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Question testing for the National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles 4

Report on findings from cognitive interviews

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1 Methods

1.1 What is cognitive interviewing?

Cognitive interviewing methods provide an insight into the mental processes used by participants when answering survey questions, thus helping researchers to identify problems with question wording and design. These methods investigate four cognitive stages: how participants understand and interpret survey questions, how they recall information that applies to the question, the judgements they make as to what information to use when formulating their answers, and the response mapping process.

1.2 What we tested

We tested new questions which have been developed for the fourth wave of the National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles (Natsal-4), as well as questions that were adapted from previous waves of the survey. Not all new or adapted questions could be tested, and therefore priority was given to those that were key questions for Natsal-4, or that were identified by the research team as potentially problematic, and those that were suited to cognitive testing methods. Findings on each of the questions tested are included within this report.

1.3 Sampling and recruitment

In total, 30 interviews were conducted with people recruited specifically for this project. The participants varied in terms of age, gender identity, ethnicity, sexual orientation, recent relationship history and recent use of the internet or apps for dating or to look for a new partner.

- 24 of the interviews were conducted with the general population and participants were recruited using doorstep recruitment methods.
- 6 of the interviews were conducted with members of the LGBT+ community, 3 of whom identified as trans.¹ These 6 participants were recruited using targeted recruitment methods, including advertising through specific networks.

Interviewers were provided with a screening questionnaire which was followed when inviting people to take part. Details collected at the screening stage were checked at the start of each interview. A confirmation letter was provided to each participant recruited (this was given by hand or by email depending on the method of recruitment used). All participants received a token of appreciation (high street voucher) to thank them for taking part in the cognitive interviews.

¹ We used 'trans' as an umbrella term which includes transgender and non-binary identities defined as follows: *Trans is a term used to describe people whose gender is not the same as the sex they were described as at birth.*

Table A: Cognitive interview sample composition

Screening characteristics		Number participants with characteristic
Gender	Male	12
	Female	14
	In another way	4
Age	18-24	10
	25-39	10
	40-59	10
Ethnicity	Ethnic minority	6 ²
Recent relationship history	Met a new partner or started a new relationship in the last 12 months	15
Use of internet/apps for dating	Used the internet or apps in the past 12 months for dating or to look for a new partner	11
Trans identity	Is trans or has a trans history	3
Sexual orientation	LGB+	10

A further table outlining individual participants' key characteristics (serial number, gender identity, age and sexual identity) can be found in Appendix 1.

1.4 Fieldwork

Interviews were carried out by researchers at NatCen and by members of NatCen's core team of cognitive interviewers. Participants were presented with the survey questions in the format they are intended to be presented in the main survey (a combination of CAPI and CASI). Participants were then asked probing questions in order to gather the required information. Interviews used a semi-structured topic guide to ask the follow-up probes. Probes looked at:

- Comprehension of key terms within the questions;
- Whether participants were able to recall the information requested and whether they constrained their thinking to the timeframes asked about;
- Whether answer options were being used appropriately and whether any response options were missing;
- The cognitive burden of answering the questions;
- Whether participants felt that they were able to give an honest answer to the questions;

² Three participants identified as White and Black African, one participant identified as Black African, one participant identified as British Bangladeshi, and one participant identified as Asian Pakistani.

- Whether the questions were asked in a sufficiently sensitive manner.

Participants were interviewed either in their homes or at the NatCen London office. In-home interviews were conducted in Lancashire, East Sussex and London. Interviews lasted approximately an hour and interviews were recorded with the participants' consent. Participants were given a £30 high street voucher as a thank you for their time and help. Procedures for testing were approved by the NatCen Research Ethics Committee prior to fieldwork being undertaken.

1.5 Analysis

The interviews were audio recorded with consent from participants. Interviews were summarised and charted by interviewers who reviewed the audio recording of each interview. All interview summaries were written into a matrix in Excel. Responses to each test question were recorded, along with findings from each of the scripted probes. Data could thus be read horizontally as a complete case record for an individual, or vertically by question, looking across all cases. Once the matrix was completed, the data in the matrix were reviewed thematically. A debriefing session was organised in order for the interviewers to present the initial findings.

This report presents results from this thematic analysis of questions, and recommendations for question alterations, which were discussed at the debriefing session. It also includes tables of the responses provided by the participants to each survey question. This is included to signal variations in the response options provided by our test sample, however the tables should not be read and understood as representative survey statistics. Instead, the tables give an indication about the potential biases a question might be prone to. The recommendations for changes to each question are presented at the end of each subsection.

1.6 Caveats to cognitive interviewing methodology

Cognitive interviewing is a qualitative interviewing methodology. It can be used to explore the types of issues that people encounter when trying to answer survey questions, and why these issues occur. However, as small purposive samples are used, cognitive methods cannot be used to quantify how often the problems reported will occur in practice. Where problems are detected, it is not possible to quantify the impact these problems will have on survey data collected.

Throughout this report we make recommendations that aim to address the issues raised by the cognitive interview participants. However, there is no guarantee that all potential issues with the questions have been detected or that the solutions proposed are themselves problem free.

2 Findings and recommendations

2.1 Gender (Gender and GenIdX)

2.1.1 Questions tested

Gender
ASK ALL

SHOWCARD A

Which of the options on this card describes how you think of yourself?

INTERVIEWER: Do not probe.

INTERVIEWER: If a participant explains that they identify as trans(man/woman/non-binary), advise them that they can choose whichever option they feel best describes them. This will be used to make sure we ask them the right questions throughout this interview. If they choose to answer 'In another way', they will be asked what this is at the next question.

- 1) male
- 2) female
- 3) In another way

If Gender=in another way then ask

GenIdX

Please tell me how you identify. If you prefer, you can type it in directly to the laptop.

[OPEN TEXT: 150 characters]

2.1.2 Responses given to the question

The cognitive sample's responses to the questions Gender and GenIdX are shown in tables 1 and 2 below. A range of responses were given and none of the participants selected "don't know" or "prefer not to say".

Table 1: Responses given to survey question Gender

<u>Gender</u>	
1) Male	12
2) Female	14
3) In another way	4

<i>Don't know</i>	0
<i>Prefer not to say</i>	0

Table 2: Responses given to survey question GenIdX

<u>GenIdX</u>	
<i>"Non-binary"</i>	
<i>"Transgender"</i>	
<i>"Trans*, Genderqueer, Trans-masculine"</i>	
<i>"Bisexual"</i>	

2.1.3 Observations

Interviewers did not observe any significant hesitations, requests for repetition or changes in answers with the question Gender. When asked GenIdX, however, one participant (CL01) requested clarification as to whether the question was referring to gender identity rather than any other kind of identity (e.g. identity in terms of sexual orientation).

Table 3: Observations for survey question Gender

<u>Gender</u>	
Hesitations	0
Asking for repetitions and help	0
Changes in answers (including on probing)	0

Table 4: Observations for survey question GenIdX

<u>GenIdX</u>	
Hesitations	0
Asking for repetitions and help	1
Changes in answers (including on probing)	0

2.1.4 Main findings

Gender

General understanding of the question and ease of response

In the general population interviews, participants largely had no issues with this question. Participants commented that they found it “*pretty straightforward to answer*” (OM08) and “*quite black and white*” (OM01).

During probing, one participant (KJ08) stated that they thought that the response option “in another way” might be referring to sexuality rather than gender identity. However, they did not select this option, so this did not ultimately have an impact on their response.

In the interviews with the LGBT+ subsample, this question was mostly well understood. Trans participants generally interpreted this question as asking about their gender identity rather than sex assigned at birth. One participant (EC02), however, commented that they found this question “*not difficult but frustrating*”. They stated that they identify as both female and non-binary and would thus have liked to have been able to select more than one response option. This participant felt that the intention of the question was unclear, since it did not differentiate between sex, gender and gender expression. Nevertheless, this participant was able to provide an answer to this question without noticeable difficulty.

Acceptability of the question

Participants in the general population sample generally found this to be an acceptable question and felt comfortable giving their answer. One participant stated that “*it’s not invasive*” (OMO3) and others remarked that they felt that this was a very ordinary question to be asked in a survey context.

Participants in the LGBT+ subsample also generally found it acceptable to be asked this question and reported feeling comfortable selecting an answer. Some participants commented that they were happy to see a question whose answers were not restricted to a binary view of gender.

Suitability of response options

No major issues relating to the response options were detected in the cognitive interviews with the general population sample. All participants in the general population sample selected a suitable response with relative ease. However, one participant (DCW07) commented that they thought the response format should be a free text box, indicating that they were unaware that GenIDx would follow if they selected “in another way”.

Participants in the LGBT+ subsample also found the response options to be generally suitable and managed to select a response with relative ease.

One participant (EC03) commented that their main criticism of this question was not being informed that selecting “in another way” leads to a follow-up question. They stated that they would have liked to have known at the Gender question that the option to freely state their identity was available at GenIdX. Related to this is a criticism from another participant (CL02) who stated that “in another way” seems insufficient and felt that participants should be able to state their gender identity in a freer way (indicating that they were not aware of GenIdX).

One participant (EC01) also suggested that “non-binary” and “trans” could have appeared as response options at the Gender question. Another participant (EC03) commented that they would prefer the options “man” and “woman” to “male” and “female”. It was also stated that clarification would be useful as to whether “male” included “trans man” and “female” included “trans woman” or not (EC03). Nevertheless, this participant was able to provide a suitable response without noticeable difficulty.

GenIdX

Comprehension of GenIdX and ease of response

This question was understood by some participants. However, other participants had difficulties understanding the intention of this question. One participant (CL01) explicitly requested clarification as to whether the question was referring to gender identity or identity of another kind. Another participant (EC01) responded with “*bisexual*”, indicating that they had likely misinterpreted the question as referring to identity in terms of sexual orientation rather than gender.

Otherwise, participants were generally able to provide an answer with ease. One participant (DM05) commented that they really liked this question and were pleased to be able to give a free text answer.

Comfort level disclosing identity in a face-to-face interview

When responding to this question, some participants were happy to tell the interviewer their answer face-to-face and some preferred to type in their answer themselves. During probing, participants who were routed to GenIdX were asked whether they would feel comfortable disclosing their identity in a face-to-face interview in a household setting. Mixed responses were received. Some participants stated that they would feel comfortable doing this. Other participants stated that they would only feel comfortable doing this if the interviewer was “*another queer person*” (EC01) or if the interviewer had a demonstrable awareness of trans identities (EC03). It was suggested that participants could be told at the point of recruitment whether interviewers had had appropriate training from named LGBT+ organisations, which would give participants reassurance.

2.1.5 Recommendations

Gender

- Make clear that if participants respond with “in another way”, that they will be routed to GenIdX. This could be done by adding the text “Please specify” to the response option.

GenIdX

- Make clear that this question is referring to gender identity rather than any other kind of identity (e.g. in terms of sexual orientation). This could be done by changing the text to “Please tell me how you identify in terms of your gender”, or “Please tell me how you would describe your gender identity”.

2.2 Sexual identity (SexID and SexIDOth)

2.2.1 Questions tested

SexID

CARD C

Which of the options on this card best describes how you think of yourself?

Please just tell me the letter next to the description on this card.

