**Participant Information Sheet**

**Study Title**: Looking back: a retrospective exploration of the shared perspectives of the gender-questioning journey.

**Researcher**: Lucy Beynon, doctoral student on the Doctorate in Educational Psychology.

**ERGO number:** 90949

You are being invited to take part in the above research study. To help you decide whether you would like to take part or not, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the information below carefully and ask questions if anything is not clear or you would like more information before you decide to take part in this research. You may like to discuss it with others but it is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you are happy to participate you will be asked to sign a consent form.

**What is the research about?**

This research project is a thesis for the Doctorate in Educational Psychology.

The aim of this research is to fully examine how, when and why a gender-questioning person showed a specific person that they were wondering about their gender. In previous research, these hints at their gender-questioning have been termed ‘breadcrumbs’ as the person is trying to check and guide a specific person to their gender-questioning status. The response of the chosen person is really important, as this may guide the gender-questioning person’s next steps. This research seeks to find out about the journey of the gender-questioning person and their chosen important person. Did they feel confident to fully reveal their gender-questioning and how was this received? How did this impact the important person’s understanding of gender, and has this altered their perspectives on gender more widely? How did this impact their relationship? What challenges did they encounter, and how did they overcome them?

**Why have I been asked to participate?**

You have been invited to participate in this research as you have been on the gender-questioning journey personally or you have a friend, colleague, or family member who you have travelled alongside on the gender-questioning journey.

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

If you agree to participate, if you are the participant who has been on the gender-questioning journey, I will invite you to invite a person important to you, who travelled on the journey with you to join us for a semi-structured interview. The interview can take place in person or online at a time to suit. The interviews conducted online will be on Teams and will be recorded. The recording will include the use of the automatic transcription service. Interviews in person will be recorded using Teams. From here, interviews will be transcribed to allow for a thematic analysis to take place.

The interview topic guide will be shared with you ahead of participating in the interview.

**Are there any benefits in my taking part?**

It is expected that this research will give professionals working in psychology and gender research a better understanding of how gender-questioning people share their wonderings with people around them, how these people react and what difference these reactions made to the gender-questioning journey. Your data will help our understanding of how people in society can better support individuals embarking on their own gender-questioning journey and how everyone’s ideas and conceptualisations of gender can be developed and enriched by being a part of another’s journey.

As an expression of thanks for your time, a £20 shopping voucher will be given to each participant.

**Are there any risks involved?**

As this study involves discussing personal and sensitive issues (gender identity, the gender-questioning journey and gender transition), it is important that you recognise that there may be some psychological discomfort. It is important that you consider whether you feel confident in discussing these issues with the other chosen person as part of the interview and with the interviewer. The topic guide is shared with you so that you can understand the general direction of questioning. However, questions and the direction of conversation will not be limited to the questions presented. If you become distressed by the questions or conversation during the interview, you can request a pause or a halt to the interview. At this point, you are also free to withdraw your consent for the interview to form part of the research analysis. At this point the researcher conducting the interview can offer support with identifying appropriate next steps, such as contacting other support agencies. If you become distressed after the interview, direction to agencies and charities who can offer support are provided in the de-brief form.

**What data will be collected?**

Consent forms will be collected by the lead researcher and stored securely on the University of Southampton OneDrive system, separately from interview and demographic data.

Basic demographic data will be gathered, including age, gender identity and ethnicity. This basic data will support the analytic process, such as understanding the time elapsed since participants went on their gender-questioning journey.

Contact details, e.g. your e-mail address and your name, will also be stored for the duration of the study in case, for example, researchers wish to contact participants to verify interview transcripts. This information will be stored separately from the interview and demographic data. This information will be deleted at the end of the study, which is currently expected to be August 2025.

All participants will be given pseudonyms during the transcription process. All identifying features discussed in interviews will be redacted to protect the anonymity of all participants.

This data will be collected in a secure form by the lead researcher on the University of Southampton’s OneDrive system.

**Will my participation be confidential?**

Your participation and the information we collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential.

Only members of the research team and responsible members of the University of Southampton may be given access to data about you for monitoring purposes and/or to carry out an audit of the study to ensure that the research is complying with applicable regulations. Individuals from regulatory authorities (people who check that we are carrying out the study correctly) may require access to your data. All of these people have a duty to keep your information, as a research participant, strictly confidential.

All data shared, such as consent forms, demographic data and interview transcripts, will be held electronically on the University of Southampton’s OneDrive system.

All recordings, either video and/or audio, will be destroyed once transcription has taken place. During the transcription process, all recordings will remain on the University of Southampton OneDrive system, where they have been initially recorded. They will not be transferred to other systems.

**Do I have to take part?**

No, it is entirely up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide you want to take part, you will need to sign a consent form to show you have agreed to take part.

If you wish to take part in the study, please complete the consent form, checking each of the boxes carefully. An electronic signature (typed) is allowed. This must be returned to the researcher, who will then contact you to make arrangements for the interview and to answer any further questions you may have about the process.

