

A study evaluating Your Local Pantry membership

Participant Information Sheet

You are invited to take part in a research study run by the University of Liverpool and other universities in England, with support from Your Local Pantry.

Please read this information carefully before deciding to take part. You can talk about it with family or friends or ask the research team questions. We provide our contact details below.

What is the purpose of this study?

People apply for memberships to food pantries for different reasons. We want to learn if being a member of Your Local Pantry makes a difference to people's lives and if so, how.

After applying for a membership, some people might start being able to access their local food pantry right away. Others may be put on a waiting list, if the Pantry membership is full. We want to find out about how things are for people when they first apply, how things change while they may wait for a membership, and then when they get a chance to become a member.

Why have I been invited to take part?

You are invited because you applied for a membership at a Your Local Pantry between February 2025 and July 2025 and filled out the researchers' form expressing your interest in taking part.

Do I have to take part?

No, taking part is completely up to you. Deciding not to take part won't affect your current or future Pantry membership in any way.

Who can take part?

To take part, you must:

- be 18 years of age or older;
- have applied for a Your Local Pantry membership for a food pantry based in England that is taking part in the study; and
- have filled out the researchers' form indicating your interest and been invited to take part in the study.

What will happen if I take part?

If you decide to take part, you'll be asked to:

- Fill out four questionnaires over the next 10 weeks
 - The first one will take about 20 minutes (and at the start, you will have to sign a consent form to say you are happy to take part in the study)
 - The next three will take 10-15 minutes each.
 - You can complete them online or with a researcher over the phone.

- Give permission to let Your Local Pantry share information with the researchers about when you applied for a membership, how long it takes for you to get one, and how often you use the food pantry, if at all, when you become a member.

Questionnaires will ask questions about you and your household, including your age, gender, and other characteristics. We'll also ask some questions about wellbeing, what you usually eat, and any struggles you've had to afford or access food and other essentials. Some questions may feel personal, but you can skip any question you don't want to answer.

You may also be invited to a research interview, but this is optional - you don't need to do them to participate in this study, and we'll provide more information about this separately.

Are there any risks in taking part?

The risks of taking part are small. Some of our questions may bring up unpleasant memories and experiences for people. You do not have to answer anything that you do not want to answer. We can give you information about where to find support if needed.

Are there any benefits in taking part?

This study will help us understand how food pantries can support people better. While it might not directly help you, your participation could improve services for others in the future.

As a thank you, you will receive a £10 shopping voucher for every questionnaire you complete. If you complete all 4 questionnaires, you will receive a £5 bonus in shopping vouchers.

How will my data be used?

Any information you give us in the questionnaires will be confidential meaning we won't share it with anyone. Any information that could potentially identify you will be removed, so nothing you say can be traced back to you. The individual answers you provide in the questionnaires **will not** be shared with Your Local Pantry or anyone else.

We'll publish the results of this study in research reports, academic journals and make presentations.

See pages 4-5 for more details on how your information will be processed and stored by the University of Liverpool.

What will happen if I want to stop taking part?

You can stop taking part in the study at any time without giving a reason. This won't affect your current or future membership in Your Local Pantry in any way.

If you stop, you can ask us to remove your data from the study within 28 days. After that, we will begin analysis of the data, and it won't be possible to remove it anymore.

Who is running the study and who can you contact if you have questions?

This study is being led by researchers at the University of Liverpool and other universities in England, in partnership with Your Local Pantry. We are using M.E.L Research, a survey company, to help us collect the study data through online questionnaires.

If you have any questions, you can contact:

Dr Suruchi Ganbavale, who is running the study:

Email: s.ganbavale@liverpool.ac.uk

Study phone number/Whatsapp: 07350 432927

Dr Rachel Loopstra, who has overall responsibility for the study:

Email: rachel.loopstra@liverpool.ac.uk

If you have questions about why Your Local Pantry is supporting this study, you can ask:

- Your Local Pantry staff members where you applied for membership; or
- The Your Local Pantry team: info@yourlocalpantry.co.uk

What if you are unhappy or if there is a problem?

You can get in touch with anyone from the research team at any time. We want to listen and address any concerns you may have and ensure that your experience in the study is positive.