1. (R) Heterosexual / Straight
2. (H) Gay/ Lesbian
3. (I) Bisexual
4. (J) Other

IF SexID = 4 (J), other THEN:

SexIDOth

CARD D

Which of the options on this card best describes how you think of yourself?

Please just tell me the letter next to the description on this card.

1. (B) Asexual
2. (Y) Queer
3. (S) Pansexual
4. (E) In another way

2.2.2 Responses given to the question

The cognitive sample's responses to SexID and SexIDOth are shown in tables 5 and 6 below. A range of responses were given and none of the participants selected "don't know" or "prefer not to say".

Table 5: Responses given to survey question SexID

SexID	
1. (R) Heterosexual / Straight	20
2. (H) Gay/ Lesbian	4
3. (I) Bisexual	4
4. (J) Other	2

<i>Don't know</i>	0
<i>Prefer not to say</i>	0

Table 6: Responses given to survey question SexIDOth

<u>SexIDOth</u>	
1. (B) Asexual	0
2. (Y) Queer	1
3. (S) Pansexual	1
4. (E) In another way	0
<i>Don't know</i>	0
<i>Prefer not to say</i>	0

2.2.3 Observations

Tables 7 and 8 below give an overview of the observations interviewers made when participants were answering the questions SexID and SexIDOth.

For SexID, one participant (EC02) wanted to go back and change their answer to “other”, as they only realised later on (at SexFluOth) that more options would be made available if “other” had been selected.

At SexIDOth, one participant (DM05) hesitated significantly as they did not like the fact that they had to choose between two response options that they identified with. The participant would have liked to have been able to select more than one option at this question.

Table 7: Observations for survey question SexID

<u>SexID</u>	
Hesitations	0
Asking for repetitions and help	0
Changes in answers (including on probing)	1

Table 8: Observations for survey question SexIDOth

SexIDOth	
Hesitations	1
Asking for repetitions and help	0
Changes in answers (including on probing)	0

2.2.4 Main findings

General understanding of the questions and ease of response

In cognitive interviews with the general population sample, all participants selected one of the first three options at SexID (Heterosexual/Straight, Gay/Lesbian, Bisexual) and thus did not see the follow-up question SexIDOth. Participants found SexID to be a relatively easy question and some commented that it was phrased in a very straightforward way. SexID was understood clearly by participants in the general population interviews and was found to be an acceptable question to be asked.

Participants within the LGBT+ subsample gave a range of responses to SexID and two participants were routed to the follow-up question SexIDOth. Participants generally found these questions to be acceptable and felt comfortable answering them.

The questions were largely well understood by all participants. A few minor issues arose, however.

A number of participants (EC03, DCW07) found the letter labels on the response options (*R*, *H*, *I* and *J* at SexID and *B*, *Y*, *S* and *E* at SexIDOth) somewhat confusing and difficult to use. Participants struggled with the fact that these letters do not form a consecutive alphabetical sequence and felt that it made the question unnecessarily burdensome. The letter labels, specifically (*R*) and (*I*), also proved problematic from an interviewer perspective (e.g. KJ01), due to the phonological similarity of the letter names, meaning that the response was difficult to code.

A further issue arose in the cognitive interviews due to the fact that participants did not feel it was clear that other options would be made available in a follow-up question (SexIDOth) if “Other” had been selected at SexID. One participant (EC02) wanted to go back and change their answer to SexID when they realised later on in the survey (at SexFluOth) that further response options were available. Another participant (EC03) commented that they did not like the lack of indication that selection of “Other” at SexID routes participants to SexIDOth.

Additionally, some participants struggled with the single-coded nature of both SexID and SexIDOth. At SexIDOth, one participant (DM05) hesitated significantly as they did not like the fact that they had to choose between two response options that they identified

with (pansexual and queer). The participant would have liked to have been able to select more than one option at this question and felt disappointed by feeling forced to choose. Another participant (EC02) wanted to select multiple options at SexID (Gay, Bisexual and Other (Queer)) as they felt that their answer would vary depending on the situation.

Suitability of response options

A few issues were detected in the cognitive interviews relating to the response options for SexID and SexIDOth.

One participant (KJ01) selected “Bisexual” at SexID but commented that they had wanted to choose “Pansexual” but could not since it was not present on the showcard. This participant did not realise that they could have answered “Pansexual” at SexIDOth if they had selected “Other” at SexID.

Participants also commented that they did not like the “Other” option at SexID (e.g. CL02, DCW01, EC03). One participant (EC03) felt that this should be changed to “In another way” (as it appears in other questions in the survey, e.g. SexIDOth). Another participant (CL02) felt that there should have been an opportunity for participants to type in their identity (as in GenIDX), however, this participant was not aware that further options were available if “Other” had been selected at SexID.

Participants mentioned that they liked the inclusion of “Asexual” at SexIDOth (EC03). Some highlighted that the response option “Gay/Lesbian” might be problematic for some people, given that “gay” and “lesbian” are sometimes perceived as very distinct identities (CL02, EC03).

2.2.5 Recommendations

- Make clear that selection of the response option “Other” at SexID leads to further response options in SexIDOth. This could be done by adding the text “Please specify” to the response option.
- Change the randomised letter labels (*R, H, I, J* and *B, Y, S, E*) to letters which form a consecutive alphabetical sequence, e.g. *W, X, Y, Z*.
- Consider changing “Other” to “In another way” at SexID in order to be less othering of non-heterosexual and non-LGB identities and to also keep this response option consistent with SexIDOth and other questions in the survey which use “In another way” rather than “Other”.
- Consider allowing participants to choose more than one response option at SexID and SexIDOth. However, the consequences of this should also be considered. If these items are used for routing, it is possible that a multi-code item would lead to some participants being asked very similar loops of questions more than once. The impact on analysis should also be considered, specifically whether it will be problematic to analysts if codes are not mutually exclusive if they are running group-based comparisons. If this is the case, there is the possibility that those who select more than one option would be excluded from the analysis.

2.3 SexFlu, SexFluID and SexFluOth

2.3.1 Questions tested

ASK ALL

SexFlu:

At any point in your life, have you had a different sexual identity than the one you just told me about?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Prefer not to say

IF Yes

SexFluID:

CARD C

Looking at this card again, please tell me the letter that corresponds with how you identified in the past. You can choose more than one answer.

1. (R) Heterosexual / Straight
2. (H) Gay/ Lesbian
3. (I) Bisexual
4. (J) Other

IF SexFluID = 4 (J) Other, THEN:

SexFluOth:

CARD D

Please tell me the letter that corresponds with how you identified in the past. You can choose more than one answer.

1. (B) Asexual
2. (Y) Queer
3. (S) Pansexual
4. (E) In another way

2.3.2 Responses given to the question

The cognitive sample's responses to SexFlu, SexFluID and SexFluOth are shown in tables 9, 10 and 11 below. A range of responses were given and none of the participants selected "don't know" or "prefer not to say".

Table 9: Responses given to survey question SexFlu

<u>SexFlu</u>	
1. Yes	8
2. No	22
3. Prefer not to say	0
<i>Don't know</i>	0
<i>Prefer not to say</i>	0

Table 10: Responses given to survey question SexFluID

<u>SexFluID</u>	
1. (R) Heterosexual / Straight	3
2. (H) Gay/ Lesbian	1
3. (I) Bisexual	5
4. (J) Other	2
<i>Don't know</i>	0
<i>Prefer not to say</i>	0

Table 11: Responses given to survey question SexFluOth

<u>SexFluOth</u>	
1. (B) Asexual	1
2. (Y) Queer	0
3. (S) Pansexual	1
4. (E) In another way	0
<i>Don't know</i>	0
<i>Prefer not to say</i>	0

2.3.3 Observations

Tables 12, 13 and 14 below give an overview of the observations interviewers made when participants were answering the questions SexFlu, SexFluID and SexFluOth.

A few cases of noticeable hesitation were observed by participants at both SexFlu and SexFluID. Participants justified their hesitation by stating that they needed time to consider their whole life course to date, and also that it was difficult to think about such a fluid concept which can change considerably over time (e.g. EC03, DM05, KJ07). Hesitation also arose at SexFluID due to it being unclear that further options would be available at SexFluOth if “Other” was selected at SexFluID (KJ01). However, all participants were ultimately able to provide a suitable response to these questions.

Table 12: Observations for survey question SexFlu

<u>SexFlu</u>	
Hesitations	2
Asking for repetitions and help	0
Changes in answers (including on probing)	0

Table 13: Observations for survey question SexFluID

<u>SexFluID</u>	
Hesitations	2
Asking for repetitions and help	0
Changes in answers (including on probing)	0

Table 14: Observations for survey question SexFluOth

<u>SexFluOth</u>	
Hesitations	0
Asking for repetitions and help	0
Changes in answers (including on probing)	0

2.3.4 Main findings

SexFlu, SexFluID and SexFluOth

General understanding of the question and ease of response

Participants in the general population sample generally understood these questions in the same way and found them relatively easy to answer. For many participants, responding was very straightforward as they found the question wording and response options clear. Participants generally found it acceptable to be asked these questions. One participant in the general population interviews (DCW07), however, stated that they would have liked to have known why this question was being asked and felt a little uneasy when answering this question.

Participants in the LGBT+ subsample also mostly found this question relatively easy to understand and answer. One participant (CL02) stated that they really liked these questions and highlighted that they felt it was really important that these questions are asked.

However, some participants in the LGBT+ subsample found these questions less easy to answer. One participant (EC03) commented that they found the questions quite odd and difficult. They remarked that it felt strange to say that they had identified as heterosexual in the past, when this was not a true identity but rather something that was assumed of them until they stated otherwise.

While most participants in the LGBT+ subsample were comfortable answering these questions, some participants commented that they would have liked to have known why these questions were being asked, since they could not easily think of a reason why this would be relevant data to collect.

Comprehension of “sexual identity”

This term was generally understood in the same way by all participants interviewed. Participants understood the term to mean:

- Your sexual orientation
- Who your sexual partners are
- Who you fancy/who you are attracted to
- People who you prefer to have sex with
- The gender of people you have had sexual experiences with

Suitability of response options

Participants were mostly able to select appropriate answer options with ease. In general, participants were able to find the response options that they wanted and did not feel that any options were missing. The ability to select multiple response options at SexFluID and SexFluOth was received well by participants.

There was, however, an issue relating to participants not realising that further response options would be made available (at SexFluOth) if they had selected “Other” at SexFluID, as discussed above. One participant wished to find “Pansexual” but did not realise that this option was available at SexFluOth. This participant stated that they did not want to select “Other” at SexFluID as they did not consider themselves to be “Other”.

2.3.5 Recommendations

- Consider including a brief introduction to these questions explaining why it is important to collect this information and to give a bit of background to the questions.
- Make clear that selection of the response option “Other” at SexFluID leads to further response options in SexFluOth. This could be done by adding “Please specify” to the response option.
- Change the randomised letter labels (*R, H, I, J* and *B, Y, S, E*) to letters which form a consecutive alphabetical sequence, e.g. *W, X, Y, Z*.
- Change “Other” to “In another way” at SexFluID in order to be less othering of non-heterosexual and non-LGB identities and to also keep this response option consistent with SexFluOth and other questions in the survey which use “In another way” rather than “Other”.

