**UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER**

**School of Geography, Geology and the Environment**

**Information Sheet for participants to the research project HIVGAYM (interviews)**

**Name of the Project:** “Analyzing the migration choices of HIV-positive gay men in England and Italy” (HIVGAYM)

**Name of Principal Investigator:** Dr Cesare Di Feliciantonio

**Name of Organization:** School of Geography, Geology and the Environment, University of Leicester

**Name of Supervisor:** Dr Gavin Brown

**Name of Sponsor:** [European Commission](https://ec.europa.eu/research/mariecurieactions/), Marie Skłodowska-Curie action

**Introduction**

My name is Cesare Di Feliciantonio, I’m a Research Fellow at the University of Leicester (School of Geography, Geology and the Environment) where I am conducting a research project, funded by the EU under the Marie Curie-actions, around the migration choices of HIV+ gay men in two European countries, England and Italy, with a particular focus on two urban areas in each country (Leicester and Manchester in England; and, Bologna and Milan in Italy).

This information sheet provides the main information in relation to the project, your rights if you are willing to participate and the procedures to collect, store, retain and disseminate the research data. Participation in the project is on a fully voluntary basis. You can take your time to think about taking part to the project, you don’t need to decide right now!

Even if you initially choose to take part, you can withdraw your consent at any time (even after the interview is finished!). So, if for any reason, you change your mind after having accepted to participate, no worries, you can withdraw from the research. Therefore I won’t register, store and analyse the data, which will be immediately destroyed. If you don’t find all the relevant information you need in this sheet, please ask me and I will give all the information you will request (in the respect of the integrity of the research project).

This consent form might include some terminology you are not familiar with. Please do not hesitate to address me any question and/or clarification so I will make sure that everything is clear to you.

**Research aims and questions**

Several studies have found a relationship between becoming HIV-positive and gay men’s decision to move cities or migrate. To date, most of this research has been focused on the US and Canada. In a European context, there is very limited knowledge about the reasons why HIV-positive gay men choose to migrate to, and/or remain in, specific urban areas across the continent. This research project aims at addressing this gap in knowledge by investigating different migration paths of HIV-positive gay men in England and Italy, with a focus on two urban areas for each country (Leicester and Manchester in England; Bologna and Milan in Italy).

Main research question: What makes HIV-positive gay men decide to move to (and remain in) a specific city?

Sub-questions: How do services available (housing, health, etc) in a specific place influence the choice to migrate to (and remain in) a specific city for HIV-positive gay men? How important is the imagery and the perception of the city, its sexual life and tolerance in this choice? How do migration networks influence the choice of the destination?

**Type of Research Intervention**

*What am I being asked to do?*

You can contribute to the research through the online survey or a semi-structured interview about your life experience.

*Why have I been asked to participate?*

If you are a man identifying as gay/MSM/bisexual/queer and you currently live in England or Italy you can contribute to the online survey. If your HIV-status is positive, you can also contribute to the interviews.

*What does participation involve?*

The online survey is completely anonymous and voluntary. It does not require you to disclose any kind of personal information but only to respond to general questions about you and your perceptions and opinions about the city you live in (and your migratory experience, if any).

The semi-structured interviews will concern your migratory experience, focusing on what made you decide to relocate, your personal experience with HIV, and your life in the city where you currently live, including personal connections and social life.

**Selection of participants**

You are being invited to participate in the interview because your experience is relevant to the research focus and objectives, i.e. you are a gay/MSM/bisexual/queer man who relocated to (or within) England or Italy after having been tested HIV-positive.

**Voluntary Participation**

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. It is your choice whether to participate or not. You may change your mind in a later stage and withdraw your participation and consent. If this happens, the data concerning your experience will be immediately destroyed, thus they won’t be registered, stored and analysed.

**Procedures**

I believe your participation could contribute to the research project. If you accept to take part in the research through the interview, you will be asked about your personal experience as respect to your relocation choice, including what made you decide to migrate, your personal experience with HIV, and your life in the city of relocation.

I will conduct the interview myself in a place and a time chosen by you, please consider the interview could include disclosure of sensitive information so you might want to choose a quiet and safe place where you don’t feel threatened by the external environment or by people we might meet. The questions addressed will be general around your personal experience, it is up to you to choose how in-depth you want to go through your answers.

