COVID-19 Interview Topic Guide

These remote interviews are intended to be flexible, semi-structured interviews. While these topics provide a general guide and a series of prompts (noted in bullet points), the aim is to encourage a conversation between the interviewer and participant, rather than a formal question and answer format. The questions will vary according to the particular situation of the participants. Additionally, there is flexibility so that participants can introduce topics that they feel are relevant. There are four topic guides in this document:

1. Baseline interview topic guide
2. 1st follow up interview topic guide
3. 2nd follow up interview topic guide
4. Photo elicitation & mapping interview guide (the same for each research phase)
5. **Baseline interview topic guide**

Probes to use throughout

* How do you feel about that?
* What do you think about that?
* You spoke about X, is that something particularly important to you?
* It sounds like doing X is important to you, can you tell me a bit more about that?
* Can you tell me a bit more about what that experience has been like for you?

When discussing difficult situation (MH, food insecurity etc)

* What kind of support were you able to get?
* How did being in the pandemic impact that experience?

**Section 1: life since lockdown, health and wellbeing**

**The family**

To start with, I’d love to know a bit more about you and your family:

* Who have you got at home right now?
* To clarify: So at home it is you, x, and x… (will have some of this info from the study)
* Do you live in a house/ apartment?
* Who was at home during lockdown?
* What was that like?
* *Probe for any positives and negatives*

**The area**

How long have lived in Bradford/ Folkestone/ Brent?

Tell me what you think about the neighbourhood

* *Probe for any positive and negatives*

Is there anything you’d like to change about the local area?

* Can you tell me why are those changes are important to you?

How have you been getting around during lockdown? (e.g. car, bus foot)

* Is that the same as before?

Proposed question: How satisfied are you with the food shops in your local area?

**General experience of lockdown**

I’m interested in how day to day life for your family has changed since lockdown

*Probes:*

* In what ways did your day to day life change during lockdown?
* Did your work change during lockdown?
* What did you find challenging during lockdown?
* Have there been any positives?
* What does day to day life look like now compared to before?
* How does it feel now we can do x, y, z
* ~~Are there things you’re concerned about as we enter into this next phase of normal?/~~
* Looking forward into the future, is there anything you’re concerned about moving forward?
* How well would you say your family are coping financially?

*If financial challenges are disclosed*

* How has this impacted your day to day life?
* How has this impacted on you being able to afford and buy the things you and your family need?
* Would you say this has impacted the kinds of foods you eat?
* Has this changed how you make decisions about what foods to eat?

Have you been able to receive any support from the government?

* How do you feel about this support?
* How has [this challenge] impacted you?
* Are you eligible for healthy start?

*If underlying health condition in family disclosed*

* Have you been able to receive any support from the government during lockdown?
* How did you feel about this support?

**Perceptions of health and wellbeing**

If I say the word ‘wellbeing’ what does that mean for you, and your family?

* Do you think any differently about wellbeing since the pandemic?
* What about the word ‘health’?
* Do you think differently about health since the pandemic?
* Thinking of the things you did to try and keep healthy before the pandemic, do you feel that has changed much since? Why do you think those changes have happened? -*leading question?*

And what does being healthy involve?

***If*** *diet is mentioned**[if diet is not mentioned ask these questions later on after asking about food]*

You mentioned healthy eating, what does healthy eating mean from your perspective?

* How easy or hard is it to do this [however they describe it]
* Is this something you prioritise? (*If healthy eating is not mentioned here, but later on, probe in the same wa*y)
* Do you think this has changed at all since the pandemic?
* How do you think this has changed?
* How do you feel about that?

**Section 2: Engagement with the food environment**

**Shopping routines (**We want to understand how shopping routines have changed and what the reasons for this are)

(Compared to where we were before Covid, how have your shopping routines changed?)

Thinking back to what things were like before March, what did an average week of acquiring food look like for you?

*Probes:*

* Who did the shopping?
* In what places? Why?
* How often?
* Did your children go with you?
* How did you travel there?

Did any of this change when lockdown started?

*Probes:*

* Did you shop in different places?
* At different times of day?
* As often as before?
* How did you navigate childcare and going shopping?

Were there any other places you got food before the lockdown?

Did you ever find it hard to get the food you usually buy? *(see financial challenge section if relevant)*

Did you do any shopping to support anyone else?

* Can you tell me your reasons for doing this shopping to support someone else?

Now that lockdown has eased what do your shopping routines look like?

*Probes:*

* Who does the shopping?
* In what places? Why?
* How often?
* Do your children go with you?
* How do you travel there?

How do you feel about food shopping since COVID?

*Probes:*

* Do you enjoy it more or less?
* Are there any changes to your routines that you would want to hold on to?
* Are there things you wish could be different?
* How easy or difficult do you find it to find time to get to the shops?

