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## Cognitive testing families

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## Non-technical summary

This study looked at how well survey questions used in Understanding Society and the wider research landscape reflect the wide variety of modern family life. As families in the UK are becoming more diverse, it is important that survey questions are clear, inclusive, and meaningful for everyone—while still staying consistent over time so trends can be tracked.

Researchers from Ipsos carried out 60 in-depth interviews with people from different family situations, including couples, separated parents, co-parents, and same-sex partners. Participants were asked to think aloud as they answered survey questions, helping researchers understand how people interpret them. The study found that while many questions were easy to understand, some caused confusion or were interpreted differently depending on a person's family situation. For example, terms like “some of the time” or “relationship status” could mean different things to different people. Sensitive topics also required careful wording to avoid discomfort.

Overall, the research provides practical recommendations to improve survey questions, so they are clearer, more inclusive, and better suited to capturing the realities of modern families, while still allowing comparisons over time.

## Preface

A central focus of Understanding Society—and previously of the BHPS—is the study of family dynamics and change over time. Increasingly, this requires recognising families who live across multiple households and a wider range of parenting relationships than in the past. Such diversity presents both conceptual and methodological challenges for a longitudinal study, where consistency over time must be balanced with the need to reflect evolving forms of family life. The cognitive interviewing project undertaken here contributes to this process, helping to ensure that future measures remain relevant to a diverse range of family structures.

This project forms one stage within a broader programme of research and consultation designed to enhance how Understanding Society captures information on family life. It sits alongside other ongoing developments, including analysis of mainstage wave data, consultation on *Life Events* questions, and further question development and testing activities. Collectively, these initiatives will inform the continued evolution of our measures and our understanding of diverse family experiences in modern society.

This project investigated questions on a range of topics relating to contemporary family and parenting experiences, including part-time residence, co-parenting relationships, separation, couple relationship quality, pregnancy and pregnancy planning, prenatal attachments, parenting styles, and parental attitudes. Ipsos won the tender, and we are grateful to the team (Eileen Irvin, Marzieh Azarbadegan, Harry Woodhall, Mariam Irfan, Evie Cogley and Lydia Smith) for their careful research and valuable insights. The findings presented in this report offer important understanding of how individuals in different family contexts interpret and respond to survey questions, highlighting key issues and underlying challenges for further consideration. These findings will be carefully considered alongside evidence emerging from the other related strands of work to inform the refinement of future questionnaires and instruments.

## Cognitive testing families

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Ipsos

**Abstract:** This report presents findings from cognitive testing commissioned by the Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER) to evaluate and refine survey measures used or being considered in Understanding Society. The study addresses the methodological challenge of balancing consistency in longitudinal measurement with the need to reflect the increasing diversity and complexity of contemporary UK family structures. Cognitive interviews (n=60), including dyadic interviews with couples and co-parents, were conducted in two rounds to examine how individuals from varied family situations interpret survey questions related to family dynamics.

Guided by Tourangeau's cognitive response framework—focusing on comprehension, recall, judgement, and response—the research assessed the clarity, inclusivity, and sensitivity of new, existing and newly adapted survey items. Participants were purposively sampled to capture a wide range of family types, including separated parents, co-parenting arrangements, same-sex couples, and expectant parents. Data collection involved think-aloud protocols, targeted probing, and systematic analysis of interview transcripts and field notes.

Findings highlight areas where question interpretation varies across family contexts, potentially affecting data reliability and validity. The study identifies specific mechanisms underlying these discrepancies and offers recommendations for improving question design while maintaining longitudinal comparability. While the qualitative nature of the research limits generalisability, the insights provide critical guidance for enhancing survey inclusivity and ensuring consistent interpretation across diverse respondent groups.

**Keywords:** youth survey participation, survey response, household survey, longitudinal survey

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**About Ipsos Public Affairs:** Ipsos Public Affairs works closely with national governments, local public services and the not-for-profit sector. Its c.200 research staff focus on public service and policy issues. Each has expertise in a particular part of the public sector, ensuring we have a detailed understanding of specific sectors and policy challenges. Combined with our methods and communications expertise, this helps ensure that our research makes a difference for decision makers and communities

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# Introduction

ISER (Institute for Social and Economic Research) leads Understanding Society, a longitudinal panel study of UK households which is the largest of its kind. A key focus of Understanding Society is examining family situations and dynamics within the UK and how these change over time.

Given the growing diversity of families in the UK, there is a need to ensure that the measures used to investigate family situations accurately reflect the full range of experiences shared by contemporary UK families. This creates a challenge for Understanding Society. The longitudinal nature of the survey means that using consistent measures is crucial to monitor trends and changes over time, but the measures must also sufficiently capture the breadth of family situations among present-day UK households.

As well as being inclusive and sensitive to different situations, it is also important that the measures are interpreted consistently by respondents in different family situations. Where there are differences in interpretation, it is crucial for ISER to understand where and how these differences arise in order to guide subsequent development. This report presents key findings from cognitive testing conducted by Ipsos on behalf of ISER, to test a range of questions and measurement scales and assess how these are interpreted by people in different family situations.

## 1.1 Aims

- **Aims** – The principal aim of this project was to understand whether survey questions used by the ISER for their Understanding Society survey remain representative to the diversifying nature of relationships and families in the UK, and how questions can be appropriately adapted in a way that is compatible with a longitudinal survey, which relies on consistent measures over time. ISER commissioned Ipsos to test survey questions with a wide range of couple and family types to ensure future questions reflect societal shifts, in a manner that can broadly be consistently interpreted across different families, and, how to best approach, and word, potentially sensitive questions.
- **Overall approach** – The cognitive testing framework used was based on Tourangeau's framework, which seeks to explore the cognitive processes involved in answering survey questions: understanding, recall, judgement, and response.<sup>1</sup> Specific probes for individual questions were included, that had been developed in conjunction with ISER, and were revised, if needed, between the two rounds of fieldwork conducted. The impact of new questions and adaptations to the questions were also considered in the context of the wider questionnaire, to understand the flow and potential impact of how other questions were answered.

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<sup>1</sup> Tourangeau, R. (1984) 'Cognitive sciences and survey methods'. Committee on National Statistics. Cognitive Aspects of Survey Methodology : Building a Bridge Between Disciplines.

## 1.2 Methodology

1. **Number of interviews** – To inform the research, a total of 60 interviews were conducted across the project. Of these interviews, 18 were recruited as dyads, where partners in a couple or two co-parents were both recruited. These participants were recruited via a third-party recruiter (Criteria). Criteria used their proprietary panel of members of the general public across the UK that have registered to take part in research opportunities. Criteria also used their wider networks across the UK and snowballing techniques to reach the specific targets required. As it had not been possible to recruit a participant who was the non-pregnant partner within a same-sex female couple, the questions on pregnancy were also tested with someone recruited through the Ipsos Pride network with this experience.
2. **Timeline** – Fieldwork was conducted in two rounds. Round 1 ran from Monday 6 October 2025 to Friday 7 November 2025, and Round 2 from Thursday 20 November 2025 to Tuesday 16 December 2025, with a workshop between Rounds 1 and 2 to discuss findings, and analysis. These findings informed the structure of the interviews in Round 2.
3. **Quotas** – To ensure the sample reflected the spread of types of families, particularly cases that may experience challenges or differences answering these questions, quotas were set based on family situation. In addition, as not everyone was eligible for every question, quotas were set to try and ensure a spread of responses to each question being testing. Participants won't have answered all the questions, and would have only answered the ones they were eligible for:

Family situation	Sample profile	Gender		Age range	
		Male	Female	20-29	30-59
Currently pregnant or expecting a child	17	5	12	5	12
First time parent to be	11	4	7	4	7
Parent of a child under 16	34	12	22	15	19
Couple but living apart	21	7	14	6	15

Separated (within the last two years)	<b>16</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>
Separated (over two years)	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>
Co-parenting arrangement: Primary carer for their child	<b>14</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>13</b>
Co-parenting arrangement: Secondary carer for their child	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>
Couples in a dyad	<b>16</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>
Same sex couples	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>
Same sex couples who are parents-to-be	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>

- Below we have outlined more detail on the composition of couples who were interviewed as part of a dyad:

	Couple type		Residence		Separation status		Caring status	
	Opposite sex	Same sex	Living together	Living apart	Separated	Intact	Primary carer with ex-partner (in dyad)	Secondary carer with ex-partner (in dyad)
Couples in a dyad	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>

- Demographic quotas were also set across all interviews:

<b>Demographic category</b>	<b>Demographic</b>	<b>Sample profile</b>
Ethnicity	From an ethnic minority background <sup>2</sup>	16
	White British	44
Gender	Male	23
	Female	37
Age band	20-24	4
	25-29	11
	30-34	15
	35-39	10
	40-44	10
	45-49	7
	50-54	2

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<sup>2</sup> This includes all participants who were not White British.

	55-59	1
Social grade <sup>3</sup>	ABC1	48
	C2DE	12

- 4. Fieldwork processes** – Interviews were conducted by Ipsos’ researchers, who had previous experience of cognitive testing. All interviewers were provided with a briefing ahead of fieldwork commencing. This equipped them with relevant knowledge surrounding the nature of the study, and how to deal with challenging situations should they arise.

Interviews were conducted online through the Microsoft Teams platform, which allows for virtual face-to-face communication. The audio from the interviews was recorded where participants gave explicit consent for this to occur. Recordings were transcribed using in-house Artificial Intelligence (AI). Where participants had consented, some interviews were observed by ISER.

Respondents were recruited through the specialist fieldwork agency. All interviews were scheduled for an hour, although actual interview time depended on the number of questions to be asked and how much the participant had to say. In some cases, respondents were not asked all the questions they were eligible to answer due to time limitations. All respondents were provided with a £50 incentive, regardless of the length of their interview.

- 5. Before the Interview** – Participants were provided with an information sheet and completed a consent form ahead of interview.
- 6. During the interview** – All interviews began with the interviewer introducing themselves and the purpose of the interview – touching on the pre-existing survey and why it was being tested. Interviewers provided assurances around confidentiality and encouraged respondents that all

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<sup>3</sup> Social Grade is a UK demographic classification based on the occupation of the household's chief income earner. Please see the detailed definitions below:

A: Higher managerial, administrative and professional

B: Intermediate managerial, administrative and professional

C1: Supervisory, clerical and junior managerial, administrative and professional

C2: Skilled manual workers

D: Semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers

E: State pensioners, casual and lowest grade workers, unemployed with state benefits only

feedback would be helpful. Respondents were made aware of their right to refuse questions and/or withdraw at any time. Interviewers confirmed that respondents had read the privacy notice and the information sheet. Finally, consent to record was confirmed.

7. **Process of interviews** – Each interview began with a quick discussion where interviewers asked respondents to describe their family situation. Following this, interviews went through the questions one-by-one on screen, based on the respondent’s family situation, encouraging the participant to “think-aloud”. In response to this “think-aloud” process, the researchers then used prepared prompts detailed in the discussion guide and reactive prompts reflecting observations of the respondent to better understand the participants’ mental processes when answering the question.. Researchers made in-field notes during/immediately after each interview, in order to supplement the recording and transcript.
8. **Data management** – The recordings were transcribed using Ipsos’ secure AI platform. These transcripts were then coded into an analysis grid, alongside the field notes, identifying any potential issues with comprehension, recall, judgement, or response for participants. The analysis grid also included demographics, to support identification of typologies across participants. This analysis grid was then reviewed by the relevant interviewer, to identify any inconsistencies.
9. **Analysis** – To analyse the results, Ipsos researchers reviewed the analysis grid for each question in turn, including reviewing for any differences in responses across dyads. This allowed for descriptive analysis – identification of elements or dimensions of comprehension, recall, judgement, and response that may result in issues with validity or reliability of the questionnaire being used. Where issues were identified, researchers identified characteristics of circumstances in which problems occurred, to understand the mechanisms behind these inconsistencies. By identifying these mechanisms, it was then possible to form recommendations of potential interventions to resolve these issues.

### 1.3 Caveats

Due to the qualitative nature of cognitive interviewing, and the purposive nature of the sample, cognitive testing cannot be used to estimate the prevalence of an issue within the wider population. In addition, the role of a qualitative interviewer is different from that of a face-to-face interviewer, reflecting the reactive nature of qualitative research, rather than the standardised processes of quantitative research. The act of prompting and taking part in a cognitive interview can make people think more extensively about the wording of questions than they would if taking part on their own.

Due to limitations of recruitment and overall sample size, some of the questions were only tested on small proportion of the population, out of context from their section within the survey, or tested on a wider audience than would be exposed to the question within its intended survey context (where this is the case, it is noted within the analysis).

It is worth noting that there were no quotas on decisions around ending a pregnancy, or those becoming a parent through adoption or fostering. Therefore, this project does not provide evidence on how participants in these situations would answer the relevant questions.

# **01 - Part-time residence**

Round 1 wording	Round 2 wording
Does [other parent / partner] live with you?	Same as round 1
<p><u>Version A:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul> <p><u>Version B:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes – all of the time</li> <li>• Yes – some of the time</li> <li>• No</li> </ul>	Same as round 1
<p><b>Findings from Round 1:</b></p>	<p>All participants were asked this question, 30 of whom responded in Round 1. Of these respondents 6 lived separately from their partner / children's other parent, 18 lived together with their child's other parent, 6 were separated from their ex-partners. Depending on their family situation, those who had children were asked 'Does the other parent live with you?' and participants who did not have any children were asked 'Does your partner live with you?'. Each participant was asked version A and B, followed by a question on their preference amongst the two. In some instances, the question order was swapped, with some participants being asked version B before version A before being asked their preference.</p> <p>Respondents raised that 'other parent' and 'partner' could be two different people in certain situations. For example, if an individual is separated from their child's other parent and is co-parenting with them and at the same time is in a relationship with someone else. In this situation, it is unclear who respondents should be thinking of when responding to the question unless a text fill is used.</p> <p>The general consensus was that version A was easily understandable. Participants could answer this question immediately. There were no differences in how couples in a dyad responded, suggesting consistency within couples of their perception of their living situation.</p> <p>For version B, there was variation in perception. Some who lived apart thought this was more applicable to their situation as it included 'some of the time', immediately choosing this option as a response. Others flagged that although adding 'some of the time' was not applicable to them, it allowed more nuance and provided insight into situations where a partner / other parent stayed periodically. This group could think of situations others had experienced, such as a partner living abroad, that would make 'some of the time' a more relevant response.</p> <p>However, using 'some of the time' was seen as a cause for confusion for some, because it was felt it could cover a range of scenarios. For example, participants thought of different timeframes such as 'weekends', 'weekdays', 'half a week', or 'one day per week'. It was recommended that to resolve this issue, 'some of the time' could be more specific about the amount of time, to capture this nuance more accurately.</p> <p>Due to the variation in understanding version B, preferences on the response wording were also mixed. Most of the people who chose 'all of the time' or 'no' in version B preferred version A. Version A was seen as simpler to respond to. However, some flagged that they could see situations in which version B was more suitable to other family circumstances, often even referencing friends who</p>

	<p>the 'some of the time' option would be more relevant to. Adding in this additional option in version B meant that there was more clarification on the timeframes which was received positively.</p> <p>On the other hand, respondents flagged that version B can also cause confusion and be interpreted in different ways. For example, does living together some of the time mean that one partner is away for work reasons? There may also be various interpretations of 'some of the time' as stated previously.</p> <p>On both versions, respondents flagged that the question wording could be improved by asking 'Do you live with your partner / other parent'.</p> <p><i>"I would say this [version B] gives a bit more insight into whether they do live with you sometimes or all the time. But I would say for the second one, some of the time ... I think maybe broaden that out a bit to say, is it one day a week, is it during the weekend, is it you stay around the house but you don't sleep over." Female, 25-29 years old, in a steady relationship and living with their partner, part of a dyad</i></p>
<b>Findings from Round 2:</b>	<p>28 respondents in Round 2 answered this question. Of these respondents 15 lived separately from their partner / children's other parent, 6 lived together with their child's other parent, 7 were separated from their ex-partners. All participants were prompted to see if asking the question as 'Do you and your partner / other parent live together?' is preferred to the wording above. Whilst some had no preference, those who did preferred the alternative wording of 'live together'. Those who had a preference shared that saying 'live with you' implies that the place of residence is the respondent's house, whereas 'live together' is more neutral. In some instances, dyads responded to this question differently, with some choosing 'no' as a response while the other partner chose 'some of the time'. Partners who chose 'some of the time' recalled periods where their partner were staying over with them for the weekend, which their partners did not interpret as 'living together'.</p> <p>Of those who selected 'some of the time' across both rounds, there was inconsistency between whether they selected 'yes' or 'no' when asked Version A.</p>
<b>Recommendations for final question wording:</b>	<p>Use 'Do you and your partner / other parent live together' alongside the response options in version B – all of the time / some of the time / no. This allows more nuance in the responses and covers varied family situations.</p>

Round 1 wording	Round 2 wording
Does [child 1/ child 2 etc...] live with you?	Does [child 1/child 2 etc...] live with you?
<p><u>Version A:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul> <p><u>Version B:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes – all of the time</li> <li>• Yes – some of the time</li> <li>• No</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes – all of the time</li> <li>• Yes – some of the time</li> <li>• No</li> </ul>
<b>Findings from Round 1:</b>	<p>All participants with a child or children under 16 (18 respondents) were asked this question in Round 1. Of these respondents 4 lived separately from their partner / children’s other parent, 10 lived together with their child’s other parent, 4 were separated from their ex-partners. Each participant was asked both version A and B, as alternative versions of the same question and probed on their preference.</p> <p>On both versions, respondents shared confusion about how to respond in situations where care arrangements varied for different children. However, this would be resolved within the survey if each child is asked about separately with appropriate text fills.</p> <p>Version B was generally preferred. While version A was easily understandable, version B provided more options, particularly for separated parents who have varying custody arrangements, particularly for parents who were not primary carers but wanted to be able to say their children lived with them at least some of the time. Respondents flagged that even version B may not provide all of the nuance in shared care arrangements – ‘some of the time’ could vary between six days a week to one day a week. This was particularly highlighted by primary carers in coparenting relationships. Adding options such as ‘most of the time’ was suggested to add more nuance to the response options.</p> <p style="color: purple;"><i>“People [who are] divorced, their kids will live with different parents at different times, so [version B] is the best way of putting that.” Male, 45-49 years old, in a steady relationship and living with their partner / child’s other parent</i></p>
<b>Findings from Round 2:</b>	<p>All participants with a child or children under 16 (19 respondents) were asked this question in Round 2. Of these respondents 6 lived separately from their partner / children’s other parent, 5 lived together with their child’s other parent, 7 were separated from their ex-partners. All participants were prompted only with version B in round 2. As noted in round 1, participants thought more nuance in the response options would be useful. There were no differences in how parents in dyads responded to this question.</p>
<b>Recommendations for final question wording:</b>	<p>Use the wording used in round 2. As there is a separate question that probes more specifically on shared care arrangements, we recommend keeping the wording as is.</p>

**02 -**

**Relationship  
with co-parent**

Round 1 wording	Round 2 wording
Which of the following best describes your current relationship status to [PARENT NAME]?	Which of the following best describes your current relationship status to [PARENT NAME]?
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Romantically involved on a steady basis</li> <li>2. Involved in an on/off relationship</li> <li>3. We are just friends</li> <li>4. We do not have a relationship</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Married, in a civil partnership, or in a long-term relationship</b></li> <li>2. Romantically involved on a steady basis</li> <li>3. Involved in an on/off relationship</li> <li>4. We are just friends</li> <li>5. We do not have a relationship <b>or do not have contact</b></li> </ol>
<p><b>Findings from Round 1:</b></p>	<p>Participants were eligible for this question if they were currently pregnant or expecting a child.</p> <p>5 participants were asked this question in Round 1. Of these parents-to-be, 3 were currently living with the child(ren)'s other parent. Of the 2 parents who were not living with the other parent, one was in an LAT relationship with the other parent, while the other had separated from the parent of their existing children and was expecting a child with someone else, with whom they were not in a relationship and did not live together.</p> <p>There was one dyad who were both asked this question in Round 1, and one parent was one half of a dyad with a participant who was interviewed in Round 2 was also asked this question.</p> <p>Due to its location in the testing, it was not necessarily clear to participants that this question would only be asked if they were expecting a child. In addition, although in the main survey this question is only asked of those not married or in a civil partnership, for testing purposes this question was not filtered on marital status.</p> <p>Generally, participants did not find the question straightforward to answer and often struggled to pick one definitive response, preferring instead to highlight responses that were most analogous to their situation.</p> <p>The question wording was somewhat problematic. In general, participants felt that the wording of "relationship status" was mismatched with the response codes and had expected the question to be primarily focused on classifying their current relationship based on a more formal categorisation. During response, participants routinely recalled more official indicators of their relationship to determine its status, such as being married or living together. This may speak to participants being more accustomed with conceptualising the status of their relationship in a more formal or administrative manner (i.e., marital status).</p> <p>Where participants felt that the wording was targeted towards how the relationship is currently going, rather than the "status" of the relationship, they expressed discomfort at using these terms to refer to their relationship. This included indicating that they felt the options were provided asked more detail about their relationship than they were expecting to provide – e.g. that this could "give too much away about the actual ins and outs" of their relationship – and that is not the type of question they were expecting. The judgement was resolved through the parent defining their relationship as "living together" with the other parent, which is the way they were expecting to define their relationship, and determining that this meant their relationships status fit best under Code 1.</p>

In terms of the response codes, the phrasing of code 1 was consistently seen as unnatural. Participants who were in long-term committed relationships with the other parent did not feel that choosing this code accurately reflected their relationship – instead, it was felt to imply a relationship in its early stages. Participants therefore felt that this code, despite being the most committed response option available, did not reflect the language they would use to refer to their relationship.

