

## Online Survey – Participant Information Sheet

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Hi there!

We're inviting you to take part in a survey about LGBTQ+ young people (aged 13 to 19) in the UK and the Channel Islands, and their experiences of online pressure or blackmail. This survey is for people who have experienced online pressures or blackmail.

Before you start, please read the information sheet below. It answers most questions you might have about the research. If you have any further questions, please contact the research team. Our contact information is provided at the end of this document.

### **What is online pressure or blackmail?**

Online blackmail is when someone tries to influence or pressure another person by saying they'll share private things — like images, videos, messages, or personal information (such as someone's sexuality, gender identity, or relationships, especially if they haven't shared this with others).

This could include asking for images or videos (like nudes), money, continued contact, or staying in a relationship. Sometimes these private or personal things were shared willingly at first; other times they may have been taken, faked or shared without consent.

Sometimes the person may build trust first by pretending to be someone they're not. Sometimes, the person may be someone you know in real life.

Online blackmail can happen through private messages, video chats, social media, or other online spaces — and between strangers, friends, family members, or people in relationships.

### **Why are we doing this study?**

Very little is known about how LGBTQ+ young people experience online blackmail. We want to better understand how these kinds of situations happen and how to support LGBTQ+ young people when they do.

This research is being carried out by LGBTQ+ researchers from the University of Birmingham and Nottingham Trent University. We are working in partnership with the [NSPCC](#), a UK charity dedicated to protecting children and young people and preventing abuse.

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LGBTQ+ young people have helped design this study and will also help create accessible resources from the findings, which we can share with the LGBTQ+ community and with adults or professionals responsible for supporting LGBTQ+ young people.

## What will this survey involve?

If you decide to take part:

- You will be asked to share things about yourself, such as your age, where in the UK you usually live (e.g., Wales), your sexual orientation and gender identity. These are the only questions where we ask you to respond. In future sections you'll be able to skip questions you don't want to answer.
- We will also ask other questions about you, such as whether you're in school or whether you are disabled.
- The main survey will ask a range of questions about your experiences of online blackmail, such as whether you've experienced this, or have experienced doing this to others.

Whatever your experience, your voice matters. By sharing your experience and views, you can help us learn how to create better support for others in similar situations and to prevent this happening in future.

Other than the eligibility questions (age, location, sexual orientation and gender identity), you can skip any questions you'd like.

If you have any **accessibility needs** or find the **language difficult to understand**, please contact us and we'll do our best to help.

The survey will take you approximately 15-20 minutes to complete.

## Do I have to take part?

Taking part is your choice. You can stop at any time. If you decide to participate in this study, you will need to give your consent, which means telling us that you understand the research and would like to take part.

**You do not need permission from a parent or carer to take part.** This is because the study is designed to support LGBTQ+ young people, and we understand that not everyone may feel safe or comfortable discussing these topics at home.

Your answers are **anonymous and confidential**. No one will know who you are or what you said. Whether you've been affected by online blackmail, or you've been involved in pressuring someone else, you are safe to take part. We're here to understand, not to judge. As your responses are anonymous, please be as honest as you can.

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## Can I change my mind?

At the start of the survey, you'll be asked to make up a special code that's unique to you. Please write this code down or take a screenshot of it and keep it somewhere safe. If you want to talk to us about your answers later, you'll need to tell us this code so we can find your information.

You can stop doing the survey at any time by simply closing the browser window. If you do this, your answers won't be saved.

If you finish the survey but later decide you don't want us to use your answers, that's okay too. You can email us at any point up to 2 weeks after the date you start the survey to ask us to delete your data. You don't have to tell us why. If you do email us, please include your unique code so we know which answers to delete.

Please know that if your email address has your name or other personal details in it, we'll see that. But don't worry, if you ask us to delete your data, we'll delete your email as well, so nothing is kept.

After two weeks, we will delete the special codes from the data, so that they become anonymised.

## Will my answers be private? How will my information be stored?

We're collecting your answers because it helps us learn what's really going on—and we're doing it under something called "**legitimate interests**". That means: We're using your data to help improve support for young people, and we're doing it in a way that's fair, respectful, and safe. We only collect the information we need to understand the issue and help make things better. We won't use your data to sell you anything or send you ads.

We also won't share your personal information with anyone outside the research team.

We will keep your answers safe on password-protected systems at the University of Birmingham. Only the research team (listed below) will be able to see the data.

We will store the data securely for up to five years.

We will share the results of this research publicly, for example, in a report on the NSPCC website, in written works and at conferences, but we will make sure that it is not possible to identify anyone who took part in the survey.

## Is there a payment for taking part?

There is **no payment** for taking part in this survey. But by sharing your experiences, you are helping researchers and organisations like the NSPCC understand what's really happening online and how to make things safe and more supportive for LGBTQ+ young people like you.

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Once completed, the findings of this research will be available on the [projects website](#) and also hosted on the [NSPCC learning website](#).

## What if I have questions or worries?

If you have any questions about the survey, you can contact the research team directly. Both researchers identify as LGBTQ+, are trans-affirming, and have experience working on LGBTQ+ topics:

- **Dr Willem Stander (he/him)** at [w.stander@bham.ac.uk](mailto:w.stander@bham.ac.uk)
- **Dr Liam Cahill (he/him)** at [liam.cahill@ntu.ac.uk](mailto:liam.cahill@ntu.ac.uk)

If you have a complaint about the research, please contact:

- Mrs Sue Cottam (Ethics Manager) at [s.l.cottam@bham.ac.uk](mailto:s.l.cottam@bham.ac.uk)
- University of Birmingham Data protection officer: [dataprotection@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:dataprotection@contacts.bham.ac.uk)
- You can also let the NSPCC know. You can email [researchcomplaints@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:researchcomplaints@nspcc.org.uk) or phone the NSPCC Support Care team on 020 7825 2505.

## Looking for support?

***This survey is not a support or crisis service.*** This survey is fully anonymous. This means we won't know who you are and won't be able to contact you or anyone else, even if you tell us something that worries us. Because we don't know who is filling in the survey, we won't be able to take action or provide help if you tell us about something that has happened to you or someone else.

However, we know that some of the topics in this survey may be upsetting or bring up difficult feelings. If you're feeling unsafe, upset, or unsure about something that's happened to you or someone else, it's important to know you're not alone. There are people and organisations you can talk to for support and advice. Please consider speaking to a trusted adult or visiting one of the **support services** listed [here](#) .