*If eligible for healthy start:*

*How do the healthy start vouchers fit in?*

*Probe:*

* Where would you use healthy start vouchers
* What do you buy with them
* What do you think of the scheme?
* Do you find that they help you to buy the things you ideally would want to?

**In-store practices** (we want to know if the way they shop when in store has changed at all)

(If they shopped in-store during lockdown)

How do you decide what to buy when you go shopping?

Is this different from before?

* *If yes, probe for reasons why*

What about how you go around a supermarket? Other store?

Do you do anything differently from before lockdown?

*Probe:*

* how long do you spend there?

Does the layout of shops look any different than before?

*Probe:*

* *If so, how?*
* *How do you find these changes to the layout?*

Do you buy the same things as before COVID or has anything changed?

* Do you ever get things you weren’t planning to?
* Has this changed since lockdown?
* Have you noticed any changes in the price of food since COVID?
  + *If so, has this influenced what you buy?*

Have you noticed any changes in food advertising?

*Probe:*

* *In-store*
* *Outside*
* *Digital (on TV/ on social media & online)*

Can you think of any changes to the instore environment that would help you buy the kind of foods you ideally want? [idea is to probe about labelling without explicitly saying it]

*If financial challenges are disclosed:*

Have you needed any additional support to get food in the last few months?

Would you be able to tell me a bit about that?

* Gentle probing to ask about experiences of food bank use, holiday hunger scheme, government food packages, what type of food was given, how they felt about it, and how they managed.
* What type of food did you receive?
* How did this impact your ability to eat the kinds of foods you ideally want to eat?
* And the stuff you received from the food parcel, how did this impact on the kind of meals you eat, compared to normal?
* Is this a change from before lockdown?

*If ordering online is mentioned:*

Is this new since COVID?

* What do you think of ordering online?
* Will you continue to do so post COVID? Why?
* Are there certain things you would or wouldn’t order online?
* *If haven’t been able to order online since COVID but used to:*
  + *Would you choose to start ordering online again?*

*If challenges in terms of finding to time to shop due to front line role, caring responsibilities*

* *Can you tell me a bit more about how that experience was for you?*
* *What would have made things easier?*

**Eating out and takeaway**

Thinking back to what things were like before March, was eating out something you did regularly? What about takeaway? For what reasons would you have gone out to eat/ gotten takeaway?

* *If they ate out regularly: Did you miss eating out? How was the experience of not being able to eat out for you?*
* *Probes:* 
  + What sort of places?
  + How often?
* During lockdown did you eat much takeaway?
* Were there things you replaced it with?
* What has eating out looked like since then?
* What do you want it to look like in future?

Are there any changes to the eating-out environment that would help you buy the kind of food you ideally want? [idea is to probe into labelling]

* Is this something you thought about before lockdown?

**Section 3: Food practices**

**Ideal mealtimes**

I want you to think a bit about the ideal family meal at your house, if there was nothing getting in the way of this mealtime going exactly the way you wanted it to. Almost like your ‘dream’ mealtime.

* What would this look like?
* Can you tell me about why these elements you spoke about important to you? / Can you tell me about why doing X is important to you?

And how similar is this to what your meal times usually look like? **Then move on to meal times**

**Meal preparation**

Who prepares the food in your family?

* Has this changed since lockdown?
  + How do you feel about that change?

Can you tell me about some typical meals?

*Probe:*

* *Breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks*
* Does everyone in your family tend to eat the same meals?
  + *If no, what are the differences?*
  + *If differences highlighted between children & parents, probe about what’s different.*
* Are there particular meals or foods that your children request?
  + Has this changed since lockdown?

Has anything changed about the food/ meals you prepare since lockdown?

*Probes:*

* *More or less from scratch cooking – why?*
* *More experimenting with new recipes – why?*
* *More baking – why?*
* *More cooking or eating as a family – why?*
* *More ready meal preparation – why?*
* *Planning your meals in advance?*
* ***So it sounds like you are doing more/less X since lockdown. How has that been for you?/ What has that been like for you?***

Do you store food any differently to before? Why?

*Probes:*

* *Freezing more*
* *Buying more long life foods*
* *Throwing food away?*

Are there things you have changed that you’d like to keep?

**Meal times**

Tell me about meal times – do you have a set routine, or does it vary?

* Has this changed since lockdown?
* How do you feel about these changes?
* Do you tend to eat together?
* *If changed, are these changes you’d like to keep as things get back to ‘normal’*

Do you and your family members ever eat food in between formal meal times/ outside of these formal meal times?

* What kind of foods do you eat in these times?
* What’s usually the reason for eating outside of these meal times?

How much influence do you feel you have over what your kids eat? Has this changed since lockdown?

**Types of food consumed**

Do you think that the types of foods that you and your family eat have changed at all since lockdown?