*“We've been together for 18 years. For sure, we're still romantically involved. But romantically involved sounds like ... a phrase you would use in an early-stage relationship. I would say that we are much more than just romantically involved... We are integrated into our lives. We've been together for half of our adult lives.”  
Male, 40-44 years old, married and living together with their partner.*

Ultimately, parents who were married or in long-term relationships where they lived with their partner did end up selecting code 1 as the most appropriate fit for their situation albeit arriving at this judgement more slowly given the unfamiliar phrasing of the code. Parents who selected this code flagged that they might instead describe their relationship in terms of living together, or in line with marital status definitions (e.g., married, civil partnership).

Several respondents also queried the presence of code 4 in the response list, given that the context of the question assumes the individual has an existing relationship.

It was also noted that there was a leap between codes 1 and 2, and participants suggested an additional code between these two might have been useful – for example, if referring to a newer relationship. This was particularly evident for the parent who was in an LAT relationship, which reflecting the timeline of their relationship, and may indicate where relationships do not fit more conventional markers of commitment (e.g., cohabitation or marriage), categorising them under the terminology of a ‘steady basis’ can feel less straightforward. Similarly, the lack of timeline to the ‘on-off’ may result in participants who are currently steady but who have had previous separations with their current partner in the past unsure how to respond.

*“I'd say number two... Yeah, I'd say – oh, I don't know, that's tricky. It's a mixture between number one and number two because it's been steady, because it's been a long period of time, but there's been on and off moments within that steadiness.” Female, 30-34 years old, in a steady relationship but not living together with their partner.*

By contrast, all 3 respondents who were married ultimately felt able to categorise themselves under option 1 with minimal consideration given to potentially selecting a different response option.

As there was no context within testing that this related to pregnancy, where someone had children with more than one partner (i.e. where separated from their older child's other parent but expecting a child with a new partner, there was confusion over who the question was asking about. Potentially, the text-fill of the parent's name, or positioning this following questions about pregnancy, may help to alleviate this ambiguity and streamline the response process. There was also a suggestion that an option for “no contact” would be worth including, as this was felt to be substantively different from not being in a relationship with another person.

### Findings from Round 2:

In total, 11 participants were asked this question in Round 2. Of these parents-to-be, 2 were currently living with the child(ren)'s other parent on a full-time basis. Of the 9 participants who were not living with the other parent, 3 had separated from the other parent, and the other 6 were in LAT relationships with the other parent.

One parent was one half of a dyad with a participant who was interviewed in Round 1.

Overall, participants found the question more straightforward to answer in Round 2, and the response options were generally seen as comprehensive and relevant. This was particularly the case for parents who were in marital relationships; these participants were quickly able to identify the first response code as most relevant to their situation and reported the question as being easier to answer than participants in marital relationships Round 1.

Parents in non-marital long-term relationships generally converged on selecting code 1 as most applicable to their situation. For the parent who formed the other half of the dyad that was split across Round 1 and 2, they self-identified with Code 1 because, despite not being married, they recognised the second half of Code 1 (“in a long-term relationship”) to be more aligned with their judgements about their own relationship.

*“I was questioning whether it's number one or two because we're not married but we have been together a long time and we have a relationship and I consider so, yeah, so yeah, long term relationship but not married.” Male, 35-39 years old, in a steady relationship and living with their partner, part of a dyad*

They were able to reach this answer with less ambiguity and found the question easier to answer than the partner who was interviewed in Round 1, who interpreted the question more in the context of how the relationship is going rather than their current relationship status.

On occasion, participants who were in non-marital relationships instead selected code 2 as most relevant to their situation. For example, one parent aged 20 described using a process of elimination when determining their answer, filtering out the first code as they were unmarried or not in a civil partnership whilst also ruling out codes 3 and below. This potentially suggests that there is a slight risk of parents in non-marital long-term relationships being inclined to disregard option 1 when selecting their response, as the first code may be activating a schema of considering their relationship in a more formal or official sense, and so parents may be schematically more drawn to the terminology in the first half of the response code.

Where the response codes did cause issues, this was principally due to a perceived overlap between codes 1 and 2, similar to Round 1. Participants sometimes found it difficult to differentiate between the two codes, particularly those who were in long-term relationships but not married or in civil partnerships. Equally, it was also suggested that an additional intermediate code would be useful to reflect a relationship that is more short-term, or has started recently, as there was a perceived incongruity between the temporal reference to the relationship between “long-term” in code 1 and the lack of an explicit counterpart phrase in Code 2, which was often taken to refer to a more ‘short-term’ relationship.

*“I read number one and just like marriage or civil partnership, I didn't actually read the full sentence. So actually I'm number one in a long-term relationship [instead of code 2, which was initially selected]. So I am in a relationship with my partner. I suppose for me, like what's the difference between being in a long-term relationship and being romantically involved on a steady basis?” Female, 35-39 years old, separated from the parent of their older children and in a steady relationship but not living together with the other parent-to-be*

	<p>Although Code 1 was generally received well, on occasion it created challenges in terms of the judgement of participants. In particular, some respondent feedback suggested it might have been useful to have a quantified definition of the time period of a long-term relationship to reduce ambiguity. Although this did not appear to impair participants' individual ability to answer the questions, it was noted that this may introduce variability in how respondents interpret the category.</p> <p><i>“I think the thing that's hard is like long term relationship. It's quantifying what a long-term relationship is to someone because to someone their longest relationship they've had is six months. So they're in a long-term relationship but... to me, a long-term relationship is like over a few years”. Female, 25-29 years old, married and in a steady relationship but not living with their partner.</i></p> <p>Where participants were not in committed relationships with the baby's other parent, there was variation in the way in which parents made judgements about their relationship when selecting response codes. For example, two parents who both chose option 3 differed in how they conceptualised their relationship. One parent framed their response in terms of the relationship's categorical status (i.e., still being involved with one another but not currently in a relationship), whereas the other framed it in terms of relationship quality, describing how they were working through current difficulties and hoping for a healthier environment going forward. This did not necessarily lead to observable mischaracterisation, and both parents felt comfortable committing to option 3. However, it is worth noting that for parents who are in more volatile or fluid relationships, they may employ a wider array of interpretive processes when considering how best to respond, perhaps because this transience means that individuals do not have conventional indicators of their relationship status easily accessible upon recall.</p> <p>Participants in Round 2 also occasionally suggested that the wording of code 2 “romantically involved on a steady basis”) came across as potentially juvenile or associated with teenagers.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations for final question wording:</b></p>	<p>We would recommend following the list of response codes suggested in Round 2. Potential consideration could be given to delineating more strongly between codes 1 and 2 for those in long-term relationships, and also whether an additional code for a shorter-term committed relationship would be a useful addition, depending on the purpose of the question. We would also encourage consideration of the latter response options: principally, whether it may be viable to add a response code or adapt an existing code to reflect parents who are no longer in contact with the other parent, and to be aware of how parents in more fluid relationships may use different interpretive frameworks to select their response.</p> <p>On occasion, due to the way the question was asked in testing, it was unclear who the text-fill would refer to in the main survey – for example when respondents had a child with an ex-partner but were currently in a relationship with someone else. This is worth considering when reviewing how this question is asked if the name of the baby's other parent is not known.</p>

# 03 - Separation

Round 1 wording	Round 2 wording
<p>Which of these reasons would you consider to be the main reason you separated or decided to live apart from [names of non-resident children identified with 'other parent' or your ex partner]? Please just tell me the number.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Never in a relationship</li> <li>2. Money or financial problems (lack of money, not having/losing work)</li> <li>3. You had grown apart</li> <li>4. Lack of communication/did not talk</li> <li>5. Different expectations</li> <li>6. Pregnancy/birth of child</li> <li>7. Disagreement over parenting issues</li> <li>8. Your ex-partner did not give enough time to family</li> <li>9. You did not give enough time to family</li> <li>10. Your ex-partner found someone else/adultery/infidelity</li> <li>11. You found someone else/adultery/infidelity</li> <li>12. Your ex-partner's violent or abusive behaviour (towards you/child)</li> <li>13. Your ex-partner's emotionally abusive behaviour (towards you/child)</li> <li>14. Your ex-partner's sexually abusive behaviour (towards you/child)</li> <li>15. Your ex-partner's financially abusive behaviour (towards you/child)</li> <li>16. Your violent or abusive behaviour (towards partner/child)</li> <li>17. Your emotionally abusive behaviour (towards partner/child)</li> <li>18. Your sexually abusive behaviour (towards partner/child)</li> <li>19. Your financially abusive behaviour (towards partner/child)</li> <li>20. Your ex-partner's alcohol/drugs/addiction problems</li> <li>21. Your alcohol/drugs/addiction problems</li> <li>22. Your ex-partner's mental illness/emotional issues/depression</li> <li>23. Your mental illness/emotional issues/depression</li> <li>24. Lack of sexual relationship</li> <li>25. You are homosexual/lesbian/gay</li> <li>26. Your ex-partner is homosexual/lesbian/gay</li> <li>27. Other (please say what)</li> <li>28. No reason</li> </ol>	<p>Which of these reasons would you consider to <b>explain why you separated from</b> [names of non-resident children identified with 'other parent' or your ex-partner]? <b>Select all that apply.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Money or financial problems (lack of money, not having/losing work)</li> <li>2. You had grown apart</li> <li>3. Lack of communication/did not talk</li> <li>4. Different expectations</li> <li>5. Pregnancy/birth of child</li> <li>6. Disagreement over parenting issues</li> <li>7. <b>You/your ex-partner did not give enough time to family</b></li> <li>8. <b>Cheating/adultery/infidelity</b></li> <li>9. <b>Violence or abuse in the relationship</b></li> <li>10. <b>Alcohol/drug/addiction problems</b></li> <li>11. <b>Mental illness/emotional issues/depression</b></li> <li>12. Other (please say what)</li> <li>13. No reason</li> </ol>
<p><b>Findings from Round 1:</b></p>	<p>All participants who had separated from a partner in the last two years (10 respondents) were asked this question in Round 1. Of these respondents 9 had dependent children, whilst 1 did not have any dependent children. 6 had separated within the last 2 years, whilst 3 had separated over 2 years ago, and 1 did not specify the timeframe for their separation.</p> <p>Participants had consensus that the response options provided were too extensive and took a lot of time to go through and find ones that were most relevant to them. Some even missed the options most relevant to them when trying to respond. Recommendations for improving this issue varied. Many suggested grouping the responses in different ways (e.g. grouping all forms of abuse together). Some also suggested that it may be useful for people to share their main reason through an open-ended question which is then back</p>

	<p>coded into the response options. Another suggestion was to ask people to say yes / no to each response option. This suggestion would ensure none of the response options are missed.</p> <p><i>“That's a quite a long list. Wouldn't be easy to just give an option for someone to give the answer than giving them a list to look into. What if after 5 minutes of reading through the whole the 26 options then I go, oh, actually it's other or there's no reason. So I think it would be easier if you allow the person being interviewed to say their answer.” Male, 40-44 years old, separated over 2 years ago</i></p> <p>The response options were clear and covered all the categories participants thought were important. The inclusion of ‘never in a relationship’ was confusing for some in the context of this question, as they weren’t sure how you could separate if you were never in a relationship – although that would depend on the way the question was filtered. Participants flagged that some of the options (such as lack of a sexual relationship or the respondent’s abusive behaviour towards partner/child) may feel too private for them to disclose. To this end, it was recommended that a ‘prefer not to say’ option is also added.</p> <p><i>“I think for some of them, people wouldn't say that it is the reason, they would give a different answer. For example number 18 [Your sexually abusive behaviour (towards partner/child)]. I doubt someone would admit to that. That's why I think if you group them together as ‘violence in the relationship’ it's a bit more general.” Female, 40-44 years old, separated within the last 2 years</i></p> <p>Most respondents chose several options and assumed the question was multiple code. They often did not recognise they were being asked to choose only one option.</p> <p>The question wording was seen as appropriate, however, some flagged that ‘decided to live apart from’ felt like it was covered by separated, which was associated with all romantic relationships, not just those formalised with a marriage or civil partnership.</p>
<p><b>Findings from Round 2:</b></p>	<p>All participants who had separated from a partner in the last two years (12 respondents) were asked this question in Round 2. Of these respondents 7 had dependent children, whilst 5 did not have any dependent children. 9 had separated within the last 2 years, whilst 2 had separated over 2 years ago, and 1 did not specify the timeframe for their separation.</p> <p>Participants who had been separated from their partner in the last two years were asked a new version of this question. In many cases, where interview timings allowed, participants were also asked the previous iteration of the question and asked to share their preference between the two versions.</p> <p>Participants preferred the second version of the separation question. This was seen as straightforward without sugarcoating any of the key issues that may lead to separation. Furthermore, it broadly asked about things which may have gone wrong in the relationship rather than placing blame on one partner or another.</p> <p><i>“I think because you're not putting any blame or anything, you're not saying who was abusing or who had the alcohol or drug problems, it's a broad enough answer that it doesn't point to specifics where it would then get too sensitive.” Male, 30-34 years old, separated within the last 2 years</i></p>

	<p>Participants generally did not find it as difficult to choose a main reason for their separation with this question wording, although where they felt the relationship ending had involved many factors, some still initially chose more than one option. On the other hand, some found it simple to pick only one reason (e.g. differences in parenting styles, growing apart, violence or abuse). When settling on a main reason, the underlying cause was often the focus, rather than the way this had exhibited itself (e.g. mental health issues leading to other difficulties in the relationship).</p> <p><i>“It’s got a good variety, kind of covers everything that you would think of in sense of a separation.” Male, 35-39 years old, separated within the last 2 years</i></p> <p>Although the response options were seen as covering all the key reasons for separation, participants suggested some additional probes including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adding ‘unhealthy sexual relationship’</li> <li>• Providing distinction between abuse in the relationship or towards others in the household</li> <li>• Including an option more specifically on losing a child / pregnancy loss</li> </ul> <p>Some also flagged that option 4 (different expectations) is very broad and could refer to a range of things from views on the future, monogamy, to children. However, this did not pose an issue for responding to the question.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations for final question wording:</b></p>	<p>Use the wording used in round 2, however, amend response option 9 to ‘violence or abuse in the relationship or household’. As the question includes a response option for ‘other (please specify)’, this would allow participants to provide more detail if they wanted to provide an answer that was not available.</p> <p>If there is a usefulness in understanding the broader context, it could also be helpful to review whether a two-stage question, with a multi-code question asking for any reasons, followed by a single-code question asking for the main reason, may be appropriate.</p>

# **04 – Couple relationship quality**

Round 1 wording	Round 2 wording
<p>Most persons have disagreements in their relationships. Please indicate below the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your partner for each item on the following list.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Handling family finances</li> <li>2. Matters of recreation</li> <li>3. Religious matters</li> <li>4. Demonstrations of affection</li> <li>5. Friends</li> <li>6. Sex relations</li> <li>7. Conventionality (correct or proper behaviour)</li> <li>8. Philosophy of life</li> <li>9. Ways of dealing with parents or in-laws</li> <li>10. Aims, goals, and things believed important</li> <li>11. Amount of time spent together</li> <li>12. Making major decisions</li> <li>13. Household tasks</li> <li>14. Leisure time interests and activities</li> <li>15. Career decisions</li> </ol>	<p><b>For each of the following questions, please indicate the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your partner at the moment. Please select only one answer per question. Please think about your current partner when responding to the question.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Religious matters</li> <li>4. Demonstrations of affection</li> <li>6. Sex relations</li> <li><b>6a. Sexual intimacy</b></li> <li>7. Conventionality (correct or proper behaviour)</li> <li><b>7a. Appropriate behaviour and good manners</b></li> <li>12. Making major decisions</li> <li>15. Career decisions</li> </ol>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Always Agree</li> <li>2. Almost Always Agree</li> <li>3. Occasionally Disagree</li> <li>4. Frequently Disagree</li> <li>5. Almost Always Disagree</li> <li>6. Always Disagree</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Always Agree</li> <li>2. Almost Always Agree</li> <li>3. Occasionally Disagree</li> <li>4. Frequently Disagree</li> <li>5. Almost Always Disagree</li> <li>6. Always Disagree</li> </ol>
<p><b>Findings from Round 1:</b></p>	<p>All participants who were currently in a relationship (22 respondents) were asked this question in Round 1. Participants reflected on each option one by one. Of these respondents 5 lived separately from their partner and 17 lived together.</p> <p>Participants noted that the introduction to the question started with a leading assumption that couples disagree on elements or have arguments about them. For some, this felt uncomfortable as they may not even discuss many of these topics (such as religious matters) with their partner, much less have disagreements with them about it. To this end, they suggested asking about whether participants had conversations with their partners on different topics or asking what their approach was to various items.</p> <p>If the question wording is kept as is, a 'not applicable' option would be useful to add for these topics that people may not discuss. Participants noted that the wording of 'most persons' should also be changed to 'most people' for it to be more accessible.</p>

“I would write it's not uncommon for people or part of relationships could be to have disagreements. This feels like you are biasing me towards thinking that we have disagreements in our relationships. I think it's a bit leading that first statement.” *Male, 40-44 years old, in a steady relationship and living with their partner, part of a dyad*

1. Participants found this question straightforward to understand and respond to. They interpreted the question as how they split their finances with their partner, and handling shared costs such as mortgage, bills, holidays, fixing a shared house. Those who did not live together also mentioned managing individual finances when responding to this question. These participants also flagged that the wording on ‘family finances’ was not really applicable to them, but if they had to respond, they would interpret this as ‘managing spending’.

There were no particular differences in how couples who lived apart understood or responded to this question in comparison to those living together. This question was also understood consistently within dyads.

2. The wording of this question was seen as more confusing, leading to different understandings between participants, with some noting that ‘recreation’ is not a word that is used in their day-to-day. Many thought recreation was the list of activities people do together outside working hours such as going for dinner. They suggested changing the wording to ‘how you spend your free time’ for clarity. Where this question was understood as referring to free time, it was also seen as repetitive of item 14 (leisure time, interest, and activities).

Others had various understandings from this wording which included having another child or the couple’s sex life (“re-creation”), and use of recreational drugs.

“Just doing things out of work hours? So whether it be go for dinner, go to cinema, have takeaway in, go out with friends that, you know, that kind of thing or just things that's outside of working hours that you do together.” *Female, 40-44 years old, in a steady relationship and living with their partner*

“Matters of recreation. Again, that's very formal when I'm looking at that I'm thinking, oh, gosh, that sounds like something the Queen's gonna go do, not me.” *Female, 30-34 years old, in a steady relationship and living with their partner*

3. Where neither the participant or their partner was religious, this was regularly highlighted as a topic they did not discuss. As none of the options reflected this, participants chose ‘always agree’, however, they noted that a ‘not applicable’ option would have been more useful. Participants also suggested that a broader term focusing on ‘spiritual beliefs’ may be useful to replace this option. Whilst most thought of their own level of religiosity when responding to this question, some also thought about their approach to their children’s religious upbringing.

There were no particular differences in how couples who lived apart understood or responded to this question in comparison to those living together. This question was also understood consistently within dyads.

4. Most people interpreted this as either public displays of affection or love languages in relation to their partner. Respondents flagged that ‘showing affection’ is a simpler way of phrasing this. Where participants flagged confusion over the question, this was either around what agreement or disagreement regarding demonstrating affection meant, or who this affection related to (i.e. their partner, their children, or people outside the relationship).

There were no particular differences in how couples who lived apart understood or responded to this question in comparison to those living together. This question was also understood consistently within dyads.

**5.** Respondents noted various interpretations of this question. These included the importance of friendships, values in friendships, the roles friends play in their lives, how much time is spent with friends, how they communicate with friends, how they are treated within friendships, how they would interact with each other's friends, approach to mutual friends in comparison to personal friends, approach to their children's friends, and where lines were drawn around cheating (e.g. comfort with male-female friendships outside of the relationship for heterosexual couples). Whilst they were able to respond based on their understanding, they often noted the need for more clarification.

Couples who lived apart were more likely to discuss being less familiar with their partner's friends, which could also impact how they respond to this question.

There were no variations in how dyads understood or responded to this question.

*"Do we have the same friends? Do we agree on what is important in friends? I would want more of an elaboration on what you mean with this topic." Male, 40-44 years old, in a steady relationship and living with their partner, part of a dyad*

**6.** Most participants understood this to mean sexual intimacy or compatibility and responded on this basis. Where participants did not understand the question in this way, they talked about it referring to views on LGBTQ+ relationships, theirs and their partner's gender identity and/or trans status, their attitudes to their children's romantic and sexual relationships, and views on non-monogamy.

There were no particular differences in how couples who lived apart understood or responded to this question in comparison to those living together.

**7.** Participants noted that brackets outlining the context and meaning was very helpful. However, even with this, 'conventionality' did not feel like an easily accessible word, and wording like 'morals' or 'ethics' was suggested as an alternative. Other than this, some shared that even with clarification, they are unsure of what the question is asking. Interpretations varied from being respectful, speaking appropriately, how their partner acts day-to-day, how they act within professional and personal settings, levels of alcohol consumption in public, how they behave in front of their children, or how they correct their children's behaviour.

There were no particular differences in how couples who lived apart understood or responded to this question in comparison to those living together. This question was also understood consistently within dyads.

*"Conventionality - I appreciate that there is some more, some more explaining in brackets there." Male, 40-44 years old, in a steady relationship and living with their partner, part of a dyad*

**8.** Whilst for many this was an easy and straightforward question to answer, others noted that this was very broad and they were unsure with which interpretation they should respond. Interpretations varied from having a similar mindset, wanting the same things from their life, outlook towards life, attitude towards ones career, and meaning of life.

There were no particular differences in how couples who lived apart understood or responded to this question in comparison to those living together. This question was also understood consistently within dyads.

*Overlap:* This question was seen by different participants as having overlap with items 3 (religious matters), 7 (conventionality), 8 (philosophy of life) and 10 (aims, goals, and things believed important).

**9.** Participants were able to respond to this question easily, even where they were not married or in a civil partnership with their partner. They noted that in-laws could also be siblings of partners as well as parents and responded with this in mind. Some also saw this as supporting in-laws, particularly in the context of aging parents who require help. They shared that using the word 'dealing with' could be seen quite negatively and suggested changing this to 'maintaining relationships with parents or in-laws'. In a situation when in-laws are deceased, a 'not applicable' option may be useful.

