

Participant Information Sheet

Brief summary:

You have been invited to take part in this pilot study for an online recovery programme for problematic pornography use. The course consists of 40 pre-recorded podcasts and a workbook which you can access online via any internet enabled device. Please be aware that if you choose to download the workbook and your device subsequently gets lost or stolen, your workbook information may be vulnerable. For this reason, you are recommended NOT to use an auto password fill feature for accessing Pivotal course and to avoid downloading the workbook onto your device.

Purpose of the study:

The purpose of this pilot study is to confirm that the Pivotal for Students programme is effective at helping students to understand more about the impact of their pornography use and to reduce, or stop, unwanted sexual behaviours.

Why have I been approached?

You have been invited to take part in this pilot study because you requested to do so via the University of Birmingham website and because you are someone who self-identifies as struggling with pornography use. You have also confirmed that you are a student at Birmingham University. You have provided your University email address to confirm your student status and been offered opportunity to provide an alternative one if you would prefer for future course contact and for registering/using the course itself.

What would taking part involve?

If you choose to participate in the pilot study, you will be asked to complete an anonymous online questionnaire before you begin the course. This is hosted by the platform Survey Monkey and you can see their privacy policy here: [Privacy Notice | SurveyMonkey](#) This will include questions about your unwanted behaviour and how it affects you. You will then be asked to commit to following the course, listening to the provided podcasts on a regular basis and also completing the accompanying workbook. You may choose to complete the course over 40 consecutive days, or less often if that fits better with your lifestyle. However, a maximum of 60 days is allowed for completion. When you have completed the course, you will be asked to complete a second Survey Monkey anonymous online questionnaire, which will include questions about your experience of undertaking the course and how effective it has been for you in helping you to understand the impact of your porn usage and stop your unwanted behaviours.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

It is hoped that you will benefit from this pilot study by feeling more informed about your porn use and/or stopping any unwanted sexual behaviours and gaining confidence that you can move forward and achieve a more fulfilling life. By participating in this study you will also be helping us to improve the service for others.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

Some of the content of the course may raise uncomfortable emotions for you, especially in early sessions when you will gain more understanding of why you struggle with your unwanted

behaviours. Taking part in this pilot study is not an alternative to receiving therapy or getting other professional or peer support and you may find that you will benefit from seeking further help.

Further support can be found at: [Your Wellbeing](#) University of Birmingham if at any point of this course you feel that you are at risk of harm to yourself then please call 11 and select 'mental health option 2' or book an appointment with your GP. If you need immediate support to keep yourself safe please call 999 or visit [your local A and E](#).

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

Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. You may decline to enter, or withdraw from, the study at any time. If you do not access the link within the required 7-day timeframe, the link will expire and you will no longer be a participant or able to access the course. You will not be contacted again however you can resubmit your request by completing the request form again. To withdraw during the course please email student@pivotalrecovery.org If you do withdraw once you have started the course, you will be asked to complete an anonymous online questionnaire to help us to understand why you made that decision so we can adapt the course if necessary.

How will my information be kept confidential?

When you first registered your interest, your ID number will be used to verify your eligibility by checking you are a current University of Birmingham student. Basic demographic data will be collected by University of Birmingham and will be held within their GDPR guidelines. This information will be held securely and in an anonymised form. You will be emailed the link to access the course once it goes live on 19th January 2026 (participants registering after this date will receive the link within 2 working days of registering interest). Your participation in this pilot study will not be shared with anyone in the University and will have no impact on your academic progress. You do not have to use your University email if you do not wish to do so and are invited to provide an alternative email address for your registration and participation in the course if you prefer.

The platform for the questionnaires that you will complete will be Survey Monkey, an industry standard research tool for data collection, storage, and analysis. All information obtained on Survey Monkey will be held in strict confidence, subject to GDPR and stored within the Survey Monkey account. Individual responses to the questions will be kept completely confidential and your name will not appear on any of the material because your name is not required at any point in the data collection; the data will be completely anonymised. Averaged group data may be published or publicly presented, but given its aggregated nature, it will not be possible to identify individual participants from this data. IP addresses will not be collected with the data. You can see Survey Monkey's privacy policy here: [Privacy Notice | SurveyMonkey](#)

Once you have accessed the pilot study, your email address will be stored on Pivotal Recovery's web server which uses industry standard secure cloud technology. If you use the digital workbook, this is fully encrypted and is also stored using the same industry standard secure cloud technology.

The course will be accessed via your chosen internet device. You will be responsible for ensuring that you have the privacy you need to listen to the podcasts and complete your workbook and to keep your device secure.

Will I receive any payment for taking part?

No you do not receive payment but on completion, you will receive free, life-time access to the complete course which would normally be charged for.

What will happen to the results of this study?

The results of this pilot study will be used to adapt Pivotal for Students to make it more efficient for users. The anonymised usage results will also be collated and shared with University of Birmingham to inform future practice and support options for students and to help understand how much of an issue pornography addiction may be in the student community. They may also be shared with other professionals who work with students and directly with students themselves across multiple platforms.

Who is organising this study?

This study has been set-up by collaboratively between Pivotal Recovery CIC and University of Birmingham

Further information and contact details

Pivotal contact - Dr Paula Hall, Clinical Director of Pivotal Recovery CIC.

Email: paula@pivotalrecovery.org

University of Birmingham contact – Sue Dalton-Knight, Head of Student Wellbeing and Therapeutic Support s.j.dalton-knight@bham.ac.uk

Thank you for your interest in this pilot study