**Study information sheet [03-10-14 version 1]**

**Title of the study**
More than lucky? Exploring self-leadership in the development and articulation of research independence.

**Purpose of the study**
Securing a research fellowship award is a highly competitive process and portion of success in gaining a fellowship is often written off as simply being lucky. This project seeks to stir up some deeper thinking in research fellows, around how they developed their CV, profile, and professional networks, in order to maximise their chances of success. We will overlap this with the reflections of university staff that support fellowship applicants, aiming to characterise the experience of gaining independent funding. We focus on self-leadership moments – that is, times when you went the extra mile, reached out, made it happen, didn't wait for permission. The foresight and ability to form productive, collaborative, and supportive networks is an element of self-leadership worthy of particular focus. We aim to evidence how becoming 'independent' is dependent on becoming more, not less, connected.

**Who are the investigators?**
Kay Guccione k.guccione@sheffield.ac.uk is the Principal Investigator and Bryony Portsmouth b.portsmouth@sheffield.ac.uk is a co-investigator. Matt Risby is a film maker involved in reporting on the project. This study also has a steering group who will only see data and information that has been anonymised and aggregated, and will not be able to identify you. Members are Justine Daniels, Charlotte Harden, Heather Mortiboys, Robin Purshouse, and Duncan Cameron.

**Why have I been chosen?**
You have been selected because you are a researcher who has been successful in gaining an externally funded research fellowship award, and you are still within the terms of your award.

**What data will we collect?**
There are two ways we are collecting data:-

Professional Network Forms and a Research Interview: You will be asked to take part in a one-off 60min recorded interview with a Kay Guccione.  Prior to the interview, Kay will contact you to ask you to complete some (5 max) pre-interview forms that will collect information on people in your network you found helpful to the Fellowship application process. This should take you no longer than 30min. Interviews will be transcribed for analysis. Transcripts will be made anonymous before analysis and information that identifies you will NOT be shared with anyone. During the interviews, you will be asked a series of open-ended questions to encourage you to reflect and discuss your professional networks, self-leadership, and your fellowship experience.

Blog post: The Fellowship Ahoy! Blog has been set up to collect fellowship stories from a wider pool of researchers across the UK. This blog aims also to be a source of personal stories for aspiring fellows, and future applicants. We're interested in hearing about times when fellows went the extra mile, reached out, made it happen, didn't wait for permission, who helped them and how; who didn't and why. How they knew they were ready, and what kept them going. If you would like to share your story, please use the comments box on the blog home page. Please anonymise your story and do not provide real names or details of your university or fellowship. Comments are moderated so that we can ensure anonymity for everyone involved.

You are most welcome to share the link to this blog with other research fellows who would like to post their story.

**Do I have to take part?**
It is up to you to decide if you would like to take part.  If you take part in an interview you will be asked to sign a consent form. If you are posting an anonymous fellowship story to the project blog, your posting this is taken as agreement that you consent to the data being analysed for research purposes. You can still withdraw your data from the study at any time even after the interview, and up until the 31st March 2015. You do not have to give a reason for withdrawing.

**Risks of taking part**
We do not anticipate any physical or psychological harm as a result of participating in this project. Your data will remain confidential and you will remain anonymous. Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in the project, it is hoped that this study will contribute to furthering our practical understanding of how research staff can develop their careers and professional networks and the impact of this.

**Confidentiality / data protection**
Your participation and data is confidential. Stories collected by social media will be anonymised. All interview data will be kept securely in password-protected anonymised files on a secure server. The study data will be aggregated and reporting will not identify individual responses or participants. Individual contributions will be quoted anonymously in the final report. If you have agreed to participate in an interview that is recorded for research purposes, there is an additional signed consent form for you to complete. All materials will be stored securely in locked cabinets, or on a secure server. After 5 years the materials containing research data will be securely destroyed or deleted.

**Reporting of the study**
The anonymised findings of the study will be disseminated in publications or presentations.  It is hoped that the findings will inform University of Sheffield and national best practice and policy, in this area. We will be happy to provide you with a copy of the study findings if you would like this.

**Who has funded this research?**
This project is funded by the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education

**Who has ethically reviewed the project?**
The University of Sheffield Research Ethics Committee has reviewed and approved this project on the 3rd October 2014.

**For further information**
Or to ask any questions, please contact Kay Guccione k.guccione@sheffield.ac.uk