

## PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

**Title of Project:** *Getting the Picture: Changing the Heatwave Visual Discourse in the News Media*

**Researcher names:** Professor Saffron O'Neill, Dr Sylvia Hayes, Dr Tristan Cann, Veronica White

### Description and purpose of research

We are a team of researchers at the University of Exeter investigating what heatwaves 'look like' in the news. We are working to change how news coverage of heatwaves could better reflect the lived experiences of people in the UK. You have been approached because we are interested to understand more about your personal experiences of hot weather in the UK, and the things you might be doing to cope with, or manage, hotter weather. Please read the following information carefully and feel free to ask any questions you have of the research at any point throughout the study.

### What would taking part involve?

We are using a method called "photo-elicitation" to help people visualise how they experience heat, and how people might be adapting to heat. Photo-elicitation involves taking photos during your day-to-day activities over a period of time in Summer 2026, and then telling us about those photos in an interview afterwards. We are interested in your thoughts and opinions – there are no right or wrong answers. We are expecting the kind of everyday 'snaps' that you might take quickly on your mobile phone (we are interested in the stories you tell with your photos, rather than the photo quality), so you do not need any previous photography experience.

*There are three parts to the project:*

1. The project introduction and kick-off workshop (to be organised in discussion with you after signing up)
2. Time by yourself to take photographs over a period of time to be discussed with you over Summer 2026. You can use your mobile phone's built-in camera for this, or we can provide you with a digital camera if you do not have access to a mobile phone with a camera.
3. An interview to discuss your photos (please choose a maximum of 20 photos) at a time convenient for you. This interview can be conducted online or in-person, whichever is more convenient for you.

### What are the possible benefits or risks of taking part?

You will be helping us to better understand the way that people, communities and places experience and adapt to extreme heat, with the aim of changing the images that we see in news coverage about heatwaves to better reflect and represent peoples' experiences. Your images will only be used in analysis for this research project. However, your photos will help inform and inspire professional photojournalists to cover heatwaves and extreme heat differently in the future. Later in the project, we will be working with professional photojournalists and videographers to produce news images which will be inspired by your photos. This research has been designed to be as unobtrusive to your time as possible, and has been reviewed by the University of Exeter Research Committee. You will not be asked to speak about anything personal or sensitive in the interview.

### What will happen if I don't want to carry on with the study?

Your participation is entirely voluntary; you do not need to take part if you do not wish. You are also free to withdraw your participation from the research at any point in the process, before, during, or after the period of taking photographs, without giving a reason. You can do so by contacting the lead researcher (Saffron O'Neill: [s.oneill@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:s.oneill@exeter.ac.uk)). If you do so, your data and/or any personal information (e.g. contact details) will be deleted, as you request. Please note that it may be difficult to remove your data from the research once the project is over (31 December 2028), as research outputs may have been published.

### **How will my information be kept?**

We will process your personal data for the purposes of carrying out research in the public interest.

To take part in the interview, you need to provide consent via signing a consent form. The interview recording and transcript will be saved in electronic form in encrypted folders on a password-protected computer with a secure cloud-based backup. Only the research team will have access to this. Anonymous data from the interview will be used to inform the project and might be presented in the findings of the research in the final report and other publications and presentations.

The images you take during the project and share with the researchers will be stored the same way. No one other than the research team will see the images you share with us, unless we contact you later in the project to discuss if you would be interested in letting us share your images in outputs from the research, e.g. academic publications or presentations – at which point you would be entirely free to decide whether or not you want any of your images to be used in this way. You have the option to opt in or out of this potential on the consent form. That decision does not affect your participation in this part of the project.

Your personal information (e.g. name, email address) will be kept in a secure University database (University protected Sharepoint) until the end of the project: 31 December 2028, in case the researcher needs to invite you to take part in a follow-up interview or ask for clarification on points. This information will not be shared with anyone, and after this date your personal information will be destroyed (unless you request sooner). Personal details will be stored separately to the interview transcript.

We endeavour to be transparent about its processing of your personal data and this information sheet should provide a clear explanation of this. If you do have any queries about the University's processing of your personal data that cannot be resolved by the research team, further information may be obtained from the University's Data Protection Officer by emailing: [dataprotection@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:dataprotection@exeter.ac.uk) or at [www.exeter.ac.uk/dataprotection](http://www.exeter.ac.uk/dataprotection).

### **Will I be anonymous?**

Your interview will be recorded (audio and/or video, as per consent form) and transcribed for analysis. In this transcription, and any outputs that are produced from this project, you will be made anonymous. This means we will remove any identifiable information from the transcript, and we will change your name to a pseudonym (e.g. Participant 1) at the point of producing the transcript. The images you share with us will not be seen by anybody outside of the research team, unless we discuss with you and you agree at a later date the possibility of using any of your images in outputs.

### **What will happen to the results of this study?**

You can request a copy of any research outputs which are produced from this research, by contacting the lead researcher.

### **Who has reviewed this study?**

This project has been reviewed by the Geography Research Ethics Committee at the University of Exeter (Reference Number 12566787)

### **Further information and contact details**

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