L.Koh@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:S.C.L.Koh@sheffield.ac.uk))

Research Associate - Jack Pickering - The University of Sheffield ([jack.pickering@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:jack.pickering@sheffield.ac.uk))