**What happens if I change my mind?**

You have the right to change your mind and withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without your participant rights being affected.

If you wish to withdraw during the interview, you can ask the researcher to stop recording and state your wish to withdraw the data already gathered. The recording taken to this point will be destroyed immediately after the call is ended.

If you wish to withdraw your data after the interview, you may do so within 3 months of the interview date. If you wish to withdraw your data, please get in touch with the lead researcher, Lucy Beynon, at [l.hanham@soton.ac.uk](mailto:l.hanham@soton.ac.uk). If you withdraw your data, the transcripts relating to your interview will be destroyed.

**What will happen to the results of the research?**

Your personal details will remain strictly confidential. Research findings made available in any reports or publications will not include information that can directly identify you without your specific consent.

It is important to be aware that this research project may form part of a published research paper in the future. At the consent process, you will be asked if you consent to the anonymised interview data being open to sharing with other researchers, when requested for secondary research purposes. No other personal data will be shared, such as demographic data.

Anonymised data (interview transcripts) will be held on the University of Southampton’s data repository. This data will be held securely for 10 years, with an agreed access arrangement with the research project supervisors (Dr Sarah Wright and Dr Cora Sargeant). In giving your consent, you allow other researchers the right to request copies of the anonymised transcripts for secondary research purposes. This data will only be released with the consent of the research supervisors. This data will not be available for commercial purposes.

**Where can I get more information?**

If you have any questions relating to the study, please contact Lucy Beynon at [l.hanham@soton.ac.uk](mailto:l.hanham@soton.ac.uk)

**What happens if there is a problem?**

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should speak to the researchers (details below) who will do their best to answer your questions.

* Lucy Beynon [l.hanham@soton.ac.uk](mailto:l.hanham@soton.ac.uk)
* Dr Sarah Wright [s.f.wright@soton.ac.uk](mailto:s.f.wright@soton.ac.uk)
* Dr Cora Sargeant [c.c.sargeant@soton.ac.uk](mailto:c.c.sargeant@soton.ac.uk)

If you remain unhappy or have a complaint about any aspect of this study, please contact the University of Southampton Head of Research Ethics and Clinical Governance (023 8059 5058, [rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk](mailto:rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk)).

**Data Protection Privacy Notice**

The University of Southampton conducts research to the highest standards of research integrity. As a publicly-funded organisation, the University has to ensure that it is in the public interest when we use personally-identifiable information about people who have agreed to take part in research. This means that when you agree to take part in a research study, we will use information about you in the ways needed, and for the purposes specified, to conduct and complete the research project. Under data protection law, ‘Personal data’ means any information that relates to and is capable of identifying a living individual. The University’s data protection policy governing the use of personal data by the University can be found on its website (<https://www.southampton.ac.uk/legalservices/what-we-do/data-protection-and-foi.page>).

This Participant Information Sheet tells you what data will be collected for this project and whether this includes any personal data. Please ask the research team if you have any questions or are unclear what data is being collected about you.

Our privacy notice for research participants provides more information on how the University of Southampton collects and uses your personal data when you take part in one of our research projects and can be found at <http://www.southampton.ac.uk/assets/sharepoint/intranet/ls/Public/Research%20and%20Integrity%20Privacy%20Notice/Privacy%20Notice%20for%20Research%20Participants.pdf>

Any personal data we collect in this study will be used only for the purposes of carrying out our research and will be handled according to the University’s policies in line with data protection law. If any personal data is used from which you can be identified directly, it will not be disclosed to anyone else without your consent unless the University of Southampton is required by law to disclose it.

Data protection law requires us to have a valid legal reason (‘lawful basis’) to process and use your Personal data. The lawful basis for processing personal information in this research study is for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest. Personal data collected for research will not be used for any other purpose.

For the purposes of data protection law, the University of Southampton is the ‘Data Controller’ for this study, which means that we are responsible for looking after your information and using it properly. The University of Southampton will keep identifiable information about you for 10 years after the study has finished after which time any link between you and your information will be removed. Data considered to be ‘identifiable’ under GDPR laws includes anonymised interview data, such as transcripts. The University of Southampton will hold the anonymised transcripts securely in the research repository for the agreed 10-year period.

To safeguard your rights, we will use the minimum personal data necessary to achieve our research study objectives. Your data protection rights – such as to access, change, or transfer such information - may be limited, however, in order for the research output to be reliable and accurate. The University will not do anything with your personal data that you would not reasonably expect.

If you have any questions about how your personal data is used, or wish to exercise any of your rights, please consult the University’s data protection webpage (<https://www.southampton.ac.uk/legalservices/what-we-do/data-protection-and-foi.page>) where you can make a request using our online form. If you need further assistance, please contact the University’s Data Protection Officer ([data.protection@soton.ac.uk](mailto:data.protection@soton.ac.uk)).

**Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and considering taking part in this important research project.**