**Social distancing and self- isolation during Covid-19 participant information sheet for adults**

UCL Research Ethics Committee Approval ID Number:14895/005

**YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS INFORMATION SHEET**

**Title of Study:**

Enforced social isolation during Covid-19: a qualitative exploration of the impact upon mental health

**Department:** Research Department of Behavioural Science and Health, UCL

**Name and Contact Details of the Researcher(s):** Dr Alison McKinlay (a.mckinlay@ucl.ac.uk), Dr Thomas May ([t.may@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:t.may@ucl.ac.uk)), Yocheved Simon (yocheved.simon.20@ucl.ac.uk), Dr Alex Burton ([a.burton@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:a.burton@ucl.ac.uk)),

**Name and Contact Details of the Principal Researcher:** DrDaisy Fancourt (d.fancourt@ucl.ac.uk)

You are being invited to take part in a research project exploring how people have responded to social distancing guidelines, and the impact of these and/or of self-isolation on mental health and wellbeing.

Taking part in this research project will involve participating in an online interview. A researcher from the team will ask you some questions about your experiences of abuse from a current or former partner (intimate partner abuse) during the pandemic, social distancing and/or self-isolation, and how this may have affected your wellbeing or mental health.

Before you decide whether to take part it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what taking part will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this.

1. **What is the project’s purpose?**

We know from previous research that the social isolation that may result from distancing or self-isolation can have an impact upon mental health and wellbeing. It is therefore important for researchers to understand what this impact might be, so that ways to manage this impact, and improve wellbeing, can be developed.

This study is therefore exploring people’s experiences of social distancing and self-isolation and how ‘social’ life has changed. It is also looking at what might help people to undertake social distancing or self-isolation whilst looking after their mental health and wellbeing, and what might be preventing them from doing this. We will also be asking about people’s worries during the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, we would like to explore how women who have experienced intimate partner abuse during the pandemic have been affected, including any impacts on mental health, well-being and daily life.

1. **Why have I been asked?**

We are asking key groups to take part: older adults, healthy adults, adults with an existing physical health condition, adults who have lived experience of mental illness, young adults, health and social care workers, key workers, gig economy workers, parents with young children and women who have experienced intimate partner abuse during the pandemic (e.g. physical, emotional, financial or sexual abuse, or coercion, threats or intimidation from a current or former partner). You have been invited to take part because you are a member of at least one of these groups experiencing life in the UK during the Covid-19 pandemic, and the impact of the social distancing and self-isolation guidance.

1. **Do I have to take part?**

It is completely up to you to decide whether or not to take part, 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.

You can also withdraw at any time without giving a reason. If you decide to withdraw before or during the interview, or before your interview has been included in the analysis (up to one week after the interview has taken place) we will not keep any of the information you have given us. If you decide to withdraw after the interview has been included in the analysis, any anonymous data you have already given us will be kept, but we won’t ask you for any further information.

1. **What will happen to me if I take part?**

If you decide to take part you will be invited to take part in an **online** interview with a researcher, at a time which is convenient for you. This can either be a video call or a telephone call.

It is anticipated that the interview will probably last up to an hour at the most, and we will ask about any social distancing or self-isolating measures you are undertaking, how this has changed your social life and networks, and what kind of effect these might be having on your mental health and wellbeing. We will also ask you about any worries you might about the future as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak.

The interview will be audio recorded, and transcribed (typed out) by a professional company. As the interview will be anonymous (i.e. we won’t use your name), the transcribers won’t know who you are. The researcher may also take some additional notes during the interview.

We will send you a voucher of £10 to say thank you for taking the time to take part in the study.

1. **Will I be recorded and how will the recorded media be used?**

The audio recordings of the interview will be used only for analysis. We won’t do anything else with these without your written permission. Only the researchers in our team and the transcribers will be allowed access to the original recordings. The recordings will be destroyed after transcription is completed.

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

You will need to give up some time to take part in the interviews. It is possible you may find some topics upsetting, and if you do, researchers will have contact numbers and details of online or telephone support groups, services and activities that may be useful to you.

1. **What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

Whilst there are no immediate direct benefits for those people taking part in the project, it is hoped that the research will support policy and decision making on social isolation and distancing, and help researchers to develop ways to help people cope with social distancing and self-isolation, and manage their mental health in this period.

1. **What if something goes wrong?**

If you have any concern over any aspect of the study, please contact the Principal Investigator of the study in the first instance: Dr Daisy Fancourt, (d.fancourt@ucl.ac.uk).