There were no particular differences in how couples who lived apart understood or responded to this question in comparison to those living together. This question was also understood consistently within dyads.

**10.** This was easily understood as how partners support each other in achieving their life goals – whether short-term, long-term, or in specific life domains – or being aligned on their values.

There were no particular differences in how couples who lived apart understood or responded to this question in comparison to those living together. This question was also understood consistently within dyads.

*Overlap:* This question was seen as having overlap with item 8 (philosophy of life).

**11.** This felt like a straightforward question to answer for most participants. They interpreted it as whether or not they or their partner wanted to spend more or less time together, or if they were happy with the current amount of time spent together. Couples who lived apart noted that the only points of tension was when one partner was feeling more vulnerable and demonstrated more need for being together. There were no variations in how dyads understood this question.

**12.** Participants found this question easy to answer. Examples of major life decisions were big purchases, life changing events such as new jobs, moving to a different city, deciding to start a family, joint investments, choice of school for their children, or funeral arrangements for parents. There were slight variations in interpretations of when in the discussion the question was asking about – some thought about this as the initial thoughts on a particular topic prior to discussion whilst others interpreted it as the point they got to after speaking through it.

There were no particular differences in how couples who lived apart understood or responded to this question in comparison to those living together. This question was also understood consistently within dyads.

**13.** Participants found this question easy to understand and answer. Participants interpreted this as whether or not the split of house tasks (such as cleaning, cooking, washing, changing the bed) between them and their partner caused arguments. It was worth noting that in some cases, even where they and/or their partner were unhappy with the split of household chores, the focus when responding to the question was on how much they argued about it, rather than whether or not they thought both partners were satisfied with the split of responsibilities.

Some participants who lived apart from their partner found this difficult to answer, noting that they do not live together so it does not feel applicable to them. On the other hand, others noted examples of cooking dinner and cleaning up together in one partner's house, providing examples of shared household chores even though they lived apart.

There were no variations in how dyads understood this question.

*“Do any men do household tasks? 90% of the time us women do nearly all cooking, cleaning, walking the dogs, feeding the dogs. He's never asked to do household tasks, so I always do them. So it's hard to know. There is no agreement or disagreement on it. It's just done.” Female, 40-44 years old, in a steady relationship and living with their partner*

	<p><b>14.</b> This was understood as hobbies and activities participants liked to do alone or with their partner. It was noted that this was a better question wording than 'matters of recreation' (item 2). There were no particular differences in how couples who lived apart understood or responded to this question in comparison to those living together. This question was also understood consistently within dyads.</p> <p><i>Overlap:</i> This question was seen as having overlap with item 2 (matters of recreation).</p> <p><b>15.</b> This item was interpreted as any changes to their career or approach to their career (such as being ambitious) and how supportive partners would. Participants noted that it may be more appropriate to ask about the level of support in comparison to agreement or disagreement. There were no particular differences in how couples who lived apart understood or responded to this question in comparison to those living together. This question was also understood consistently within dyads.</p>
<p><b>Findings from Round 2:</b></p>	<p>All participants who were currently in a relationship (17 respondents) were asked this question in Round 2. Of these respondents 12 lived separately from their partner and 5 lived together. Across both rounds, there were occasional small differences between how dyads answered questions (for example, one selecting 'always agree' and another 'almost always agree'), but generally dyads were consistent in how they talked about their relationships.</p> <p>Participants reflected on each option one by one. The list of questions were cut down and included alternative wording for some of items. Where alternative wording was provided, the ordering of these options was varied between participants.</p> <p>Whilst the introduction text was easily understood, there was some confusion about the timeframe being referred to, where the state had of the relationship had significantly changed (for example, where a couple had separated for several years before reuniting). Where this was the case, participants were not clear whether to answer based on their relationship as a whole, or their relationship in its current state. Adding a timeframe may help resolve this issue,</p> <p><b>3.</b> There were no key differences in how this question was understood in round 1 and 2.</p> <p><b>4.</b> There were no key differences in how this question was understood in round 1 and 2.</p> <p><b>6.</b> There were no key differences in how this question was understood in round 1 and 2.</p> <p><b>6a.</b> Participants mostly noted this was easier to answer in comparison to 'sex relations', and it was understood more consistently to refer to theirs and their partners' sex life. There were no differences in how couples in dyads or those living apart understood or responded to this question.</p> <p><b>7.</b> There were no key differences in how this question was understood in round 1 and 2.</p> <p><b>7a.</b> Where participants thought this meant the same thing as 'conventionality', they preferred the alternate wording. This wording was seen as outlining behaviour in social settings more clearly. On the other hand, where respondents thought conventionality and appropriate behaviour were distinct, they did not have a preference.</p>

	<p>There were no particular differences in how couples who lived apart understood or responded to this question in comparison to those living together. This question was also understood consistently within dyads.</p> <p><b>12.</b> There was only one key differences in how this question was understood in round 1 and 2. In round 2, dyads expressed slight differences, with one pair living apart recalling a career decision as a major decision, and the other noting that there have not been any major decisions they have needed to make with their partner. This may indicate that decisions around careers are not necessarily understood or recalled as a major decision for all, or differences between partners in perceptions depending on the specific career decision and how they interacted with it.</p> <p><b>15.</b> There were no key differences in how this question was understood in round 1 and 2.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations for final question wording:</b></p>	<p>To ensure participants can clarify situations which do not apply to their relationships (such as religious matters), it would be beneficial to provide a 'not applicable' option in the responses overall. It may also be useful to consider merging items that are seen as overlapping (such a matters of recreation and leisure time and activities; philosophy of life and aims, goals and things believed important; etc).</p> <p>The alternative wordings which were tested in round 2 were generally preferred, and it would therefore be recommended that these wordings are used.</p>

Round 1 wording	Round 2 wording
<p>16. How often do you discuss or have you considered divorce, separation, or terminating your relationship?  17. How often do you or your mate leave the house after a fight?  18. In general, how often do you think that things between you and your partner are going well?  Please think about your current partner when answering the question.  19. Do you confide in your mate?  20. Do you ever regret that you married? (or lived together)  21. How often do you and your partner quarrel?  22. How often do you and your mate "get on each other's nerves?"</p>	<p>16. How often do you discuss or have you considered divorce, separation, or terminating your relationship?  <b>16a. How often do you discuss or consider ending your relationship?</b>  20. Do you ever regret that you married ? (or lived together)  <b>20a. Do you ever regret being in a relationship with your partner?</b>  21. How often do you and your partner quarrel?  22. How often do you and your <b>partner</b> "get on each other's nerves?"</p>
<p>1. All the time  2. Most of the time  3. More often than not  4. Occasionally  5. Rarely  6. Never</p>	<p>1. All the time  2. Most of the time  3. More often than not  4. Occasionally  5. Rarely  6. Never</p>
<p><b>Findings from Round 1:</b></p>	<p>As above, all participants who were currently in a relationship (22 respondents) were asked this question in Round 1. Of these respondents 5 lived separately from their partner and 17 lived together. Participants reflected on each option one by one.</p> <p>Across all questions and participants, 'partner' was preferred to 'mate', which some participants interpreted as friend or housemate, and therefore found confusing in context, and others described as unusual terminology, even if they could interpret what was intended within the context of the question.</p> <p><i>"I would call my friend my mate. Maybe change that word to partner to make it consistent or maybe if you want to use mate the whole time, then just tell the person before. But yeah, I would say the mate's a bit different." Female, 25-29 years old, in a steady relationship and living with their partner, part of a dyad</i></p> <p><b>16.</b> This was very easy for most participants to answer. However, it is worth noting that most chose 'never', describing that if they ever considered ending their relationship, that would be a sign something was very wrong – reflecting that for many participants even selecting "Rarely" was seen as expressing concern about the relationship. They noted that the wording 'terminating' comes across as too clinical, and using 'ending' may be a better alternative.  There were no differences in how couples in dyads or those living apart understood or responded to this question.</p> <p><i>"We have never discussed anything like that. If you even think that for a minute, there's probably a problem. How can you come back from that?" Male, 40-44 years old, in a steady relationship and living with their partner, part of a dyad</i></p>

	<p><b>17.</b> Some shared that the question feels biased towards the negative and it would be useful to ask how frequently partners fight before asking this specific question. Interpretations of the word ‘fight’ also varied – for some this implied a physical fight, whilst others thought this spoke to a quarrel / disagreement. There were no differences in how couples in dyads or those living apart understood or responded to this question.</p> <p><b>18.</b> Most found this an easy question to understand and respond to. Participants noted that ‘all of the time’ is an unrealistic response. However, other than this, the response options feel distinct enough that they could respond to them with a little thought. There were no differences in how couples in dyads or those living apart understood or responded to this question.</p> <p><b>19.</b> Respondents found this question easy to understand and answer. They shared examples of confiding about topics such as their general worries and some shared that their partner is the first person they would go to for confiding about matters that were on their mind. There were no differences in how couples in dyads or those living apart understood or responded to this question.</p> <p><b>20.</b> Participants who were married found this relatively straightforward to answer. Couples who were not currently married flagged that including ‘or lived together’ separately feels exclusionary of them as the current framing makes it appear like an afterthought. In the same vein, some noted that ‘being married’ and ‘living together’ are quite separate and it may make sense to ask about these separately. This question also did not work for those in couples who did not live together, for whom the question did not apply. Alternatively, respondents suggested asking ‘Do you ever regret being together?’. This was seen as a broader and more appropriate question.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“I wouldn't maybe jump straight to ‘you're married or living together’. Would it not be more like, do you ever regret that maybe you're together? Because, like, that kind of covers all of it.” Female, 25-29 years old, in a steady relationship and living with their partner</i></p> <p><b>21.</b> Most participants noted that quarrel was an old fashioned and less accessible word to use than words such as ‘having a disagreement’, ‘fighting’, ‘arguing’, or ‘bickering’. Some noted that this questions should be asked prior to item 17 and the wording could be made consistent by replacing ‘quarrel’ with ‘fight’. There were no differences in how couples in dyads or those living apart understood or responded to this question.</p> <p><b>22.</b> Respondents understood ‘getting on each other’s nerves’ in varying ways. Whilst some had similar definitions of ‘getting on someone’s nerve’ and ‘quarrelling’, others noted this meaning getting frustrated at someone or annoying someone, compared with quarrelling being more of an argument. Those who thought the wording was similar to ‘quarrelling’ flagged that this was more accessible wording.</p> <p>Those who did not live together noted that it may be appropriate to add a qualifier of ‘when you see each other’ for this question and others which may be dependent on being in the same physical space. There were no differences in how couples in dyads understood or responded to this question.</p>
<b>Findings from Round 2:</b>	All participants who were currently in a relationship (17 respondents) were asked this question in Round 2. Of these respondents 12 lived separately from their partner and 5 lived together.

	<p>Participants reflected on each option one by one. In round 2, participants were also asked to share their preference between original and alternate wordings for some of the questions, and the order of these options varied between participants. Based on the feedback participants had given on the wording of 'mate' this was replaced with 'partner' throughout.</p> <p><b>16.</b> There were no key differences in how this question was understood in round 1 and 2.</p> <p><b>16a.</b> Participants preferred this wording in comparison to item 16 as the word 'ending' was used in comparison to 'terminating'. This wording also felt more open and not only limited to married couples. It was flagged that 'considering' and 'discussing' are different and it may be useful to separate these from each other. There were no differences in how couples in dyads or those living apart understood or responded to this question.</p> <p><b>20.</b> There were no key differences in how this question was understood in round 1 and 2.</p> <p><b>20a.</b> There was consensus amongst participants that this is a better wording for this question in comparison to item 20. Some couples who were living apart noted that whilst the previous wording made them focus on prolonged periods of time with their partner, this made them think about their relationship as a whole. There were no differences in how couples in dyads understood or responded to this question.</p> <p>Some noted that the wording 'regret' feels very heavy and noted that regret may relate to other choices they have missed out on due to being in a relationship.</p> <p>In addition, a participant who had separated from their long-term partner several years before starting a new relationship together focussed more about whether they regretted the original relationship, considering the way it ended, rather than their current relationship. This therefore impacted how they understood and answered the question.</p> <p><b>21.</b> There were no key differences in how this question was understood in round 1 and 2.</p> <p><b>22.</b> There were no key differences in how this question was understood in round 1 and 2.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations for final question wording:</b></p>	<p>The alternative wordings which were tested in round 2 were generally preferred, and it would therefore be recommended that these wordings are used. The word 'mate' should be replaced with 'partner' throughout to avoid confusion for respondents.</p>

Round 1 wording	Round 2 wording
<p>23. Do you kiss your mate?</p> <p>1. Every Day 2. Almost Every Day 3. Occasionally 4. Rarely 5. Never</p>	<p>23. Do you kiss your <b>partner</b>?</p> <p><u>Version A:</u> 1. Every Day 2. Almost Every Day 3. Occasionally 4. Rarely 5. Never</p> <p><u>Version B:</u> <b>1. All of the time</b> <b>2. Most of the time</b> <b>3. More often than not</b> <b>4. Occasionally</b> <b>5. Rarely</b> <b>6. Never</b></p>
<p><b>Findings from Round 1:</b></p>	<p>As above, all participants who were currently in a relationship (22 respondents) were asked this question in Round 1. Of these respondents 5 lived separately from their partner and 17 lived together.</p> <p>As previously mentioned, the wording of 'mate' was seen as confusing. Respondents suggested replacing this with 'partner'.</p> <p>Some noted that the question implies the response should be yes / no, whilst the responses do not align. Couples who lived apart also commented on the response options, sharing that they could only respond this for when they were physically in the same space. When they were in the same space, they often shared they would kiss each other every day, but those living apart were more likely to have days that they did not see their partner. The current response options do not reflect this nuance.</p> <p>Some participants also shared that it may be beneficial to create distinctions between initiating or receiving a kiss in the context for this question.</p> <p>There were no differences in how couples in dyads understood or responded to this question.</p> <p><i>"I would say almost every day because we don't live together, but when we are together, we do kiss, obviously. We kiss hello, we would kiss goodbye. We kiss in private and, I mean, if we lived together every day, would we kiss each other every day? Hopefully at least once. I don't know." Male, 30-34 years old, in a steady relationship and not living with their partner, part of a dyad</i></p>
<p><b>Findings from Round 2:</b></p>	<p>As above, all participants who were currently in a relationship (17 respondents) were asked this question. Of these respondents 12 lived separately from their partner and 5 lived together.</p>

	<p>In round 2, participants were also asked to share their preference between original and alternate wording.</p> <p><b>For version A</b>, participants noted no issues using 'partner'.</p> <p>When providing feedback on version B, participants noted that 'all the time' was an unrealistic option. Couples who lived apart also shared that they could not respond to this question any differently in comparison to version A as they did not see their partner all of the time. Adding a qualifier of 'when you see them' was suggested to resolve this issue.</p> <p>There were not differences in how couples in dyads understood or responded to this question.</p> <p><b>Preference:</b> There was no clear preference between the two response options.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations for final question wording:</b></p>	<p>The word 'mate' should be replaced with 'partner' throughout to avoid confusion for respondents. Other than this, it is recommended that the question wording is changed to reflect a question about frequency, e.g. 'How often do you kiss your partner?'</p> <p>It may be worth considering adding "when you are together" or equivalent caveat, to account for couples who regularly live apart, or taking this difference into account when conducting analysis, depending on how this question will be used.</p>

Round 1 wording	Round 2 wording
<p>24. Do you and your mate engage in outside interests together?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. All of them</li> <li>2. Most of them</li> <li>3. Some of them</li> <li>4. Very few of them</li> <li>5. None of them</li> </ol>	<p>24. Do you and your <b>partner</b> engage in outside interests together?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. All of them</li> <li>2. Most of them</li> <li>3. Some of them</li> <li>4. Very few of them</li> <li>5. None of them</li> </ol>
<p><b>Findings from Round 1:</b></p>	<p>As above, all participants who were currently in a relationship (22 respondents) were asked this question in Round 1. Of these respondents 5 lived separately from their partner and 17 lived together.</p> <p>As previously mentioned, the wording of 'mate' was seen as confusing. Respondents suggested replacing this with 'partner'. The wording of 'outside interests' was also not intuitive for most participants. They understood this to mean 'hobbies' or 'common interests' and thought these would be more appropriate replacements. This is especially important in the context that many respondents were limited to thinking about activities that were done outside when responding.</p> <p>There were no differences in how couples in dyads or those who lived apart understood or responded to this question.</p>
<p><b>Findings from Round 2:</b></p>	<p>As above, all participants who were currently in a relationship (17 respondents) were asked this question. Of these respondents 12 lived separately from their partner and 5 lived together.</p> <p>In round 2, participants were also asked to share their preference between original and alternate wording.</p> <p>Participants noted no issues on using 'partner'. Some shared a preference for asking this question differently, suggesting focusing on whether or not a couple engage in each other's hobbies or show interest in each other's interests rather than using the current wording. Some participants noted that this has an overlap with the item that asks about 'leisure activities' (item 14).</p> <p>There were no differences in how couples in dyads or those who live apart understood or responded to this question.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations for final question wording:</b></p>	<p>It may be useful to think about potential overlaps between this question and those asking about agreement regarding leisure activities.</p> <p>Other than this, the word 'mate' should be replaced with 'partner' throughout to avoid confusion for respondents.</p>

Round 1 wording	Round 2 wording
<p>How often would you say the following events occur between you and your mate?</p> <p>25. Have a stimulating exchange of ideas  26. Laugh together  27. Calmly discuss something  28. Work together on a project</p>	<p>How often would you say the following events occur between you and your <b>partner</b>?</p> <p>25. Have a stimulating exchange of ideas  27. Calmly discuss something  27a. <b>Calmly discuss something you disagree on</b>  28. Work together on a project  28a. <b>Plan or work together on something (e.g. organising a holiday or DIY)</b></p>
<p>1. Never  2. Less than once a month  3. Once or twice a month  4. Once or twice a week  5. Once a day  6. More often</p>	<p>1. Never  2. Less than once a month  3. Once or twice a month  4. Once or twice a week  5. Once a day  6. More often</p>
<p><b>Findings from Round 1:</b></p>	<p>As above, all participants who were currently in a relationship (22 respondents) were asked this question in Round 1. Of these respondents 5 lived separately from their partner and 17 lived together.</p> <p>As previously mentioned, the wording of 'mate' was seen as confusing.</p> <p>Participants also shared feedback on the response options, noting that the last option is better phrased as either 'several times a day' or 'more often than once a day'. They also noted that the timeframes make it more difficult to respond to some of these questions, suggesting replacing it with a difference scale that provides options such as 'never', 'rarely', 'sometimes', 'often', etc. This was particularly true for couples who live apart, as they do not necessarily see each other every day.</p> <p><i>"I think it's a weird question only because I was just like, imagine only laughing together once a day. Do you schedule in laughs?" Male, 20-24 years old, in a steady relationship and not living with their partner, part of a dyad</i></p> <p><b>25.</b> Respondents thought this was a straightforward question to answer and thought through a typical week for this response. When asked what 'stimulating exchange of ideas' meant for them, they flagged things such as deep, thought provoking, or interesting conversations. There were not differences in how couples in dyads or those who live apart understood or responded to this question.</p> <p><b>26.</b> Participants found this straightforward to respond to this question. There were not differences in how couples in dyads or those who live apart understood or responded to this question.</p> <p><b>27.</b> Participants interpreted this question differently, with some noting that there is an undertone of a disagreement that needs to be discussed being implied in the wording. Others understood this to mean their daily discussions such as what to have for dinner, bedtime, news, and any general conversations with their partner.</p>

	<p>There were not differences in how couples in dyads or those who live apart understood or responded to this question.</p> <p><b>28.</b> This question was easily understood and answered. Project was interpreted in various ways including things to do with shared houses such as building a house, DIY, or setting up a room to working together to host a dinner party, supporting with a partner's CV, and booking travel. Some thought the wording 'project' was more appropriate for a work context, and 'task' may be a better word for this. Even within dyads, there were differences in assumptions about what a 'project' might involve.</p> <p>There were not differences in how couples who live apart understood or responded to this question.</p>
<p><b>Findings from Round 2:</b></p>	<p>As above, all participants who were currently in a relationship (17 respondents) were asked this question. Of these respondents 12 lived separately from their partner and 5 lived together.</p> <p>In round 2, participants were also asked to share their preference between original and alternate wordings for some of the questions, and the order of these options varied between participants. Participants noted no issues on using 'partner'.</p> <p><b>25.</b> There were no key differences in how this question was understood in round 1 and 2.</p> <p><b>27.</b> There were no key differences in how this question was understood in round 1 and 2.</p> <p><b>27a.</b> Many preferred this wording, noting that it adds clarity, whilst others thought items 27 and 27a are now focused on different topics and therefore could not be compared, as they had understood 27 to focus on general conversations, rather than those where there was a difference of opinion.</p> <p>There were no differences in how couples in dyads or those who live apart understood or responded to this question.</p> <p><b>28.</b> There were no key differences in how this question was understood in round 1 and 2.</p> <p><b>28a.</b> Participants noted various preferences between this item and item 28. Whilst some were pleased with the specificity and found the question easier to respond to, others preferred the initial wording and thought the specificity did not help.</p> <p>There were no differences in how couples in dyads or those who live apart understood or responded to this question.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations for final question wording:</b></p>	<p>The alternative wordings which were tested in round 2 were generally preferred, and it would therefore be recommended that these wordings are used.</p> <p>The word 'mate' should be replaced with 'partner' throughout to avoid confusion for respondents.</p>

Round 1 wording	Round 2 wording
<p>These are some things about which couples sometimes agree and sometime disagree. Indicate if either item below caused differences of opinions or were problems in your relationship during the past few weeks. (Check yes or no).</p> <p>29. Being too tired for sex. 30. Not showing love.</p>	<p>Not asked in Round 2</p>
<p>1. Yes 2. No</p>	<p>Not asked in Round 2</p>
<p><b>Findings from Round 1:</b></p>	<p>As above, all participants who were currently in a relationship (22 respondents) were asked this question in Round 1. Of these respondents 5 lived separately from their partner and 17 lived together.</p> <p>Overall, participants felt asking about the frequency of these occurrences may be more useful than a yes / no question.</p> <p><b>29.</b> Participants showed different levels of comfort answering this question, with some moving on from the question quickly after providing short answers and others providing more detail. Some noted that there could be many reasons they / their partner would not like to have sex (such as dealing with health conditions). The current question wording misses the nuance in the context for not having sex. There was also a focus on whether or not there had been a situation when one partner was too tired for sex, rather than whether or not this had caused a disagreement. There were no differences in how couples in dyads or those who live apart understood or responded to this question.</p> <p><b>30.</b> This item was seen as repetitive of item 4 (demonstrations of affection) and understood in a similar way, but otherwise participants were able to answer it easily. Couples who lived apart tended to think about showing love in situations when they were physically together, for example when hugging, kissing, or watching a film together. There were no differences in how couples in dyads understood or responded to this question.</p>
<p><b>Findings from Round 2:</b></p>	<p>These items were not asked in Round 2.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations for final question wording:</b></p>	<p>It may be useful to consider changing this question to one that focuses on frequency of occurrence rather than a yes/no question to capture more nuance.</p>

Round 1 wording	Round 2 wording
31. The circles on the following line represent different degrees of happiness in your relationship. The middle point, "happy," represents the degree of happiness of most relationships. Please fill in the circle which best describes the degree of happiness, all things considered, of your relationship.	31. <b>The responses below represent</b> different degrees of happiness in your relationship. The middle point, "happy", represents the degree of happiness of most relationships. <b>Please select the number</b> which best describes the degree of happiness, all things considered, of your relationship.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Extremely unhappy</li> <li>2. Fairly unhappy</li> <li>3. A little unhappy</li> <li>4. Happy</li> <li>5. Very happy</li> <li>6. Extremely happy</li> <li>7. Perfect</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Extremely unhappy</li> <li>2. Fairly unhappy</li> <li>3. A little unhappy</li> <li>4. Happy</li> <li>5. Very happy</li> <li>6. Extremely happy</li> <li>7. Perfect</li> </ol>
<b>Findings from Round 1:</b>	<p>As above, all participants who were currently in a relationship (22 respondents) were asked this question in Round 1. Of these respondents 5 lived separately from their partner and 17 lived together.</p> <p>Participants had consensus that 'perfect' felt unrealistic and unachievable, with some even suggesting it being removed. Some also noted that the question wording was long and difficult to understand, recommending changing 'represents a degree of happiness in most relationships' to something simpler such as 'relationships on average'. Other than this, the question was easy to answer and understand.</p> <p>Couples who lived apart by choice often noted that their responses (often on the 'happy' to 'extremely happy' end of the spectrum) would have been more negative had they lived together.</p>
<b>Findings from Round 2:</b>	<p>As above, all participants who were currently in a relationship (17 respondents) were asked this question in Round 2. Of these respondents 12 lived separately from their partner and 5 lived together.</p> <p>The question wording was more easily understood in comparison to round 1. Similar to round 1, those who lived apart by choice often noted they would be less happy if they were living with their partners.</p>
<b>Recommendations for final question wording:</b>	The alternative wording which was tested in round 2 were generally understood more easily, and it would therefore be recommended that this wording is used.

