

Consumer Insights Tracker Technical Report: Questionnaire Design

Questionnaire design

Each wave of the survey is designed through collaboration between the FSA project team and YouGov. The survey asks respondents about their attitudes and behaviours in relation to a range of food-related topics that are of strategic interest to the FSA. This includes consumers' concerns about food-related issues, perceptions of the food supply chain, and attitudes and behaviours relating to food affordability and availability. The survey is designed to be flexible so it can respond to topical or emerging issues, so although a core set of questions are asked each month, new questions can be added as new evidence needs arise. The survey is cross-sectional and offers a snapshot of time, with the findings for each wave reflecting the context at the time. Thus, it is important to reflect on the wider context when interpreting the findings for each wave.

Demographic information is already held by YouGov, so does not need to be part of the questionnaire. An example of the survey questionnaire is available in Annex 1, and additional survey scripts are available on request from the [FSA Social Science team](#).

Survey questions are written using plain English and neutral phrasing to reduce bias and encourage participation. The survey is structured in a way that flows logically, with similar topics grouped together, to reduce respondent fatigue. Questions that are sensitive in nature, which may incite an order effect ([footnote 1](#)), or which relate to respondent demographics, are placed at the end of the survey where possible. Questions with multiple response options have their response options randomised so that the order these are presented does not affect how respondents answer. The same is done with the randomisation of questions that form question grids ([footnote 2](#)). Additional questions are also included in the survey to check for 'straight lining' ([footnote 3](#)), as well as attention check questions to ensure that respondents are truly engaged in the survey rather than providing random responses.

Each month, the questionnaire is reviewed by the FSA project team. Any new questions or amendments to existing questions are developed by the FSA project team in collaboration with stakeholders at the FSA. Where possible, existing and cognitively tested questions (for example, from Food and You 2) are used to help design new survey questions. Once agreed they are sent to YouGov where they are reviewed by at least two experienced researchers, including at least one senior member responsible for sign-off. See the 'Quality Assurance' section for further information about quality assurance in place for the survey design.

Pilot study

The online survey is piloted with approximately 100 respondents each month, before main fieldwork commences. This is to assess the respondent's understanding of the questions, the survey logic, programming and the overall length of the survey. Once the pilot is completed any amends to the survey are made before main stage fieldwork.

1. An order effect occurs when a question earlier in a survey influences respondents' answers to later questions in the survey.
2. Question grids are tabular questions that asks respondents to evaluate one or more row items using the same set of column choices.
3. Straight lining is when respondents answer a survey in a 'straight line', for example selecting the first option for each question.