If you remain unhappy and wish to make a complaint then you can contact the Chair of the UCL ethics committee: ethics@ucl.ac.uk

1. **Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?**

All the information, such as your contact details, that we collect during the research will be kept strictly confidential. Your contact details will be kept separately from your interview recording and transcription and destroyed once the analysis is finished.

An external company will be used to transcribe (type up) the group discussion. Only researchers on the project, and the transcribing company, will have access to the recordings of the interview discussions or transcripts of these, and these will be kept strictly confidential.

Quotes from your interview 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 you know may possibly be able to recognise you from the quotes used.

1. **Limits to confidentiality**

Please note that confidentiality will be maintained as far as it is possible, unless during our conversation we hear anything which makes us worried that someone might be in danger of harm, we might have to inform your support worker or relevant agencies of this. We will only do so if you agree to this.

1. **What will happen to the results of the research project?**

We will write the results of the wider project up and this will be reported through publication in articles, conferences and presentations, and through the MARCH Network which is a group of service users, community organisations and policy makers interested in community activities and mental health. You are welcome to join for free at [www.MARCHNetwork.org](http://www.MARCHNetwork.org) where links to the results of this study will also be posted. We will also send you a summary report of the findings if you would like this. We will also produce blogs on findings for policy and mental health audiences respectively. We will also work with the BBC to inform media discussion and provide advice on staying mentally well at home. Once the pandemic is over, we will host a policy roundtable on considerations to prepare for future pandemics.

The anonymised transcribed interviews will be stored securely (password protected) for ten years after the completion of the study.

1. **Data Protection Privacy Notice**

**Notice:**

The data controller for this project will be University College London (UCL). The UCL Data Protection Office provides oversight of UCL activities involving the processing of personal data, and can be contacted at [data-protection@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:data-protection@ucl.ac.uk). UCL’s Data Protection Officer can also be contacted at [data-protection@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:data-protection@ucl.ac.uk)***.***

Your personal data will be processed for the purposes outlined in this notice.

This ‘local’ privacy notice sets out the information that applies to this particular study. Further information on how UCL uses participant information can be found in our ‘general’ privacy notice:

For participants in research studies, click [here](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/legal-services/privacy/ucl-general-research-participant-privacy-notice) or go to <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/legal-services/privacy/ucl-general-research-participant-privacy-notice>

The information that is required to be provided to participants under data protection legislation (GDPR and DPA 2018) is provided across both the ‘local’ and ‘general’ privacy notices.

The legal basis that will be used to process your personal data are: ‘Public task’ for personal data and’ Research purposes’ for special category data

***Your personal data will be processed so long as it is required for the research project***. If we are able to anonymise or pseudonymise the personal data you provide we will undertake this, and will endeavour to minimise the processing of personal data wherever possible.

If you are concerned about how your personal data is being processed, please contact UCL in the first instance at [data-protection@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:data-protection@ucl.ac.uk). If you remain unsatisfied, you may wish to contact the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO). Contact details, and details of data subject rights, are available on the ICO website at: <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/data-protection-reform/overview-of-the-gdpr/individuals-rights/>

1. **Who is organising and funding the research?**

The research is being organised by the MARCH network, based at University College London (UCL). The network is funded by the Nuffield Foundation and the Wellcome Trust.

1. **Contact for further information**

Please contact Alex Burton for further information:

Email: [a.burton@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:a.burton@ucl.ac.uk)

If you would like to access support or if you need to speak to someone about your mental health, you can contact the following organisations:

MIND

Website: <https://www.mind.org.uk/>

Infoline: 0300 123 3393

Email: info@mind.org.uk

Text: 86463

Samaritans

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

Telephone: 116 123

Email: jo@samaritans.org

The UK government website also has advice on looking after your mental health and wellbeing:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-public-on-mental-health-and-wellbeing>

Suggestions for activities and online groups can be found in the website links below:

<https://www.marchnetwork.org/creative-isolation>

<https://chatterpack.net/blogs/blog/list-of-online-resources-for-anyone-who-is-isolated-at-home>

If you would like to access support or if you need to speak to someone about intimate partner abuse, you can contact the following organisations:

National Domestic Abuse Helpline

Website: <https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/>

Helpline: 0808 2000 247

Livechat: https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/Chat-to-us-online

Women’s Aid

Website: <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/>

Email: [helpline@womensaid.org.uk](mailto:helpline@womensaid.org.uk).

Livechat: https://chat.womensaid.org.uk/

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

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