Round 1 wording	Round 2 wording
32. Which of the following statements best describes how you feel about the future of your relationship?	Not asked in Round 2
<p>1. I want desperately for my relationship to succeed, and would go to almost any length to see that it does.</p> <p>2. I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and will do all I can to see that it does.</p> <p>3. I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and will do my fair share to see that it does.</p> <p>4. It would be nice if my relationship succeeded, but I can't do much more than I am doing now to help it succeed.</p> <p>5. It would be nice if it succeeded, but I refuse to do any more than I am doing now to keep the relationship going.</p> <p>6. My relationship can never succeed, and there is no more that I can do to keep the relationship going.</p>	Not asked in Round 2
<b>Findings from Round 1:</b>	<p>As above, all participants who were currently in a relationship (22 respondents) were asked this question in Round 1. Of these respondents 5 lived separately from their partner and 17 lived together.</p> <p>Participants noted that this was a detailed question which was helpful for more clarification. Some interpreted the question as asking 'How much are you willing to invest for your relationship to succeed?'. Others thought it was asking about 'How confident are you in your relationship being a lasting relationship?'. Some also noted that there are two key focuses in this question – how participants are feeling about their relationship as well as what they would do to ensure its success.</p> <p>There was also a sense that the first response option implies the relationship is not working in the way the respondent would like. The sense of 'desperation' was not received positively, and the placement of this as the first option (which people expected to be the most positive in this sequence) was confusing for some.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>"I guess this is a very hard question to answer because there's I think, a lot of different nuances here that like you'd have to consider. For example, I'll do my fair share. That seems like the most appropriate to me. But then at the same time it might be considered as like, I'm going to put bare minimum effort, if that makes sense." Male, 20-24 years old, in a steady relationship and not living with their partner, part of a dyad</i></p>
<b>Findings from Round 2:</b>	This item was not asked in Round 2.

**Recommendations for final question wording:**

It may be useful to consider splitting this out into separate questions regarding confidence in one's relationship and what respondents are willing to do ensure future success. It is also important to consider for analysis that the first option was considered by most respondents as a potentially negative sign in a relationship.

# 05 – Co- parenting

Round 1 wording	Round 2 wording
<p>You told us you have dependent child(ren) under 16 with [your [ex-]partner]. We would like to ask some questions about your co-parenting arrangements. Thinking only about overnight stays (not daytime contact), what are your current living arrangements for your child(ren)?</p>	<p>Same as Round 1</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. They stay overnight with you all of the time</li> <li>2. They stay overnight both at your home and the other parent's home</li> <li>3. They stay overnight at home and each parent moves in and out</li> <li>4. They do not stay overnight with you</li> <li>5. Other arrangement</li> <li>6. Not sure</li> </ol>	<p>Same as Round 1</p>
<p><b>Findings from Round 1:</b></p>	<p>To be asked this question, participants were required to have a child or children under 16 who they were responsible for, and be living apart from the child's other parent.</p> <p>Of the 11 parents who were asked this question in Round 1, 9 were separated from the other parent of their child(ren). The remaining 2 parents were in relationships with the other parent but preferred to live separately.</p> <p>There were a variety of living arrangements and relationship situations among parents in the sample. Of the 9 parents who were separated, 7 lived with their child(ren) on a full-time / majority basis. For the other 2 parents who were separated from their partner, one parent lived with their child on a part-time basis, and the other parent did not live with their children but saw them regularly.</p> <p>Of the 2 parents who were in relationships but living apart, one parent lived with their child on a full-time basis, and the other parent reported that the child(ren) primarily live with the other parent but they do live with them some of the time.</p> <p>There was one co-parenting dyad where both parents were asked this question and one parent was one half of a dyad with a participant who was interviewed in Round 2. The dyads generally agreed on their descriptions of their children's living arrangements.</p> <p>Overall, participants found this question fairly straightforward to answer. Occasionally, participants flagged that the question wording was slightly cumbersome and could be made more concise, but there were no real issues with understanding what was being asked.</p> <p>Participants liked the use of "stay" in the response codes, rather than "living with" (as used in the earlier questions), as it felt less permanent and more semantically aligned with the idea of co-parenting. In general, participants also viewed the inclusion of code 5 positively, as it allowed for more specific co-parenting scenarios to be captured. However, some felt that using this as a catch-all meant that some nuance would be lost, and on occasion it was felt that certain scenarios should form part of the precode list (e.g., children staying over at the other parent's home but only when that parent is absent).</p>

Generally, respondents did not appear to anchor their response to an explicit time period, and instead focussed on agreed structures and custody arrangements – for example, if the child had set days that they stayed with their other parent. Where there were differences between answers to the earlier questions about where their children live and the question about overnight stays, participants describing “living” somewhere as a more permanent situation:

*“In our situation, it's definitely that [our children] live here and they just stay [with their other parent]. Whenever they stay there, they haven't got a set thing. Whereas other people that I know have a very 50:50 arrangement. So they might answer it that their kids live 50:50, because the kids have got stuff there and, you know, dual iPads and whatever kids want at both houses. Whereas my two will, like, pack a bag.” Female, 40-44 years old, separated and living apart from the other parent but in a co-parenting arrangement with them, and living with their child on a majority basis.*

Often, parents who looked after their child(ren) for the majority of the time found the response codes insufficient in capturing their situation and expressed dissatisfaction at having to choose code 2, which they felt implied the child(ren) spent equal time with each parent and therefore undervalued their role. On occasion, this led some respondents to select option 5 instead.

*“I would say probably number five because when I say they stay over one night at the weekend, it's not always the case. Sometimes he doesn't take them so you know, to say that they stay overnight, I think that's setting it in stone that he does take them one night when it's not like that.” Female, 45-49 years old, separated and living apart from the other parent but in a co-parenting arrangement with them, and living with their child on a full-time basis.*

*“I don't want to tick number two because [my son]'s [at his other parent's] one day a week and I don't want people to think that he's there all the time because he's not.” Female, 25-29 years old, separated and living apart from the other parent but in a co-parenting arrangement with them, and living with their child on a full-time basis.*

Less frequently, respondents questioned the need for code 6 as part of the response options. Some respondents felt this was not relevant and said it would be a concern if participants were unaware of their child's current living situation. “Prefer not to say” was suggested as a more suitable alternative response code on one occasion. On occasion, participants also flagged a potential overlap between codes 4 and 5 – the idea here centred on the fact that if the child or child(ren) does not stay overnight with the parent, then by definition there is an ‘other’ arrangement taking place.

Upon probing, participants shared a variety of co-parenting arrangements and generally showed no resistance to doing so. It is also worth noting that participants with older children were more likely to describe more flexible arrangements that may change week by week, depending on the preference of the children, while those of younger children were more likely to describe fixed, structured relationships in line with previously-agreed arrangements (e.g. custody settlements). Parents also talked about spending time with their child(ren) without overnight stays, either through doing activities during the day (particularly where there were practical reasons

	<p>why their home was unsuitable for overnight stays for their child(ren)), or keeping in touch virtually, including by messaging and phone and video calls. These were not captured by the question but may be useful context for analysis.</p> <p>The speed at which participants had arrived at these co-parenting arrangements was variable; on some occasions, the arrangements were decided instantly, whereas on other occasions it had taken over a year to formalise the arrangements. Frequently, participants referenced external influences when describing how the co-parenting arrangement was decided – examples included the instructions of lawyers, accessibility requirements of children with long-term conditions and disabilities, and the suitability of the parents' living spaces. Some participants also noted the transience of their current co-parenting arrangements – although code 6 was not selected by any respondents.</p> <p>Where the co-parenting arrangements were formally or legally defined, respondents generally appeared to interpret the question principally based on their own knowledge of the co-parenting arrangement and then describe the source from which this arrangement was dictated – so, for example, focusing first on the fact that the child(ren) stay overnight at both parents' houses as this is the agreed arrangement, and then upon probing explaining the method through which this arrangement was arrived at (e.g., because work schedules dictated that one parent can only look after the child on weekends).</p> <p>Generally, the number of children involved in the coparenting arrangement did not appear to affect participants' understanding of the question or their ability to select a suitable response code, although some who selected option 2 did describe different frequencies of overnight stays for different children (for example, depending on the child's age).</p>
<p><b>Findings from Round 2:</b></p>	<p>9 participants were asked this question in Round 2.</p> <p>Of the 9 parents who were asked this question, 5 were separated from the other parent of their child(ren). The remaining 4 parents were relationships with the other parent but lived separately – for a variety of reasons including work arrangements, personal preference and being in different countries. One of the parents who was separated from the other parent of their child was in a new relationship and cohabiting with a new partner.</p> <p>As in Round 1, there were a variety of living arrangements and relationship situations among parents in the sample. Of the 5 parents who were separated, none of them lived with their child(ren) on a full-time basis, 3 parents said that the child(ren) lived with them on a majority basis, one parent said that the child(ren) lived with the other parent for the majority of the time, and one parent said that the child(ren) do not live with them and have not stayed overnight since the separation occurred. For the other 4 parents who were in relationships but lived separately, all parents lived with their child on a full-time or majority basis.</p> <p>Participant feedback was broadly consistent with Round 1. In general, respondents did not have issues understanding the question wording. Upon probing, respondents sometimes highlighted that they interpreted “overnight stays” as relating to the child’s sleeping arrangements. As in the previous round, participants also generally talked about the arrangements based on standardised agreements, rather than what had happened over a particular time period.</p> <p>Mostly, the response codes were seen as suitable and straightforward to understand. Participants noted that they saw the utility of options 5 and 6, particularly for newly-separated couples who are still determining their co-parenting arrangements.</p>

	<p>However, there was a similar frustration amongst respondents who looked after their child(ren) for most of the time but felt that they had to select code 2, and it was frequently suggested that having a “majority of the time” option would have been more reflective of their situation. There was also some concern that the selection of code 2 engendered a “lack of accuracy” in the sense that the actual split of time spent at each parent’s house would not be captured, and whether this could affect the conclusions drawn. Interestingly, this was also acknowledged by one parent in an equal co-parenting arrangement:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“Another answer could be that they stay with the other parent the majority of the time. But yeah, no, I would say my answer would be that they stay overnight both at our homes, like at my house and the other parent’s. Because it is equal.” Female, 30-34 years old, separated from the other parent but in a co-parenting arrangement with them, and living with their child on a split basis.</i></p> <p>On occasion, parents also were less clear about code 3 and suggested this might not be selected by many parents.</p> <p>As in Round 1, participants reported a variety of co-parenting arrangements. Generally, the parents who referred to external factors when describing their co-parenting arrangements (e.g., working patterns) said that the decisions were dictated to them and so their co-parenting arrangements were arrived at more easily.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations for final question wording:</b></p>	<p>We would recommend retaining the existing question wording but expanding the scale to also capture frequency (e.g., adding codes to reflect the fact that the child stays with the participant or their partner most of the time). This would enable participants to provide extra nuance as desired when answering about their co-parenting arrangements and may encourage more accurate responses.</p> <p>Allowing verbatim responses or an additional question about the reasoning for this arrangement may also help ensure the breadth of co-parenting arrangements is captured for additional analysis.</p>

# 06 – Pregnancy

Round 1 wording	Round 2 wording
<p>Are you currently pregnant or expecting a baby and you had your 12-week pregnancy scan or someone who is pregnant by you had their 12-week scan?</p>	<p>Are you currently pregnant <b>or is another person pregnant with your child?</b></p> <p>(IF YES AT PREVIOUS QUESTION)</p> <p>Have you or they had their 12-week pregnancy scan?</p>
<p>1. Yes 2. No</p>	<p><i>Part 1 of question:</i></p> <p>1. Yes 2. No <b>3. Prefer not to say</b></p> <p><i>Part 2 of question:</i></p> <p>1. Yes 2. No</p>
<p><b>Findings from Round 1:</b></p>	<p>All respondents who were expecting a child (5 respondents) were asked this question in Round 1. Out of these, 3 were pregnant, and 2 respondents were expecting a baby via surrogacy.</p> <p>Some respondents found this question overly complex, as it seemed to be asking two distinct questions within itself: whether there was a pregnancy, and whether there had been a 12-week scan. Those under 12 weeks pregnant found the question particularly difficult to answer. Respondents provided suggestions for splitting the question: first asking 'Are you currently pregnant/Is someone currently pregnant by you?' and then separately: 'Have you/your partner had their 12-week scan?'</p> <p>Where participants were expecting a child, but were less than 12 weeks gestation, they were unsure how to answer the question in its current format, as they didn't want to select "No" as they were expecting a baby.</p>
<p><b>Findings from Round 2:</b></p>	<p>At Round 2, 11 respondents were asked this question, of which 8 were pregnant, and 3 were non-pregnant expectant individuals.</p> <p>The wording used in Round 2 was generally understood well, and respondents commented on openness of the question, meaning it could be applicable to everyone.</p> <p><i>"It did not just limit the question to a particular gender." Female, 26-30, Not in a steady relationship</i></p> <p>The follow-up question was understood well by respondents and was felt to be applicable across genders and relationship types. It was also flagged that a "Prefer not to say" option may be appropriate for this question.</p> <p>The 12-week scan was seen as a suitable marker for this question, described both as a standard marker for telling people about the pregnancy, but also as entering the "safe zone", where a miscarriage was less likely.</p> <p><i>"After you have the 12 week scan, you know, like there's a confirmation of the pregnancy [...] It's kind of like the main confirmation and that's when it's like the, the rates of like miscarriages have reduced anyway [...]"</i></p>

	<p><i>Because then it means like you've passed, you've completed the first trimester." Female, 26-30, Not in a steady relationship</i></p> <p>There were no differences in interpretation amongst couples in a dyad. One respondent, who did not live with their partner, suggested an alternate phrasing of the question: "Are you expecting a child?". There were no other notable differences amongst couples who lived together and those that did not.</p> <p>However, the suitability of this question for same-sex couples was again queried in Round 2. A respondent in a same-sex female relationship, whose wife had previously been pregnant, felt this question did not accurately reflect their pregnancy situation. It was also noted that the question assumed any woman who said yes to the question was pregnant, which would have implications for routing for the following section, where different questions should be asked on the pregnant and non-pregnant parent, as it did not ask whether they were pregnant. This also has implications for women expecting a child via a surrogate.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations for final question wording:</b></p>	<p>Follow wording aligned to that used in Round 2, to avoid confusing participants by attempting to condense multiple questions in one. Reword Part 1 of the question to a broader question, i.e. "Are you currently pregnant or expecting a baby?" and then offer 3 broad option codes, including a "prefer not to say" option:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Yes, I am pregnant</li> <li>2. Yes, another person is pregnant with my child</li> <li>3. Prefer not to say</li> </ol> <p>This allows the question to remain open, which was appreciated in Round 2, while still allowing participants to confirm whether or not they are the person who is pregnant. Answer code 2 would broadly be able to encompass current/ex-partners, surrogates, and/or anyone else whom may be pregnant with the respondent's child. Alternatively, individual answer codes for each of these categories could be included.</p>

Round 1 wording	Round 2 wording
<p>And just for our context, how far along are you in your pregnancy?</p> <p>OR</p> <p>And just for our context, how many weeks pregnant is your partner/co-parent currently?</p>	<p>Same as Round 1</p>
<p>[OPEN NUMERIC]</p>	<p>Same as Round 1</p>
<p><b>Findings from Round 1:</b></p>	<p>This question was asked to 5 respondents in Round 1. Out of these, 3 were pregnant and 2 respondents were the non-pregnant parent expecting a baby.</p> <p>The majority of respondents were able to immediately answer this question, providing details of the length of their pregnancy in weeks and/or months. The exception to this was a respondent in a same-sex relationship, expecting via surrogacy, who felt the question excluded those in a similar situation, as their surrogate was neither their partner or co-parent.</p>
<p><b>Findings from Round 2:</b></p>	<p>Likewise, the 11 respondents (8 pregnant, 3 non-pregnant expectant individuals) asked this in Round 2 understood this question well, and there were no differences amongst those in a dyad, nor amongst couples who lived together and couples who did not.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations for final question wording:</b></p>	<p>Keep as is.</p>

Round 1 wording	Round 2 wording
Can you tell me the full name of the baby's other parent?	Same as Round 1
[OPEN TEXT]	Same as Round 1
<b>Findings from Round 1:</b>	<p>This question was asked to 5 respondents at Round 1, all of whom were expecting a child.</p> <p>Respondents generally felt comfortable with describing the individual as the 'baby's other parent.' Some respondents felt uncomfortable with disclosing this individual's name, with one querying the relevance of this question. However, all participants felt able to answer the question, and dyads were consistent about who they would consider the 'other parent'.</p> <p>One respondent speculated whether others may view their baby as having multiple other parent(s), however still felt the question was broadly acceptable. This question was more complicated for those expecting via surrogacy, or those expecting a baby alone, so may be worth adjusting the wording to reflect this – depending on the design of the preceding questions.</p>
<b>Findings from Round 2:</b>	<p>This question was asked to 11 respondents at Round 2, all of whom were expecting a child.</p> <p>Although respondents generally understood this question, there was a greater variety of views about the suitability of referring to an individual as the 'baby's other parent'. There was no notable pattern based on relationship status or living situations, nor based on whether the individual themselves was pregnant. Opinions instead appeared to be driven by individual preferences.</p> <p>A few respondents felt this was an inclusive way of asking this question, encompassing different sexual preferences. One respondent, who was in a steady relationship but not living with their partner, felt they would have referred to this individual as the 'father of the child', whilst another, who was not in a steady relationship, expressed indifference, interpreting both 'father of the child' and 'baby's other parents' as similar.</p> <p>Where the respondent was not in a steady relationship, they queried the suitability of asking this to somebody who did not want to associate themselves/communicate with the other parent, and/or people who were in situation where the other parent of their child was not involved:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>"This is now limited to if you are still in communication with the other parent. So, what if I am not in communication with the other parent, and I don't want him to be... to be a part of my baby's life?" Female, 26-30, Not in a steady relationship</i></p> <p>The respondent suggested including "if applicable" at the end of the question to make the question more inclusive.</p>
<b>Recommendations for final question wording:</b>	<p>Include a 'prefer not to say' answer option. Perhaps include a message reaffirming that information provided in the survey will be treated with confidentiality, and/or if possible, include a brief note on why this information is being collected.</p> <p>Depending on previous routing, it may be appropriate to previously identify those expecting via surrogacy, and/or if the person is having the baby alone or with a co-parent before asking the co-parent's name.</p>