* Can you describe those differences to me?
* Why do you think you and your family are doing these things differently?
* How do you feel about these changes?
* What do you think about the idea of these changes continuing into the future?
* *Additional probes:*
  + *More or less fruit and veg (types)- why?*
  + *~~More or less snack food (types)- why?~~*
  + *More or less HFSS food specifically (types)- why?*
  + *More or less out of home food- why?*
  + *More or less sugary drinks? – why?*
  + *More or less energy drinks? – why?*
  + *More or less healthy?*

Is there anything you’d like to change about what you and your children eat in light of the pandemic?

Is there anything that you want to continue as things get back to ‘normal’ in terms of how you cook and eat? *(eating together, cooking from scratch, shopping in different outlets, n. of takeaways, baking)*

**Section four: school food**

What has eating at school/ nursery been like since the kids went back (or if they stayed)?

*Probes:*

* Do they have school meals?
* What do they think of them?
* What do you think of them?
* Do they get water at school? How accessible is this? How popular is this?
* Did they ever go and buy extra food outside school?
* Has this changed since Covid?

How do you feel about the role of schools in providing food for your children? Has this changed since before lockdown?

1. **1st and 2nd follow up topic guide**

*Please note these follow up topics guides are rough guides. The guides are highly contingent a) on what parents reported in the first interview and b) the situation with COVID-19 nearer to the time of interview. We will be able to ascertain the latter closer to the time of the follow ups and will submit any amendments to the ethics committee.*

Probes to use throughout

* How do you feel about that?
* What do you think about that?
* You spoke about X, is that something particularly important to you?
* It sounds like doing X is important to you, can you tell me a bit more about that?
* Can you tell me a bit more about what that experience has been like for you?

**Section 1: life since lockdown, health and wellbeing**

**The family**

How has everyone in your family been since we last chatted?

* Note any significant changes

**The area**

Has much changed about [neighbourhood] in the past six months?

Are you still getting around by [transport mode]

**General experience of lockdown**

I’m interested in how day to day life for your family has looked since we last spoke?

*Probes:*

* In what ways did your day to day life change in the past six months?
* Any work changes?
* New challenges?
* Have there been any positives?
* What does day to day life look like now compared to 6 months ago?
* How does it feel now we can/ can’t do x, y, z
* Are there things you’re concerned about as we enter into this next phase of normal?

*If financial challenges are disclosed*

Have you been able to receive any support from the government?

* How do you feel about this support?
* How has [this challenge] impacted you?
* Are you eligible for healthy start?

*If underlying health condition in family disclosed*

* Have you been able to receive any support from the government during lockdown?
* How did you feel about this support?

**Perceptions of health and wellbeing**

When we spoke last, you said that health and wellbeing meant x. Does that still ring true for you today?

* Is there anything in that’s changed in terms of how you keep healthy in the past 6 months?
* Can you tell me about those changes?

**Section 2: Engagement with the food environment**

**Shopping routines (**We want to understand how shopping routines have changed and what the reasons for this are)

When we spoke six months ago, you mentioned shopping looked like x. What are your routines looking like now?

*Probes:*

* Who does the shopping?
* In what places? Why?
* How often?
* Do your children go with you?
* How do you travel there?
* How did you navigate childcare and going shopping?
* Do you still shop to support x?

How have you felt about food shopping since we last spoke?

*Probes:*

* Do you enjoy it more or less?
* Are there any changes to your routines that you would want to hold on to?
* Are there things you wish could be different?
* How easy or difficult do you find it to find time to get to the shops?

*If eligible for healthy start (child >4 yrs* ***and*** *earning >£16,190/ child tax credit / on UC / income support)*

*How do the healthy start vouchers fit in?*

*Probe:*

* Where would you use healthy start vouchers
* What do you buy with them
* What do you think of the scheme?
* Do you find that they help you to buy the things you ideally would want to?

**In-store practices**

When we spoke you said you thought about x when deciding what to buy. Is that still the case?

* *If no, probe for reasons why*
* What about how you go around a supermarket? Other store?
* Have you done anything differently in the past six months?

Has the layout of shops changed at all in the last 6 months?

*Probe:*

* *If so, how?*
* *How do you find these changes to the layout?*

Do you buy the same things as you were buying six months ago or has anything changed?

Can you tell me about those changes?

You said before you did/ didn’t get things you weren’t planning to. Has this changed at all? Can you think of any reasons for that?

Have you noticed any changes in the price of food since we last spoke?

* + *If so, has this influenced what you buy?*

Have you noticed any changes in food advertising?

*Probe:*

* *In-store*
* *Outside*
* *Digital (on TV/ on social media & online)*

Can you think of any changes to the in-store environment that would help you buy the kind of foods you ideally want? Last time you mentioned x?

*If financial challenges are disclosed:*

Have you needed any additional support to get food in the last few months?

Would you be able to tell me a bit about that?

