



Links between the Market Research Society and the Survey Data Collection Network

The Market Research Society (MRS) is an active member of the Survey Data Collection Network (SDC-Net). MRS has presented to the Network on the longer-term future of face-to-face data collection, *Back in the field after Covid-19: What's changed and how data collection is evolving*, in addition to contributing to a panel discussion on *Future demand for face-to-face fieldwork: How shall the survey industry respond?*

MRS produced a wide range of guidelines and resources about face-to-face data collection, initially in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, which were also shared and discussed within the SDC-Net community. The following resources are useful for researchers interested in survey data collection and for SDC-network members. Further information about MRS, its activities and guidance are detailed below.

About the Market Research Society (MRS)

MRS is the UK professional body for research, insight and analytics. MRS recognises c.5,000 individual members and over 500 accredited Company Partners in over 50 countries who are committed to delivering outstanding insight.

MRS consults with business and government leaders to ensure that research stays at the forefront of commercial and political agendas. MRS works on behalf of MRS members and MRS Company Partners to ensure the sector stays relevant and recognised. As the regulator, MRS promotes the highest professional standards throughout the sector via the MRS Code of Conduct.

MRS supports the sector with specialist training and qualifications, professional membership, company accreditation, conferences, awards and advice on best practice.

- **Professional development** – Through [qualifications](#), [CPD](#), mentoring, skills mapping and [specialist training](#), MRS upskills individuals and organisations within the sector.
- **Thought leadership** – MRS publishes the award-winning [Impact magazine](#), provide 40 e-books and free webinars, as well as the academic 2* journal published by SAGE, the [International Journal of Market Research \(IJMR\)](#). MRS drives the research sector's own think tank [MRS Delphi Group](#) which publishes white papers on issues such as privacy, data integration and prediction.
- **Awards** – MRS hosts the sector's key awards including the MRS Excellence Awards, the MRS Operations Awards and MRS Awards for outstanding individuals and organisations.
- **Events** – Each year MRS provides a comprehensive events programme including specialist conferences, the Annual Conference, Speaker Evenings, regional and specialist events plus a Roadshow.
- **Market insight** – MRS gathers market intelligence about the sector and publishes reports such as the [MRS League Tables](#), [MRS Annual Survey](#) and the [MRS Business Sentiment Analysis](#) to reveal the key market and industry trends.

The MRS Code of Conduct

For nearly 70 years the MRS Code of Conduct has been the foundation of good research. Adherences to the **MRS Code of Conduct**, is a requirement for all MRS members and employees working for [MRS Company Partners](#).

The Code of Conduct was historically created to support all those engaged in research, insight and data analytics in maintaining professional standards. In recognition of the changing nature of activities by practitioners the MRS Code of Conduct was expanded to cover all professional activities being undertaken by MRS Members and MRS Company Partners.

The Code is also intended to reassure the general public and other interested parties that activities undertaken by MRS members and MRS Company Partners are carried out in a professional and ethical manner.

MRS Guidance

The MRS Code of Conduct is supported by a suite of ethical and legal guidance designed to help practitioners undertake robust research, insight and data analytics.

A full list of MRS guidance can be found here: <https://www.mrs.org.uk/standards/mrs-guidance>.

A selection of some of the MRS guidance, which is relevant for data collection activities is listed below:

Inclusion Guidance

- [MRS Best Practice Guide on Collecting Ethnicity Sample Data](#) – This MRS Guide is focusing on the collection of ethnic data from the UK, although the general principles and examples could apply and/or be adapted for other countries depending upon the cultural and language norms for collecting ethnicity data.
- [MRS Best Practice Guide on Collecting Sample Data on Physical Disabilities and/or Mental Health Conditions](#) - MRS has produced this Best Practice Guide to help practitioners act legally and ethically in collecting data and asking research participants questions on physical disabilities and/or mental health conditions.
- [MRS Best Practice Guide on Collecting Sample Data on Sexual Orientation](#) - MRS has produced this Best Practice Guide is to help practitioners act legally and ethically when collecting data and asking research participants questions on sexual orientation.
- [MRS Best Practice Guide on Collecting Data on Sex and Gender](#) - MRS has produced this Guidance Note to help practitioners act legally and ethically in collecting data and asking research participants questions on biological sex, gender and gender identity.

Researching Children and Vulnerable Adults

- [MRS Guidelines for Conducting Data collection Activities with Children](#) - The MRS Code, defines children as those aged under 16 years. There is no recommended minimum age for data collection activities among children, but it is expected that members will involve very young children directly in data collection activities only when this is necessary and appropriate to a particular project. This MRS guidance provides ethical guidance on collecting data from children.

- [MRS Best Practice Guide: Research Participant Vulnerability](#) - MRS has produced this best practice guide and checklist to help practitioners identify, understand and respond to research participant vulnerabilities effectively and consistently.

Data Collection

- [MRS Guidelines on Questionnaire Design](#) – MRS has produced this guidance to help practitioners to understand the fundamental principles and approaches to designing better questionnaires.
- [MRS/IQCS Guidelines on Interviewer Safety](#) – This MRS guidance was originally updated during the Covid-19 pandemic when interviewers returned to in-person data collection. The Guidance has been prepared with reference to the guidelines published by the [Suzy Lamplugh Trust](#).
- [MRS Covid-19 Data Collection Guidance](#) – The MRS Covid-19 guidelines applied throughout the pandemic and these guidelines were withdrawn from 1 January 2023. The MRS Covid-19 guidance provides general good practice in data collection ensuring that participants, interviewers and colleagues are protected when undertaking data collection.
 - [Undertaking Safe Face-to-Face Data Collection - April 2022](#)
 - [Undertaking Safe Face-to-Face Mystery Shopping - April 2022](#)
 - [Facilities Used for Face-to-Face Data Collection - April 2022](#)
- [MRS Guidance – Essential Safeguards: Mental Health](#) – This MRS guidance aims to help practitioners identify the signs of anxiety and depression to assist in their professional activities.
- [MRS Guidance – Essential Safeguards: Dealing with Discriminatory Comments](#) – This MRS guidance aims to help practitioners if they witness or experience discrimination whilst undertaking their professional activities.

Data Protection

- [Data Protection & Research: Guidance for MRS Members and Company Partners 2019](#) – This MRS guidance is designed to help researchers understand the impact of GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 on research policies and practices and was developed through information consultation with the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO).
- [MRS/SRA Guidance on the General Data protection Regulation \(GDPR\) and data protection for social research](#) – This guidance covers all the main aspects of GDPR and data protection which is relevant to undertaking social research including the research exemptions and using the public interest lawful bases.

Observation

- [MRS Guidelines for Observers – legal and ethical responsibilities](#) - There is a wide variety of ways for observing data being collected and each of the modes of observation involves different obligations. MRS has produced this guidance to help navigate the different legal and ethical issues for each of the different observer modes.

- [MRS Guidance – Essential Safeguards: Video Conferencing](#) – MRS produced this short guidance during the Covid-19 pandemic to highlight the ethical, practical and interactional issues associated with the use of video conferencing techniques.
- [MRS Checklist: Viewing Facilities – Viewers’ Commitments to Participants](#) – This checklist sets out the steps that viewing facilities must follow when they are used for observing participant research.