# **07 – Pregnancy**

## **plan**

Round 1 wording	Round 2 wording
Have you/your partner decided to continue with this pregnancy? Please be assured the answer you give is completely confidential.	<b>The following questions are about experiences of pregnancy. Can we check, is the current plan to continue with this pregnancy? Please be assured the answer you give is completely confidential.</b>
1. Yes 2. No, decided to end the pregnancy/termination 3. Prefer not to say	1. Yes, <b>continuing with the pregnancy</b> 2. No, <b>not continuing with the pregnancy</b> 3. <b>Uncertain/still deciding</b> 4. <b>Prefer not to say</b>
<b>Findings from Round 1:</b>	<p>All respondents who were expecting a baby (5 respondents) were asked this question in Round 1. This included 3 individuals who were pregnant, and 2 who were expecting via surrogacy.</p> <p>Potential difficulties around this question were raised by respondents - who proactively raised concerns around the sensitivity of asking this question to those who may, for example, were planning on putting the child up for adoption, or those having to terminate their pregnancy for any reason. Participants who had had an assisted conception (in this case surrogacy) felt this question was not applicable to their situation.</p> <p><i>“It's very unlikely that someone who is going through surrogacy and paying loads of money for it would just decide to end the pregnancy. I think this whole question ought to be reconsidered.” Male, 40-44, In a steady relationship and living together</i></p> <p>However, it is worth noting that terminations may happen due to medical reasons, which would still apply to those having a child through surrogacy.</p> <p>Respondents also expressed appreciation of the “prefer not to say” answer code, even amongst those who personally did not feel uncomfortable answering the question.</p> <p><i>“Maybe it's hard for people who might be going through the pregnancy and giving the baby up for adoption at the end and things like that. I think it's probably quite sensitive.” Female, 35-39, In a steady relationship and living together.</i></p> <p>There were no differences on the basis of whether or not respondents were living together with their partner.</p>
<b>Findings from Round 2:</b>	<p>All respondents who were expecting a baby (11 respondents) were asked this question in Round 2. This comprised of 8 individuals who were pregnant, and 3 who were not.</p> <p>Although respondents broadly felt comfortable providing an answer, they again noted how others could find this question distressing, with a respondent suggesting those terminating their pregnancy may already be dealing with feelings of “guilt” (ID42), highlighting the question as being sensitive.</p> <p><i>“I think it is a difficult subject. I can imagine if it was someone who was undecided. It is a very difficult question to ask someone. So, yes, it's a difficult one. It's not nice to, like, you know, to think about stuff like that. [...] I</i></p>

	<p>guess it's potentially necessary. So it's got the prefer not to say option there. So, I think that's pretty fine.”  <i>Male, 25-29, Not in a steady relationship</i></p> <p>The assurance of confidentiality provided after the question was noted as being reassuring.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations for final question wording:</b></p>	<p>Align wording close to that provided at Round 2, including the prefer not to say option and reassurance of confidentiality, as this is a question which may invoke difficult or upsetting feelings and/or emotions amongst respondents.</p> <p>It may also be appropriate to consider adding some context around other reasons for terminating a pregnancy other than not wanting to become a parent at that time, such as health reasons. However, even where participants were confused as to why they were being asked the question considering they had used assisted conception, they were still able to answer the question.</p>

Round 1 wording	Round 2 wording
Before this pregnancy began, did you intend to have a baby at some time in the future?	Before this pregnancy began, <b>were you planning to have a baby?</b>
1. Yes 2. No	1. Yes, <b>was actively trying</b> 2. <b>I was planning to have a baby, but not at this time</b> 3. <b>No, I was not planning to have a baby</b> 4. <b>Unsure/hadn't decided</b>
<b>Findings from Round 1:</b>	<p>Respondents who were expecting a child (including 3 pregnant and 2 non-pregnant parents-to-be) were shown this question. This equated to five respondents at Round 1. Participants who were part of dyads consistently agreed with their partners on their response to this question.</p> <p>The majority of those asked found the question straightforward and easy to answer. The exception to this was a respondent in a same-sex relationship, who noted how pregnancy will be almost always planned for an LGBTQIA+ couple, as they cannot naturally conceive, therefore an unintentional pregnancy was impossible.</p> <p>Furthermore, despite finding the question straightforward to answer, there was a differentiation between a planned pregnancy (i.e. one that was been actively tried for) and wanting to have a baby at some point in the future. The respondent mentioned how individuals may have specific “time frames” in mind, for example, and that yes/no answer codes may not be sufficient.</p> <p>The Round 1 respondent also mentioned how those struggling with fertility may find this question difficult.</p>
<b>Findings from Round 2:</b>	<p>10 respondents, who were either pregnant or a non-pregnant expecting individual were shown this question at Round 2.</p> <p>Again, respondents broadly found this question acceptable and were able to provide an answer. The answer codes provided allowed for a distinction between the potential interpretations of ‘planning’ (i.e. actively trying versus planning to have a baby at some point in the near future) which were raised at Round 1. One respondent appreciated the range of answer codes provided, noting them to be better than a dichotomous alternative of yes/no. Where there was a challenge in aligning oneself to the answer codes provided, a “prefer not to answer” code was suggested, as was a code for not actively trying, but also not actively preventing pregnancy (e.g. not using contraception).</p> <p>There were no notable differences between expectant individuals who lived with their partner, and those who lived separately.</p>
<b>Recommendations for final question wording:</b>	<p>Align to round 2 wording, which provides answer options beyond just yes/no, and include a “prefer not to answer” code. An option to capture people not actively trying but also not actively avoiding pregnancy may also be appropriate.</p> <p>It may also be worth considering the routing for this question, and whether to exclude those who had an assisted conception, for whom the answer can be inferred.</p>

Round 1 wording	Round 2 wording
Was the pregnancy...	<b>How was the pregnancy conceived?</b>
1. Naturally conceived 2. Assisted conception	1. Naturally conceived <b>2. Using fertility treatment (e.g. IVF, insemination, fertility drugs etc)</b> <b>3. Prefer not to say</b>
<b>Findings from Round 1:</b>	<p>At Round 1, 5 respondents who were expecting a child (including pregnant and non-pregnant parents-to-be) were asked this question. Participants in a dyad consistently agreed on their responses to this question.</p> <p>Respondents understood this question and found it easy to answer. When considering code 2 (assisted conception), people referred to specific terms they were more familiar with (IVF). Respondents who had naturally conceived were less familiar with the term “assisted conception”.:  <i>“I mean, I've heard it [assisted conception] before, but probably not as frequently used because obviously I hear more IVF and things like that, those terms. I know there's different types of assisted conception, but it's not commonly used, I don't think. Probably more, you know, people who undergo assisted conception, they're more familiar with it and that terminology. But yeah, I don't come across it too much.” Female, 35-39, In a steady relationship and living together</i></p> <p>Those becoming parents through surrogacy also felt these options were appropriate for them.</p>
<b>Findings from Round 2:</b>	<p>Amongst the 11 respondents (who were either pregnant or a non-pregnant expecting individual) asked this at Round 2, they generally felt comfortable answering this question. However, participants acknowledged the risk that those whose method of assisted conception was not included as part of the examples provided may feel “left out”. The idea of those who had used assisted conception potentially finding this question difficult to answer was also proactively discussed by participants who had conceived naturally.  <i>“If there wasn't maybe another option people might feel a bit ashamed to. Of what they've done and just put ‘prefer not to say’.” Female, 25-29, In a steady relationship but not living together</i></p> <p>Surrogacy was also an option highlighted as a potential example. Where participants felt the answer options did not provide the level of detail they would like to share (including of their own experiences of assisted conception), an open text box was suggested so people could explain their unique situations if they wished to do so, or didn’t feel they were covered by the options provided.</p>
<b>Recommendations for final question wording:</b>	<p>Align the question wording to that in Round 2. It may also be worth considering adding surrogacy to the example list, depending on whether or not this is identified at a previous question.</p> <p>This question may also make more sense before the question about whether someone was trying for a baby, as those using assisted conception could then be routed out of the question asking if the pregnancy was planned.</p>

Round 1 wording	Round 2 wording
Did this pregnancy occur sooner than you wanted, later than you wanted, or at about the right time?	<b>How do you feel about the timing of this pregnancy? This pregnancy was...</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sooner</li> <li>2. Later</li> <li>3. About the right time</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sooner <b>than I wanted</b></li> <li>2. Later <b>than I wanted</b></li> <li>3. About the right time</li> </ol>
<b>Findings from Round 1:</b>	<p>5 respondents were asked this question at Round 1, all of whom were expecting a child.</p> <p>All respondents who were asked this question, understood it. However, this question was seen as notably more difficult to answer than the other questions within the pregnancy section, with respondents reflecting on their individual circumstances – such as mentioning the age of their other children, and their expectations that it may take a while to conceive, so while a pregnancy may have occurred within an expected window, they would have preferred to conceive earlier. There was therefore limited differentiation between a three to six-month conception window and a much longer conception window. Respondents expecting through surrogacy did not find this question applicable, as their surrogacy had had to be pre-planned, meaning questions about timing were complicated.</p>
<b>Findings from Round 2:</b>	<p>11 respondents were asked this question at Round 2, all of whom were expecting a child.</p> <p>While the majority of respondents understood the question, one individual interpreted this question as referring to the due date of her child.</p> <p>Like at Round 1, respondents reflected based on personal circumstances when answering this question, and there was variation in how comfortable participants felt answering the question, which may impact the data collected at this question. For example, one respondent, who was not in a steady relationship, felt that option 1 (sooner than I wanted) implied that the pregnancy was not wanted. They mentioned the term “expected” as opposed to “wanted”, as in their situation the pregnancy was sooner than they expected but not sooner than they wanted. They therefore struggled to select an appropriate answer.</p>
<b>Recommendations for final question wording:</b>	<p>Include a “prefer not to answer” code, as this question can bring up challenging feelings/emotions amongst respondents.</p> <p>It may also be appropriate to consider whether “wanted” or “expected” is the more appropriate term, to reduce connotations of the pregnancy/baby being unwanted, depending on the analysis priorities for this question.</p>

# 08 – Pre-natal attachments

Round 1 wording	Round 2 wording
<p>The following sentences describe thoughts and feelings people may experience during pregnancy. We are interested in your experiences during this pregnancy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I wonder what the baby looks like now</li> <li>2. I imagine calling the baby by name</li> <li>3. I enjoy feeling the baby move</li> <li>4. I think that my baby already has a personality</li> <li>5. I let other people put their hands on my tummy to feel the baby move</li> <li>6. I know things I do will make a difference to the baby</li> <li>7. I plan the things I will do with my baby</li> <li>8. I tell others what the baby does inside me</li> <li>9. I imagine what part of the baby I'm touching</li> <li>10. I know when the baby is asleep</li> <li>11. I can make my baby move</li> <li>12. I feel love from the baby</li> <li>13. I like to sit with my arms around my tummy</li> <li>14. I dream about the baby</li> <li>15. I know why the baby is moving</li> <li>16. I stroke the baby through my tummy</li> <li>17. I know the baby hears me</li> <li>18. I get very excited when I think about the baby</li> </ol>	<p>The following sentences describe thoughts and feelings people may experience during pregnancy. We are interested in your experiences during this pregnancy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I wonder what the baby looks like now</li> <li>2. I imagine calling the baby by name</li> <li>3. I enjoy feeling the baby move</li> <li>4. I think that my baby already has a personality</li> <li>5. I let other people put their hands on my tummy to feel the baby move</li> <li>6. I know things I do will make a difference to the baby</li> <li>7. I plan the things I will do with my baby</li> <li>8. I tell others what the baby does inside me</li> <li>9. I imagine what part of the baby I'm touching</li> <li>10. I know when the baby is asleep</li> <li>11. I can make my baby move</li> <li>12. I feel love from the baby</li> <li>13. I like to sit with my arms around my tummy</li> <li>14. I dream about the baby</li> <li>15. I know why the baby is moving</li> <li>16. I stroke the baby through my tummy</li> <li>17. I <b>think about the baby hearing me OR I speak to or make noise for the baby</b></li> <li>18. I get very excited when I think about the baby</li> </ol>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Almost always</li> <li>2. Often</li> <li>3. Sometimes</li> <li>4. Almost never</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Always</b>/Almost always</li> <li>2. Often</li> <li>3. Sometimes</li> <li>4. <b>Never</b>/Almost never</li> </ol>
<p><b>Findings from Round 1:</b></p>	<p>The full scale of this question was asked of respondents who were pregnant – this translated to 3 respondents in Round 1. The majority of the response options were understood without issue and seemed appropriate to participants looking to describe their experience of pregnancy.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. One respondent mentioned how they did not feel pregnant before the 12-week mark, and another also mentioned how their baby was too small at the moment for them to consider this.</li> <li>2. It was suggested by respondents that others may be able to provide more concrete answers based on their stages and/or experiences of pregnancy. For example, the respondent who mentioned not feeling pregnant before 12-weeks suggested that the reason they “almost never” imagined calling the baby by name was because they were quite early in their pregnancy – and were not sure what they were going to name their baby.</li> </ol>

**3.** Statement 3 was understood well, although again respondents commented on the size of the baby. One respondent mentioned basing their answer to this code on the time of their scan, where their excitement levels were highest.

**4.** Amongst pregnant respondents, some aspects of this scale were seen to over-humanise the baby, including code 4, and/or being able to show love as seen in Code 12, which was not necessarily how they felt at that stage of the pregnancy. These parents had varying views of these statements, and some implied concern that saying they did not do these things would be interpreted as a lack of care. Some of the statements were seen as invasive or odd, and although respondents generally felt able to provide an answer, they noted that some statements were asking about aspects of their pregnancy which they had not necessarily given much thought to.

*“Those two about the personality and then about the love from the baby were a little bit left field. I felt like they were maybe a little bit disjointed compared to the other ones, just in my opinion, because I think they're very a matter of perspective.” Female, 35-39, In a steady relationship and living together*

**5.** This question was broadly understood and answered on the basis of personal preference. One respondent mentioned the only individual that they would allow to do this would be her partner.

**6.** There was also general questioning amongst respondents regarding statement 6, as there was a lack of clarity about whether this was referring to actions during pregnancy, or after the baby was born:

*“Is this as in things you do whilst you're pregnant now? I guess it's prenatal part of the thingy, isn't it, part of the questionnaire? [...] I know things I do will make a difference to the baby whilst it's, you know, not born. Is that what you mean prenatally? Is this what it means?” Female, 35-39, In a steady relationship and living together*

One respondent was able to recall some examples of activities they felt would make a difference, stating that they had seen other parents make specific foods on social media, which they hadn't considered before.

**7.** Respondents comprehended this question as referring to activities post-birth, recalling examples of how Christmas would be with the baby, and how they would balance spending quality time with their other children once the baby was born.

**8.** Similar to codes 4 and 12 where the baby was seen to be over-humanised, one respondent expressed that the only thing the baby would 'do' inside of her would be to move, and therefore this wording felt odd.

**9.** Understood well, with some comments on how this is dependent on the stage of pregnancy.

**10.** Again, this was broadly understood well, however one respondent felt the question was quite odd, as there is no guarantee as to whether the baby is asleep or not. However, another respondent said her baby was quite active inside the womb, therefore she could tell when it was asleep.

	<p><b>11.</b> Respondents understood the question well, however one respondent felt an additional “not applicable [yet]” code could be added to the question in order to encapsulate their personal experience.</p> <p><b>12.</b> Similar to statement 4, this was seen to over-humanise the baby, and respondents mentioned not having given this much thought during pregnancy. One respondent almost immediately likened this to statement 4.</p> <p><b>13.</b> Again, respondents understood the question well. One respondent commented on the process of visualising putting arms around a tummy, and suggested this be changed to ‘hands’.</p> <p><b>14.</b> Respondents understood this question well.</p> <p><b>15.</b> Respondents understood this question well, although one mentioned they hadn’t given much thought as to why their baby would be moving.</p> <p><b>16.</b> Respondents understood this question well, although some of the wording was seen as odd. One respondent likened ‘stroking’ to how one would treat a pet, and did not feel it was the correct word to use, once probed. Another respondent also felt that the question implied the baby was being touched directly, rather than an individual touching their own stomach, and would not personally refer to the action in that way.</p> <p><b>17.</b> Respondents understood this question well, and a couple mentioned being aware of the fact the baby could hear them. One respondent mentioned how this is not something they naturally did or thought about, however they have been told that the baby can hear them by their midwife.</p> <p><b>18.</b> Respondents understood this question well, however provided nuance to the feeling of excitement, with one respondent mentioning they felt a mix of excitement and anxiety, and another feeling the excitement was for once the birth was over.</p>
<p><b>Findings from Round 2:</b></p>	<p>Similar to Round 1, amongst the 8 pregnant respondents shown this question at Round 2, there were often a feeling that many of the answer codes were dependent on the stage of pregnancy one was in and personal circumstances –</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“It depends how early or far along you are, depending on what people's situations are and what they're doing about their pregnancy. But I'd say for me, yeah, it is a good way of finding out how I'm feeling about the pregnancy.” Female, 20-24, In a steady relationship but not living together</i></p> <p><b>1.</b> Respondents understood the question well, but similar to Round 1, a few felt this was dependent on the stage of pregnancy, or was humanising the baby before birth.</p>

2. Respondents again highlighted a need for including an additional code at this question reflecting those whose baby doesn't have a name yet. This included participants who talked about coming from cultures where it was considered unusual or inappropriate to name a child before it was born.
3. Respondents could answer this question well, however there was a difference of opinion as to whether this question was liked. Although one respondent liked this question, and felt others would "love" it, another did not like the question as feeling the baby move was painful. As seen previously, it was mentioned that the stage of pregnancy would likely influence one's response.
4. Again, this code was seen by some to over-humanise the baby.
5. This question was broadly understood. Many respondents limited their recall of 'others' to close friends/family, including their partner.
6. This statement was interpreted by some as activities during pregnancy (such as not drinking nor smoking), and by others as activities that would be done after the baby was born (such as making hand puppets, or reading to them, even if they couldn't respond, because they know this would be beneficial for their development).
7. This question was broadly understood, although respondents mentioned that plans were not always concrete, and expected that in reality things would be flexible.
8. Respondents were probed on who they would class as "others" at statement 8. Many limited this to their partner and/or close friends or a family, although others focused more broadly on those outside this sphere. This had implications for how they answered, particularly where they were comfortable with close family touching their stomach, but not wider connections.
9. Respondents understood this question well, although a couple expressed not having given this much thought, with one feeling the question was odd.
10. Respondents understood this question well.
11. Respondents mostly understood this question well, although one mentioned how they would never try and intentionally make the baby move.
12. Respondents commented again on the over-humanisation of the baby, through mentioning how babies cannot feel love at this stage.
13. Respondents understood this question well. One respondent indicated a preference for the term "stomach" over 'tummy'.
14. Respondents understood this question well.

	<p><b>15.</b> Although the question was seen as easy to answer, some respondents found it difficult to do, with one respondent feeling the question was “bizarre”.</p> <p><b>16.</b> As seen in Round 1, a few respondents commented on the term “stroke” and expressed dislike, suggesting alternatives such as “touch”.</p> <p><b>17.</b> Respondents broadly understood this question well, although one felt there should be a caveat in the answer options to reflect those who were over 12 weeks pregnant, as this is when the baby could hear.</p> <p><b>18.</b> Respondents understood this question well.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations for final question wording:</b></p>	<p>Include ‘prefer not to answer’ answer codes as part of the response options offered, to encompass the variety of experiences and perspectives of pregnant individuals that may be answering this question. Consider including wording to reassure participants that the thoughts and feelings on the scale are not expectations, for example:</p> <p><b>“People experience different thoughts and feelings during pregnancy.</b> The following sentences describe thoughts and feelings people may experience during pregnancy.</p> <p><b>If you don’t experience any of these thoughts and feelings, that’s ok</b> - we are interested in your <b>personal</b> experiences during this pregnancy.”</p>

Round 1 wording	Round 2 wording
<p>The following sentences describe thoughts and feelings people may experience during pregnancy. We are interested in your experiences during this pregnancy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I wonder what the baby looks like now</li> <li>2. I imagine calling the baby by name</li> <li>3. I enjoy feeling the baby move</li> <li>4. I think that my baby already has a personality</li> <li>6. I know things I do will make a difference to the baby</li> <li>7. I plan the things I will do with my baby</li> <li>9. I imagine what part of the baby I'm touching</li> <li>12. I feel love from the baby</li> <li>14. I dream about the baby</li> <li>17. I know the baby hears me</li> <li>18. I get very excited when I think about the baby</li> </ol>	<p>The following sentences describe thoughts and feelings people may experience during pregnancy. We are interested in your experiences during this pregnancy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I wonder what the baby looks like now</li> <li>2. I imagine calling the baby by name</li> <li>3. I enjoy feeling the baby move</li> <li>4. I think that my baby already has a personality</li> <li>6. <b>I think about the impact the things I do during the pregnancy have on the baby</b></li> <li>7. I plan the things I will do with my baby</li> <li>9. I imagine what part of the baby I'm touching</li> <li>12. I feel love from the baby</li> <li>14. I dream about the baby</li> <li>17. I know the baby hears me</li> <li>18. I get very excited when I think about the baby</li> </ol>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Almost always</li> <li>2. Often</li> <li>3. Sometimes</li> <li>4. Almost never</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Always</b>/Almost always</li> <li>2. Often</li> <li>3. Sometimes</li> <li>4. <b>Never</b>/Almost never</li> </ol>
<p><b>Findings from Round 1:</b></p>	<p>A slightly reduced version of the above scale was asked to 1 non-pregnant expecting male individual.</p> <p>The physical aspects of the scale were flagged as not always being applicable to male expectant partners, or those conceiving via surrogacy, where they may not be in the same physical place as the pregnancy, and therefore there were limits on how they could interact with the baby.</p>
<p><b>Findings from Round 2:</b></p>	<p>This scale was tested with 3 non-pregnant expecting individuals at Round 2, all of whom were male. Two respondents were shown the full length of the scale, whilst the third was not shown items 17 and 18.</p> <p>Again, the scale felt very-mother focused and often didn't feel completely relevant amongst non-pregnant expecting individuals. Respondents felt certain items didn't align with their attachment to the baby, particularly where they were not in a relationship with their baby's other parent. For example, where they were not living together, it was harder for some participants to think about things they did that had an impact on the baby. As an alternative, questions asking about involvement in the baby's life were suggested as potentially more useful.</p> <p>In addition, there were questions raised about whether a time-frame might be a more useful framework to understand frequency.</p>

*“Maybe if you put, like, some sort of timing frame there, [...] , so many times a month or a week or something. Like: yes, at least once a week [...] that might be helpful.” Male, 26-30, Not in a steady relationship*

1. There was division between respondents on whether this reflected their attachment to the baby before birth.
2. Respondents broadly understood this question well.
3. This question was broadly understood. However, for some participants it was not felt to be applicable where it was too early in the pregnancy to feel the baby move, or where the respondent was neither in a relationship with nor living with the individual carrying his child, as these external factors impacted whether or not this was possible, rather than reflecting their own preferences.
4. This question also raised some concern for participants. For example, a respondent expressed not feeling as though their baby had a personality yet as it was unborn, and instead contextualised this question in terms of the baby's activity in the womb. Another respondent noted how a 'prefer not to answer' code could be useful at this question.
6. Where respondents understood the question well and felt it related to their experience, they talked about examples such as remembering saving money, smoking and drinking behaviour, and how they would drive with the baby in the car. This respondent also suggested separating out answer codes 1 and 4 to convert the scale into a 6-point one. However, others felt this was more mother-focussed, as they assumed the question was about the specific impact of behaviour while carrying the baby, and therefore felt examples of things which would have an impact may help in order to aid understanding and improve the question's answerability.
7. Respondents broadly understood this question, recalling activities they have thought about doing with the baby once it was born, such as sports or taking the child on trips. Even where participants did not currently plan future activities, as they were focussed on the pregnancy, they still felt this item was appropriate to understand attachment to the baby.
9. This item was generally not felt to be an accurate reflection of their attachment to the baby, due to the impact of external factors, like stage of the pregnancy. This was likened to item 3, and an additional answer option reflecting these external factors was suggested.
12. Respondents struggled to answer this question, finding it to be mother-centric and/or over-humanising the unborn baby. A respondent suggested reframing this question to whether or not the baby made [you] happy.