If you are still unhappy or have a complaint that cannot be met by the researchers, please contact the Research Ethics and Integrity office at ethics@liverpool.ac.uk. When contacting the Research Ethics and Integrity office please provide details of the name or description of the study, the researcher(s) involved and the details of your complaint.

The University strives to maintain the highest standards in the processing of your data. However, if you have any concerns about the way in which the University processes your personal data, it is important that you are aware of your right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office by calling 0303 123 1113.

Thank you for reading this information.

If you decide to join, we'll ask you to confirm your consent before starting the first questionnaire.

Additional Information

Rewards for taking part

- You will receive a £10 shopping voucher for GoGift for each questionnaire you complete. These can be used at specific shops (Primark, Boots, SportsDirect, H&M, TK Maxx, Argos).
- If you complete all four questionnaires, you will get a £5 bonus voucher

In total, you can get up to £45.

Shopping vouchers will be sent electronically by email or text/WhatsApp within 7 days of you completing the questionnaire. If you can't receive vouchers electronically, we can send them by post, but only at the end of the study.

What happens to your data if you decide to take part

The University of Liverpool processes personal data as part of its research and teaching activities in accordance with the lawful basis of 'public task', and in accordance with the University's purpose of "advancing education, learning and research for the public benefit.

Under UK data protection legislation, the University acts as the Data Controller for personal data collected as part of the University's research. The Principal Investigator acts as the Data Processor for this study, and any queries relating to the handling of your Personal Data can be sent to Dr Rachel Loopstra (Rachel.Loopstra@liverpool.ac.uk).

An independent market and social research agency, M.E.L Research, is operating the survey platform we'll use to collect data and will send reminders about completing questionnaires. All data collected will be through their secure survey platforms. They will act as the Data Processor, as outlined in more detail below.

Further information on how your data will be used can be found in the table below.

How will my data be collected?	Your data will be collected by questionnaire through an online survey platform operated by M.E.L Research. This questionnaire can also be completed over the phone with a researcher, who can enter the answers you give into the form for you. Data is also collected by Your Local Pantry on when people receive membership and how often they use it. These data will be shared with the study researchers with your permission.
How will my data be stored?	Your data will be kept safe and secure. Data will be transferred from M.E.L Research's secure survey platform to the University of Liverpool and stored on a secure password-protected server. It will be deleted from the survey platform as soon as this done. Your contact details will be stored separately from the data collected through questionnaires by the research team and M.E.L Research. Only authorised researchers will have access to the stored data.
How long will my data be stored for?	Once the study has finished, the researchers will keep your contact details for one year. This will allow us to send you a copy of the study report. If you

	don't want to receive this, after the study concludes, we will retain your information for a reasonable period necessary to fulfil any legal or regulatory requirements. Once this retention period expires, your personal data will be securely deleted. M.E.L Research will store your contact details to enable them to send you links to the survey over the 10 weeks that you participate in the study. Once you have completed the study or if you indicate you no longer want to participate, they will no longer store these details. We will remove your contact details from questionnaire data. We'll check to ensure it does not contain any identifying information. If it does, this information will be deleted or redacted. The research data collected for this study will then be stored for at least 10 years, as is University of Liverpool policy.
What measures are in place to protect the security and confidentiality of my data?	Your data will be stored securely in encrypted databases, accessible only to authorised team members. Your personal contact details will be stored separately from your study data.
Will my data be anonymised?	Your study data will be anonymised, removing all personally identifiable details such as your name. Any reports or publications resulting from the study will use aggregated and summarised data, ensuring you cannot be identified when results are reported.
How will my data be used?	Your information will only be used for research. The findings will be shared in academic journals, reports and presentations. Your data won't be used for commercial purposes or shared for profit.
Who will have access to my data?	Only authorised members of the research team and M.E.L Research will have access to your data. Data management is carefully handled by designated team members who ensure the secure storage, management, and protection of participant data.
Will my data be archived for use in other research projects in the future?	Anonymised research data may be archived for use in other research projects in the future.
How will my data be destroyed?	At the end of the data storage periods outlined above, we will make sure to permanently delete all your data. All digital files and paper documents will be deleted or shredded, as relevant.