2.4 GenIntro, SexBirth and TransHist

2.4.1 Questions tested

GenIntro:

The next few questions are about your gender.

These questions are asked because not all people feel that the sex they were described as at birth matches how they feel about themselves today.

It is important to ask these questions to make sure you are asked the right questions throughout the rest of the survey. Your answers will be completely confidential, and the interviewer will not be able to see them.

Press 1 and <Enter> to continue.

SexBirth:

At birth, were you described as...

Please select one option.

- 1) male
- 2) female
- 3) intersex?

TransHist:

Do you consider yourself to be trans, or have a trans history?

Trans is a term used to describe people whose gender is not the same as the sex they were described as at birth.

- 1) Yes
- 2) No

2.4.2 Responses given to the question

The cognitive sample's responses to SexBirth and TransHist are shown in tables 15 and 16 below. A range of responses were given and none of the participants selected "don't know" or "prefer not to say".

Table 15: Responses given to survey question SexBirth

<u>SexBirth</u>	
1) male	12
2) female	18
3) intersex	0
<i>Don't know</i>	0
<i>Prefer not to say</i>	0

Table 16: Responses given to survey question TransHist

<u>TransHist</u>	
1) Yes	3
2) No	27
<i>Don't know</i>	0
<i>Prefer not to say</i>	0

2.4.3 Observations

Tables 17 and 18 below give an overview of the observations interviewers made when participants were answering the questions SexBirth and TransHist. There were no significant hesitations, requests for repetition/help or changes in answers observed for these questions.

Table 17: Observations for survey question SexBirth

<u>SexBirth</u>	
Hesitations	0
Asking for repetitions and help	0
Changes in answers (including on probing)	0

Table 18: Observations for survey question TransHist

<u>TransHist</u>	
Hesitations	0
Asking for repetitions and help	0
Changes in answers (including on probing)	0

2.4.4 Main findings

GenIntro

General understanding and acceptability

In the cognitive interviews with participants who did not identify as trans, no major issues with understanding or acceptability of the introduction were detected. These participants commented that they found the introduction straightforward and easy to understand: *“It’s worded in a very simple way with words that are not difficult to understand”* (OM04); *“Everything has been explained”* (OM07). Participants reported finding the introduction helpful.

The trans participants interviewed also found the introduction easy to understand, clear and acceptable. Participants did not feel that there was anything missing from the introduction or anything that needed changing. One participant (EC03) commented that they very much liked the explanation of why these questions are being asked, and thought that the wording was sensitive. The participant felt that the introduction demonstrated a good understanding that the questions in this section are quite personal.

SexBirth

Understanding and ease of response

This question was generally found by all participants to be easy, clear and straightforward to answer.

The participants who did not identify as trans did not have any significant problems understanding this question and all were able to provide an answer with relative ease. Some of these participants had little or no understanding of the word “intersex”, however, this did not impede their ability to respond to the question in any cases.

One issue with the question which proved somewhat distracting for some participants was the presence of a question mark after the word “intersex” (EC01, EC02, EC03). It was not clear to participants that this simply marked the end of the question, and some participants thought this was somehow related to the term “intersex”.

The trans participants interviewed also did not have any significant problems with this question. One participant (EC03) commented that they found it strange to see “described” rather than “assigned”, given that “assigned” is more commonly used in this context, but upon probing said that they did not mind use of “described”. Another participant (DM05) said that they would also like the opportunity to write in some free text at this question in order to write in some additional details to their answer.

Acceptability of the question

All participants found this question to be acceptable and reported feeling comfortable being asked for this information.

TransHist

Understanding and ease of response

Participants generally found this question to be clear and straightforward to answer.

The participants in the sample who did not identify as trans largely understood this question in the same way as each other and were able to give an answer easily. Participants commented that they found the definition of “trans” to be very helpful: *“there was a description of what each term meant... it was helpful”* (DCW03); *“not only did they ask you the question, they explained them clearly”* (DCW04).

The trans participants in the sample also had no issues with understanding or answering this question. Some participants commented that they liked the definition used in the question (EC03).

Acceptability of the question

All participants generally found this question to be acceptable and reported feeling comfortable being asked for this information.

One participant who did not identify as trans commented that they thought it was a strange question to be asked, however they were able to easily provide an answer to the question nonetheless (KJ02).

Among the trans participants interviewed, it was generally felt that this was a really important question to ask (DM05) and also that being asked this question was very reasonable in the context of this survey (EC03).

2.4.5 Recommendations

- Remove the question mark after “intersex” in SexBirth.

2.5 Change and ChangeInt

2.5.1 Questions tested

Change:

Have you gone through any part of a process to change from the sex you were described as at birth to the gender you identify with?

Please select all that apply.

1. Yes – social changes (e.g. changing name, changing pronouns)
2. Yes – legal changes (e.g. changed gender passport or birth certificate)
3. Yes – medical changes (e.g. surgery, taking hormones)

ChangeInt:

Do you **intend** to go through any part of a process to change from the sex you were described as at birth to the gender you identify with?

Please select all that apply.

1. Yes – social changes (e.g. changing name, changing pronouns)
2. Yes – legal changes (e.g. changed gender passport or birth certificate)
3. Yes – medical changes (e.g. surgery, taking hormones)

2.5.2 Responses given to the question

The cognitive sample's responses to Change and ChangeInt are shown in tables 19 and 20 below. For the Change question, a range of responses were received, and one participant selected "don't know". None of the participants selected "prefer not to say" at this question. At ChangeInt, all participants routed to this question answered with either "don't know" or "prefer not to say".

Table 19: Responses given to survey question Change

Change	
1. Yes – social changes (e.g. changing name, changing pronouns)	3
2. Yes – legal changes (e.g. changed gender passport or birth certificate)	1

3. Yes – medical changes (e.g. surgery, taking hormones)	2
<i>Don't know</i>	1
<i>Prefer not to say</i>	0

Table 20: Responses given to survey question ChangeInt

<u>ChangeInt</u>	
1. Yes – social changes (e.g. changing name, changing pronouns)	0
2. Yes – legal changes (e.g. changed gender passport or birth certificate)	0
3. Yes – medical changes (e.g. surgery, taking hormones)	0
<i>Don't know</i>	3
<i>Prefer not to say</i>	1

2.5.3 Observations

Tables 21 and 22 below give an overview of the observations interviewers made when participants were answering the questions Change and ChangeInt. There were no significant hesitations, requests for repetition/help or changes in answers observed for these questions.

Table 21: Observations for survey question Change

<u>Change</u>	
Hesitations	0
Asking for repetitions and help	0
Changes in answers (including on probing)	0

Table 22: Observations for survey question ChangeInt

ChangeInt	
Hesitations	0
Asking for repetitions and help	0
Changes in answers (including on probing)	0

2.5.4 Main findings

General understanding of the questions and ease of response

Participants who were routed to Change and ChangeInt found these questions easy to answer overall. They were able to understand all terms used within the questions.

One of the main issues with both Change and ChangeInt was the lack of an option to answer “no” or “not applicable”. Some of the participants explained that they wanted to answer “no”, either because they have not made and do not intend to make any of these changes (e.g. EC01), or because they have already made all of the changes that they want to make, at least for now (e.g. DM05, CL02). Due to being unable to answer “no” to these questions, participants instead had to select “don’t know” (EC01, DM05) or “prefer not to say” (CL02).

One participant (EC03) commented that they really liked being able to say “don’t know” at ChangeInt, because these changes involve such big decisions.

Suitability of response options provided

In general, participants felt that the options provided (i.e. social, legal and medical changes) covered all changes that they had made or intend to make, and did not think that anything significant was missing from the list. One participant (CL01) suggested the inclusion of “changes within the workplace/educational setting” in addition to more general “social changes”, but also said that this could be incorporated into social changes.

The examples of social, legal and medical changes given in the questions were also liked by participants. It was felt that the examples were helpful in clarifying what was meant by “social changes” and “medical changes” in the context of the questions.

It was suggested by one participant (EC03) that something could be added to the examples of “medical changes” to include people who have been referred to a Gender Identity Clinic or who are trying to access medical assistance in another way, since there are people who are technically undergoing the process of receiving medical assistance but are not actually accessing the medical assistance yet due to waiting times.

Acceptability of the questions

All participants who were routed to these questions found the questions to be acceptable, particularly in the context of this survey. Participants reported feeling comfortable providing a response.

2.5.5 Recommendations

- Add a “No” option to both Change and ChangeInt (the question currently does not let a participant proceed if they have not selected any of the options available).
- Consider adding an example to “medical changes” which includes those who have tried to access medical assistance but are still waiting to receive that assistance. This could include reference to receiving a referral or being put on a waiting list.

2.6 TransPart

2.6.1 Questions tested

TransPart

ASK ALL

Some of the questions that follow ask about sexual experiences you may have had with *men/women* or *women/men* (*textfill so display opposite sex first then same sex*). So that we make sure we ask you about the experiences that are relevant to you, can we just check, have you ever had any sexual experiences with a person who was trans (at that time)?

That is any experience you felt was sexual.

'Trans' is a term used to describe people whose gender is not the same as the sex they were described as at birth.

1. Yes
2. No
3. Not sure

2.6.2 Responses given to the question

The cognitive sample's responses to TransPart are shown in table 23 below. A range of responses were given, and 3 participants selected "Not sure". None of the participants used the "don't know" or "prefer not to say" options.

Table 23: Responses given to survey question TransPart

TransPart	
1. Yes	8
2. No	19
3. Not sure	3
<i>Don't know</i>	0
<i>Prefer not to say</i>	0

2.6.3 Observations

Table 24 below gives an overview of the observations interviewers made when participants were answering the question TransPart. One participant (OM06) had to re-read the question several times due to its length. There were no significant hesitations or changes in answers observed for these questions.

Table 24: Observations for survey question TransPart

TransPart	
Hesitations	0
Asking for repetitions and help	1
Changes in answers (including on probing)	0

2.6.4 Main findings

General understanding of the question and ease of response

In general, participants found this question easy to understand and answer. Some participants commented that the explanations given in the question were useful.

However, some problems were encountered relating to the length of the question. This caused confusion for some participants and meant that the question had to be re-read. One participant (OM06) commented that the inclusion of the phrase “can we just check” was odd and distracting, since there was nothing to “check” in this question; it simply asks for this information for the first time. Another participant (OM07) found the phrase “at that time” somewhat confusing, and explained that they were not sure whether this referred to a trans person who had undergone any medical changes or not. Nevertheless, participants were generally able to understand the question and could ultimately provide an appropriate answer with relative ease.

Among the LGBT+ subsample, this question was also generally understood well, and most participants felt that the question and the definitions given in the question were very clear. However, some confusion arose for one participant (EC02), who thought that the question was going to be asking about sexual experiences with men/women in general rather than focussing specifically on trans people. Upon probing, this participant suggested that the length of the question and the inclusion of this introductory information (“Some of the questions that follow ask about sexual experiences you may have had with *men/women*”) was the source of the issue. Nevertheless, all participants were ultimately able to give appropriate answers to this question.

Acceptability of the question

This question was generally found to be acceptable by all participants.