*“I don't feel love from the baby. No, I feel love for the baby.” Male, 26-30, In a steady relationship but not living together*

14. Respondents varied as to whether they felt this was a relevant indicator of attachment to the baby.

*“Whether you dream about the baby or not doesn't mean you're attached to the baby” Male, 36-40, In a steady relationship and living together*

17. This question was broadly understood amongst the individuals that were asked it. However, there was less awareness of whether this was physically possible, and it was felt to be linked to pregnancy stage. Therefore, a 'don't know' answer code was suggested.

	18. This item was broadly understood and respondents felt it to accurately reflect their attachment to the baby before birth.
<b>Recommendations for final question wording:</b>	<p>Seek to align the question more closely to thoughts and feeling of non-expectant parents-to-be, taking into considerations those who may not be in a relationship and/or close contact with their baby's other parent, potentially through revising codes such as 3, 12 and 17, or providing "Not applicable" options.</p> <p>It is also worth considering whether any changes made to the scale for those going through pregnancy should be made to this scale, for consistency of analysis, or whether any codes would benefit from being specifically adjusted for the non-pregnant parent-to-be.</p>

# 09 – Parenting styles

Round 1 wording	Round 2 wording
<p>Next, we are interested in knowing a little about any of your children aged 10. Here is a list of ways you could interact with your child. Please mark the answer that best indicates how often you usually do each.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I am responsive to [child name]'s feelings and needs.</li> <li>2. I use physical punishment as a way of disciplining [child name].</li> <li>3. I take [child name]'s desires into account before asking [him/her] to do something.</li> <li>4. When [child name] asks why [he/she] has to do something, I say 'because I say so' or 'I am your parent and I want you to'.</li> <li>5. I explain to [child name] about how I feel about [his/her] good and bad behaviour.</li> <li>6. I spank [child name] when [he/she] is disobedient.</li> <li>7. I encourage [child name] to talk about [his/her] troubles and/or feelings.</li> <li>8. I find it difficult to discipline [child name].</li> <li>9. I encourage [child name] to freely express [him/herself] even when disagreeing with parents.</li> <li>10. I punish by taking privileges away from [child name] without telling [him/her] why.</li> <li>11. I emphasise the reasons for rules to [child name].</li> <li>12. I give comfort and understanding when [child name] is upset.</li> <li>13. I yell or shout when [child name] misbehaves.</li> <li>14. I give praise when [child name] is good.</li> <li>15. I give in to [child name] when [he/she] causes a commotion or creates a fuss about something.</li> <li>16. I explode in anger towards [child name].</li> <li>17. I threaten [child name] with punishment more often than actually giving it.</li> <li>18. I take into account [child name]'s likes and dislikes when making plans for the family.</li> <li>19. I grab [child name] when [he/she] is being disobedient.</li> <li>20. I state punishments to [child name] and do not actually do them.</li> <li>21. I show respect for [child name]'s opinions by encouraging [him/her] to express them.</li> <li>22. I allow [child name] to give input into family rules.</li> <li>23. I scold and criticise to make [child name] improve.</li> <li>24. I spoil [child name].</li> <li>25. I give [child name] reasons why rules should be obeyed or followed.</li> <li>26. I use threats as punishment with little or no justification or explanation.</li> <li>27. I have warm, happy and comforting times together with [child name].</li> </ol>	<p>Same as Round 1</p>

<p>28. I punish [child name] by putting [him/her] somewhere alone with little or no explanation.</p> <p>29. I help [child name] to understand the effect of behaviour by encouraging [child name] to talk about the consequences of [his/her] own actions.</p> <p>30. I scold or criticise when [child name]'s behaviour doesn't meet my expectations.</p> <p>31. I explain the consequences of [child name]'s behaviour.</p> <p>32. I slap [child name] when he/she misbehaves.</p>	
<p>1. Never</p> <p>2. Once in a while</p> <p>3. About half the time</p> <p>4. Very often</p> <p>5. Always</p>	Same as Round 1
<p><b>Findings from Round 1:</b></p>	<p>To be eligible for these questions, participants were required to be parents of a dependent child aged 10 or 11, regardless of whether they were living with the other parent or not.</p> <p>In total, 2 participants were asked this block of questions. The full scale was tested on one parent, and another parent was asked a partial version of the scale due to time constraints during the interview.</p> <p>Both of the parents in Round 1 were married or in a registered civil partnership with the other parent and were living with them at the time of the interview. Both parents also lived with the children on a full-time basis.</p> <p>Both of the parents had children aged 11; one parent also had a child aged 20. One of the respondents was female, and the other was male.</p> <p>1. Participants understood this item well and highlighted that this was important. However, it was acknowledged that some children may not need their feelings responded to and would prefer to work through them independently.</p> <p>2. This item was well understood and easy to answer. Where there were differences, this was contextualised against the participant's own childhood experiences.</p> <p>3. Participants understood this well, and were able to answer easily – although were less comfortable immediately answering where the answer was not “Always”.</p> <p>4. This item was well understood and easy to answer. Where there were differences, this was contextualised against the participant's own childhood experiences.</p> <p>5. This question was clear and answered easily, and the importance of this when parenting was highlighted.</p> <p>6. This question was also very straightforward and quickly answered.</p> <p>7. This question was easily interpreted and felt to be important when considering parenting approaches.</p>

**8.** Both parents were able to answer it – but the reasons for why they found it challenging when they did varied. This depended on the driver of whether they felt a punishment was needed or the severity of the punishment (for example, the severity of the offence or the perceived intentionality of the behaviour). This question was primarily considered in the context of whether or not to discipline their child, rather than the perceived ease or difficulty of disciplining them.

**9.** This question was clear, and able to be answered easily. Guilt was associated with not feeling that they listened to their child enough, although the time and energy required to let children express themselves freely was also mentioned.

**10.** For this question, the participants focussed on whether or not they would take away privileges (e.g. remove access to a mobile phone if they used it to send malicious messages), even where they would always explain why an action was taken. In this context, the use of the word “punish” was felt to be too strong, rather than discipline.

**11.** This question was well understood, although required thought to answer where participants felt that they were in the middle in terms of striking the balance between giving the child free reign and being overly rules-focused.

**12.** The participants easily answered this question and again highlighted the importance of letting the child have a voice and empathising with the child’s feelings to allow them to give advice.

**13.** The participants understood this question well but had to think about their answer. It was noted that “never” shouting at a child was unrealistic, but participants wanted to be clear that it was unusual and to justify when they might do so.

**14.** The participants found this question straightforward, although acknowledged that the context in which the child is being good would influence the frequency of the praise being given. For example, if the child was good at school, this was likely to be praised more than if the child was being good around the home.

**15.** This question was understood differently depending on the parenting approach. There was a concern that “giving in” never does any good and it will encourage the child to “get too smart” and do this more frequently to get what they want. By contrast, there was concern that creating a commotion might express the child’s unmet needs, which may require giving in some of the time.

**16.** This question was easy for respondents to answer, but the term “explode in anger” was disliked as a way of describing their parenting. An alternative of “getting cross” was suggested as more suitable in reflecting how they engaged with their child. This would usually occur if the child had been misbehaving and already been made aware that their behaviour was not in line with expectations.

*“I don't like the explode in anger... but I can get cross... Because if you've given, you know, an explanation and you've said, look, this is your chance, and then you've given two chances and possibly three, and you're met with that you're not going to do that to me attitude... I do get cross and probably to him my tone is totally different.” Female, 40-44 years old, in a steady relationship and living together with the other parent and living full-time with the child.*

- 17.** This was understood clearly. It was noted that this could happen for several reasons, such as forgetting to follow through on a threatened punishment, or deciding after reflection that the punishment is unnecessary.
- 18.** The question was understood, with examples including attendance at wider family functions as something that the child would not enjoy as much. In this case, it was noted the parent would consider the child's preference but, on some occasions, attendance would be necessary regardless.
- 19.** This question was interpreted slightly differently, with one understanding being through the lens of physical punishment, while the other being potentially required out of fear for the child's safety (e.g., if the child was running into the road).
- 20.** This question was understood well and considered to be something that happened either if they had forgotten to follow through, or changed their mind on reflection. A conceptual similarity was noted between this question and question 17.
- Only one parent was asked question 21.*
- 21.** This question was straightforward to answer.
- 22.** This question was slightly less clear, depending on what were considered as "rules" – e.g. safety or health rules (like bedtime) or wider family rules that might be more open to discussion.
- 23.** Participants strongly disliked the term "scold" in this question. One parent said it came across as aggressive and connoted anger and criticism, and another said that it sounded like you were making the child feel stupid. "Constructive criticism" was suggested by one parent as an alternative terminology that felt more reflective of their situation.
- 24.** This question was understood but interpreted slightly differently, with one focus being purely on physical gifts, while the other being considering wider resources like time or energy. Where what they were able to give was different than that provided to older children, there was more comfort in admitting to "spoiling" their children.
- 25.** This question was flagged as repetitive of previous questions, but otherwise easily understood and answered.
- 26.** Participants were able to understand and answer this question – with a focus on providing justification for punishment. The word "threat" was described as very harsh, but it was acknowledged that what a child may perceive to be a threat (e.g., taking away the child's PlayStation) may differ from an adult's definition of a threat.
- 27.** This question was easily answered and understood.
- 28.** This question was well understood and easily answered. This approach was associated with ineffectiveness as well as concerns about potential trauma where a child was anxious.
- 29.** This question was also well understood. It was highlighted that this was considered important so that the child could try and take away a lesson for the future about the consequences of their behaviour. However, it was flagged that it may not always be an immediate action.

	<p><b>30.</b> Again, participants objected to the term “scold” here, preferring “criticise” instead.</p> <p><b>31.</b> Participants found this question clear and easy to answer.</p> <p><b>32.</b> This question was easy to answer and clearly understood by participants.</p> <p><b>Overall:</b> The participants flagged that the punishment-related questions were repetitive and could be distilled into one question asking whether parents use any of these specific types of punitive measures. It was also noted by participants that they felt more able to answer the questions with more emotive language (e.g., “threat”, “punish”) because they were able to give a justification as to their specific parenting style during the interview, and they may have felt less able to do this if answering the questions alone.</p>
<p><b>Findings from Round 2:</b></p>	<p>In total, 3 participants were asked this block of questions. All parents were asked the full scale.</p> <p>Two of the participants who were asked this block of questions had a child aged 11, and one parent had a child aged 10. In contrast to Round 1, none of the 3 participants were living with the other parent at the time of the interview (1 of the parents was separated from the other parent, and the other 2 were in relationships with the other parent but living separately).</p> <p>One of the parents had a 12-year-old and an 18-month-old as well as their 11-year-old child; the other parents only had one child.</p> <p>Generally, the feedback was similar to the findings from Round 1.</p> <p><b>4.</b> It was highlighted that the answer to this question may be situation-dependent, for example, in situations where the child was perceived to be unsafe, they might take action first using a similar justification to the question wording. However, they would subsequently explain the reason why once the child was safe.</p> <p><b>6.</b> The statement was highlighted as old-school and that the item would have been more appropriate for older generations.</p> <p><b>9.</b> This question was highlighted as similar conceptually to question 7.</p> <p><b>14.</b> All parents understood this question well and said “Always” without hesitation.</p> <p><b>15.</b> Here new considerations were given that might impact when a parent might give in, the setting (with parents more likely to give in in a public setting) or the effort involved in not giving in (picking and choosing battles).</p> <p><b>16.</b> Parents disliked the term “explode in anger” here and reacted strongly to seeing the question.</p> <p><i>“I explode in anger. Wowzer! Never. Wow. I mean, if you've got a yes to this question, I think that would be one of the ones... you might have to have another conversation. Wow. No, I don't explode – I'm sorry, I'm laughing. It's not funny.” Female, 39, separated from the other parent of their older children but in a steady relationship and living apart from the parent of their younger child, and living full-time with all children.</i></p>

	<p><b>20.</b> Similarity to question 17 was noted, with this question being identified as the more unclear wording. The proposed alternative wording suggested by this parent was: “Do I threaten punishments and then don’t follow through?”</p> <p><b>23.</b> As in Round 1, parents strongly disliked the term “scold” in this question. It was described as very old-fashioned and respondents questioned whether this word would still be commonly understood but was also highlighted as highly concerning behaviour towards a child.</p> <p><b>24.</b> This question was understood fairly well. While there was hesitation, described as influenced by the fact that spoiling a child is predominantly seen as a negative thing (e.g., a “spoiled brat”), there was acknowledgement that they did engage in “spoiling” their child. Examples of spoiling were limited to monetary incentives or gifts (e.g., pocket money, buying new toys).</p> <p><b>30.</b> Again, participants disliked the use of “scold” here. It was described as an old-fashioned term in the same way as in question 23. There were mixed views on a preferred alternative of “criticise” or “talking through things” as the most appropriate way of describing what happens when the child fails to meet the parent’s expectations.</p> <p><b>Overall:</b> Parents found some of the statements unclear and were particularly against some of the emotive language that was used, such as “explode” and “scold”.</p> <p>In general, there were no major differences between the Round 1 and Round 2 respondents in terms of the interpretive processes through which the questions were asked or the answers were given, suggesting that the scale functioned similarly whether parents were living together or apart. Even amongst the Round 1 parents who lived with the other parent and were committed in a relationship, parents routinely framed their responses in relation to their personal parenting style rather than a combined approach. The main exception was in terms of rules and punishments, where the emphasis was more likely to shift to “We” when talking about the rules for the two parents in Round 1 that were in committed relationships and living with the other parent. This may reflect a perception of rules and disciplinary measures as a more shared domain that is negotiated by both parents when they are present and living together within the household – whereas for parents who live apart from one another, priority was given to instilling their own rules and disciplinary measures whilst the child(ren) are with them in the co-parenting arrangement, rather than negotiating a shared structure. It also suggests that parents may have found it easier to think about the more relational items of the scale in the context of their individual perceptions.</p> <p>Overall, this suggests that the actual living arrangement had limited influence on how respondents interpreted the items, with differences primarily reflecting contextual framing rather than differences in comprehension.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations for final question wording:</b></p>	<p>We recommend reviewing questions where wording was seen as particularly emotive (e.g., 16, 23) to identify whether using alternative terminology that may evoke a less inflammatory reaction is feasible. This is likely to promote more honest and less socially desirable answers. We also recommend considering the conceptual overlap amongst certain questions, particularly those asking about punishment, although understand this may be used for measuring underlying factors.</p>

# **10 – Parental attitudes**

Round 1 wording	Round 2 wording
8. How often do you and your [child/children] spend time together on leisure activities or outings outside the home such as going to the park or zoo, going to the movies, sports or to have a picnic?	<b>8. How often do you</b> and [your child/ <b>any of your</b> children] spend time together on leisure activities or outings outside the home?
1. Never or rarely 2. Once a month or less 3. Several times a month 4. About once a week 5. Several times a week 6. Almost every day	Same as Round 1
<b>Findings from Round 1:</b>	<p>To be asked this question, parents were required to have a dependent child under 16.</p> <p>In total, 17 participants were asked this question in Round 1. Of those participants, 7 were currently living with the other parent of their child(ren), whereas 10 were not (8 were separated from the other parent, and 2 said it was because they prefer to live separately).</p> <p>The households varied in terms of the number and age ranges of the participants' children. There was a roughly even split between those who had only one child (9 parents) vs. those who had multiple children (8 parents). The children ranged in age from 10 months up to children over 18 who still lived in the household (in these cases, parents also had children under 16).</p> <p>Of the 17 participants who were asked this question, 13 lived with their child(ren) on a full-time / majority basis, 3 lived with their children on a part-time basis, and 1 did not live with their child(ren).</p> <p>There was one co-parenting dyad amongst the 17 respondents and one other respondent who was one half of a co-parenting dyad with a respondent in Round 2.</p> <p>Generally, this question was fairly well understood and easy to answer. Participants were largely satisfied with the question wording and the examples given – in particular, the inclusion of “going to the park” was praised as it provided an example of a more cost-effective activity, available to parents regardless of their financial circumstances.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“People underestimate the park ... you’re still going out and doing something with your children, spending quality time with them... in this day and age, a lot of people can’t afford to go and do sports or go to the movies or the zoo”. Female, 25-29 years old, separated and living apart from the child’s other parent, with one 6-year-old child that primarily lives with them.</i></p> <p>When prompted, participants were consistently able to provide additional examples of leisure activities and outings relevant to their typical arrangements, and there was a broad range of activities selected (e.g., visiting friends and family, playing sports, going for</p>

	<p>walks). Typically, participants retrieved information either by thinking through their standard arrangements (e.g., the household's usual weekly schedule), or by thinking about broad preferences within their household.</p> <p>Where parents did struggle to answer the question, this was primarily due to the lack of delineation between the types of outings and leisure activities specified. For example, the frequency with which participants would go to the park was often different to the frequency with which they would go to the zoo, creating ambiguity around which response code to select. Similarly, participants flagged that the examples grouped together formal activities such as going to the zoo (which typically require booking or scheduling and a membership) with more informal, spontaneous ones such as going to the park. Participants also noted that it was unclear whether going for a walk would count as a leisure activity or outing.</p> <p>There was also some redundancy noted in the question wording – in particular, the idea that it was unnecessary to specify activities like going to the park or the zoo as examples of outings, because these activities both require one to leave the house, so are inherently outings anyway.</p> <p>Parents with multiple children exclusively thought about activities they did with all of their children simultaneously, rather than thinking about activities with at least one child, which meant these parents said these happened less frequently, particularly where there was an age gap which meant their children had different interests.</p> <p>In addition, parents with older children tended to spend less time on leisure activities and outings than those with younger children, citing lack of interest from their children or that their children would not be willing participants in said activities.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“I wouldn't take them to the park because they would be mortified!” Female, 40-44 years old, separated and living apart from the child's other parent, with children aged 14 and 15 that primarily live with them.</i></p> <p>Other barriers cited by parents to taking part in regular leisure activities and outings included work commitments and expenditure. Parents were more likely to justify their responses through identifying barriers to participation if they participated in leisure activities or outings with their children less often than once a week.</p> <p>There were no major differences between parents who lived separately from the child's other parent versus those who lived together in terms of the types of leisure activities or outings selected. However, parents who were in new steady relationships and did not live with the other parent primarily thought about the activities in the context of their current household, rather than considering time spent with the child's other parent as well.</p> <p>Where both parents were involved, dyads were generally consistent in understanding and memory, even if there were slight differences in response. For example, one dyad of co-parents highlighted that they had weekly routine for all of them to go out and do a formalised leisure activity and outing (one referred to doing this “as a family”). However, they gave slightly different responses at this question – one gave “Once a week” as their response, reflecting the planned routine, whereas the other settled on “Several times a month”, to reflect that it wasn't possible to engage in a leisure activity or outing every week.</p>
<b>Findings from Round 2:</b>	<p>15 respondents were asked this question in Round 2. Of those participants, 5 were currently living with the other parent of their child(ren), whereas 10 were not. For the 10 respondents who were not living with the other parent, 5 were separated from the other parent, with the remaining 5 in relationship with the other parent but living separately for a variety of reasons, including work commitments, personal preferences and living in different countries.</p>

