Interview & Focus Groups Questions: Opening and Closing Questions

1: Opening questions

- Can you think of any times when you have become aware of how data about you is used? If so, please share examples.
- You shared some personal data with us before the focus groups – how did you feel about doing that?
- Have you seen data use talked about in the media? If so, please tell us more.
    - [if they have an example] What was your reaction to this example? What did it make you think or feel?
    - [if no examples presented, we gave examples from the news at the time of the focus group or interview. For example, a story which claimed that people in England who have been told to self-isolate by the NHS Test and Trace system (the government funded service aimed at tracking and preventing the spread of Covid-19) could have their details passed to police.
- I'd like you to think about how you generally feel about data use.
    - Do you think it benefits society?
    - Do you have concerns about it?
- Can you think of examples where you have changed what you do because of concerns? [if no answers: for example, do you ever not input your personal details on an online form, think twice before using public wifi]
- Do your feelings vary (eg depending on the data use or situation)?
- Is this something that you think about much?

2.1: Data uses in the public sector

We're interested in your views about data uses in the public sector. This includes government departments like the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), healthcare providers like the NHS, or public service media organisations like the BBC.
- How do you think that public sector organisations such as DWP, NHS, BBC use personal data?
- How do you feel about these kinds of data uses?
    - [If no examples are given, 'Don't worry if you can't think of any, we are going to give you some examples next'.]
    - [If possible inaccuracies emerge, 'It can be hard to know exactly what's happening to our data, which is something we'll come back to at the end of this focus group'.]

2.2: Examples of uses of data in public sector contexts

In this section, we will show you examples of public sector uses of data and ask your opinion about them. Some of these are actual, current data uses, and some are possible future data uses that organisations are considering.

This section focused on one of four themes. Click on the links below to view questions about each theme.

3: Closing questions

3.1. Perceptions of fairness:
- Do you think any of the data uses we have spoken about today are fair (e.g. you feel okay about? comfortable with?). If so, which ones?
- Do you think any of the data uses we have spoken about today are unfair (e.g. you feel okay about? comfortable with?). If so, which ones?
- For those data uses you think are not OK/fair, is there anything you think could be done to improve or make these practices fairer?
    - [if they can't answer in relation to specific practices, broaden it out] Generally, what does fair/unfair data use look like to you?
    - [if they ask what fairness is, or what we mean by this, ask participants what it means to them in everyday life and whether they think they can apply this to what they have seen today. Could also link back to the benefits/concerns that we discussed and whether those prompt any thoughts on what could be fair/unfair?]
- How important is it that data is used in a fair way? Why do you think this?

3.2. Understanding:
- How much do you feel you understand the data uses we have talked about? How easy do you think it is to understand them?
- Are some of the data uses we have shown you today easier to understand than others? Why/why not?
    - [if participants thank me for 'teaching' them or 'making it easier' say that I am glad to hear that and I will pass that on to the person who designed the visuals but that what I am really interested in knowing is whether they think, in general, data practices are easy to understand]
- How important is it to understand such things in your day to day life? Why do you think this?

3.3. Context (if not come up organically):
- We said earlier that we're interested in data uses in public sector organisations like DWP, NHS, BBC.
- In your thinking about whether data uses are fair or not, and whether you feel comfortable with them or not, how important is:
    - organisations involved,
    - whose data is involved,
    - in what context,
    - for what purpose?
- Are there other factors that matter when it comes to how you feel about data uses? For example, has the coronavirus pandemic affected your views? If so, in what way?

4. Concluding
- Anything to add?
- Thank you very much for participating in this focus group!