

## Dating App Connections

### Participant Information Sheet (PIS)

You are being invited to take part in a research study about the role that dating apps played in people's wellbeing and intimacy during and after COVID-19. Before you decide whether to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully before deciding whether to take part, and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

### **About the research**

#### ➤ **Who will conduct the research?**

This research is led by a team of people. These include Prof Brian Heaphy, Dr Jaime Garcia-Iglesias and Dr Isabel Nuñez-Salazar, from the Department of Sociology at the University of Manchester. The research is conducted by MEL Research (<https://melresearch.co.uk>) on their behalf.

#### ➤ **What is the purpose of the research?**

The goal of this research is to understand how dating apps influenced people's intimacies (how they connect with others, make friends, find love, etc.) during and after COVID-19, and also the impact that the apps had on people's wellbeing (including loneliness).

You have been chosen to take part as part of an existing survey panel of adults managed by Dynata living in the UK who may have used dating apps before or during COVID-19 (March 2020 to July 2021).

We expect to involve approximately 600 people in this survey.

#### ➤ **Am I suitable to take part?**

You are eligible to take part if you are over 18 years-old, live in the UK, and used dating apps (such as Grindr, Tinder or others) before or during COVID-19. Using means downloading them, logging on, viewing other people's profiles or information, sending or receiving messages, or chatting with people.

#### ➤ **Will the outcomes of the research be published?**

The outcomes of this project will be published in a number of ways, including research journal papers, a book, and a report. We may also publish them in a podcast and a video-series. You can keep up to date with these by following our Twitter account ([twitter.com/datingappres](https://twitter.com/datingappres)).

#### ➤ **Who has reviewed the research project?**

Indicate that the project has been reviewed by The University of Manchester Research Ethics Committee 5

➤ **Who is funding the research project?**

This project is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) (grant number: ES/W002426/1)

**What would my involvement be?**

➤ **What would I be asked to do if I took part?**

Via email, you will be offered to complete the survey.

You will be asked to read this information.

You will be asked some screening questions to check your eligibility. If you are eligible, you will be asked to read sign the Consent form. You will be able to download a copy of these for your records.

Then, you will be asked to complete the survey, which contains several sections. Some of the questions ask about your ethnicity, age, sexuality or sexual history, as well as about your use of dating apps. Asking this questions helps us better understand the impact of COVID-19 on different groups of people.

The survey is expected to take approximately 35 to 45 minutes. **You must complete it in one sitting.**

At the end of the survey, you will be offered information about available support resources.

At the consent stage, you will be asked if you would like to be contacted in the future (approximately within two months of completing the survey) to take part in an online/telephone interview (expected to last between 30 minutes and one hour) for additional compensation. If you agree to be contacted, and you are selected to be interviewed, you will be contacted to register for an interview. You can complete the survey without having to agree to be contacted in the future.

➤ **Will I be compensated for taking part?**

You will be compensated for completing the survey by the survey panel.

➤ **What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?**

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part, you just need to complete the consent form and answer the survey. If you choose not to take part, you can close the survey and not complete it. If you do decide to take part you will be emailed this information sheet to keep and will be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without detriment to yourself. However, it will not be possible to remove your data from the project once it has been anonymised as we will not be able to identify your specific data. This does not affect your data protection rights. If you decide not to take part you do not need to do anything further.

**Data Protection and Confidentiality**

➤ **What information will you collect about me?**

In order to participate in this research project we will need to collect information that could identify you, called “personal identifiable information”. Specifically we will need to collect:

- Name and surname
- Contact information (email or phone number)
- Age
- Ethnicity
- Sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation
- HIV status
- Disability information
- Income, employment, and education history
- First part of your postcode (not your address)

➤ **Under what legal basis are you collecting this information?**

We are collecting and storing this personal identifiable information in accordance with UK data protection law which protect your rights. These state that we must have a legal basis (specific reason) for collecting your data. For this study, the specific reason is that it is “a public interest task” and “a process necessary for research purposes”.

➤ **What are my rights in relation to the information you will collect about me?**

You have a number of rights under data protection law regarding your personal information. For example you can request a copy of the information we hold about you, including audio recordings or photographs.

If you would like to know more about your different rights or the way we use your personal information to ensure we follow the law, please consult our [Privacy Notice for Research](#).

➤ **Will my participation in the study be confidential and my personal identifiable information be protected?**

In accordance with data protection law, The University of Manchester is the Data Controller for this project. This means that we are responsible for making sure your personal information is kept secure, confidential and used only in the way you have been told it will be used. All researchers are trained with this in mind, and your data will be looked after in the following way:

Your name and contact information will be held separate from your survey responses. You will be assigned a Respondent ID number. Only your Respondent ID number will be made available to the research team by the survey company. That is, your survey responses will be anonymous.

Your anonymized survey responses will be transferred to the University of Manchester within two months of completion. The survey company will retain your personal information (name and contact information) and delete them when the project is completed (expected to be in June 2023).

If you agree to be contacted for an interview and are selected to be interviewed, the survey company will ask you to register your interest in taking part on a different form. If you do so, the survey company will share your name and contact information, as well as your Respondent ID, with the research team. If you

do not want to take part in an interview, your name and contact information will continue to be separate from your survey responses.

At the end of the project we will deposit a fully anonymised dataset in an open data repository where it will be permanently stored. We will use the UK Data Service. Researchers at other institutions and others can access the anonymised data directly from the repository and use it for further research or to check our analysis and results.

Please also note that individuals from The University of Manchester or regulatory authorities may need to look at the data collected for this study to make sure the project is being carried out as planned. This may involve looking at identifiable data. All individuals involved in auditing and monitoring the study will have a strict duty of confidentiality to you as a research participant.

## **What if I have a complaint?**

### **➤ Contact details for complaints**

If you have a complaint that you wish to direct to members of the research team, please contact:

Professor Brian Heaphy, Principal Investigator

[Brian.heaphy@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Brian.heaphy@manchester.ac.uk)

+44 (0) 161 275 0266

**If you wish to make a formal complaint to someone independent of the research team or if you are not satisfied with the response you have gained from the researchers in the first instance then please contact**

The Research Ethics Manager, Research Office, Christie Building, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL, by emailing: [research.complaints@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:research.complaints@manchester.ac.uk) or by telephoning 0161 306 8089.

If you wish to contact us about your data protection rights, please email [dataprotection@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:dataprotection@manchester.ac.uk) or write to The Information Governance Office, Christie Building, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, M13 9PL at the University and we will guide you through the process of exercising your rights.

You also have a right to complain to the [Information Commissioner's Office about complaints relating to your personal identifiable information](#) Tel 0303 123 1113

## **Contact Details**

If you have any queries about the study or if you are interested in taking part then please contact the researcher(s)

Dr Jaime Garcia-Iglesias, [jaime.garciaiglesias@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:jaime.garciaiglesias@manchester.ac.uk)