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Subject: Update on Sexual Orientation, Gender and Intersex in the GSS 2018

Hi all

I hope I have included everyone that has expressed an interest in this topic...if not, please forward this on with my apologies.

Yesterday a few of us met with Kathy and Rachael and have agreed a plan for the GSS:

Given the short timeframe between now and the GSS 2018, we have made the decision not to progress a question or collection methodology for either Gender or Intersex in this collection and to use a Sexual Orientation question and method similar to the GSS field test, with some simple improvements such as moving the demographic section to the end of the questionnaire. The reason for this is the large amount of development work, stakeholder interaction and conceptual thinking involved, which cannot be undertaken in only a couple of months. Alongside this, we will work on a larger development piece looking at all of our household surveys and the inclusion of these topics going forward. We will also work on a plan to communicate with stakeholders about what we are/aren't including.

For those that aren't familiar with the GSS field test (due to finish 4 October), here is a brief description of the decisions that were made on including a question on Sexual Orientation. The debrief for the Field test is scheduled for 9 October and unless there are any risks identified, these decisions will remain for the main GSS. If more development work is needed due to results from the field test, a further decision may be required.

1. There was not enough time to include questions on either Intersex or Gender Identity in the GSS field test. These two topics require a lot more development work, however, a question was included on Sexual Orientation.

2. The Sexual Orientation question used will be the same as tested in the 2018 Census test i.e.

Which of the following options best describe how you think of yourself?

* Heterosexual or straight

* Gay or lesbian

* Bisexual

* Other (please state)

* Choose not to answer

3. The classification will follow the draft classification developed for the Census test and may change once the final classification is completed.

4. We plan to only ask this question of respondents aged 18 and over. (The GSS is asked of 15 year-olds and over).

5. The Sexual Orientation question will be asked at the end of interview to mitigate against a risk that respondents will end the interview at this point.

6. The question will allow the respondents to identify a code on a showcard rather than reading the response aloud. This, along with the “choose not to answer” option will minimise confidentiality concerns.

7. We have implemented an option that allows interviewers to skip the question if they feel this might impact on their personal safety or the safety of the respondent.

8. An additional set of prompt questions has been developed to gain further information from the field test. These will be answered by interviewers after completion of each interview and training will be provided on why this question is important and what we hope to learn through the field test.

9. For the main GSS (but not the Field test) the demographics module will be moved to the end of the questionnaire to accompany this question.

Please let me know if you have any questions, thanks Calli

Calli Seedall

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