* Gentle probing to ask about experiences of food bank use, holiday hunger scheme, government food packages, what type of food was given, how they felt about it, and how they managed.
* Is this a change from before?

*If ordering online is mentioned:*

Is this new in the last 6 months?

* What do you think of ordering online?
* Will you continue to do so post COVID? Why?
* Are there certain things you would or wouldn’t order online?
* *If haven’t been able to order online since COVID but used to:*
  + *Would you choose to start ordering online again?*

*If challenges in terms of finding to time to shop due to front line role, caring responsibilities*

* *Can you tell me a bit more about how that experience has been for you these past few months.*
* *What would have made things easier?*

**Eating out and takeaway**

You mentioned last time that x about takeaway and eating out. Has this changed since? How has this changed? What about takeaway? For what reasons would you have gone out to eat/ gotten takeaway?

* *If they ate out regularly:*
* What do you want it to look like in future?

Are there any changes to the eating-out environment that would help you buy the kind of food you ideally want? [idea is to probe into labelling]. Six months ago you mentioned x, is that still the case now?

* Is this something you thought about before lockdown?

**Section 3: Food practices**

**Ideal mealtimes**

When we last spoke you told me x about your idea mealtime. Has that changed at all?

* Can you tell me how?

**Meal preparation**

When we last spoke you told me x prepared most of the food. What do things look like now?

* *If a change* How do you feel about that change?

Has anything changed about the food/ meals you prepare in the last 6 months?

*Probes:*

* *More or less from scratch cooking – why?*
* *More experimenting with new recipes – why?*
* *More baking – why?*
* *More cooking or eating as a family – why?*
* *More ready meal preparation – why?*
* *Planning your meals in advance?*
* ***So it sounds like you are doing more/less in the last 6 months. How has that been for you?/ What has that been like for you?***

Do you store food any differently to before? Why?

*Probes:*

* *Freezing more*
* *Buying more long life foods*
* *Throwing food away?*

Are there things you have changed that you’d like to keep?

**Meal times**

You said before that meal routines looked like x? What are things like now?

* How do you feel about any changes?
* Do you tend to eat together?
* *If changed, are these changes you’d like to keep as things get back to ‘normal’*

Do you and your family members still eat food in between formal meal times/ outside of these formal meal times?

* What kind of foods do you eat in these times?
* What’s usually the reason for eating outside of these meal times?

**Types of food consumed**

Do you think that you (and others at home) have eaten any differently in the last six months?

* Can you describe those differences to me?
* Why do you think you and your family are doing these things differently?
* How do you feel about these changes?
* What do you think about the idea of these changes continuing into the future?
* *Additional probes:*
  + *More or less fruit and veg (types)- why?*
  + *More or less snack food (types)- why?*
  + *More or less HFSS food specifically (types)- why?*
  + *More or less out of home food (types)- why?*
  + *More or less sugary drinks? – why?*
  + *More or less energy drinks? – why?*
  + *More or less healthy?*

Is there anything you’d like to change about what you and your children eat?

How much influence do you feel you have over what your kids eat? Has this changed since lockdown?

Is there anything that you want to continue as things get back to ‘normal’ in terms of how you cook and eat? *(eating together, cooking from scratch, shopping in different outlets, n. of takeaways, baking)*

**Section four: school food**

What has eating at school/ nursery been like in the past six months?

*Probes:*

* Do they have school meals?
* What do they think of them?
* What do you think of them?
* Do they get water at school? How accessible is this? How popular is this?
* Did they ever go and buy extra food outside school?
* Has this changed in the past six months?

1. **Creative methods topic guide**

*Note: not all participants may have participated in all the activities*

* How did you find the activities?
* Was there anything you noticed about the way food and eating has changed for you?

**Oral Diaries**

Probes (highly dependent on context):

* your diary entry said xxxx. Putting yourself back in this moment and time, can you tell me more about this experience? What did you do after/ before?
* Is this similar or different to normal
* Are there things that might make x experience easier?
* **If they took oral diaries in FE: Can you tell me about what you were looking at/doing/watching when you made this note.**

**Photos**

Depending on how many photos they participant has been taken they can choose to talk through all of the photos or a smaller selection.

Looking at each photo in turn, ask the participant: A) what is this a photo of? B) what were you thinking about when you took this photo?

Additional probes depending on what the photo is of:

1. Is this common or a one off?
2. What is positive/ negative about this situation?
3. What might you like to be different?
4. What would the ideal situation look like?
5. How does this impact your wellbeing?
6. Were there any other things you think you might have taken a photo of/forgot to take a photo of?

**Maps**

* Tell me about what’s on the map
* How easy/ difficult do you find it to get to these places? [safety, cost, childcare, accessibility, comfort]
* Are these places you go regularly or a one off?
* Does this map look similar or different to how it might have looked pre-covid?
* What are the similarities and differences?