Please remember that you can leave and stop the interview at any time you wish. I will not attempt to coerce or force you to continue if you do not want to. For me it is fundamental that you enjoy a pleasant and safe experience, so remember that you can refuse to answer any question you are not comfortable with, and you are completely free not to disclose any information which you wish to remain private. I will not try to coax or convince you in any way to delve into any subject matter if you do not want to do so.

In order to enhance academic rigour and precision, I kindly ask you the permission to audiorecord the interview. Otherwise if you don’t want to be audiorecorded, I will only take notes of your answers. In any case after the interview is done, I will send you the transcript of the interview or my notes to confirm that you agree with the information included there and that you allow the use of data for research purposes. When sent the transcripts/notes you will have the opportunity to include additional information or clarify specific parts. Of course if you are not comfortable with the transcript/notes and you want to withdraw your consent, you are allowed to: the interview will be destroyed and won’t be included in the research at any point.

The interview (including transcript and notes) will be completely anonymized, i.e. there will be no possibility to identify you at any later stage of the analysis and in the results of the research disseminated. Only myself and the research supervisor (Dr Gavin Brown) will have access to the raw data which will be stored for a period of five years in external devices password-protected in order to avoid hacking or unauthorized use of the data. Depersonalized data will stored for a period of fifteen years in order to allow future comparative research.

**Duration**

The estimated duration of the interview is between 60 and 120 minutes. If you agree I will ask you to meet again after 2-6 weeks in order to deepen some aspects emerged during the original interview.

**Risks**

The interview involves a focus on sensitive, confidential and emotional information and matters, so you might feel uncomfortable about sharing some information or you might feel overwhelmed. Please remember that you are asked to disclose only the information you want to and I won’t push you to share undesired information. If you feel overwhelmed, please do not hesitate to share your feelings, we can stop the interview at any time and resume it (if you still want to!) when you feel ready and comfortable to do so. Remember that you can withdraw your consent at any time and you can refuse to answer specific questions or you might want to choose not to discuss specific topics at all. The information you will choose to give depends just on you.

**Benefits**

By taking part to the project, you will contribute to improve academic knowledge around HIV-status and migration for gay/MSM/bisexual/queer men, thus also supporting potentially improved awareness of these issues for policy makers and health practitioners that will be informed about the research and will likely read some of the research outputs.

**Reimbursement**

There is no financial incentive to participate to the research. However if you incur in any transport expenses to attend the interview, they will be reimbursed at the time of the interview. Moreover if you need any refreshment or meal during the interview, it will be provided.

**Confidentiality**

As already stated, all the information will be completely anonymized, including names of people, specific places and any other details that might disclose your identity. The interview data won’t be accessible to anyone but myself and Dr Gavin Brown, the data securely stored in password-protected external devices. At the beginnings of the interview, you will be asked to choose an acronym made of 2 to 5 letters and/or numbers for the depersonalization of data. The acronym will enable you to identify your own contribution to the research in the resulting publications and reports (for instance if I will quote an extract of your interview in any resulting research output, I will refer to the interview with the acronym and a vague indication of your age group and migratory path. E.g. “...”, personal interview, XXX, age 25-35, migrated from a small English town to Manchester). No research output will make possible to identify your participation to the project.

**Sharing the Results**

Raw anonymized data won’t be ever accessible to the public and third parties. Beyond the results presented in publicly accessible research outputs (e.g. academic papers, articles in online magazines), the full results of the analysis will be accessible only to academic researchers and policy-analysts by following a specific procedure of access at the University of Leicester.

**Who to Contact**

For any doubt or question, please do not hesitate to contact me via email (cf254@leicester.ac.uk) or telephone (00447403117378).

The ethical procedures followed are in line with new EU General Data Protection Regulation No. 2016/679, the Code of Practice of the University of Leicester and the Data Protection Act 2018 of the British State. For detailed information please visit the following websites:

<https://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/researchsupport/integrity/code-of-conduct>

<https://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/ias/resources/policies/gdpr/Guidance%20Note%2012%20GDPR%20and%20Research%20Data%20Quick%20Guide.pdf>

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/12/contents/enacted>

https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L\_.2016.119.01.0001.01.ENG

If you have any additional question or doubt concerning these ethical guidelines, please contact the Research Support Services Contact at the University of Leicester via email (RED@le.ac.uk) or via phone (00441162297763).