



PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

WE-EngAGE: Wellbeing, Engagement, Ageing

Participant Information Sheet for people aged 55 or over interested in joining the WE-EngAGE research project

You are invited to take part in a research project exploring the effects of social leisure engagement on the psychological, cognitive, and physical wellbeing of adults aged 55 or over. This includes exploring what makes individuals engage less or more with different types of social leisure activities, and we are interested to hear from those who do and do not currently engage. These activities include engagement with social clubs, community groups, exercise groups, volunteering, and arts, culture, and heritage. The project is a partnership between University College London (UCL) and the University of Edinburgh. It is funded by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). Dr Katey Warran (Research Fellow) at the University of Edinburgh is the lead for the part of the research that you are being invited to participate in.

Before you decide to take part, it is important that you understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Please do not hesitate to contact us by emailing Katey at kwarran@ed.ac.uk if anything is not clear or if you would like more information. Thank you.

1. What is the purpose of the research project?

The purpose of the WE-EngAGE research project is to explore the effects of social leisure engagement on the psychological, cognitive, and physical wellbeing of older adults. Such engagement encompasses diverse activities, including participation in social clubs and community groups, engagement in exercise groups, volunteering, and arts and cultural engagement (e.g., choirs, museums, heritage). Social leisure engagement could support and improve older adults' wellbeing, so we are keen to explore how engagement could be encouraged. We hope the findings of the research will make social leisure activities more available for older adults. The research project aims to be completed by September 2025.

2. Who is invited to take part in this research project?

Participation is open to anyone aged 55 or over who lives in the UK. We are seeking a diverse range of individuals across demographic and geographic factors (i.e., region you live in), as well as social leisure engagement patterns (e.g., whether or not you engage, how often you engage, what kinds of engagement). You will need to have access to a computer or smartphone and speak English to a level that is sufficient to read and understand this information sheet.

3. Do I have to take part?

It is completely up to you whether you decide to take part or not, and if you do not wish to take part, you do not have to give any reason. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. All aspects of this research project are taking place online. This includes the consent process, where you will be asked to complete the consent form via the online survey. Please ensure you have read and understood this information sheet before signing the consent form. You can opt out of taking part at any stage of the research project without giving a reason. If you decide to opt-out, any anonymous data you have already provided up until that point will be retained, but no further data will be gathered.

4. What will happen if I take part?

If you decide to participate, the first step will be **completing a short survey** to explore your patterns of leisure engagement and your suitability for participating in a focus group (i.e., in relation to your age and geographic/demographic factors to ensure diversity). The survey will be shared with you via Microsoft Forms (an online form provider) and will ask you questions about you and your leisure engagement. This will include questions on

geography (i.e., region you live in), educational qualifications, employment status, occupational history, housing tenure, age, ethnicity, gender, health conditions, and patterns of participation in social leisure activities.

You may then also be invited to participate in **one focus group** (group discussion) as part of a second step. Selection will be based on trying to include a broad spectrum of people with different backgrounds based on the information provided in the survey. We anticipated there to be around 6-8 people in each focus group.

If you decide to participate in a focus group, we will ask you to attend an online meeting using the software Microsoft Teams for around 60-90 minutes. In the group, we will ask you questions about your social leisure engagement. For example, this could include asking you about your motivations to engage, if you engage with other people, how accessible social leisure engagement is to you, and what types of activities support and maintain your engagement.

5. What will happen to the information I give you? Will my participation be kept confidential?

All the information that we collect will be kept strictly confidential. Your contact details will be kept separately from your survey responses, and if you also participate in the focus group, your focus group recording and transcription (a typed-out version of what was discussed) will also be stored separately from your contact details. The transcription will be anonymised (personal details removed) as far as possible. Only researchers on the research project will have access to your focus group and survey data. Anonymous data (i.e., that cannot be traced back to you) may be shared with researchers at University College London who are leading the research, but it will not be passed to any third parties. This research project has received approval from the University of Edinburgh's Research Ethics Committee for Health in Social Science. Further information on the survey and focus group are detailed below:

Short online survey

You will be asked questions about yourself, including age, geography (i.e., the region you live in), educational qualifications, employment status, occupational history, housing tenure, age, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, health conditions and participation in social leisure activities. Some of these questions are considered sensitive data, such as your gender, ethnicity, and health status, and we will ensure that the information you provide cannot be traced back to you when it is stored. We will ask for your name and contact details when you complete the survey, but we will remove these from the rest of your answers and give you a unique ID code when we save your data so that it is stored and analysed anonymously.

