

Participant information sheet

As researchers in the DEMAND Centre and Department of Sociology at Lancaster University, we would like to invite you to take part in a research study about the coordination of household activities and patterns of energy use.

Please take time to read the following information carefully before you decide whether or not you wish to take part.

What is the study about?

This study aims to learn more about the sequences of activities that people carry out in their everyday lives, how these are coordinated and organised and sometimes made up as they go along. We are interested in these ordinary patterns of living because of what they mean for how energy is used for things like heating, Wi-Fi and lighting. These services are provided in many different places and contribute greatly to our quality of life. We want to know more about how they relate to where people are and what they are doing, particularly in the early evening period. What we learn from the research will hopefully inform the future development of things such as energy policies, the setting of energy prices, and new technologies.

Why have I been invited?

We have approached you because we are interested in understanding your experiences in the early evening period – how you schedule and travel to activities during this time, as well as how you coordinate heating and other technologies inside your home. We are interested in a range of different perspectives on what is involved in this coordination, from people in different types of households. We would be very grateful if you would agree to take part in this study.

What will I be asked to do if I take part?

If you decide to take part, we will arrange an interview in your home at a time of mutual convenience. We are interested in interviewing multiple adults from the same household, so if possible your interview could involve a partner or housemate, or this person could be interviewed at a separate time. The interview would last approximately 45-90 minutes. It would involve a creative activity in order to help tell the story of a typical early evening (5-9pm) that you have recently experienced and to spark interesting discussion.

What are the possible benefits from taking part?

Taking part in this study will allow you to share your experiences and contribute to research that improves our understandings of how services such as heating can be better provided in public and private spaces. You may also find that the creative

activity and discussion help to prompt interesting thoughts about the challenging and rewarding aspects of your daily routines, and how energy is used. As a token of appreciation for your participation, you will also receive shopping vouchers.

Do I have to take part?

No. It is completely up to you to decide whether or not you take part. Your participation is voluntary and you are free to decline to answer any questions, or to stop the interview at any time, without giving any reason. As your interview might be conducted in the presence of other people, it is not possible to withdraw all of your contributions from the study after the interview has started. However, for up to 2 weeks following your interview you will be able to contact the researchers to discuss having specific parts of the discussion changed or eliminated from the study if you have particular concerns about them.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

There are not likely to be any significant disadvantages or risks to taking part, although arranging and taking part in the interview will involve your time.

Will my data be identifiable?

We will keep all personal information about you (e.g. your name and other information that could identify you) confidential – it will not be shared with anyone outside of the research team. After the interview, a written transcript will be made. Either one of the researchers or a professional transcriber will listen to the recording of the interview and produce a written record of what has been said, ensuring to anonymise this record so that any personal information about you is removed. The transcriber will sign a confidentiality agreement before commencing work and a researcher will check to make sure the transcript is fully anonymised after the transcriber's work is finished.

How will my data be stored?

All personal information will be stored on encrypted storage (that no-one other than the research team can access) and password-protected computers. Any hard copies of these data will be securely stored in locked cabinets in offices at the university. We will keep data that can identify you separately from non-personal information (e.g. your views on a specific topic). Non-personal information will also be kept on password-protected computers or cloud storage.

In accordance with University guidelines, when no longer required the data will be securely and permanently destroyed.

How will we use the information you have shared with us and what will happen to the results of the research study?

We will use the data you have shared with us for academic purposes only. This may include writing about it in academic publications (e.g. journal articles and books) or publically-accessible articles (e.g. briefing notes, blogs or news websites), and

presenting the results of the study at academic conferences, or to non-academic groups (including members of the public), students, and policy-makers.

When writing up the findings from this study, we would like to reproduce some of the views and ideas you shared with us. When doing so, we will only use anonymised quotes (e.g. from our interview with you), so that although we will use your exact words, you cannot be identified in our publications. We may also use anonymised images of any documents or photos that are generated or provided during the interview in the publications and presentations noted above.

This study is funded by the Research Councils UK (Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council). The funder expects us to make our data available for future research and use by other researchers. We will only share anonymised data in this way and will exclude all personal data from archiving. We intend to approach the UK Data Archive about the possibility of sharing the study's data. If the data is not accepted for inclusion in this archive, it will be archived in the Lancaster University data repository where it will be publically accessible for a minimum of 10 years.

Who has reviewed the project?

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Faculty of Science and Technology's Research Ethics Committee at Lancaster University.

What if I have a question or concern?

If you have any questions or if you are unhappy with anything that happens concerning your participation in the study, please contact the research team:

Dr. Allison Hui (Academic Fellow)
DEMAND Research Centre and Department of Sociology, FASS Building,
Lancaster University, Lancaster, LA14YD
a.hui@lancaster.ac.uk
01524 510791

Professor Gordon Walker (Professor of Geography)
DEMAND Research Centre and Lancaster Environment Centre, FASS Building,
Lancaster University, Lancaster, LA14YD
g.p.walker@lancaster.ac.uk
01524 510256

If you have any concerns or complaints that you wish to discuss with a person who is not directly involved in the research, you can also contact:

Professor Elizabeth Shove (Director, DEMAND Research Centre)
DEMAND Research Centre and Department of Sociology, FASS Building,
Lancaster University, Lancaster, LA14YD
e.shove@lancaster.ac.uk
01524 594610

Thank you for considering your participation in this project.