

**Group Differences in the Cognitive and Affective Processing of Social and Emotional Cues**

**Information Sheet**

We are recruiting participants for a research project that aims to understand how people with convictions for different types of sexual or violent offences process social and emotional cues.

During the study, we will show you some images that may cause some mild discomfort. They depict hands in potentially painful everyday situations e.g., chopping vegetables with a knife, but no actual injury is shown. Other images depict children and adults wearing swimwear, similar to what one might see on a visit to the local swimming pool.

We will also ask you some questions about your mental wellbeing, including mood and anxiety, and we will ask about your use of different sexual fantasies involving children. If you would be likely to experience considerable discomfort responding to these items, then you should not take part.

All participation is voluntary and anonymous. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important that you understand what is involved and why the research is being carried out. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

**What is the research for?**

The study aims to explore how different groups perform on tasks that measure self-regulation and understanding other people’s emotions and thoughts. It also aims to explore how these responses vary with personality traits. This research could help us to better understand why some people commit sexual or violent offences.

**Who can take part?**

Anybody can take part who has a conviction for a sexual or violent offence, is male, aged over 18, and speaks the English language. You should not take part if you have learning difficulties or a neurological condition, are experiencing psychoses, or if you have current substance abuse/dependence or have used alcohol or other substances on the day of testing.

**Do I have to take part?**

All participation is completely voluntary. If you do decide to take part, you can change your mind at any point during the study; you can simply stop completing the study without providing explanation. If you wish to withdraw your data after taking part, you need to do so within two weeks. After this time, data reduction and preparation may have begun.

**What does the research involve?**

Participation will take around 2 hours to complete all study measures. You will first be asked to confirm that you understand what is involved, and whether or not you agree to take part in the study. You will be asked to complete three computer-based tasks:

1. We will ask you to rate your feelings in response to a number of images while we record your eye movements and the size of your pupil
2. We will ask you to watch a short movie and answer questions at intervals while we record your eye movements and the size of your pupil
3. We will ask you to respond as quickly as possible to cues presented on the computer

You will also be asked to provide some simple information about you (for example, your age, gender and ethnicity), and to respond to questionnaire items.

**What does eye tracking involve?**

The eye tracking will be completed in head-free-to-move mode, this means that your head will not be restrained in any way. You will be required to place a small sticky dot to your forehead, between your eyebrows. The researcher will begin the task by focussing the eye tracking camera, a small black box which sits on top of the laptop keypad, and you will be asked to fixate on a given point at the beginning of each trial. This camera will record the movements of your eyes and the size of the pupil (the small dark openings at the centre of the eye that let light in).

**What are the risks?**

Some questions will ask about feelings of anxiety, feelings of low mood, intentional harm or suicidal thoughts, and sexual fantasies involving children.

You will be shown images including hands in painful situations and computer modified images of children and adults in swimwear. None of these images display any actual injury or indecency. If you think that these images will cause you considerable discomfort, then you should not take part. If you do feel uncomfortable while completing the study, please alert the researcher.

The research team are unable to offer any clinical advice or guidance on the subjects involved in this study. We have provided details for a relevant helpline that can be accessed from prison; Samaritans (UK), who offer completely confidential telephone support to anybody who is experiencing distress. This information can be found at the end of this document, and in a separate document following study completion.

If you would like support for your physical or mental health, or if you are concerned about intentional harm or suicidal thoughts, please contact a medical professional or a member of prison staff.

**What are the benefits?**

All participants in the research will provide valuable information to help increase our understanding of the cognitive and affective processing of social and emotional cues, and why some people commit offences.

**Is it confidential?**

We will ask you for your name and signature on a consent form. We will also use your name to link your responses from the first session, to your responses in the second session. Your consent form and your name will be held separately to the rest of your data. Only the researchers will be able to link your responses back to your name. Once analysis has been completed, your consent form will be retained but we will no longer be able to match your name to your data. At this point, your data will be fully anonymised.

You will also be asked to consent to the researchers having access to your case file held by the prison, or for data from your file to be shared with the researchers by members of staff within the prison.

Responses to questionnaires will remain confidential, however, if you disclose information that is known to be new or not previously disclosed relating to a crime or a victim, then the researcher will be obligated to report this to relevant prison staff. If you break any rules or behave in a way that is harmful to yourself or others, or if you report that you intend to do harm, then the researcher must also report this to relevant prison staff.

**What will you do with my information?**

After completing data collection, the research team will analyse all anonymous information. The findings from this research will be submitted for publication in scientific journals. Findings may also be presented during conferences or workshops.

All data will be stored in accordance with the law. Under UK data protection legislation, the University acts as the Data Controller for personal data collected as part of the University’s research. Any queries relating to the handling of your personal data can be sent to the Principal Investigator, Dr Steven Gillespie, who will act as the Data Processor for this study. For more information, please see further information on how my data will be used.

**Can I have a copy of the findings?**

Where possible, the research team will present the findings of the research in the prison. Unfortunately, we will not be able to provide a copy of your individual results as all data will be anonymised before beginning analysis.

**What if I’m unhappy or there is a problem?**

If you are unhappy with the research, or there is a problem, please inform a member of the prison staff and they can let us know by contacting Dr Steven Gillespie (Steven.Gillespie@liverpool.ac.uk) and we will do our best to help.

If you remain unhappy or have a complaint that you do not want to come to us with, please inform a member of the prison staff, and they can contact the Research Governance Officer (ethics@liv.ac.uk). When contacting the Research Governance Officer, please provide details of the name or description of the study (so that it can be identified), the researcher involved, and the details of the complaint you wish to make.

**Who can I contact if I have further questions?**

If you would like any more information about this study, please let prison staff know.

**Further information on how my data will be used:**

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| How will my data be collected? | Your data will be collected via computer tasks and questionnaires. We will also collect information from your prison case file. |
| How will my data be  stored? | Data will remain the responsibility of the data custodian (the Principal Investigator), who will be responsible for storing the data securely in accordance with the University’s Research Data Management policy. |
| How long will my data  be stored for? | The data will be available indefinitely on a data archive for reuse and future research. |
| What measures are in  place to protect the  security and  confidentiality of my  data? | Your name will be held alongside a participant number in a password encrypted file, separate to your responses from each session. Your responses will also be held alongside your participant number. Only the researchers will be able to link your responses back to your name. Your name will also be written on your consent form, which will be stored separately to any response you provide. |
| Will my data be  anonymised? | After data collection is complete, the file containing your name will be destroyed and the data will be completely anonymous. We will no longer be able to link your responses back to you. |
| How will my  anonymous data be  used? | The results of the study will be written up for publication in journals and/or shared at relevant conferences or workshops. The results may also be shared with relevant organisations and networks. |
| Who will have access to my anonymous data? | Dr Steven Gillespie and the Co-Investigators will have access to your data. |
| Will my data be  archived for use in  other research  projects in the future? | Your anonymised data will be available on a data archive for reuse and future research. |
| How will my data be  destroyed? | Your consent form and any written responses will be destroyed in accordance with the University’s Research Data Management Policy after ten years. |

**The Samaritans (UK)**

Telephone Support - All prisons are required to offer people in prison access to Samaritans’ helpline free of charge.

Listener Schemes – Certain prisons have inmates who are specially selected and trained (Listeners), who provide confidential emotional support.

Freepost Service - The Samaritans offers a confidential freepost service, so there is no need to buy a stamp. Freepost envelopes are usually available in communal areas of the prison.