Among the participants interviewed who did not identify as trans, some expressed feeling comfortable with the question and commented that it was a very relevant question to be asked (e.g. KJ03). Other participants (e.g. KJ08) did not want to respond to specific probes on this question, but did state that they found the question itself to be acceptable.

There were no significant issues relating to acceptability among the trans participants interviewed. However, one participant (EC03) explained that they would have liked more of an explanation as to why this question was being asked of them.

Confidence in response

Participants generally stated that they were quite confident in the response that they gave. Some of those who answered “no” to this question reported a high level of certainty, stating that this is something they would know about if it were the case.

One participant in the LGBT+ subsample (EC01) stated that they were very confident in their own answer, but felt that many other people would get this question wrong, and was concerned that there is no way of checking the accuracy of their answers.

All participants who answered “yes” to this question demonstrated an understanding of the term “trans” during probing at this question and/or at the question TransHist.

Suitability of response options

Participants largely found the response options to be suitable. The overt “not sure option” was used by 3 participants. These participants all demonstrated knowledge of the term “trans” at this question and/or at TransHist, suggesting that their response is likely to be genuine rather than a result of not understanding the question. One participant in the LGBT+ subsample (EC02) commented that they were initially unsure whether “not sure” meant “not sure that the person was trans” or “not sure that the experience was sexual”. During probing, this participant stated that they had interpreted it as the former possibility.

2.6.5 Recommendations

- Keep the overt “not sure” response option, as it was felt that this was needed by some participants.
- Consider removing the phrase “can we just check”, as this is unnecessary and might cause confusion for some participants.
- Consider reducing the overall length and complexity of the question. Specifically, consider the removal of “Some of the questions that follow ask about sexual experiences you may have had with *men/women* or *women/men*”, since this was found confusing by some and is also not necessary for the question.

2.7 Definitions (TermInt, Terms1)

In the main Natsal interview, definitions are introduced gradually as and when each question is asked. However, for cognitive testing the following definitions were all shown at the start of the interview. These were not specifically probed on, however some participants spontaneously commented on the definitions.

TermInt

Some of the questions that follow use terms like oral sex and vaginal intercourse.

So that everyone attaches the same meaning to these terms, they are explained on the next screen. Please be sure to read these explanations.

When you have finished reading them select 1 and touch the next arrow on the screen to continue.

Terms1

PARTNERS OR SEXUAL PARTNERS: People who have had sex together - whether just once, or a few times, or as regular partners, or as married partners.

GENITAL AREA: A penis, vulva or vagina - that is, the sex organs.

VAGINAL SEX (vaginal sexual intercourse): A penis in a vagina.

ORAL SEX (oral sexual intercourse): A person's mouth on a partner's genital area.

ANAL SEX (anal sexual intercourse): A penis in a partner's anus (rectum or back passage).

2.7.1 Main findings

Participants generally found these definitions to be unproblematic and acceptable. All terminology in the definitions was understood by participants.

However, a number of comments were made about the lack of inclusivity of the definitions. Specifically, the definitions of vaginal and anal sex were felt to assume the involvement of a penis in these kinds of sex, whereas in many cases participants stated that they had had these kinds of sex without a penis being involved in the situation (KJ07, EC01, EC02, CL01).

2.7.2 Recommendations

- Where possible, adapt definitions of vaginal and anal sex to make sure that they are inclusive of situations in which a penis is not involved.

2.8 'Agreement' to having sex

2.8.1 Questions tested

Sexcheck

Now that you have read those definitions, can I just check- have you ever had sex? That is oral sex, vaginal sex, or anal sex.

1. Yes
2. No

If Sexcheck=yes THEN IntroR

IntroR

The next questions are about the person you had sex with most recently. This may be a person you had sex with just once, or a few times, or a regular partner or a husband/wife.

Select 1 and touch the next arrow on the screen to continue

R1LYear

When did you most recently have sex with that person?

Please estimate if you are not sure.

1. In the last year
2. More than a year ago

If R1LYear=more than a year ago

R1Thanks

Thank you, that is the end of the questions about the person you had sex with most recently. Select 1 and touch the next arrow on the screen to continue to the next topic.

If R1LYear=in the last year

R1sexagn

Are you likely to have sex with this person again in the future?

1. Yes
2. Probably
3. Probably not
4. No
5. Don't know

If R1LYear=in the last year

R1FYear

Still thinking about this person, when did you first have sex with them?

Please estimate if you are not sure.

1. In the last year
2. More than a year ago

IF R1FYear=in the last year THEN:

R1Agree

Please think about the **first time** you had sex with that person.

Did you agree to have sex with them? Please consider only the period of time immediately before you had sex.

1. Yes- I agreed to have sex with them
2. No- I did not agree to have sex with them
3. Not sure/ Can't remember

If R1Agree=1 or 3

R1AgHow

Immediately before the first time you had sex with that person, how did you show you agreed to have sex with them ...

Please select all that apply

1. I indicated **verbally** that I agreed to have sex (e.g. with words)
2. I indicated **non-verbally** that I agreed to have sex (e.g. by touching or kissing)
3. I just went along with it, but I did not indicate it verbally or non-verbally
4. It was unclear
5. Not sure
6. Can't remember

IF R1AgHow=1

R1AgVerb

You said that you indicated verbally to that person that you wanted to have sex with them. Was the agreement to have sex...

Please select all that apply

1. Discussed directly (e.g. "I want to have sex")
2. Discussed indirectly (e.g. "Shall we go to my bedroom?")
3. Not sure/ Can't remember

2.8.2 Responses given to the question

The cognitive sample's responses to R1Agree, R1AgHow and R1Agverb are shown in tables 25 to 27 below. Participants who had answered that they had sex in the last year were routed to R1Agree.

Table 25: Responses given to survey question R1Agree

R1Agree	
1. Yes – I agreed to have sex with them	10
2. No – I did not agree to have sex with them	1
3. Not sure/can't remember	0
<i>Not applicable</i>	19

Table 26: Responses given to survey question R1AgHow

R1AgHow is a multi-code question therefore the number of participants responding may not equal to the number in the cognitive sample. Participants were routed to R1AgHow if they had indicated they had agreed to have sex or if they were not sure or couldn't remember.

R1AgHow	
1. I indicated verbally that I agreed to have sex (e.g. with words)	5
2. I indicated non-verbally that I agreed to have sex (e.g. by touching or kissing)	7
3. I just went along with it, but I did not indicate it verbally or non-verbally	2
4. It was unclear	0
5. Not sure	0
6. Can't remember	0
<i>Not applicable</i>	19

Table 27: Responses given to survey question R1AgVerb

R1AgVerb is a multi-code question therefore the number of participants responding may not equal to the number in the cognitive sample. A range of responses were given with two participants answering they were not sure or couldn't remember.

R1AgVerb	
1. Discussed directly (e.g. "I want to have sex")	3
2. Discussed indirectly (e.g. "Shall we go to my bedroom")	3
3. Not sure/can't remember	2
<i>Not applicable</i>	24

2.8.3 Observations

Tables 28 to 30 show hesitations or changes in answers observed by interviewers for questions R1Agree to R1AgVerb.

Table 28: Observations for survey question R1Agree

R1Agree	
Hesitations	0
Asking for repetitions and help	0
Changes in answers (including on probing)	0

Table 29: Observations for survey question R1AgHow

R1AgHow	
Hesitations	0
Asking for repetitions and help	0
Changes in answers (including on probing)	1

Table 30: Observations for survey question R1AgVerb

R1AgVerb	
Hesitations	1
Asking for repetitions and help	0
Changes in answers (including on probing)	0

2.8.4 Main findings

R1Agree to R1AgVerb

General understanding of the question and ease of response

Overall, participants found these questions easy to understand and answer. Some participants reported that the examples given in brackets at R1AgHow and R1AgVerb helped them focus on what the questions were referring to (KJ04, DCW06). Others commented that having the text in bold at R1AgHow helped focus them to think about what was being asked (DM05).

Some participants found R1AgHow difficult to understand as they felt the question was aimed at those who use online dating sites where more “*predatory*” behaviour is likely to take place. One participant felt that in these circumstances people are more likely to verbally or non-verbally agree as the intention is to have sex (KJ03). One participant was not thinking about relationships or one-night stands but more about their online dating experiences.

Another participant changed response options at the CASI question R1AgHow as he had to re-read the question several times before he understood what it was implying (OM08). Through probing the participant revealed that they had thought response option 2 was being about “caring and romantic” whereas option 3 was the reverse of this (OM08).

R1Agree

Comprehension of “agree”

The term “agree” was generally well understood by most participants with some suggesting it was referring to “*consent*” (OM07, KJ01) or “*consensual sex*” (KJ03) as opposed to being forced against your will.

One participant struggled with the concept of ‘agreeing to sex’. They described the situation where their first experience of sex was a result of an arranged marriage. The participant explained that because she had married the man this was understood indirectly to mean that she would have sex with him. This was not considered as agreement on her part as she had no choice. Instead, she described in this context ‘agree’ refers to when “*you are fully aware of what you’re putting yourself into, or that you’re happy with it...you’ve got a choice*” (OM02). This participant stated that if you are in a relationship and you love the individual then there would be a form of agreement between two individuals.

The distinction between agreeing verbally and non-verbally was largely understood. Some participants stated that “agree” would generally be verbal, whereas agreeing non-verbally would include physical or emotional gestures (OM08), or signs and indications such as “*taking a condom*” out (KJ06, OM05).

Suitability of response options

R1Agree

On the whole, participants found the response options to be clear and were able to find their answer from the options provided. Participants did not think there was anything missing from the response options provided. One participant stated that they would have answered “don’t know” if they knew that that option was available. This comment was despite the fact a “not sure / can’t remember” option was displayed on screen. As a result of this, they “*guessed*” their answer (KJ01).

R1AgVerb

One participant struggled to find a suitable response option at R1AgVerb as she felt that her experiences did not match response options 1. “Discussed directly (e.g. I want to have sex” or response option 2. “Discussed indirectly (e.g. shall we go to the bedroom)” (OM07). She understood response option 1 as being “too blunt” and option 2 was more of a non-verbal agreement because there was no direct yes or no answer. The participant also commented that the question was referring to a discussion and would have selected option 1 if the example had not been included. The participant suggested the options could be reworded to:

1. Was the (verbal) agreement discussed directly (Yes/No)
2. Was the (verbal) agreement discussed indirectly (Yes/No)

One participant stated that they found the response options “*harshly worded*” and thought that relationships were not only about sex which he thought was implied by the response options (KJ03). A few participants thought that the examples given in brackets were “*unrealistic*” (OM07) and “*old fashioned*”, (KJ03), particularly “Shall we go to my bedroom.” A few participants stated that this example would not be applicable to young people who would not necessarily be having sex at home (KJ01). Examples of “*back of cars*” or “*club alleys*” were given by a few participants (KJ01, KJ03). One participant felt that the example “Shall we go somewhere private” could replace the example used in option 2 (OM05).

Others felt that the response options were suitable and understood that option 1 was referring to direct action and option 2 was not explicitly saying that sex was indicated.