	<p>The households varied in terms of the number and age ranges of the participants' children. The majority of parents in Round 2 only had one child (11 parents) vs. those who had multiple children (4 parents). The children ranged in age from 18 months up to 15 years old – the majority of children were of primary school age.</p> <p>Of the 15 participants who were asked this question, 12 lived with their child(ren) on a full-time / majority basis, 2 lived with their children on a part-time basis, and 1 did not live with their child(ren).</p> <p>There was one co-parenting dyad amongst the 15 respondents and one other respondent who was one half of a co-parenting dyad with a respondent in Round 1.</p> <p>The feedback was broadly similar to Round 1. Despite the exclusion of examples from the question wording, respondents still generally found the question straightforward to answer. Indeed, the range of examples given by parents in Round 2 was slightly broader than in Round 1, including more informal and formal outings, as well as school clubs and indoor activities.</p> <p>Parents who did not live with their children full-time did not have any particular difficulties answering the question and thought about the question solely in the context of the time they spend with the children. For the parent who did not see their children, they found the question straightforward to answer, selecting code 1. For the two parents who lived with their children some of the time, there was slightly more deliberation in choosing an overall judgement – one parent settled on “once a month”, whereas the other parent oscillated between “several times a month” and “once a week”. This difference may partly reflect their reported co-parenting arrangements: the latter participant described an equal split of time between households, whereas in the former case the child(ren) primarily lived with the other parent. However, the actual temporal anchors were clear and made sense to respondents.</p> <p>On occasion, parents found the question to be quite broad in scope and flagged that they would have selected different response codes based on the focus of the activities (e.g., whether the leisure activities were indoor or outdoor). There was also some suggestion that adjusting the format of the question to use a more open numeric response format (e.g., “How many times in a month do you...”) would provide a more accurate representation of the participants' experience.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations for final question wording:</b></p>	<p>We would recommend the question wording used in Round 2. Although some parents benefitted from having the examples in Round 1, more often than not they created unnecessary ambiguity. By allowing parents to freely define activities and/or outings for themselves, the question became more straightforward to answer.</p>

Round 1 wording	Round 2 wording
9. How important do you think it is for your [child/children] to complete their {if not in Scotland} A-level/{if in Scotland} Higher Grades exams? Is it...	Same as Round 1
1. Very important 2. Important 3. Not very important 4. Not at all important	Same as Round 1
<b>Findings from Round 1:</b>	<p>Respondents with a dependent child aged between 10 and 15 were asked this question (9 participants in Round 1).</p> <p>Of these 9 participants, 3 were currently living with the other parent of their child(ren) and 6 were living apart. Of those participants who were living apart, all but one were separated from the other parent, with the remaining participant a relationship but living separately from their co-parent. Of the 6 participants who were living apart from the other parent, 5 were co-parenting.</p> <p>The ages of children in the household ranged from 11 to 15, and 7 out of 9 participants asked this question had multiple children.</p> <p>In terms of living arrangements, 7 out of 9 participants lived with their child(ren) on a full-time / majority basis. Of the remaining two participants, one lived with their children on a part-time basis, and the other participant did not live with their child(ren) but still saw them on a weekly basis.</p> <p>There was one co-parenting dyad that was asked this question.</p> <p>Parents found this question fairly straightforward to understand, but there was some tentativeness when committing to an answer. This was particularly evident in the case of parents with multiple children, who often expressed a desire to give different answers based on each child. In some cases, this was due to a difference in academic aptitude between the children; in others, this was because the likelihood of one or more children taking part in these exams was small (e.g., due to the child's additional needs).</p> <p>Some parents flagged that having an option in between codes 2 and 3 would have been more aligned with their situation, particularly in terms of not wanting to place pressure on their children. It was also suggested that there could be a follow-up question to understand why parents selected particular codes – for example, justifying the selection of code 3 by clarifying that they felt their child wanted to go into a trade instead.</p> <p>In terms of approaching the question, most parents answered by focusing on what their thoughts were, rather than what they felt their children might want to do. On occasion, this involved the parents drawing from their own educational experiences, whether good or bad. When parents did focus on whether their child would want to complete the exams, they were generally less certain in their responses. There were some differences in responses from the co-parenting dyad, reflecting their perception of the question (one focussed on their personal preferences, while recognising contextual reasons why this might not be possible, while the other focussed on grounding their response in the contextual realities). However, the context behind their answers were consistent and, for both, there was recognition that the context was different for different children.</p>
<b>Findings from Round 2:</b>	4 participants were asked this question in Round 2.

	<p>All of these participants were living apart from the other parent of their child(ren). One of the participants was separated from the other parent, while the remaining 3 participants were in relationships with the other parent but lived separately.</p> <p>The ages of children in the household ranged from 11 to 15, and half of the participants asked this question had multiple children.</p> <p>In terms of living arrangements, all 4 participants lived with their child(ren) on a full-time / majority basis.</p> <p>The feedback was broadly similar among Round 2 respondents. The question was generally easy to understand and answer, with some hesitancy when answering.</p> <p>Again, emphasis was placed on the fact that not all children are academically inclined and that these exams are not the only source of education.</p> <p>As with Round 1, some parents focused more heavily on their own experiences and preferences when answering the question, and others focused more on their children.</p>
<b>Recommendations for final question wording:</b>	<p>We would recommend considering whether this question should be targeted for each individual child to account for between-child differences, and also whether explicitly prompting parents to focus either on their own experiences or their child's preferences may help elicit more consistent approaches to answering the question.</p>

Round 1 wording	Round 2 wording
10. How important do you think it is for your [child/children] to stay in education or training after they leave school? This could be education at 6th form or to study for other qualifications, other training courses, or training on schemes such as apprenticeships?	Same as Round 1
1. Very important 2. Important 3. Not very important 4. Not at all important	Same as Round 1
<b>Findings from Round 1:</b>	<p>To be asked this question, respondents had to have a dependent child aged between 10 and 15 and have selected either “Not very important” or “Not at all important” at the previous question.</p> <p>6 participants were asked this question in total. Of the 5 parents in co-parenting situations who were asked the previous question, only 2 were asked this question. All of the participants who were asked this question actively lived with their child(ren).</p> <p>As in the previous question, the ages of the children ranged from 11 to 15 years old, with 4 out of 6 parents having multiple children.</p> <p>Again, this question was generally well understood. Some parents found the question wording too generic and slightly long-winded but were able to provide an answer without too much difficulty. By contrast, others praised the fact that the question wording here covered more potential options for their children, such as referencing training schemes and apprenticeships.</p> <p>As in the previous question, some parents would have preferred an additional option in between codes 2 and 3 (e.g., “Somewhat important”) to more accurately reflect their perception of the importance of post-16 education or training.</p> <p>Again, parents with multiple children generally would have preferred to answer this question for each child.</p>
<b>Findings from Round 2:</b>	<p>Only one respondent answered this question in Round 2. This respondent was separated from the other parent (with whom they had three children aged between 11 and 15) but was in relationship with but living separately from their current partner (with whom they had an 18-month-old child). The participant lived with all of their children on a full-time basis.</p> <p>The feedback for Round 2 largely mirrored that of Round 1. On one occasion, it was noted that the question wording was insufficiently comprehensive, missing out certain alternative routes (e.g., vocational courses).</p>
<b>Recommendations for final question wording:</b>	<p>As per question 9, we would recommend considering the possibility of targeting this question so that it focuses on an individual child, rather than asking the parent to answer for all children simultaneously. Given the diverse feedback on the question wording, a potential design approach to consider would be to remove the second sentence so the question wording is more concise – and then include a help screen with a comprehensive list of post-16 pathways. This could include those referenced in the existing question wording as well as other examples like vocational courses.</p>

Round 1 wording	Round 2 wording
11. Most children have quarrels with their parents at some time. How often do you quarrel with [your child/any of your children]? Is it...	Same as Round 1
1. Most days 2. More than once a week 3. Less than once a week 4. Hardly ever?	Same as Round 1
<b>Findings from Round 1:</b>	<p>To be asked this question, participants had to have a dependent child aged between 5 and 15 and 13 parents were asked this question in Round 1.</p> <p>Of the 13 participants who were asked this question, only 3 actively lived with their child(ren)'s other parent. Of the remaining 10 parents, 9 were involved in a co-parenting arrangement, with the remaining participant reporting that the child's other parent was not actively involved in their life.</p> <p>Participants had children of varying ages, ranging from 3 to 20. As before, children who were younger than 5 or older than 15 were in multiple-child households, where the parent had an eligible child aged between 5 and 15 in the household (9 out of 13 parents had more than one child).</p> <p>In Round 1, 10 out of 13 parents lived with their child on a full-time / majority basis. Of the remaining 3 parents, all 3 were involved in co-parenting arrangements (2 of the 3 parents were separated from the child(ren)'s other parent, and one was in relationship with the child's other parent but lived separately).</p> <p>There was one co-parenting dyad that was asked this question.</p> <p>This question was more challenging for respondents to understand – primarily due to the range of interpretations of the key terminology of “quarrel”.</p> <p>Interpretations of the meaning of this word differed among respondents. Some parents considered quarrels in terms of severity – commonly, a quarrel was seen as more akin to bickering or a mini-argument, and was considered less aggressive than arguing, but on some occasions quarrel and argument were viewed as synonymous terms. Other parents considered quarrelling as something more relevant to older children rather than younger children and suggested that quarrelling was more frequent than arguing. The term was also sometimes described as “too negative” or “outdated”.</p> <p>Regarding alternative wording, the most frequently suggested was “argue”. However, some respondents also disliked “argue” due to its more aggressive connotations – so words like “fallout”, “row”, and “bicker” were all also suggested as viable alternatives. Frequently, participants fed back that their answer would change based on which word was used.</p> <p>The question design and response codes were generally more consistently interpreted by parents. There was some suggestion that parents would prefer to specify the frequency in a more numeric way (e.g., the number of times they quarrel within a set time period), and there was also a suggestion to adjust response code 3 to “once a month”.</p>

	<p>In general, respondents felt comfortable being asked this question when probed, seeing it as a “reality of life”. However, parents of younger children found the question less relevant, and parents with multiple children were typically somewhat more likely to say “frequently”, which participants felt could potentially confound responses.</p> <p>Where participants lived separately from their children, they were still able to answer this question. Their answers were impacted by how frequently they interacted with their children, rather than how often they stayed with their children – including virtual contact.</p>
<p><b>Findings from Round 2:</b></p>	<p>10 participants were asked this question in Round 2.</p> <p>Of these participants, 3 actively lived with their child(ren)’s other parent. Of the remaining 7 parents, 6 were involved in a co-parenting arrangement, with the remaining participant reporting that the child’s other parent was not actively involved in their life.</p> <p>Participants had children of varying ages, ranging from 18 months to 15 years old and 7 of 10 parents had only one child. As before, children who were younger than 5 were in multiple-child households, where the parent had an eligible child aged between 5 and 15 in the household.</p> <p>Overall, 8 out of 10 parents lived with their child on a full-time / majority basis. Both of the remaining 2 parents were involved in co-parenting arrangements, and both parents were separated from the child(ren)’s other parent. One parent lived with their child on a part-time basis, and the other parent did not live with their child but still saw them.</p> <p>There was one co-parenting dyad that was asked this question.</p> <p>The word “quarrel” proved similarly divisive for respondents in Round 2. There was more of a consensus around the old-fashioned nature of the term (in one case, it was referred to as “Shakespearean language”), but parents still viewed it to mean different things.</p> <p>Again, the most commonly suggested alternative suggested was “argue”, with “disagree” also a popular choice, with most parents expressing a preference for alternative wording.</p> <p>The range of responses at this question was again influenced by the age of the children in the household, and also whether the child had additional needs. Where parents did not live with their children full-time, they based their answer on the time they were in the children’s lives but did not feel noticeably uncomfortable about being asked the question. As in Round 1, this reflected both time spent together when the child was living with them, and time where they visited or interacted with the child remotely (e.g. over the phone).</p>
<p><b>Recommendations for final question wording:</b></p>	<p>We would recommend if possible reconsidering the wording “quarrel” in favour of a word that provides more consistent interpretations and stands out less to respondents, although with awareness that this would likely impact comparability. We would also advise considering this question in the context of the number of children in the household, and the age of those children, for analysis purposes.</p>

Round 1 wording	Round 2 wording
12. Children vary a great deal in how often they talk to their parents about things that matter to them. How often [does your child/do any of your children] talk to you about things that matter to them?	Same as Round 1
1. Most days 2. More than once a week 3. Less than once a week 4. Hardly ever?	Same as Round 1
<b>Findings from Round 1:</b>	<p>To be asked this question, respondents had to have a dependent child aged between 5 and 15 (13 in Round 1).</p> <p>Of the 13 participants who were asked this question, only 3 actively lived with their child(ren)'s other parent. Of the remaining 10 parents, 9 were involved in a co-parenting arrangement, with the remaining participant reporting that the child's other parent was not actively involved in their life.</p> <p>Participants had children of varying ages, ranging from 3 to 20. As before, children who were younger than 5 or older than 15 were in multiple-child households, where the parent had an eligible child aged between 5 and 15 in the household (9 out of 13 parents had more than one child).</p> <p>In Round 1, 10 out of 13 parents lived with their child on a full-time / majority basis. Of the remaining 3 parents, all 3 were involved in co-parenting arrangements (2 of the 3 parents were separated from the child(ren)'s other parent, and one was in relationship with the child's other parent but lived separately).</p> <p>There was one co-parenting dyad that was asked this question.</p> <p>Overall, parents found the question straightforward to understand, although it was highlighted the question wording could be shorter, and "vary a great deal" was considered slightly awkward wording.</p> <p>In terms of the response codes, some respondents felt that another option between 2 and 3 (i.e., "once a week") would have been more suitable and representative of their situation. Participants also noted that there was no option for "every day", which again would have been more reflective of some parent's experience.</p> <p>As with the prior question, the salience of the question topic was somewhat dependent on the age of the child, with parents of younger children sometimes indicating that the question was not particularly relevant in their situation. In general, co-parenting arrangements did not affect the extent to which participants' children spoke to them about things that mattered. This was aided by parents' ability to communicate with their children virtually as well as in person, alongside the importance co-parents placed on connecting with their child when they were together (e.g., when picking them up from school). Some parents also thought about their answer in the context of the child or children's relationship with the other parent – i.e., whether the child opens up more to the respondent or to the other parent.</p> <p>On occasion, parents described this question as emotionally sensitive, using terms such as "sad" and "hard".</p>

<p><b>Findings from Round 2:</b></p>	<p>10 participants were asked this question in Round 2.</p> <p>Of these participants, 3 actively lived with their child(ren)'s other parent. Of the remaining 7 parents, 6 were involved in a co-parenting arrangement, with the remaining participant reporting that the child's other parent was not actively involved in their life.</p> <p>Participants had children of varying ages, ranging from 18 months to 15 years old and 7 of 10 parents had only one child. As before, children who were younger than 5 were in multiple-child households, where the parent had an eligible child aged between 5 and 15 in the household.</p> <p>Overall, 8 out of 10 parents lived with their child on a full-time / majority basis. Both of the remaining 2 parents were involved in co-parenting arrangements, and both parents were separated from the child(ren)'s other parent. One parent lived with their child on a part-time basis, and the other parent did not live with their child but still saw them.</p> <p>There was one co-parenting dyad that was asked this question.</p> <p>Findings from Round 2 were generally consistent with Round 1. Again, in some instances participants would have preferred an "every day" option as this would have felt more representative to their situation – for example, if the child "tells me everything".</p> <p>Interpretations of things that matter differed slightly among parents. Some viewed this as a matter of importance to the child, whereas some viewed it in terms of a safe space for the child to confide in. There were occasions where further nuance was applied in terms of the things that matter – for example, children may be more predisposed to talk about important things that they want (e.g., a new toy) rather than personal matters or feelings.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations for final question wording:</b></p>	<p>Overall, the question wording and response codes were fairly well-received. We would recommend considering the phrasing of the preamble, and whether providing additional options to allow parents to say that this happens "every day" and/or "once a week" would be of value. We would also note that the age of the child is likely to impact the perceived relevance of this question among parents, which will have implications for analysis.</p>

Round 1 wording	Round 2 wording
13. How often do you praise your child or any of your children? 14. How often do you spank or slap your child, or any of your children? 15. How often do you cuddle or hug your child, or any of your children? 16. How often do you shout at your child, or any of your children?	13. How often do you praise your child or any of your children? 14. <b>Parents use different approaches to discipline.</b> How often do you spank or slap your child, or any of your children? 15. How often do you cuddle or hug your child, or any of your children? 16. How often do you shout at your child, or any of your children?
1. Never 2. Seldom 3. Sometimes 4. Very often	1. Never <b>2. Rarely</b> 3. Sometimes 4. Very often
<b>Findings from Round 1:</b>	<p>These questions were asked to all parents who had a dependent child under 16 – except in one case, where a parent was only asked question 13 due to time constraints. Therefore, 17 respondents were asked question 13 in Round 1, and the other questions were asked of 16 participants.</p> <p>The sample (and thus, demographic profiles) of parents who were asked question 13 mirrored those who were asked the opening question in this section. Therefore, of the 17 participants who were asked question 13, 7 were currently living with the other parent of their child(ren), whereas 10 were not. For the 10 respondents who were not living with the other parent, 8 were separated from the other parent, and 2 said it was because they prefer to live separately.</p> <p>The households varied in terms of the number and age ranges of the participants' children. There was a roughly even split between those who had only one child (9 parents) vs. those who had multiple children (8 parents). The children ranged in age from 10 months up to children over 18 who still lived in the household (in these cases, parents also had children under 16).</p> <p>Of the 17 participants who were asked question 13, 13 lived with their child(ren) on a full-time / majority basis, 3 lived with their children on a part-time basis, and 1 did not live with their child(ren).</p> <p>There was one co-parenting dyad amongst the 17 respondents and one other respondent who was one half of a co-parenting dyad with a respondent in Round 2.</p> <p>For the remaining questions (14-16), the participant who did not answer the questions was separated from and did not live with the child's other parent and reported that the other parent was currently not involved in their child's life. They had one child aged 15.</p> <p>Across all questions, the main point where confusion arose was around the response codes. The term "seldom", which occurred throughout, was not always understood, and participants sometimes struggled to understand the difference in meaning between response codes 2 and 3. The term itself was seen as old-fashioned and feedback indicated that some parents would have preferred a more familiar alternative.</p> <p>There was also some indication that the response categories were too sparse to accurately capture the parent's experience. Principally, parents wanted to supersede code 4 and say something like "all the time" or "every day" to reflect their situation; adding an "Often" option between codes 3 and 4 was also suggested.</p>

**13.** Most parents found the question to be well worded and were able to easily select a response. Parents consistently emphasised the significance of regularly praising their child(ren) and identified an array of forms in which praise was provided. Examples included verbal praise, positive physical reinforcement (e.g., high-fives) or buying them gifts. Common scenarios where parents praised their child(ren) included when their child had received academic awards or other school achievements, or encouraging a child with additional needs.

Some parents also noted they felt it unlikely for parents to choose option 1 – even if this was the reality, the implications of choosing this response code would steer parents towards responding with a more socially desirable answer.

**14.** Again, the question wording was seen as straightforward to understand. Generally, although parents acknowledged the sensitivity of the topic, they felt comfortable being asked the question. On occasion, parents suggested including a “Prefer not to answer” response code in case the topic was triggering.

When probed on how they approached the question, many parents related this to their own childhood experiences and highlighted that although striking a child was more commonplace when they were growing up, it is now considered illegal and/or unlawful. There were frequent references made to the potential involvement of social services and the risk of facing other legal consequences. In line with this, on the whole parents expressed scepticism about whether someone who did spank or slap their child would answer honestly, saying that it could open up a “different can of worms”. However, in some cases parents suggested that being asked this question may have utility in making parents rethink their existing disciplinary approaches.

**15.** There were no issues with understanding this question. As with question 13, some parents would have preferred an “all the time” response code as this felt more relevant to their situation.

Generally, the frequency with which parents cuddled or hugged the children was lower if the children were older, and occasionally, if they were male. This would sometimes vary within families and was often described as led by the child – for example, one participant said they more frequently hugged their younger daughter than their older son, as he would prefer receiving “fist bumps” and “high fives”. In these cases, parents with multiple children fed back that they would answer differently based on which child was being referred to – but were nonetheless clear about which response code was suitable for each of their children. Some parents highlighted that they were not naturally tactile, but their child(ren) “forced it on them”.

Parents felt comfortable answering this question and volunteered examples of when the hugs were given (e.g., at bedtime, in the morning) and affectionate gestures that were paired with cuddles and hugs (e.g., saying loving words / phrases to the child).

There were some differences in response between the co-parenting dyad, which reflect differences in frequency of physical contact (one parent lived with the children full-time, while the other did not), but also in terms of parenting behaviours.

**16.** In general, the question was again fairly well-understood. In some instances, the word “shout” caused some discomfort among parents, as it had connotations of anger and evoked the image of “a big mouth shouting down on a wee child”. The most commonly suggested alternative was “raise your voice”, which felt more moderate. However, other respondents considered these two terms analogous in meaning.

