

## Article

Symposium 2008:  
Data Collection: Challenges, Achievements and New Directions

### **Development and Implementation Issues for a Survey Question on Sexual Identity**

by Joseph Traynor

2009



## **Development and Implementation Issues for a Survey Question on Sexual Identity**

Joseph Traynor<sup>1</sup>

### **Abstract**

The expansion in scope of UK equality legislation has led to a requirement for data on sexual orientation. In response, the Office for National Statistics has initiated a project aiming to provide advice on best practice with regard to data collection in this field, and to examine the feasibility of providing data that will satisfy user needs.

The project contains qualitative and quantitative research methodologies in relation to question development and survey operational issues. This includes:

- A review of UK and international surveys already collecting data on sexual orientation/identity
- A series of focus groups exploring conceptual issues surrounding 'sexual identity' including related terms and the acceptability of questioning on multi-purpose household surveys
- A series of quantitative trials with particular attention to item non-response; question administration; and data collection
- Cognitively testing to ensure questioning was interpreted as intended.
- Quantitative research on potential bias issues in relation to proxy responses
- Future analysis and reporting issues are being considered alongside question development e.g. accurately capturing statistics on populations with low prevalence

The presentation also discusses the practical survey administration issues relating to ensuring privacy in a concurrent interview situation, both face to face and over the telephone

---

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Traynor, Office for National Statistics, London, England, UK