R1Agree

Confidence in response

Participants generally stated that they were fairly confident in the response option they gave. Most participants had no issues recalling the time period of when they first had sex with their most recent partner. A variety of recall periods were given, such as within the last year, whilst others were thinking about the last few months. One participant commented that recall was difficult as it depended on how sexually active you were and someone with hundreds of partners could find recall problematic (KJ08).

One participant found it difficult to think of the time period of ‘immediately’ before having sex. He could only think about the time period (e.g. number of weeks) building up to sex and therefore had hesitated before answering the questions, “*it was a series of steps and not just a conversation*” before they had sex (KJ03).

R1AgHow

Distinction between “agreeing verbally” and “agreeing non-verbally”

There were variations in participants’ responses to what is meant by agreeing verbally and agreeing non-verbally at R1AgHow. Some participants stated that agreeing verbally was about stating words or responding to a direct question that you are consenting to sex. One participant thought that agreeing verbally is like “*prostitution*”, where you directly request someone to have sex with you (DCW07). Some participants stated that agreeing non-verbally was “*implicit without speaking...through your demeanour or actions*” (DCW01). Others gave examples and mentioned that non-verbal agreement would involve types of physical intimacy such touching and kissing and could be with a partner or a person of interest. One participant commented that non-verbal agreement is not considered as fully consenting to sex.

Generally, participants understood response option 3. “I just went along with it, but I did not indicate it verbally or non-verbally” to mean non-consensual sex. Option 2 “I indicated non-verbally that I agreed to have sex” was considered to mean consensual and reciprocated sex.

R1AgHow

Distinction between “unclear”, “not sure” and “can’t remember”

Some participants mentioned that option 4 “It was unclear” referred to an uncertainty of whether someone agreed or not, option 5 “Not sure” was the same as option 4, “*if you are unclear then you are unsure*” (OM05). A few participants gave the example of being intoxicated (drink or drugs) and not remembering whether agreement was made. One participant had not noticed that the question was a code all that apply question. It was suggested whether the ‘select all that apply’ text could be made bold.

2.8.5 Recommendations

R1AgHow

- Combine ‘it was unclear’ and ‘not sure’ response options.

R1AgVerbR

- Suggest including an additional example at option 2 “Shall we go somewhere more private.”

2.9 Exclusivity/openness

2.9.1 Questions tested

(Participants were asked a previous question on whether they are likely to have sex with their most recent partner again. If they reported 'yes' or 'probably', they were asked version A of the question. If they reported 'probably not', 'no' or 'don't know' they were asked version B of the question.)

IF R1sexagn = 1 OR 2

R1ExclusiveA: Still thinking about the person you had sex with most recently, would you say that you and that person are...

1. **Exclusive** - you and that person only have sex with each other
2. **Supposedly exclusive** - one or both of you and that person have sex with other(s) even though you are supposed to only have sex with each other
3. **Not exclusive** - you and that person have discussed and agreed that one or both of you can have sex with other(s)
4. **Unclear** if you and that person are exclusive or not, as you have not discussed whether either or both of you can have sex with others or not
5. **Something else** (please describe): *[Freetext follow up question]*

IF R1sexagn = 3 OR 4 OR 5

R1ExclusiveB: Still thinking about the person you had sex with most recently, would you say that you and that person were...

1. **Exclusive** - you and that person only had sex with each other
2. **Supposedly exclusive** - one or both of you and that person had sex with other(s) even though you were supposed to only have sex with each other
3. **Not exclusive** - you and that person had discussed and agreed that one or both of you could have sex with other(s)
4. **Unclear** if you and that person were exclusive or not, as you had not discussed whether either or both of you could have sex with others or not
5. **Something else** (please describe): *[Freetext follow up question]*

IF R1ExclusiveA = 3

R1OpenTypeA: Which of the following applies to you and that person? Tick all that apply.

1. **Open relationship** - you and that person are open to having sex with others. These encounters are intended to be sexual only, without any romantic or emotional involvement, and might be engaged in by both or just one of you.

2. **Threesome** - you and that person are open to having sex as a couple with another person.
3. **Swinging** - you and that person are open to having sex with others, normally in the presence of others. This typically involves swapping partners or having sex in a group. These encounters are intended to be sexual only, without any romantic or emotional involvement.
4. **Casual relationship/dating** - this is a casual relationship or you are dating that person, with an understanding that one or both of you can have sex with others
5. **Polyamory** - you and that person are open to having emotional, romantic, and sexual relationships with others, and might be engaged in by both or just one of you.
6. **Something else** (please describe): *[Freetext follow up question]*

IF R1ExclusiveB = 3

R1OpenTypeB: Which of the following applied to you and that person? Tick all that apply.

1. **Open relationship** - you and that person were open to having sex with others. These encounters were intended to be sexual only, without any romantic or emotional involvement, which might have been engaged in by both or just one of you.
2. **Threesome** - you and that person were open to having sex as a couple with another person.
3. **Swinging** - you and that person were open to having sex with others, normally in the presence of others. This typically involved swapping partners or having sex in a group. These encounters were intended to be sexual only, without any romantic or emotional involvement.
4. **Casual relationship/dating** - this was a casual relationship or you were dating that person, with an understanding that one or both of you could have sex with others
5. **Polyamory** - you and that person were open to having emotional, romantic, and sexual relationships with others, which might be engaged in by both or just one of you.
6. **Something else** (please describe): *[Freetext follow up question]*

2.9.2 Responses given to the question

The cognitive sample's responses to R1Exclusive* and R1OpenType are shown in tables 31 and 32 below.

Table 31: Responses given to survey question R1Exclusive

<u>R1Exclusive</u>	
1) Exclusive - you and that person only have sex with each other	13
2) Supposedly exclusive - one or both of you and that person have sex with other(s) even though you are supposed to only have sex with each other	2
3) Not exclusive - you and that person have discussed and agreed that one or both of you can have sex with other(s)	7
4) Unclear if you and that person are exclusive or not, as you have not discussed whether either or both of you can have sex with others or not	6
5) Something else (please describe):	0
<i>Refused/Don't know</i>	0

* Answers for R1ExclusiveA and R1ExclusiveB have been merged together. 23 participants saw R1ExclusiveA and 5 participants saw R1ExclusiveB.

Table 32: Responses given to survey question R1OpenType

<u>R1OpenType</u>	
1) Open relationship - you and that person are open to having sex with others. These encounters are intended to be sexual only, without any romantic or emotional involvement, and might be engaged in by both or just one of you.	1
2) Threesome - you and that person are open to having sex as a couple with another person.	1
3) Swinging - you and that person are open to having sex with others, normally in the presence of others. This typically involves swapping partners or having sex in a group. These encounters are intended to be sexual only, without any romantic or emotional involvement.	0
4) Casual relationship/dating - this is a casual relationship or you are dating that person,	3

with an understanding that one or both of you can have sex with others	
5) Polyamory - you and that person are open to having emotional, romantic, and sexual relationships with others, and might be engaged in by both or just one of you.	3
6) Something else (please describe)	1
<i>Refused/Don't know</i>	0

2.9.3 Observations

When answering R1Exclusive, one participant (EC03) mentioned that they had to read the answer options a few times. Another participant (KJ02) hesitated before answering R1Exclusive.

Table 33: Observations for survey question R1Exclusive

<u>R1Exclusive</u>	
Hesitations	1
Asking for repetitions and help	1
Changes in answers (including on probing)	1

Table 34: Observations for survey question R1OpenType

<u>R1OpenType</u>	
Hesitations	0
Asking for repetitions and help	0
Changes in answers (including on probing)	0

2.9.4 Findings on R1Exclusive

Participants were asked R1ExclusiveA if they reported that they were likely to have sex with their most recent partner again. They were asked R1ExclusiveB if they reported that they were not likely to have sex with their most recent partner again.

General understanding of the question and ease of response

Some issues were noted with the exclusivity and openness items. Participants generally understood the overall gist of the question in similar ways, with some participants describing the status of their relationships and others describing it as how their relationship is defined. Some participants interpreted the question as asking about honesty in a relationship. That said, issues were detected with the response options presented in terms of clarity and how well they worked with people outside of relationships.

Participants generally found it easy to answer about how *they* would define their relationship with their most recent partner. However, some participants commented they found it difficult trying to answer when thinking about how *their partner* would define their relationship. One participant said:

“I feel uncomfortable because I don’t actually know” (DCW03).

All participants were able to give an answer to this question, and a few mentioned how they felt more comfortable with answering privately on the laptop. Participants mentioned that they thought some people would not answer this question honestly as the answer option ‘exclusive’ may be perceived as more desirable

Comprehension of answer options

Some participants found the question easy to answer and felt the question did well in defining the response options. The bold text in the response options made the answers clear for these participants.

In contrast, other participants found answering the question difficult as they would personally define the answer options differently. Reasons for difficulties were as follows:

- Some participants also mentioned that the question seems to be directed at people who have ongoing relationships rather than more ‘casual’ relationships or sex outside of a relationship.
- Some participants would have liked to see other relationship types listed such as “*friends with benefits*” (KJ01, EC02) as they felt their situation did not fit very well into the answer options. Both participants selected answer option 3, “not exclusive” to this question. Therefore, the correct response was elicited.
- One participant found the term ‘exclusive’ difficult to understand and would have preferred “*monogamous*” (EC03). Some participants thought the “supposedly exclusive” answer category was problematic. Participants mentioned how this response suggested that someone has cheated in the relationship. One participant felt the phrasing seemed passive-aggressive (OM06), and another suggested it implies lying. It was also noted people may not know if a partner has been unfaithful.

Based on these issues, there is some evidence to suggest the response options used for R1Exclusive need to be revisited.

2.9.5 Findings on R1OpenType

General understanding of the question and ease of response

Participants varied as to how easy they found this question. Some were generally able to select their answer easily to this question and found the answer options easy to understand. Others expressed some difficulties. The types of issues raised were as follows:

- Some participants mentioned that they would not necessarily see 'open relationship' as having no romantic connection (EC01, EC03). One participant who found the question difficult thought people with long-term partners would find the question easier to answer as "*they know exactly where they stand*" (KJ02).
- Another participant thought "*the first option should be a committed relationship*" (KJ01).
- The same participant also mentioned how 'swinging' is not a term that is used amongst their age group (18-24 year old). This participant was still able to answer the question.

2.9.6 Recommendations

R1Exclusive

- The first issue with the question noted was that the wording appears to assume the survey participant is in some form of ongoing relationship (as the concept of exclusivity was thought to only apply to people in this situation). At the debriefing, it was discussed how it is difficult to discuss the concept of exclusivity about a relationship that has ended as it is not clear at what point in the relationship one is answering about. Likewise, it is not clear how well the questions work of people who are considering one-off sexual encountered. Consideration needs to be given as to whether the question should **only** be asked of people who say they are going to have sex with this person again (i.e. people who answered R1ExclusiveA).
- The second issue noted was with the 'supposedly exclusive' category. The current wording was criticised as being both unclear and negative sounding. Therefore, the response is not working in terms of clarity or sensitivity. People stated they would not know if their partner was doing this. We propose removing the 'supposedly exclusive' option entirely from the list of response options provided and asking a more direct follow-up question on this area. For example, for people who say they are 'exclusive' we could ask a follow-up along the lines of:
 - 'Still thinking about the person you last had sex with. Do you ever have sex with someone else, even though you have described your relationship as being exclusive?' and

- “Still thinking about the person you last had sex with. To the best of your knowledge does this person ever have sex with other people, even though you have described your relationship as exclusive?” An overt ‘Unsure/ Don’t know’ should be offered with this question.
- Add a reminder that the answers are anonymous so participants feel like they can answer honestly.
- Make it clearer that the participant is being asked to answer to the best of their knowledge, for example by bolding the word ‘you’:

“Still thinking about the person you had sex with most recently, would **you** say that you and that person are”

R1OpenType

- Consider whether people who answer ‘unclear’ at R1Exclusive should be asked this question too (it is currently only asked of those who report ‘not exclusive’). People who are in casual relationships or dating may not like consistently being asked this follow up question even though it applies to them. Change the definition of ‘open relationship’ as follows:

You and that person are open to having sex with others. These encounters may be engaged in by both or just one of you.