	<p>The question topic itself was generally not seen as particularly sensitive and the most common response options selected were codes 2 and 3. However, similar to Question 14, some participants expressed scepticism about whether parents who regularly shout at their children would share this in the survey. Additionally, some parents who did report shouting at their children clarified how the shouting occurred (e.g., never shouting in the child's face) or emphasised that it was primarily out of concern for the child's safety rather than as a disciplinary measure.</p> <p>Again, it was felt that asking this question to some parents who did regularly shout at their children may encourage them to rethink this approach.</p>
<p><b>Findings from Round 2:</b></p>	<p>As in Round 1, the sample (and thus, demographic profiles) of parents who were asked question 13 mirrored those who were asked the opening question in this section. Therefore, 15 respondents were asked this question in Round 2.</p> <p>Of those participants, 5 were currently living with the other parent of their child(ren), whereas 10 were not. For the 10 respondents who were not living with the other parent, 5 were separated from the other parent, with the remaining 5 in a relationship with the other parent but lived separately for a variety of reasons, including work commitments, personal preferences and living in different countries.</p> <p>The households varied in terms of the number and age ranges of the participants' children. The majority of parents in Round 2 only had one child (11 parents) vs. those who had multiple children (4 parents). The children ranged in age from 18 months up to 15 years old – the majority of children were of primary school age.</p> <p>Of the 15 participants who were asked this question, 12 lived with their child(ren) on a full-time / majority basis, 2 lived with their children on a part-time basis, and 1 did not live with their child(ren).</p> <p>There was one co-parenting dyad amongst the respondents and one other respondent who was one half of a co-parenting dyad with a respondent in Round 1.</p> <p>All 15 respondents were asked question 13 and 15. 14 parents were asked question 16, and 12 parents were asked question 14, due to time constraints.</p> <p>The update from "Seldom" to "Rarely" was well-received by participants, with no concern raised about this answer code.</p> <p><b>13.</b> In Round 2, there were continued calls for having an "all the time" option to more accurately reflect the reality of how frequently their child was praised. On one occasion, this went as far as the respondent saying they praise the child "too often".</p> <p>Again, participants consistently emphasised the importance of praising their child regularly and gave multiple examples of types of praise, principally focusing on verbal praise (e.g., compliments, words of affirmation) and giving children gifts.</p> <p>On occasion, parents considered praise to be subtly distinct from reward and suggested that clarification of the difference between these concepts would have been helpful in informing their answer – however, ultimately parents who said this would still have selected code 4, regardless of this distinction being made.</p>

	<p><b>14.</b> There were occasional references to the harshness of the terms “spank” or “slap”, and also the Americanised nature of “spank”. Some parents expressed non-verbal and verbal surprise at the question being asked; upon probing, this was not attributable to the question content being sensitive or triggering, but primarily because these forms of discipline are considered unlawful.</p> <p>Again, parents acknowledged that this question could be sensitive subject for some parents, and the scepticism around parents providing honest answers if they did use these disciplinary approaches was also consistent with the feedback in Round 1. There was a frequent narrative that “times have changed” from when parents were younger, and that they preferred different disciplinary approaches to those used in their childhood.</p> <p><b>15.</b> The feedback was broadly similar to Round 1 – no issues with understanding the question, and a desire to select “all the time” as a response code. Parents of school-age children were generally less likely to select code 4, and this was generally seen as normal – the child was of an age where hugging and cuddling was less commonplace. Parents in co-parenting arrangements mostly answered the question by focusing just on the time they spent with the children.</p> <p>On occasion, it was noted that a more quantifiable metric would be useful here, as one person’s interpretation of “Rarely” may differ substantially from another’s. In these cases, parents expressed a preference for specifying a number of times that they cuddle or hug their child within a particular time period.</p> <p><b>16.</b> The feedback broadly aligned with Round 1, and there were no substantive issues with understanding the question. Discussion was once again centred around the term “shout”, which some parents felt did not resonate and was seemingly aggressive. In line with Round 1, in some instances “raise your voice” was suggested as an alternative that was seen slightly differently; other examples included being “assertive” and a “slight change of tone”. When probed, it was suggested that shouting and raising your voice would both have negative impacts on the children.</p> <p>There were slightly more varying perspectives on the response codes. In some cases, respondents felt that graduated codes between “never” and “rarely” (e.g., “once or twice”), or between “rarely” and “sometimes”, would have been more accurate indicators of their experience. Again, there was some evidence of parents wanting to justify the situations in which they shout (e.g., being influenced by their ex-partner’s behaviour, or doing it for the child’s safety or to get their attention).</p>
<p><b>Recommendations for final question wording:</b></p>	<p>We would advise retaining “rarely” as the terminology used at response code 2 and consider whether adding an option that captures the idea of “all the time” would be more reflective of parents’ experiences.</p> <p>Generally, the wording and response codes were well-understood and, broadly, participants did not take offence or feel that the question was triggering. However, it would be beneficial to consider the extent to which people are likely to answer honestly given the sensitivity of the question topic, and whether remedial measures (e.g., reassurances around confidentiality) could prove worthwhile here. This is particularly the case for “shout”, where an alternative term (like “raise your voice”) may be considered more socially acceptable to admit to.</p> <p>For all these questions, it also may be worth asking if these are different between children, depending on the intended analysis purpose – although reflecting that this may increase the length of the questionnaire drastically for those with multiple children. It will also be important to consider the age and gender/sex of the children when conducting analysis of some of the answer codes.</p>

Round 1 wording	Round 2 wording
20. In the past 7 days, how many times have you eaten an evening meal together with your [child / children] and other family members who live with you?	Same as Round 1
1. None 2. 1 - 2 times 3. 3 - 5 times 4. 6 - 7 times	Same as Round 1
<b>Findings from Round 1:</b>	<p>This question was asked to all parents with a dependent child under 16 (17 in Round 1).</p> <p>The sample (and thus, demographic profiles) of parents who were asked question 20 mirrored those who were asked the opening question in this section. Therefore, of the 17 participants who were asked question 20, 7 were currently living with the other parent of their child(ren), whereas 10 were not. For the 10 respondents who were not living with the other parent, 8 were separated from the other parent, and 2 said it was because they prefer to live separately.</p> <p>The households varied in terms of the number and age ranges of the participants' children. There was a roughly even split between those who had only one child (9 parents) vs. those who had multiple children (8 parents). The children ranged in age from 10 months up to children over 18 who still lived in the household (in these cases, parents also had children under 16).</p> <p>Of the 17 participants who were asked this question, 13 lived with their child(ren) on a full-time / majority basis, 3 lived with their children on a part-time basis, and 1 did not live with their child(ren).</p> <p>There was one co-parenting dyad amongst the 17 respondents, and one other respondent who was one half of a co-parenting dyad with a respondent in Round 2.</p> <p>Compared to the previous questions, this question proved slightly more conceptually challenging for respondents, and on a couple of occasions the purpose of the question was queried. However, the question wording was generally fairly well understood. Parents interpreted the question in broadly consistent ways, focusing on being present with the child – some thought of this in terms of proximity (e.g., “sitting around the table together”), and others thought about this in terms of other indicators, like having a conversation during the meal.</p> <p>However, in some cases, parents were confused by the dual reference to children and other family members. Parents suggested that this may have been more suitable as two separate questions rather than amalgamating the two groups into one question, and others suggested that the question wording could have also just referred to family members, since children are part of the family unit.</p> <p>The spread of responses extended across the entire scale. It was noted that there was some variability in responses based on the child's schedule in the previous week (e.g., whether they were on school holiday, whether the entire family unit was at home). On occasion, participants suggested that the change in circumstances might alter their current response compared to what their response would have been in a previous week, particularly where the child(ren) did not live with them full-time and co-parenting arrangements varied from week to week.</p>

	<p>Some parents of pre-school children found this question more difficult to answer as it was perceived to be less relevant, but others felt that the question was appropriate.</p>
<p><b>Findings from Round 2:</b></p>	<p>14 respondents were asked this question in Round 2.</p> <p>Of those participants, 4 were currently living with the other parent of their child(ren), whereas 10 were not. For the 10 respondents who were not living with the other parent, 5 were separated from the other parent, with the remaining 5 in a relationship with the other parent but living separately for a variety of reasons, including work commitments, personal preferences and living in different countries.</p> <p>The households varied in terms of the number and age ranges of the participants' children. The majority of parents in Round 2 only one child (10 parents) vs. those who had multiple children (4 parents). The children ranged in age from 18 months up to 15 years old – the majority of children were of primary school age.</p> <p>Of the 14 participants who were asked this question, 11 lived with their child(ren) on a full-time / majority basis, 2 lived with their children on a part-time basis, and 1 did not live with their child(ren).</p> <p>There was one co-parenting dyad amongst the respondents, and one other respondent who was one half of a co-parenting dyad with a respondent in Round 1.</p> <p>The presence of a time period was seen as beneficial in most cases, as it enabled parents to provide a more “definitive” answer. However, using a week as the chosen time period was not always seen as suitable. Building on the concerns raised in Round 1, some parents felt that this time frame did not reflect the “true story” – particularly in the case of co-parenting arrangements such as having “a week on, a week off”, where some of the more frequent response options would not be applicable to the respondent’s situation. These parents generally felt that a month would be a more suitable timeframe.</p> <p>Co-parents also experienced some difficulties with calculating the exact number of times they ate an evening meal with their family when more complex co-parenting arrangements were in place.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations for final question wording:</b></p>	<p>We would recommend considering whether the reference to other family members should be removed or separated and also consider whether the timeframe of the question should be adjusted, particularly with regard to co-parenting arrangements that may span longer periods.</p>

Round 1 wording	Round 2 wording
<p>21. How often do you help [CHILD NAME] with her/his homework?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Every day</li> <li>2. Several times a week</li> <li>3. Once or twice a week</li> <li>4. At least once a month</li> <li>5. Less often than once a month</li> <li>6. Never or hardly ever</li> <li>7. No homework</li> </ol>	<p>21. How often do you help [CHILD NAME] with <b>their</b> homework?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Every day</li> <li>2. Several times a week</li> <li>3. Once or twice a week</li> <li>4. At least once a month</li> <li>5. Less often than once a month</li> <li>6. Never or hardly ever</li> <li>7. No homework</li> </ol>
<p><b>Findings from Round 1:</b></p>	<p>This question was asked to all parents with a child in school aged 4-15. 12 participants were asked this question in Round 1.</p> <p>Of the 12 parents who were asked this question, 9 did not live with the other parent of their child(ren). For the 9 participants who were not living with the other parent, 7 were separated from the other parent, whereas 2 were in a relationship with their co-parent but lived separately.</p> <p>The households varied in terms of the number and age ranges of the participants' children. The majority of the sample (9 out of 12 parents) had more than one child. The age range of the children varied from 1 year old to 20 years old (in these cases, children were part of a multi-child household), and 6 out of 12 households contained children of both primary school age and secondary school age.</p> <p>All 9 parents who did not live with the child(ren)'s other parent were involved in a co-parenting arrangement. 6 parents lived with their child(ren) on a full-time / majority basis. Of the 3 parents who did not live with their child(ren) on a full-time / majority basis, 2 of the 3 parents were separated from the child(ren)'s other parent, and one was in a relationship with the child's other parent but lived separately.</p> <p>There was one co-parenting dyad included in the sample for this question.</p> <p>This question was generally received well by respondents. In particular, the response scale was viewed positively, and it was suggested that the scale would work well for other questions as there are "more increments" and the codes "flow better".</p> <p>Parents took nuanced approaches to answering the question, though most were still able to identify an answer that aligned with their situation. Some parents only included instances where the child had asked for help themselves, whereas others considered it as anytime they helped, regardless of whether the child had requested this or not. Parents also frequently commented on their own capability to help – this was more the case for parents of older children, who sometimes felt unable to help with the homework received. Other interpretations included parents highlighting that they helped the child virtually if in co-parenting arrangements, and other parents defined homework more broadly when their child had additional needs (e.g., physiotherapy).</p> <p>On the other hand, some parents felt that there was not a suitable option for explaining situations where the child does not receive homework due to school policy (e.g., they are in a younger year group, or in a special school) and why this might be the case. The question was also seen as irrelevant in some instances – primarily, when children were in younger year groups.</p>

<p><b>Findings from Round 2:</b></p>	<p>12 respondents were asked this question in Round 2. Of these parents, 9 did not live with the other parent of their child(ren). For the 9 participants who were not living with the other parent, 5 were separated from the other parent, whereas 4 were in a relationship but currently living separately from the other parent for a variety of reasons, including work commitments and personal preference.</p> <p>The households varied in terms of the number and age ranges of the participants' children. The majority of the sample (8 out of 12 parents) only had one child. The age range of the children varied from 18 months to 15 years old (in cases where parents had children younger than 5, the children were part of a multi-child household), and 2 households contained children of both primary school age and secondary school age.</p> <p>8 out of 9 parents who did not live with the child(ren)'s other parent were involved in a co-parenting arrangement. Of these 8 parents, 5 lived with their child(ren) on a full-time / majority basis. All 3 parents who did not live with their child(ren) on a full-time / majority basis were separated from their child's other parent.</p> <p>There was one co-parenting dyad included in the sample for this question. The feedback, on the whole, was similar to Round 1. Key ideas that resurfaced included the distinction between whether the help was requested or not, and the capability of the parent to help.</p> <p>On occasion, some parents felt that an intermediate code between 3 and 4 would be more reflective of their situation.</p> <p>The wording alteration did not have a significant impact on parents' comprehension of the question.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations for final question wording:</b></p>	<p>Overall, we would recommend using the updated wording in Round 2 and considering the age of children in any analysis of this question.</p>

Round 1 wording	Round 2 wording
24. Would you personally like to see [CHILD NAME] go on to university or college when they finish their schooling?	Same as Round 1
1. Yes 2. No	Same as Round 1
<b>Findings from Round 1:</b>	<p>This question was asked to parents who are responsible for one or more children aged 4-15 and who have a child aged 10-15.</p> <p>11 parents answered this question in Round 1. Of these parents, 8 did not live with the other parent of their child(ren). 6 of these parents were separated from the other parent, and 2 were in a relationship with, but lived separately from, their co-parent.</p> <p>As in previous questions, the age profiles of the households varied. The ages of parents' children ranged from 1 years old to 20 years (in these cases, children were part of a multi-child household). 8 out of 11 parents had multiple children.</p> <p>All 8 parents who did not live with the child(ren)'s other parent were involved in a co-parenting arrangement. 5 of the parents lived with their child(ren) on a full-time / majority basis. Of the 3 parents who did not live with their child(ren) on a full-time / majority basis, 2 of the 3 parents were separated from the child(ren)'s other parent, and one was in an LAT relationship with the child's other parent.</p> <p>There was one co-parenting dyad included in the sample for this question. This question was well understood but was slightly more challenging for participants to respond to.</p> <p>The central tension was around the committal nature of saying 'Yes' or 'No'. Several participants expressed discomfort with this and would have preferred a more noncommittal alternative, such as "Maybe" or "Other". Principally, these parents felt that they didn't want to "push" their child into going into higher education unless it aligned with the child's preferences, or because there were other reasons (such as disability or long-term conditions) which meant this would not be possible for their child, even if they might have wished for it in an ideal world.</p> <p>When participants answered based on their own preferences, the binary format of the question was generally less troublesome and they felt more comfortable committing to an answer.</p> <p>Parents frequently flagged that apprenticeships should be included as a separate example alongside university and college, given their increasing popularity and prevalence.</p>
<b>Findings from Round 2:</b>	<p>8 parents answered this question in Round 2. Of these parents, 6 did not live with the other parent of their child(ren). Of the 6 parents who did not live with the other parent, 3 were separated from the other parent, and the other 3 were in a relationship with, but lived separately from, their co-parent, for a range of reasons, including work commitments, personal preference and living in different countries.</p> <p>As in previous questions, the age profiles of the households varied. The ages of parents' children ranged from 18 months to 15 years old. There was an even split of parents who had multiple children compared to parents who had just one child.</p> <p>All but one of the 6 parents who did not live with the child(ren)'s other parent were involved in a co-parenting arrangement (4 of the parents lived with their child(ren) on a full-time / majority basis). Both of the 2 parents who did not live with their child(ren) on a full-time / majority basis were separated from the child(ren)'s other parent.</p>

	<p>There was one co-parenting dyad included in the sample for this question. Most commonly, the alternative suggested in this round was “Don’t know”, with parents saying that there “needs” to be this option. Again, parents who advocated for the inclusion of a third option were typically framing the question in the context of their child’s preferences and happiness, and on some occasions also brought in other considerations (e.g., how society will look by the time their child goes to university).</p> <p>In contrast to Round 1, the inclusion of apprenticeships was not mentioned as frequently, and on occasion parents actually preferred the fact that the question wording was limited exclusively to academic pathways.</p>
<b>Recommendations for final question wording:</b>	<p>We would recommend considering the addition of a third response code here to enable respondents who do not have as strong an internal preference or who view the question through the lens of their child to find an answer that best fits their situation. We would also encourage consideration of whether the addition of apprenticeships would be viable here, or whether a separate question around more vocational pathways would be worthwhile.</p>

Round 1 wording	Round 2 wording
25. How often do you allow [your child/any of your children] to help set rules?	Same as Round 1
1. Never 2. Seldom 3. Sometimes 4. Very often	1. Never 2. <b>Rarely</b> 3. Sometimes 4. Very often
<b>Findings from Round 1:</b>	<p>This question was asked to parents who are responsible for one or more children aged 4-15 and who have a child aged 5-15.</p> <p>In Round 1, 13 parents were asked this question. Of these parents, 9 did not live with the other parent of their child(ren) – 7 out of these 9 parents who did not live with the other parent were separated, and 2 were in a relationship with, but lived separately from, the other parent.</p> <p>The households varied in terms of the number and age ranges of the participants’ children. The majority of the sample (10 out of 13 parents) had more than one child. The age range of the children varied from 1 year old to 20 years old (in these cases, children were part of a multi-child household).</p> <p>All 9 parents who did not live with the child(ren)’s other parent were involved in a co-parenting arrangement. 6 of the parents lived with their child(ren) on a full-time / majority basis. Of the 3 parents who did not live with their child(ren) on a full-time / majority basis, 2 of the 3 parents were separated from the child(ren)’s other parent, and one was in a relationship with, but lived separately from, the child’s other parent.</p> <p>There was one co-parenting dyad included in the sample for this question.</p> <p>This question was understood by respondents in the context of how they perceived rules within their household. Some parents were able to give examples of rules they set; principally, curfews or bedtime were mentioned, as well as things like screen time limits and chores. However, it was clear that some parents did not resonate with the idea of setting rules in this way, and there were no examples of rules that immediately came to mind. By contrast, other parents felt that the question was strange as they did not believe children should have a role in determining household rules.</p> <p>As with previous questions, “Seldom” was also flagged as problematic on occasion.</p> <p>Some parents highlighted the relevance of the question topic in the context of modern society, particularly around neurodivergence. Parents indicated that they were able to set specific rules for their child or remove what might be perceived as traditional rules in order to align their expectations with the additional needs of their child.</p> <p>In general, the older children were, the more likely they were to have input into the household rules.</p>
<b>Findings from Round 2:</b>	<p>10 participants were asked this question in Round 2. Of these parents, 7 did not live with the other parent of their child(ren). 3 of these parents who did not live with the other parent were separated, and 4 were in a relationship with, but lived separately from, the other parent for a variety of reasons.</p>

	<p>The households varied in terms of the number and age ranges of the participants' children. The majority of the sample (6 out of 10 parents) had only one child. The age range of the children varied from 18 months old to 15 years old (in cases where children were aged under 5, the children were part of a multi-child household).</p> <p>All but one of the 6 parents who did not live with the child(ren)'s other parent were involved in a co-parenting arrangement. 4 of the parents lived with their child(ren) on a full-time / majority basis, and both of the 2 parents who did not live with their child(ren) on a full-time / majority basis were separated from the child(ren)'s other parent</p> <p>There was one co-parenting dyad included in the sample for this question.</p> <p>It was clear that the concept of rules was not resonant for some parents. Additionally, some parents highlighted that the rules they set may differ from the rules set by their co-parent, and only thought about their children in the context of them being at the respondent's house. Less often, it was also suggested that there was a difference between the idea of "setting rules" and inherent expectations whereby the parent ensured that the rules in general are followed.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations for final question wording:</b></p>	<p>It may be helpful to add some examples here, where participants do not think of some of themselves as "setting rules" for their children.</p>

Round 1 wording	Round 2 wording
26. Are the rules you have strictly enforced or not very strictly enforced?	Same as Round 1
1. Strictly enforced 2. Not very strictly enforced 3. It varies	Same as Round 1
<b>Findings from Round 1:</b>	<p>This question was asked to parents who have a child aged 5-15. Although there were 13 parents who were eligible to be asked this question, only 12 parents were asked it due to time constraints.</p> <p>Of the 12 participants who were asked this question, only 3 actively lived with their child(ren)'s other parent. All of the remaining 9 parents were involved in a co-parenting arrangement; 7 out of 9 parents who did not live with the other parent were separated, and 2 were in a relationship with the other parent but lived separately.</p> <p>Participants had children of varying ages, ranging from 1 to 20. As before, children who were younger than 5 or older than 15 were in multiple-child households, where the parent had an eligible child aged between 5 and 15 in the household (9 out of 12 parents had more than one child).</p> <p>In Round 1, 9 out of 12 parents lived with their child on a full-time / majority basis. Of the remaining 3 parents, 2 with their children on a part-time basis, and the other participant did not live with their child(ren) but still saw them on a weekly basis.</p> <p>There was one co-parenting dyad that was asked this question.</p> <p>The question wording was generally viewed positively, to the extent that it was described as "spot on". However, there were occasional comments that it was not as readable as it could be – the alternative wording proposed was to make it more concise by saying "Are the rules you have strictly enforced or not?"</p> <p>There was a spread of responses selected. Participants who selected code 3 often justified why they selected this code by discussing the nuances which could affect their level of enforcement. Examples of these nuances included the age of the child, the time period (e.g., whether the child was on school holiday), whether the rules themselves were seen as important, and the other commitments in the child's life (e.g., how much homework they had).</p> <p>Again, co-parents who answered this question tended to focus exclusively on how the rules were enforced when their children were at their house, with some participants acknowledging that their approach to rules differed to their ex-partner's.</p>
<b>Findings from Round 2:</b>	<p>8 participants were asked this question in Round 2. Of these parents, 6 did not live with the other parent of their child(ren). Of these parents, 3 were separated, and the other 3 were in a relationship with the other parent but lived separately for a variety of reasons.</p> <p>The households varied in terms of the number and age ranges of the participants' children. The majority of the sample (5 out of 8 parents) had only one child. The age range of the children varied from 18 months old to 15 years old (in cases where children were aged under 5, the children were part of a multi-child household).</p>

	<p>All but one of the 6 parents who did not live with the child(ren)'s other parent were involved in a co-parenting arrangement. Of these, 4 of the parents lived with their child(ren) on a full-time / majority basis, and both of the 2 parents who did not live with their child(ren) on a full-time / majority basis were separated from the child(ren)'s other parent</p> <p>There was one co-parenting dyad included in the sample for this question.</p> <p>Mirroring Round 1, the question was generally viewed fairly positively, and the statements made sense to most responses.</p> <p>As well as the nuances captured above, participants in Round 2 also noted that some rules were more strictly enforced if they were perceived to affect the child's safety (e.g., strictly enforcing wearing a helmet on a bike).</p> <p>On occasion, some parents appeared keen to emphasise that they were not strict – but this was not an issue for other parents.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations for final question wording:</b></p>	<p>In general, the wording and response codes are suitable. It would be worth considering whether the repetition of 'strictly enforced' within the question is necessary from an understanding point of view, and we would also note that parents are likely to approach this question with nuanced approaches, so if capturing this nuance is of interest, allowing an open-text follow up for participants who select code 3 may be beneficial.</p>

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