

Participant Information Sheet for Young People

Loneliness in the digital world: Co-developing smartphone-based research to examine how online social experiences impact adolescent mental health

You are invited to take part in a research study. To help you decide if you want to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. You can ask us any questions to help you decide and please take your time to decide if you wish to take part.

What is the purpose of the study?

We want to find out the impacts of online or in-person social interaction on adolescent loneliness and their mental health. We would like young people to join our smartphone-based study for two weeks and share their moment-to-moment experiences with us.

Why?

We are all spending increasing amounts of time online and there are mixed views about whether digital social interactions are positive or negative. We would like to look at this in more detail and measure young people's feelings of loneliness throughout the day in relation to your different interactions which will allow us to understand more about mental health.

Can I take part?

- Aged 12 – 15 years
- Stay in Scotland
- Member of Generation Scotland

We would like to understand more about the health of people in Scotland over a longer period of time and use the health records and baseline questionnaires that Generation Scotland volunteers complete in order to do this. Therefore, we are asking participants of this study to join Generation Scotland.

You can join Generation Scotland here www.gen.scot

No worries if you don't have your own mobile phone, we will provide you one, and please return to us at the end of the study.

About Generation Scotland

Generation Scotland is the largest family health study in Scotland, and we follow the health and well-being of multiple generations of familiar over time. Our 30,000 volunteers have already helped research into cancer, diabetes, mental health and lots more. We are excited that we can now include young people in our study to help create positive change for the young population's future. Before you signed up for Generation Scotland, your parents confirmed that you are able to fully understand

the questions you have been asked and what you have agreed. Therefore, no further parental consent needs to be obtained for the Loneliness in the Digital World project.

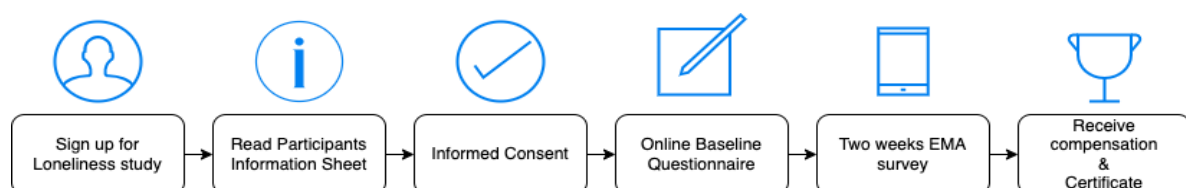
Do I have to take part?

No, it is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form, but you are still free to stop taking part at any time and without giving a reason.

What will happen if I take part?

Take a look at the diagram below and read below what will happen at each stage. Starting from the participants information sheet that you are currently reading.

1. If you decide to take part, you will complete a consent form online.
2. Then you will complete an online questionnaire about yourself, which takes less than ten minutes.
3. After completed the online questionnaire, we will send you a link or QR code for you to download the App. No worries, we will help you with that!
4. Following this, you will participate in the smartphone-based survey of the study.
 - Full instructions on how to complete the smartphone-based survey will be provided by email or text once you have completed the online questionnaire.
 - You will receive four daily questionnaires for the duration of two weeks. Each daily questionnaire contains 23 items and takes less than one minute to complete.
 - No personal information will be collected during the smartphone-based survey.
 - You don't need to act on the questionnaire immediately, there is a time window (i.e., an hour) in which you can respond. Also, you can skip a questionnaire if necessary.
5. At the end of the study, you will receive an e-voucher and a certificate of participation and to say thank you for taking part.



If there anything I need to do or avoid?

To be part of this study, first, you need to sign up for Generation Scotland, and then you can join our study. Once you agree to be part of it, download the 'LifeData' App on your phone. Make sure to turn on notifications from the app so you get our prompts during the day. Please don't use the 'Do not Disturb' mode, or you won't get the app notifications.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

You'll get a voucher to say thank you for being part of this study and sharing your time and effort. Complete the online questionnaire, and you'll get £5. Depending on how much of the study you finish on the App (70%, 50%, 30%, or less than 30%), you can receive up to £15, £10, £5, or £2, respectively. You'll also get a certificate to show you took part. The things we learn from this study will help plan future studies. Your involvement can really make a big difference in this important area of research!

What are the possible disadvantages of taking part?

There are a few quick (less than one minute) questions to answer on your smartphone every day, and we know it might take up your time or pop up at inconvenient moments.

In this study, we'll ask about both good and not-so-good times with friends, feelings of loneliness, and how you're doing mentally. If you've had or are having not-so-great experiences with friends, it's important to talk to your parents before deciding to join. And if you do join but feel uncomfortable answering any questions, you can stop anytime, no explanation needed.

If any of the questions make you worried, talk to your parents or guardians. There's also a mental health support line called Samaritans at 116 123, and you can learn more about them here: <https://www.samaritans.org/scotland/branches/edinburgh/>. If texting feels more comfortable, you can reach out to Shout at 85258. More info about Shout is available here: <https://giveusashout.org/>. You'll find this information on the App too.

What will happen if I don't want to carry out on with the study?

You can stop answering the survey at any point if you do not want to take part in the study giving a reason.

Further Support / Information

If you have questions about any aspect of this study, please contact Generation Scotland Teens (genscot_teens@ed.ac.uk), or Zhuoni Xiao (zxiao@ed.ac.uk) or call us [07385 008 242] who will do their best to answer your questions. You can also find a detailed Information Sheet and Parental version on the Loneliness website <https://www.gslonelinesssteens.com/>