2.10 Digital and pornography

2.10.1 Questions tested

Pornint

ASK ALL

The following question is about pornography (porn). By porn we mean material showing genitalia such as a penis or vagina and/or sexual activity of any kind for sexual arousal or fantasy. This includes pornographic images, magazines, videos and material on the internet.

Everporn

ASK ALL

Have you ever looked at or watched porn? (select one answer only)

1. Yes
2. No

Eversext

ASK ALL

The following questions are about sexting – by this we mean sending or receiving ‘sexual’ images or video to or from another person using digital technology (e.g. text message, email, direct message, apps). This might include images or video showing the sender’s penis or vagina (genitals), buttocks or breasts; or that person engaging in sexual activity.

Have you ever sent or received a sext (as defined above)? (select all that apply)

1. Yes, I have sent a sext
2. Yes, I have received a sext
3. No, I have never sent or received a sext

If Eversext = 1 or 2

Lastyearsext

Have you sent or received a sext within the last year? (select all that apply)

1. Yes, I have sent a sext within the last year
2. Yes, I have received a sext within the last year
3. No, I have not sent or received a sext within the last year

If Eversext = 1

Pressuresext

Have you ever been forced or pressured to send a sext to someone? (select one answer only)

1. Yes, within the last year
2. Yes, but longer than a year ago
3. No

If Eversext = 1

Sharesext

As far as you know, has anyone who you have sent a sext to ever sent or shown this to someone else without your permission? (select one answer only)

1. Yes, within the last year
2. Yes, but longer than a year ago
3. No

EverLS

The following question is about using live-streaming technology (e.g. Skype, Face Time) to interact with another person or people sexually (one or more of you showing their penis or vagina, buttocks or breasts; or engaging in sexual activity).

Have you ever used live-streaming technology (as defined above) to interact with another person or people sexually? (select one answer only)

1. Yes, within the last year
2. Yes, but longer than a year ago
3. No

2.10.2 Responses given to the questions

The cognitive sample's responses to these questions are shown in tables 35 to 40 below.

Table 35: Responses given to survey question EverPorn

EverPorn	
Yes	26
No	4
<i>Refused/Don't know</i>	0

Table 36: Responses given to survey question EverSext

<u>EverSext</u>	
Yes, I have sent a sext	20
Yes, I have received a sext	24
No, I have never sent or received a sext	4
<i>Refused/Don't know</i>	0

Table 37: Responses given to survey question LastYearSext

<u>LastYearSext</u>	
Yes, I have sent a sext within the last year	16
Yes, I have received a sext within the last year	20
No, I have not sent or received a sext within the last year	4
<i>Refused/Don't know</i>	0

Table 38: Responses given to survey question PressureSext

<u>PressureSext</u>	
Yes, within the last year	2
Yes, but longer than a year ago	3
No	15
<i>Refused/Don't know</i>	0

Table 39: Responses given to survey question ShareSext

<u>ShareSext</u>	
Yes, within the last year	0
Yes, but longer than a year ago	1
No	18
<i>Refused/Don't know</i>	1

Table 40: Responses given to survey question EverLS

<u>EverLS</u>	
Yes, within the last year	4
Yes, but longer than a year ago	8
No	17
<i>Refused/Don't know</i>	1

2.10.3 Observations

Participants generally had no problems with these questions. One participant changed their answer during probing to EverSext, as they had read the question quickly and thought it was asking if they had ever sent a “text” not “sext” (OM07). During probing of PressureSext, another participant recalled a situation they had been in so changed their answer to reflect this (KJ08).

Table 41: Observations for survey question EverPorn

<u>EverPorn</u>	
Hesitations	0
Asking for repetitions and help	0
Changes in answers (including on probing)	0

Table 42: Observations for survey question EverSext

<u>EverSext</u>	
Hesitations	0
Asking for repetitions and help	0
Changes in answers (including on probing)	1

Table 43: Observations for survey question LastYearSext

<u>LastYearSext</u>	
Hesitations	0
Asking for repetitions and help	0
Changes in answers (including on probing)	0

Table 44: Observations for survey question PressureSext

<u>PressureSext</u>	
Hesitations	0
Asking for repetitions and help	0
Changes in answers (including on probing)	1

Table 45: Observations for survey question ShareSext

<u>ShareSext</u>	
Hesitations	0
Asking for repetitions and help	0
Changes in answers (including on probing)	0

Table 46: Observations for survey question EverLS

<u>EverLS</u>	
Hesitations	0
Asking for repetitions and help	0
Changes in answers (including on probing)	1

2.10.4 Main findings

General understanding of the introduction PornInt

Participants found the introduction to the porn questions clear and easy to understand. A few participants also mentioned that the examples in the introduction were good. Some participants thought the definition could include different types of porn, such as “soft porn” or “hard porn”. One participant mentioned how “role-play” could also be included in the definition (CL02).

Some participants discussed that there are TV shows which include sexual activity and fantasy and wondered if these would be included as porn considering the description in the introduction. Both participants who mentioned this said that they wouldn't classify this as porn (KJ03, DCW08).

General understanding of Everporn and ease of response

The question EverPorn was largely well understood by participants. Some participants thought the question was easy to answer, some participants stated “*you either have or you haven't*” illustrating that the question was straightforward (OM01, OM04).

Knowing what scenarios to include was difficult for one participant, who had come across porn accidentally online but had not actively looked for it or watched it (DM05). The participant thought it could be clearer on whether to include or exclude scenarios where someone may come across porn accidentally.

Participants were generally able to recall whether they had ever watched porn, although a few participants mentioned that they were only considering the past 12 months when they selected their answer. The participants who were thinking of the shorter reference period all answered ‘yes’, therefore the data quality was not affected. During probing, one of the participants mentioned that they did not remember the time period the question was asking until they looked back at the question (EC02). A participant also mentioned that they had begun by thinking about the past 20 years but had narrowed down to the last year to answer the question (OM01). Another mentioned that they were only considering the question in the context of their current long-term relationship (KJ07).

General understanding of EverSext

Participants generally understood what the question was asking, and for most participants the question was straightforward. One participant read the question quickly and thought it had asked about a ‘text’. The participant thought that there should be more emphasis on ‘sext’ to avoid this happening to other people (OM07).

Some participants also mentioned that receiving a “sext” is not always consensual, as anyone could receive one even if they do not want it.

Some of the participants mentioned that they were primarily referring to a “sext” as being sent using mobile phones, apps and websites. One participant thought the idea of

sending a “sext” via email was “*old school*” (KJ01). Some of the apps mentioned by participants include WhatsApp, Snapchat and Grindr.

Comprehension of “sexting”

Participants understood “sexting” in a variety of ways. Some participants agreed with the definition included in the question introduction. A lot of the participants mentioned that “sexting” also includes a narrative, for example “*talking dirty*” (OM01) or talking about having sex with that person. Another participant mentioned that they would include “*role-playing*” and “*fantasies and imaginary scenarios*” (KJ02). It was also suggested that voice messages may also be a form of “sexting”, and some participants mentioned talking on the phone about having sex. It is not clear whether these participants included these forms of “sexting” which were not defined in the question when selecting their answer.

General understanding of LastYearSext and ease of response

This question LastYearSext was overall well understood, and most participants felt like they were able to answer the question easily.

Recalling information

When answering the question LastYearSext, some participants were able to think about the past year without difficulty, whereas a few participants mentioned that they could not remember exactly whether it had been a year or around that amount of time. Some participants thought about different time periods when answering this question, for example some participants were thinking about their current relationship or recent experiences whereas others were thinking of ever or ever in their adult life. One of the participants who was thinking about recently rather than the past 12 months stated in the question answered ‘yes’ to both sending and receiving a “sext” in the past year (DCW04). Another participant, who mentioned during probing that they were thinking about if they had ever sent or received a “sext”, said that they had sent one the same day as the interview (OM04). Therefore, the answers given were still accurate, and the differences in reference periods thought about is not considered to be problematic.

Most participants found it easy to remember whether they have sent or received a “sext” in the last year, with a few participants mentioning they had sent one that same day. A few of the participants were not certain whether the answer they had given was about less than a year ago or slightly more than a year ago.

General understanding of PressureSext

PressureSext was generally well accepted and all the participants who answered this question felt that it was clear and easy to answer. One participant mentioned that the question shocked them at first because they could relate to the scenarios in which someone is pressured to send a “sext” (KJ05).

Most participants also felt comfortable answering this question. A few participants mentioned that either they know people who have been pressured to send images they did not want to, or they have been pressured themselves. A few participants discussed

how there was more pressure when they were younger, and that younger people are more likely to be pressured to send these images.

Comprehension of “forced” and “pressured”

Participants had a variety of views on what “forced” and “pressured” meant in the context of the question. Generally, participants understood “pressured” as people being asked repeatedly for a “sext” and feeling like they had to send them even if they didn’t want to. Other examples of how someone may be “pressured” include guilt tripping, peer-pressure and “*psychological pressure such as bullying*” (CL01). A participant mentioned that the pressure can come from social media, and another mentioned it could be social pressures.

One participant understood “pressured” to mean “*someone taking pictures of you without your consent*” (KJ02). This participant also mentioned “*you can always say no or you can always block them*”.

A few participants mentioned that “forced” could mean being coerced or conned into sending pictures. One participant thought that “forced” felt like it was referring to physical force or violence (KJ01). One participant liked the use of both “forced” and “pressured” in the question rather than just one of the terms (EC03).

General understanding of ShareSext and ease of response

Most of the participants found the question ShareSext clear and felt comfortable when answering the question. The question was uncomfortable for one participant who mentioned that it had brought up “*not nice feelings*” from a past experience (KJ05). Although this participant found the question uncomfortable, they were able to give a response and mentioned that it was important to ask these questions on sexting.

Certainty of answer

It was generally believed by most participants that it was very difficult to be 100% sure of their answer to this question. Some participants pointed out that the question states “as far as you know”, and that their answer is based on that as they don’t know what the other person does. A few of the participants also thought that having “as far as you know” included in the answer options or changing the “no” to “*not that I am aware*” (KJ01) would make the question clearer and easier to answer. A few of the participants stated that they were sure of their answer.

