

Spring 2019 Directive

Part 1: Plastics & you

This Directive is about plastics and their uses, particularly 'single-use' plastics that are used only once before they are thrown away or recycled. These include plastic straws, food packaging, carrier bags and shampoo bottles. You may be able to think of some more examples.

We are not only interested in your views on the problems caused by plastics. We are also interested in the positive aspects of plastics. We are particularly interested in changes over time.

Task

We would like you to make a list of the plastics you encounter throughout one day.

Some prompts for you:

- Think about different rooms in your home (kitchen, bathroom etc.)
- Think about different everyday activities that may or may not take place at home (e.g. shopping, household chores, work, hobbies)

Using plastics

Reflecting on your lists, were the plastics you encountered useful? If yes – how and why were they useful (e.g. making everyday tasks and activities easier and more convenient, communicating information to help make decisions)?

Were any of the plastics you encountered single-use?

Do you ever use plastics in ways that you think might differ from their intended uses?

Can you think of any ways in which plastics make it hard for you to do everyday tasks and activities? If yes, what do you do to get around this?

We welcome one or two photographs that help illustrate your replies to this section

Looking back

Can you remember what particular products were like before they were made with plastic (e.g. toys, shoes or cooking utensils)?

Can you remember if any everyday activities (such as shopping, eating or bathing) were different? Why do you think plastics replaced other materials? Are things better or worse now than they were before?

Please start each part of your Directive reply on a new sheet of paper with your MO number, sex, age, marital status, the town or village where you live and your occupation or former occupation.

Remember *not to identify yourself or other people* inadvertently within your reply. It is best to use initials instead of real names.

Can you think of any examples where the packaging for a particular item (e.g. crisps, a favourite chocolate bar, fruit and vegetables, condiments, cleaning products) has changed over time? How has it changed? Have these changes gone hand-in-hand with changes in the product itself? Was it better before or after?

Why now?

Have you noticed an increase in media coverage and political action around the problems caused by single-use plastics? If yes, why do you think this is?

Are your friends, neighbours and relatives talking about these issues and/or doing anything to address them?

Leaving aside the importance of recycling, do you do anything to reduce the amount of single-use plastics in your life? Please share any tips, no matter how trivial you might think they are. When did you start doing these things and why?

The future

Do you think it is possible to live without single-use plastics? What needs to change in order for people to use less plastic?

Do you think a future without single-use plastics would be a good or bad thing? Why?

What are the alternatives to single-use plastics? Do we need 'new' ideas and technologies or a return to older ways of doing things? Can you think of any examples where there is no real alternative to single-use plastics?

Reflecting on your task lists and more generally, do you think that day-to-day activities would be radically different (e.g. more expensive or less convenient) in the absence of plastics?

Part 2: Loneliness and belonging

In five words, what does the word loneliness mean to you?

Your experiences

Have there been any times in your life when you have felt lonely or struggled with the social aspects? Was there anything in particular that triggered this? How did it feel? How did you manage this feeling? Did anything help?

If you have felt lonely, was this feeling heightened at particular points in time such as weekends, holidays or seasons?

Did it alter your outlook, behaviour, or attitude? Did it alter the way your body felt, or the way your mind worked?

Have you had any positive experiences of being alone? Please tell us more.

Have there been times when you have felt particularly connected, supported, and valued? What do you think was behind these feelings?

Moving away

Have you had an experience of moving away from home, perhaps for work, university, college or a relationship? How did you settle in? Were there any social challenges? Did you seek out opportunities to meet people?

Identity and environment

Do you feel like any specific aspects of your identity and experience (e.g. gender, age, sexuality, class, race, disability, or history) play a role in how you have connected with others and how comfortable you feel socially? These can be either positive or negative.

How about your circumstances – the city, town, village, area, or type of housing you live in, your access to council services and ‘natural spaces’ – such as woods, fields, parks, beaches – your family roles, relationships and responsibilities, or your financial situation?

Have you ever felt excluded or stigmatised because of any of these factors?

Are there any other considerations that we have not mentioned but that you think are equally important? Do let us know.

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Loneliness and society, past and present

Do you think that people today are lonelier than ever before? If so, why? If not, why not?

Do you think it affects a particular age group over another?

Do you think that the way loneliness is understood has changed? If so, how?

Have any social, cultural, or technological changes over the course of your life increased or decreased general feelings of belonging?

Is loneliness a personal problem or a social and political one? Can it be solved, as a recent Guardian article suggested, by a pill? What else do you think should be done to prevent loneliness?

Part 3: 29th March 2019: Brexit day diary

As we write this Directive, it looks like the UK will leave the European Union on Friday 29th March 2019, regardless of whether there is a deal with the EU or not.

We will be asking you about the effect of Brexit later in the year. For now, we would like you to record your 29th March in the form of a day diary.

How did you spend 29th March? Did you avoid or follow news reports about Brexit? How did you feel on the day? Did you celebrate, commiserate, or ignore the UK leaving the EU?

We welcome diaries about other events and activities that do not relate to Brexit. Equally, even if there is a U-turn/extension and the UK remains part of the EU we still want your diaries.

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Please post your response to: Freepost: RTGU-AYJE-YSSC, The Mass Observation Archive, The Keep, Woollards Way, Brighton, BN1 9BP or by email to: moa@sussex.ac.uk
JS/KP Spring Directive/No. 114