

Participant Information Sheet

My name is Lucy Ryan and I am a PhD student based in the Sociology department at Lancaster University. My PhD supervisors are Dr. Celia Roberts and Dr. Imogen Tyler. I am also a qualified social worker. I currently work training social workers, though I have previous experience of working with adoptive parents and children who have been adopted.

I am conducting a study which will explore the process of becoming a first time adoptive parent, particularly looking at how adoptive parents construct their identities as parents and come to understand expectations about their parenting. As you are someone who has been approved as an adoptive parent, I would like to invite you to participate. This sheet provides information about the study and what participation will involve.

I hope it answers any questions that you may have, but if you do have any further queries please feel free to contact:

l.ryan@lancaster.ac.uk

Project Title: Adopting Identities: How People Become Parents

Aims of the research:

The aim of this project is to explore the process of becoming a first time adoptive parent and how ideas about parenting are formed and change during this process. It is hoped that this research will help develop better systems of assessment, training and support for adoptive parents.

Study procedure and the participant's role:

In order to complete this research I would like to interview approved adoptive parents who, at the time of the first interview, have not yet had a child (or children) placed with them. Interviews could last up to an hour and will be conveniently located at a place of your choice. Please note that interviews will be informal and will aim to not substantially repeat questions asked during the assessment process. Questions will specifically focus on the assessment process, what sort of parent you would like to be and whether this has changed during the assessment process. You will not be asked for in-depth personal information and you are welcome to not answer any question you wish.

If you are part of a couple, either one or both of you may choose to be participants. If you both choose to participate you may choose whether you wish to be interviewed together or separately. During the interview you have the right to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and if you so wish, I will not use any of the preceding discussion in my research. The interviews will be recorded and will later be anonymised. If you would like to see a copy of the transcript of your interview before it is anonymised, I can provide you with a copy of this and if you wish any part of your data to be removed this can occur before it is anonymised. Once data has been anonymised it will no longer be possible for that data to be removed from the study. If you wish to receive a copy of your transcript I will send this to you within 14 days, and you will have a further 14 days after receiving this to notify me of any data you would like removing before it is anonymised.

All non-anonymised data – interview recordings, non-anonymised transcripts – will be destroyed as soon as anonymised copies have been made.

I would like to be able to conduct up to three further follow up interviews at approximately six monthly intervals. However, just because you agree to participate in the initial interview does not mean that you are required to take part in any further interviews. While I am specifically looking for participants who have not yet had a child placed with them at the time of the first interview, it is expected that some participants will have had a child placed with them by the time of subsequent interviews.

Participation in this study is **entirely voluntary**. You may withdraw at any point and you need not give a reason. Your continued participation in the study should be as informed as any initial consent, so please feel free to ask for clarification, or further information via the email address at the start of this document. Before the study commences you will be asked to sign a consent form to confirm that you have received and read this information sheet, and that you are willing to take part in the research.

Confidentiality and anonymity:

Any information collected will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. This means that only I will have access to any raw information that can be specifically associated with you, and any information that is shared (such as in reports or publications) will be made anonymous. This means that details such as your name or any identifiers will be removed. This will apply to any publications, presentations, or any discussion with other colleagues in the University.

How will the data be used and protected:

I will treat data that is collected in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. This means that any personal information stored in physical format (paper, readily playable recordings) will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in a locked office on Lancaster University premises. Any personal information stored electronically will be stored on a secure, password-protected server. Any personal information that is transported electronically on a mobile device (a laptop or memory stick) will be encrypted and/or password-protected. Only I will have access to this information and data.

The information collected will be used to inform the development of further research and may be included in publications and presentations. Anonymised data may be kept securely (as described above) for a period of up to ten years, to be used by me only in future publications or in developments of this research project.

Risks of participation:

The risks related to this study are minimal. Your participation in this study and any information you share will be treated in the strictest confidence. The adoption agency and your social worker will not be informed of your participation or anything that you say. Therefore your participation will have no impact on the placement of a child or children with you or on any support services you may be offered.

Benefits:

There may be no personal benefit to you from participating in this project and there is no financial incentive to do so. However you may find that this study offers an opportunity for reflection on your experiences of the adoption process, which may in turn help you to identify any support you may need in the future.

Your participation will allow us to gain an understanding of how adoptive parents come to identify as parents and how they view their parenting role. This could be helpful for developing assessment, training and support services for adoptive parents. At the end of the study you will have the option to receive a report summarising the main findings.

Concerns:

If you are not satisfied with the manner in which this study is being conducted or if you have any concerns regarding your participation, you may contact (anonymously if you so choose):

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