General understanding of EverLS and ease of response

Most of the participants were able to answer the question EverLS, however there were a few issues with the definition of “live-streaming” and the examples which were given in the introduction to the question. Some of the participants found it difficult to know which situations to categorise as “live-streaming” when giving their answers.

Comprehension of “live-streaming”

There were a few issues with the term “live-streaming” in the context of the question. Some participants mentioned that “live-streaming” is a one-way video, sometimes used by celebrities using social media to share their “live” video. A few participants mentioned that they would not necessarily think of “Skype” as “live-streaming”. “Live-streaming” was understood by some participants to mean videos that were happening at that time so could not be edited and was “*in the moment*” (OM05).

Some participants talked about “video-calling” and “live video” when referring to the examples of “live-streaming” given in the question. Other platforms participants mentioned which facilitate “live-streaming” include:

- Snapchat
- Omegle
- Grindr
- Kik

Some of the participants thought of “live-streaming” as videos done via webcam as paid work. One participant discussed how their friend had an account so people could pay to watch them to earn money whilst at university (OM04). Another participant mentioned that they did not know whether they were supposed to include scenarios where people “live-stream” for paid work or scenarios where “live-streaming” is only for personal use, or whether to include both (EC03).

2.10.5 Recommendations

General recommendation

- Bold or otherwise emphasise timeframes in questions, as participants missed these. This is likely to apply throughout the questionnaire.

Eversext

- Bold the word ‘sxt’ when first used, so that it stands out for participants who read the questions quickly.
- Bold the words ‘images or video’ to emphasise that we do not want participants to include other forms of sexual communication.
- Consider adding ‘a sexual image or video’ to the question stem and get rid of the clarification ‘as defined above’. Therefore, EverSext would become:

“Have you ever sent or received a sxt (a sexual image or video)?”

Sharesex

- Consider rewording response option 3 to ‘Not as far as I am aware’

EverLS

- Consider changing the term ‘live-streaming’ to ‘video calling’.

2.11 Meeting partners online

2.11.1 Questions tested

Lastyearonlinepartnerseeking

ASK ALL

The following question asks whether you have looked for potential sexual partners online in the last year, regardless of whether or not you then messaged or talked with, met face-to-face or had sex with them.

In the last year, have you looked for potential sexual partners online? (Tick all that apply)

1. Yes, using a social media app/website? (e.g. Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook)
2. Yes, using an app/website where you were looking to meet people mainly for sex (e.g. for “hook ups”)?
3. Yes, using an app/website where you were looking to meet people mainly for dating and relationships?
4. Yes, using another online source e.g. (Chatrooms, personal homepages, newspaper comments)
5. No

Lastyearonlinexperiences

[If Lastyearonlinepartnerseeking = 1-4]

Thinking about the last year, what sort of experiences have you had when looking for potential sexual partners online? You can give multiple answers

1. I didn't meet anyone face to face
2. I met someone face to face, without ever having sex
3. I met someone face to face and we had sex but did not start an ongoing sexual relationship.
4. I met someone face to face and started an ongoing sexual relationship with them
5. Other

2.11.2 Responses given to the questions

The cognitive sample's responses to these questions are shown in tables 47 and 48 below.

Table 47: Responses given to survey question Lastyearonlinepartnerseeking

<u>Lastyearonlinepartnerseeking</u>	
Yes, using a social media app/website? (e.g. Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook)	7
Yes, using an app/website where you were looking to meet people mainly for sex (e.g. for “hook ups”)?	5
Yes, using an app/website where you were looking to meet people mainly for dating and relationships?	9
Yes, using another online source e.g. (Chatrooms, personal homepages, newspaper comments)	1
No	18
<i>Refused/Don't know</i>	0

Table 48: Responses given to survey question Lastyearonlineexperiences

<u>Lastyearonlineexperiences</u>	
I didn't meet anyone face to face	4
I met someone face to face, without ever having sex	7
I met someone face to face and we had sex but did not start an ongoing sexual relationship	5
I met someone face to face and started an ongoing sexual relationship with them	6
Other	0
<i>Refused/Don't know</i>	0

2.11.3 Observations

No issues were detected with these questions based on interviewer observations.

Table 49: Observations for survey question Lastyearonlinepartnerseeking

<u>Lastyearonlinepartnerseeking</u>	
Hesitations	0
Asking for repetitions and help	0
Changes in answers (including on probing)	0

Table 50: Observations for survey question Lastyearonlinexperiences

<u>Lastyearonlinexperiences</u>	
Hesitations	0
Asking for repetitions and help	0
Changes in answers (including on probing)	0

2.11.4 Main findings

General understanding of Lastyearonlinepartnerseeking and ease of response

Participants largely found the question Lastyearonlinepartnerseeking clear and easy to answer. One participant mentioned that there was a lot of text in the question, so they didn't read the other answer options as their answer was "no" (OM07). Some participants thought the question would be easier to answer if it gave more examples, such as Tinder. Some participants also mentioned that they wouldn't necessarily think of using Instagram, Snapchat and Facebook as places to meet sexual partners. Some participants also mentioned that you can use apps for multiple reasons, for example some people may use Tinder to look for "hook-ups" whereas some people may use it to look for a relationship.

Comprehension of "potential sexual partner"

Most participants understood "potential sexual partner" as looking for somebody who you might want to have sex with. The term was largely found to be straightforward and easy to comprehend.

Comprehension of “hook-up”

Participants generally understood “hook-up” as meeting someone to have sex which is usually a one-time occurrence. A few participants mentioned that they would use the term “one-night-stand” to describe the same thing. There were no issues with understanding this term.

Distinction between response options 2 and 3

The cognitive interviews explored whether participants understood the difference between response options 2 and 3. As a reminder, these options were as follows:

2. Yes, using an app/website where you were looking to meet people mainly for sex (e.g. for “hook ups”)?
3. Yes, using an app/website where you were looking to meet people mainly for dating and relationships?

Some participants outlined that response option 2 was looking at meeting people for one-off sexual encounters, where response option 3 was looking at meeting people for dating or long-term relationships. One person mentioned that option 3 meant that someone was looking for a “*meaningful connection*” (KJ01). Most of the participants were clear that the difference in the answer options was the intention for using the app/website.

A few participants mentioned that if you are looking for “dating and relationships” then you are not necessarily looking for a “potential sexual partner”, as sex might not come into it. Another participant mentioned that you might be looking for a “hook-up” as in answer option 2 but it becomes a more serious relationship (KJ03).

General understanding of Lastyearonlinexperiences and ease of response

The question Lastyearonlinexperiences was well understood by the participants and they were able to easily give a response. Some participants mentioned that the answer options were clear and covered all possible options.

After probing, some participants mentioned that they were thinking about the past year when answering this question, while others said they were thinking about their current relationship. One of the participants said that they were thinking about their most recent partner because of how the questions are being asked (DCW07). Another participant mentioned that the question appears to be asking how promiscuous you are (OM01).

Comprehension of “ongoing sexual relationship”

Participants largely understood “ongoing sexual relationship” as people who continue having sex after the first time and intend to keep on doing so. Some participants mentioned that it could be either a long-term relationship or a casual sexual relationship. One participant had difficulties with what the term “ongoing sexual relationship” could mean, as they thought “*it is quite a broad statement*” (DCW07). Another participant

thought it wasn't clear how many times would count as "ongoing" as it could only be a few times (EC03).

Distinction between response options 3 and 4

The cognitive interviews explored whether participants understood the difference between response options 3 and 4. As a reminder, these options were as follows:

3. I met someone face to face and we had sex but did not start an ongoing sexual relationship.
4. I met someone face to face and started an ongoing sexual relationship with them

Participants understood response option 3 as meeting to have sex once or twice, whereas response option 4 was broadly understood as meeting someone to have sex and then starting a relationship with them. Participants understood the type of relationship this could be in different ways. Some participants thought this relationship was more of a casual sexual relationship, where you continually meet up for sex, whereas other participants described a long-term "*proper*" relationship (KJ01). We do not see this as being a problem with the answer options per se.

2.11.5 Recommendations

Lastyearonlinepartnerseeking

- Consider changing the question to ask about 'sexual or romantic partners'.

Lastyearonlinexperiences

- No changes required.

2.12 Paying for sex

2.12.1 Questions tested

EverPdMGS

ASK ALL

The next questions are about paying for sex

“Have you ever paid someone for sex with money or goods?” (please do not include online experiences)

1. Yes
2. No

If EverPdMGS=yes THEN

Howpaid

Was this...

Please select all that apply

1. “with money”
2. “with alcohol or drugs”
3. “with accommodation/place to stay”
4. “with something else”

2.12.2 Responses given to the question

The cognitive sample’s responses to EverPdMGS are shown in table 51 below. At EverPdMGS, all participants answered “no” they had not paid for sex with money or goods. As a result, no participants were routed to the question Howpaid.

Table 51: Responses given to survey question EverPdMGS

EverPdMGS	
1. Yes	0
2. No	30
<i>Refused/Don't know</i>	0

2.12.3 Observations

Interviewers did not observe any hesitations, requests for repetition or changes in answers with the question EverPdMGS.

Table 52: Observations for survey question EverPdMGS

EverPdMGS	
Hesitations	0
Asking for repetitions and help	0
Changes in answers (including on probing)	0

2.12.4 Main findings

General understanding of the question and ease of response

On the whole, participants found EverPdMGS easy and clear to understand, stating that they would know whether or not they had paid for sex. Some participants stated that the question was referring to the context of “*sex work*” or “*prostitution*”.

Participants were probed on how they would respond in the situation where someone was given alcohol or drugs in exchange for sex – should they answer ‘yes’ or ‘no’?

Most participants answered “yes”, with a small minority reporting “no” in response to this scenario. Of those reporting “yes,” one participant commented that they had answered “yes” as drugs or alcohol were given in return for sex (OM04). Others reported that if an agreement had been made in advance and the recipient had agreed exactly how much alcohol and drugs were exchanged then this would be counted as “yes” but “no” if drugs or alcohol were just offered as this was not considered to be a transaction (EC01). Of those who answered “no”, one participant mentioned that the exchange of “money” or “goods” should benefit the recipient and drugs and alcohol do not have any benefits (DCW07).

Participants were asked to respond to a similar scenario where someone had a house and allowed an individual to stay rent free in exchange for sex. Most participants answered “yes,” with some participants stating that although you are not directly paying for the accommodation, it is still considered as a “*service*” or a form of payment in exchange for something (OM08). One participant who had answered “no” reported that “goods” were interpreted as physical items and would not have thought about accommodation (EC01).

Some participants found the distinction between “goods” and “services” offered in exchange for sex problematic. One participant mentioned that EverPdMGS may not be inclusive of other situations where a service could be offered in exchange for sex, e.g. sexual favours offered to enhance career prospects (KJ03).

Comprehension of “goods”

The term “goods” was well understood by participants with most suggesting that “goods” referred to something that was tangible or of value to the recipient that could be exchanged for sex. Examples given by participants included:

- Drugs or alcohol;
- Accommodation, including paying for rent;
- Material goods e.g. phones, jewellery, clothes or food;
- Favours e.g. “*driving someone somewhere*”.

One participant mentioned that “goods” were referring to physical items and would not have necessarily thought of drugs (OM04). Some participants thought that it would be helpful to include examples of what “goods” referred to in this context (OM06, OM08) as it may not be obvious to some that drugs and alcohol could be counted as “goods” (KJ03).