Online focus group

The video and audio of the group discussion will be recorded (you can choose whether to have your video on or not), and the researcher may also take some notes during the discussion. The recorded audio will be transcribed (typed-out) by a university-approved professional transcription service, and the recordings will be destroyed after analyses are complete (approximately 6-12 months after the focus group has taken place). We will remove any mention of names from the transcriptions so that they cannot be traced back to you. The transcriptions will be used for analysis in this research project only, and no other use will be made of them without your written permission. No one outside the research team will be allowed access to the original recordings, and the recordings will be destroyed after analysis is complete. Quotes from your focus group may be used in research reports or publications, but this will have a pseudonym (a 'made up' name) beside them, never your real name. People who know you very well may possibly be able to recognise you from the quotes used.

6. Limits to confidentiality

Please note that confidentiality will be maintained as far as possible unless, during our research, we see survey responses or hear anything during our focus group that makes us worried that you might be in danger of harm; in this case, we might have to inform relevant agencies of this. Confidentiality is also limited in a focus group setting because the research team have limited control over what participants may subsequently share with others outside of the group. We will do all that we can to mitigate this by asking all those present to adhere to Chatham House rules. This means that members will be informed that they should not share who has said what or who has attended.

7. How long will my data be stored for?

Your data will be processed in accordance with Data Protection Law. Your contact details will be deleted as soon as the research project finishes. Your data will only be used for this research project. Your anonymised data will be stored

securely (password protected) for ten years by the University of Edinburgh after the end of the research; at this point, the data will be reviewed, and if they are still deemed to be of public interest, they may be retained for longer. Again, this will only ever be anonymised data. It will not be possible to remove your information and responses from existing data sets once those data sets have been anonymised because your data will have become unidentified.

You can withdraw your data for use in the focus groups up until completion of analyses (e.g., we will delete your contributions in the transcripts), which we estimate to be 6-12 months after the focus group is carried out. However, we cannot delete your recorded contribution to the focus group audio until they have been transcribed as this will also include other voices of participants who are still in the research project. For the surveys, we can delete your data (your answers) in the 2 week period after you have completed it. After this period, we cannot delete your responses, but they will be stored anonymously.

For general information about how we use your data go to: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/records-management/privacy-notice-research>

8. What are the possible benefits of taking part?

We can offer you £25 in high street shop gift vouchers if you participate in a focus group. We also hope that those who engage in a focus group will find the discussions lively and interesting, also spotlighting key leisure activities that could support your own health and wellbeing in the future.

9. What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

You will need to give up 10-15 minutes to complete the survey and up to 90 minutes to attend the focus group discussion. It is possible that you may find aspects of the focus group upsetting because it may prompt you to reflect on your lived experiences, such as in relation to your health status or social life. If you do, we can provide you with contact numbers and details of online or telephone support groups, services and activities that may be useful to you. We will also ask everyone who takes part in your focus group to keep what is discussed privately according to Chatham House rules, as detailed in point 6.

Online modes of carrying out research always come with a very small chance of security breaches. We will do all that we can to ensure that this does not happen by only sharing details with those who have confirmed attendance.

If you need to access support or to speak to someone, contact the Samaritans:

Website: <https://www.samaritans.org/>

Telephone: 116 123

Email: jo@samaritans.org

10. What if something goes wrong?

If you have any concerns over any aspect of the research, please contact the research lead at the University of Edinburgh, Katey Warran: kwarran@ed.ac.uk. If you remain unhappy and wish to make a complaint, you can contact Professor Heather Wilkinson (Director of the Centre running the research at the University of Edinburgh) via email at H.Wilkinson@ed.ac.uk.

11. What will happen to the results of the research project?

In all outputs, confidentiality remains, and it will not be possible for you to be identified. We will write-up the results of the research and submit it for publication in academic journals. We will also share the results with you via email if you opt to receive the report when completing the consent form for the project. In addition, we will share our findings via university websites (e.g., University of Edinburgh and UCL) and social media platforms. We are also planning a range of activities to share our findings such as participation in conferences and webinars, a knowledge-exchange roundtable, blogs & media articles, teaching materials, and summary reports for policymakers and practitioners.

Please contact Katey Warran for further information: kwarran@ed.ac.uk

Thank you for reading this information sheet and for considering taking part in this research project.