



Participant Information Sheet

Westminster Voices: Accent, authenticity and representation in UK politics

Invitation to research

This study examines the role of accent and speaking style in shaping the experiences of members of the UK Parliament. We are interested in how parliamentarians perceive and experience evaluation of their speech in political contexts, including parliamentary proceedings, media appearances, and constituency work. One-to-one interviews will address themes such as authenticity, representation, linguistic expectations, and the ways in which parliamentarians may adapt their speech across different settings. The findings will be published as a report, an academic article and in presentations. It is hoped that the work will provide the opportunity to explore and addresses fundamental questions about voice, identity, equality, and authenticity in political life. The findings will also be used to inform a planned wider project.

Why have I been invited?

You are being invited to take part on the basis that you are a current member of the House of Commons or the House of Lords. It is anticipated that this part of the study will comprise 15-20 participants.

Do I have to take part?

No. Once you have read this information sheet it is up to you to decide whether you want to take part or not.

What will I be asked to do?

We will contact you (or your office) to arrange a 30–45-minute interview with one of us. This can be in-person or online, whichever is most convenient. We will ask about your experiences of voice, accent and speech in relation to your role as members of the UK Parliament.

Are there any risks if I participate?

There are no anticipated risks in taking part. However, discussion may involve potentially sensitive topics relating to accent, identity, representation, or experiences of being judged because of how you speak. We will take all reasonable steps to protect your identity in any published outputs, unless you choose to be identified. Given the public nature of parliamentary roles, complete anonymity cannot be guaranteed.

Are there any advantages if I participate?

There are no direct personal benefits to participating. However, your contribution will help us better understand how voice, accent and speech shape experiences within UK parliamentary life and may inform future research, policy, and public discussion in this area.

Informed consent

If you choose to take part, you will be asked to provide your consent by completing a short consent form before the interview.

What information about me will you collect and why?



We will collect some basic background information, such as your parliamentary role and regional background, to help us understand and interpret participants' experiences. During the interview, we will ask about your experiences of voice, accent and speech in the context of your parliamentary work.

How will my information be stored and how will you look after it?

Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. All research data will be pseudonymised at the earliest practical stage and stored securely using Manchester Metropolitan University's Research Data Storage platform, Dropbox for Business, and the University of Cambridge's OneDrive, with access restricted to members of the research team.

Pseudonymisation involves removing or replacing identifying information and assigning a unique participant ID. Information that links participant IDs to individuals will be stored separately from the research data and protected through appropriate security measures.

How will you use my information?

The information you provide will be analysed by the research team to better understand the experiences of Members of Parliament and Members of the House of Lords in relation to voice, accent and speech. Findings may be used in academic publications, presentations, reports, and research funding applications.

To enable recruitment to a planned larger follow-on study, information that links your identity to your participant ID (such as your name and contact details) may be retained securely for up to two years following your participation. Further details about data retention and destruction are provided below.

Will my data be sent anywhere else, or shared with other people or organisations?

Your data will only be accessible to members of the research team at Manchester Metropolitan University and the University of Cambridge.

When will you destroy my information?

Information that links your identity to your participant ID (such as names and contact details) will be retained securely for up to two years following participation to allow recruitment to a planned larger follow-on study. After this period, the identifying information will be securely deleted.

Pseudonymised research data, such as interview transcripts and analysis files, will be retained securely for ten years following the end of the project, in accordance with Manchester Metropolitan University's research data retention policy. After this period, the data will be securely destroyed.

Data Protection Law

The way we look after your information is ruled by UK law. Under UK law, we need to have a very good reason for using your information (this is called a 'lawful basis'). Sometimes, we might also want to use sensitive information about you, like information about your health, religion and ethnic background. This is called 'special category information'. We collect all this information from you to help with our research, which aims to benefit everyone (this means that it is in the 'public interest').

You have the right to make choices about your information under UK law. If you have any questions or would like to ask us to do something with your information, you can ask the researcher or someone else at the University. Contact details are shown towards the bottom of this document.



You can stop being a part of the study at any time, without giving a reason. You can ask us to delete your data at any time, but it might not always be possible. If you ask us to delete information within one month of data collection we will make sure this is done. If you ask us to delete data after this point, we might not be able to.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

Primarily, the results of the study will be published as a report, an academic article, and presented at academic conferences. The report will be made publicly available through the project website and via social media. Findings will also be used to inform the planning of a larger project on the same theme.

Who has reviewed this research project?

The study has been reviewed by Manchester Metropolitan University ethics committee.

Who do I contact if I have concerns about this study or wish to complain?

Researchers:

Professor Rob Drummond, School of English, Manchester Metropolitan University.

Email: r.drummond@mmu.ac.uk.

Dr Amanda Cole, Faculty of Modern and Medieval Languages and Linguistics, University of Cambridge. Email: ac2854@cam.ac.uk

Line Manager of Rob Drummond:

Dr Aidan Arrowsmith, School of English, Manchester Metropolitan University.

Email: a.arrowsmith@mmu.ac.uk.

Ethics:

Dr Adi Kuntsman, Head of Ethics, Faculty of Arts and Humanities. Manchester Metropolitan University. Email: a.kuntsman@mmu.ac.uk

Manchester Metropolitan Data Protection Officer

Our Data Protection Officer can be contacted using the dataprotection@mmu.ac.uk e-mail address, by calling +44 (0)7584 330586 or in writing to: Data Protection Officer, Legal & Governance, Ormond Building, Lower Ormond Street, Manchester, M15 6BX

UK Information Commissioner's Office

You have the right to complain directly to the Information Commissioner's Office if you would like to complain about how we process your personal data:

<https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/>

THANK YOU FOR CONSIDERING PARTICIPATING IN THIS PROJECT