2.12.5 Recommendations

EverPdMGS

- Suggest including examples of the types of payment that could be made for sex to ease comprehension.

ASK ALL

The next questions are about paying for sex. Please do not include online experiences.

“Have you ever paid someone for sex, using either money or goods?” Please include paying with alcohol or drugs, offering a place to stay or any other exchange for sex.

1. Yes
2. No

HowPaid

- Include in the question wording a direct instruction to remind participants to include goods that have been used to pay for sex.

Which of the following have you used to pay for sex?

Please select all that apply.

1. “Money”
2. “Alcohol or drugs”
3. “Accommodation or a place to stay”
4. “Other material goods (e.g. phones, clothing, jewellery)”
5. “Something else”

2.13 Reproductive health – history of pregnancy

2.13.1 Questions tested

ASK IF Gender= female OR (gender<>sexbirth) OR transhist= yes

Intro

The following questions are about your history of pregnancy, if any.

EverPreg1

Have you ever been pregnant even if you didn't carry the baby to term?

1. Yes
2. No
3. *This does not apply to me – response option only shown for those identified as trans*

ASK IF Everpreg1= Yes

EverPreg2

There are many reasons why some pregnancies might not result in a live birth.

Have you ever given birth to a live baby?

1. Yes
2. No

ASK IF Gender= female OR (gender<>sexbirth) OR transhist= yes

Can I check...

Abort

Have you ever had an abortion (abortion medication or surgery)?

1. Yes
2. No
3. This does not apply to me

StillB

Have you ever had a still birth (death of a baby after 24 weeks)?

1. Yes
2. No
3. This does not apply to me

EctTub

Have you ever had an ectopic or tubal pregnancy (a pregnancy that grows outside the uterus, usually in the fallopian tubes)?

1. Yes
2. No
3. This does not apply to me

Miscar

Have you ever had a miscarriage (loss of a pregnancy before 24 weeks)?

1. Yes
2. No
3. This does not apply to me

2.13.2 Responses given to the question

The cognitive sample's responses to EverPreg1 to MisCar are shown in table 53 below.

Table 53: Responses given to survey questions EverPreg1 to MisCar

	Yes	No	<i>Not applicable</i>
EverPreg1	6	6	12
EverPreg2	4	10	16
Abort	4	14	12
StillB	0	18	12
EctTub	1	17	12
MisCar	3	15	12

2.13.3 Observations

Interviewers did not observe any hesitations, requests for repetition or changes in answers with the questions EverPreg1 to MisCar.

Table 54: Observations for survey questions EverPreg1 to MisCar

EverPreg1 to MisCar	
Hesitations	0
Asking for repetitions and help	0
Changes in answers (including on probing)	0

2.13.4 Main findings

EverPreg1 to MisCar

General understanding of the question

Participants generally found these questions easy to respond to and understand. The terms used to describe the different types of pregnancy outcomes were well understood and clear, with some participants reporting that their own experiences had helped them understand the terms referenced within the questions. An issue that arose for one participant was considering how to respond to the question about abortion as she had experienced an ectopic pregnancy and as a result had an abortion. This participant answered 'yes' to both those questions (KJ07).

EverPreg1 to MisCar

Acceptability of asking the questions and ease of response

Although participants largely found these questions acceptable and felt that they could give an honest answer, the sensitivity of the questions was considered to be problematic by some participants. One participant felt that some people, particularly younger people, may not answer truthfully if they were forced into having an abortion and were very upset as a result (OM043). Another participant felt strongly and stated that the questions were intrusive and "*emotionally challenging*" (EC02).

Some participants suggested that people should be warned at the outset of what the questions would cover with a reminder about confidentiality. One participant suggested that people should be permitted to opt out of answering the questions at the outset if they did not wish to. A few participants suggested changing the format of the questions, so they were less "*intrusive*" and "*overwhelming*", e.g. asking the questions on one screen and including 'do not apply' response options (EC02). One participant felt uncomfortable with the term "death" used at StillB and suggested whether it could be replaced with "loss" (DCW02).

One LGBT+ subsample participant reported that they liked the "*non-gendering*" of the questions as they did not assume that only those identifying as female could have children (DM05). However, it was suggested that the questions could be perceived as "*triggering*" for some trans or non-binary people: "*some people are dysphoric and uncomfortable about body parts, reproductive systems generally and talking about fertility can be quite triggering*" (DM05).

2.13.5 Recommendations

- NatCen to re-investigate whether there is any way to have all the pregnancy history questions on one screen.
- Consider adding an introduction to this section to acknowledge that these questions may be upsetting for some people and reminding them that they can choose not to answer any questions they do not want to.
- Consider allowing participants to skip the entire history of pregnancies section. This could work in a similar way to the sexual violence module, where if someone skips one question they are asked if they want to skip all the questions in this section.

- Suggest replacing the term “death” with “loss” at StillB.

2.14 Reproductive health – access to fertility treatment

ASK ALL

FertNHS

“In the last five years, have you (or a partner) tried to access free fertility treatment on the NHS?”

1. Yes
2. No

If FertNHS=YES then

FertAcc

“In the last five years, have you (or a partner) received free fertility treatment on the NHS?”

1. Yes, I/we received treatment entirely free on the NHS
2. Yes, I/we received some free treatment on the NHS but I/we also paid for private treatment
3. No, I/we did not receive any free treatment on the NHS

2.14.1 Responses given to the question

The cognitive sample’s responses to FertNHS and FertAcc are shown in tables 55 and 56 below.

Table 55: Responses given to survey question FertNHS

FertNHS	
1. Yes	3
2. No	27
<i>Not applicable</i>	0

Table 56: Responses given to survey question FertAcc

FertAcc	
1. Yes, I/we received treatment entirely free on the NHS	1
2. Yes, I/we received some free treatment on the NHS but I/we also paid for private treatment	1
3. No, I/we did not receive any free treatment on the NHS	1
<i>Not applicable</i>	27

2.14.2 Observations

No observations were reported by interviewers at questions FertNHS and FertAcc.

Table 57: Observations for survey questions FertNHS and FertAcc

EverPreg1 to MisCar	
Hesitations	0
Asking for repetitions and help	0
Changes in answers (including on probing)	0

2.14.3 Main findings

General understanding and ease of answering the questions

FertNHS and the follow up question FertAcc were generally easy to answer, with some participants stating that they had not undergone fertility treatment and therefore it was a straightforward question to answer. The “*broad*” time period of five years helped one participant in answering the question (OM06).

Some participants thought the question was referring to situations where someone is unable to conceive naturally, as a result of “*low sperm or egg count,*” and as a consequence seeks medical intervention.

Some participants understood the question as referring to accessing fertility treatment as a couple and others stated it was referring to treatment received individually.

Comprehension of ‘fertility treatment’

One of the aims of testing was to check participants’ understanding of the term ‘fertility treatment’. Some participants stated that this was referring to getting support and access to conceive through medical intervention. Examples of fertility treatment suggested by participants included:

- IVF
- sperm donation
- surrogacy
- freezing eggs
- hormone analysis

However, some participants stated the term referred to forms of contraception such as birth control and the use of condoms. If this misunderstanding occurs in the main survey,

this could lead to data over-reporting the use of fertility treatment, so this issue needs to be addressed.

One participant queried what was implied by 'free', assuming that most fertility treatments had to be paid for.

2.14.4 Recommendations

FertNHS

- Consider adding examples of fertility treatment to avoid confusion with contraception.
- Suggest explicitly stating "...to help conceive a baby on the NHS" to ease comprehension.
- Consider deleting the word "free" at FertNHS as this is better captured at FertAcc.

3 Final comments

At the end of the interview, participants were given the opportunity to leave any further comments and feedback about the interview by typing their thoughts into the laptop.

Feedback

That is the end of the questions. Now that you have finished the interview, is there anything that you'd like to tell the research team that you didn't get chance to say?

Table 58: Responses to feedback question.

Feedback	Participant
<i>"I think maybe when talking about meeting people online using apps if you want more knowledge to maybe ask about how many times/experiences so you can get a clearer picture into someone's personal life"</i>	OM01
<i>"I think all the questions were well written and to the point. I don't feel they were intrusive in anyway. I think bringing up more gender options would be a good idea because it's a very big subject in the last couple of years and more people are wanting to feel represented e.g. non-binary."</i>	OM03
<i>"the questions are very straight forward, they are easy to understand and read well"</i>	OM04
<i>"found it interesting"</i>	KJ06
<i>"no thank you very much."</i>	DCW07

**note: some comments have been omitted as they did not have any feedback, e.g. "n/a" in comment box.*

Overall, the majority of feedback entered at this question is positive. One participant suggested more questions on meeting partners online to understand frequency of use. Another participant suggested expanding the gender answer options to be more inclusive of all genders.

4 Appendix 1

Serial Number	Gender ³	Is trans or has a trans history ⁴	Age	Sexual identity ⁵
OM01	Male	No	25-39	Gay/Lesbian
OM02	Female	No	40-59	Heterosexual/Straight
OM03	Female	No	18-24	Gay/Lesbian
OM04	Female	No	25-39	Heterosexual/Straight
OM05	Male	No	18-24	Heterosexual/Straight
OM06	Male	No	18-24	Heterosexual/Straight
OM07	Female	No	18-24	Heterosexual/Straight
OM08	Male	No	40-59	Heterosexual/Straight
KJ01	Female	No	18-24	Bisexual
KJ02	Female	No	40-59	Heterosexual/Straight
KJ03	Male	No	25-39	Heterosexual/Straight
KJ04	Female	No	18-24	Heterosexual/Straight
KJ05	Female	No	40-59	Heterosexual/Straight
KJ06	Male	No	18-24	Heterosexual/Straight
KJ07	Female	No	40-59	Heterosexual/Straight
KJ08	Male	No	40-59	Gay/Lesbian
DCW01	Male	No	25-39	Heterosexual/Straight
DCW02	Female	No	25-39	Heterosexual/Straight
DCW03	Female	No	25-39	Heterosexual/Straight
DCW04	Female	No	18-24	Heterosexual/Straight

³ As described at the questions Gender and GenIDX.

⁴ As described at the question TransHist.

⁵ As described at the questions SexID and SexID0th.

DCW05	Female	No	40-59	Heterosexual/Straight
DCW06	Male	No	18-24	Heterosexual/Straight
DCW07	Male	No	18-24	Heterosexual/Straight
DCW08	Male	No	40-59	Heterosexual/Straight
EC01	In another way – “bisexual” ⁶	No	25-39	Bisexual
EC02	Female ⁷	No	25-39	Bisexual
EC03	In another way – “non-binary”	Yes	25-39	Other – Queer
DM05	In another way – “Trans*, Genderqueer; Trans-masculine”	Yes	40-59	Other – Pansexual
CL01	In another way – “transgender”	Yes	25-39	Bisexual
CL02	Male	No	40-59	Gay/Lesbian

⁶ EC01 answered “bisexual” to GenIdX, but during probing explained that they are non-binary.

⁷ EC02 answered “Female” to Gender, but during recruitment explained that they identify as both female and non-binary.