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Introduction

The Youth Cohort Study (YCS) series is a significant and extensive study of young people’s transitions and has informed key policy decisions over a number of years. It is known to sample members as ‘The Pathways Study’.

The primary aim of YCS is to track young people’s transitions from compulsory education into further education, training and the labour market.

The longitudinal nature of the YCS enables the Department for Education to establish the education and employment paths that young people take and explore how things develop over time. Finding out about the different routes that young people take helps the Department plan services for different types of young people. It also enables the Department to establish appropriate points in the lives of young people where policy intervention helps to improve their educational and employment outcomes.

The YCS series dates back to 1985 when Cohort 1 Sweep 1 took place. To date, there have been 13 YCS Cohorts and 45 Sweeps and details of these are set out in figure I1 below. The separate Cohorts are listed across the page while the ‘Sweeps’ are shown by the year in which they took place. YCS Cohorts are selected by taking a random sample of pupils from the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) which contains details of young people in Year 11 in schools. The first survey (or ‘Sweep’) takes place around six months to one year after pupils have finished Year 11, with subsequent Sweeps taking place annually.
Figure 11: YCS Design

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\(^1\) Cohort 6 was surveyed twice in 1994 (Sweeps 3 and 4).
\(^2\) These Cohorts were surveyed twice in 2000. Cohort 9 had Sweeps 3 & 4 and Cohort 10 had Sweeps 1 & 2.

Cohorts 1 to 12 of YCS covered both England and Wales, but Cohort 13 covers England only.

This technical report describes the methodology used on the fourth Sweep of the 13\(^{th}\) YCS, which was carried out by TNS-BMRB in spring - summer 2010. This survey was amongst 19 and 20 year olds who had completed Year 11 in the summer of 2006. A total of 4,829 interviews were conducted.
Cohort 13 has been a departure from previous YCS Cohorts in terms of the methodology used. Cohort 13 Sweep 4 was conducted using a mixed-mode methodology (online, telephone and face-to-face interviewing). Sweeps 2 and 3 of Cohort 13 had been conducted using the same mixed mode methodology and Sweep 1 used a face-to-face methodology in order to address falling response rates on previous YCS Cohorts. In particular there was concern over differential response rates between high attainers and low attainers, with low attainers being more likely to drop out of the survey, and their opinions and circumstances therefore not being sufficiently represented in survey data. It was considered a face-to-face methodology at Sweep 1, and mixed-mode at Sweeps 2, 3 and 4 would boost response rates amongst low attainers.

Another major difference from previous YCS Cohorts was the linking up with the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (LSYPE) conducted by TNS-BMRB (lead contractor), GfK NOP and Ipsos MORI. LSYPE started in 2004, interviewing 13/14 year olds (Year 9), and sample members have been interviewed annually thereafter. LSYPE sample members are the same age as those included in YCS Cohort 13. The questionnaire for YCS was a subset of the LSYPE questionnaire to allow for the merging of the two datasets which enables more detailed subgroup analysis thanks to the increased sample size.

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1 Falling response rates are not specifically related to YCS, it is widely accepted that response rates on all types of survey research have been declining over recent decades (for example, see article “Trends in non-response rates” by Tom W Smith in the International Journal of Public Opinion Research, Vol 7, No 2).
1. Sample design

The Sweep 4 sample consisted of all young people who had been interviewed at Sweep 1, Sweep 2 and Sweep 3, and who agreed to be re-contacted. For details of the Sweep 1 sample design (how the sample was initially selected) see the Sweep 1 technical report2.

1.1 Weighting

The data was weighted to account for non response from certain groups. This Sweep followed those who were academic age 19.

As with the previous Sweep, the weighting involved 2 stages. Firstly, the design weights were applied, which accounted for the probability of being in the sample. For this Sweep, the final weights from the previous Sweep were used as the design weights. With these weights applied, the profile of the issued cases was compared with that of the achieved cases, with regards to a range of variables from the previous Sweep.

A logistic regression was carried out to estimate the probability of response among key groups that were associated with non-response or those considered to be of importance to be controlled for between the Sweeps. These looked at the respondents' situation in the previous Sweep and how the sample compared on a range of measures. After discussion with the Department, the final criteria that were controlled for were:

- Whether respondent had ever applied to go to university at or before the previous Sweep
- Hours in paid work at previous Sweep
- Gender3
- Ethnicity
- Tenure at previous Sweep

2 Technical reports for all 3 previous Sweeps of YCS Cohort 13 are available on the UK Data Archive (www.data-archive.ac.uk). The study number for YCS Cohort 13 is 6024.

3 Gender was not significantly associated with non-response, but was considered important to control for, and hence included in the model.
- Survey mode at previous Sweep
- Interview month at previous Sweep

To obtain the final non response weights, the inverse of the probability of response was taken, and multiplied by the design weight to achieve the final non response weight. This was then trimmed at the 2nd and 98th percentile to remove any extreme weights, and then scaled to the achieved sample size.

Checks were done by comparing various statements for respondents who took part in Sweep 4 with the Sweep 4 weight applied, against those who took part in Sweep 3 with the Sweep 3 weight applied and assessed for similarities. None of the estimates looked at were considered to be out of an acceptable range of similarity.

No population weights were applied at this Sweep, as it is no longer possible to identify the up to date characteristics of the eligible population.
2. Questionnaire development

The questionnaire for Sweep 4 was developed with the LSYPE Wave 7 questionnaire as the questions used on YCS were a subset of those used on LSYPE. A dress rehearsal was used to test the questionnaire.

2.1 Questionnaire structure

The average interview length was 15 minutes, although this varied a little by mode. The questionnaire covered the following topics:

- Introductory questions – some demographics and questions on the respondent’s health;
- Activity history and current activity – details of what the respondent had been doing since their Sweep 3 interview, and what they were doing at Sweep 4;
- Jobs and training – details of what the respondent was doing in their current job or training place;
- Qualifications being studied for now – details of any qualifications the respondent had been studying for in the 2009-2010 academic year (excluding university courses);
- NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) – some questions for respondents who were NEET about why they were NEET and about looking for work;
- Apprenticeships – some questions for respondents who were on apprenticeships about what they thought of their apprenticeship;
- Higher Education – details of any higher education courses the respondent was on, whether they were doing any paid work during term time and how they were funding their studies;
- Potential higher education students (those in education, but not in higher education) - whether the respondent had applied to university, received and accepted any offers, and whether they were on a gap year;
- Information, Advice and Guidance – sources of Information, Advice and Guidance the respondent had used;
- Own children – whether the respondent had any children of their own, and if they lived with them;
- Caring responsibilities – whether the respondent cared for any children (not their own) or elderly/disabled relatives or friends;
- Household information – this section collected details of who the respondent was living with;
- Future contact details – respondent’s contact details to allow them to be contacted for future research (if they consented to this).

As the questionnaire was administered using three different methodologies (online, telephone and face-to-face) it was necessary to design the questions to minimise differences between modes. For example all precoded lists on the telephone survey had to be read out by the interviewer as a respondent completing the questionnaire online would be able to see all possible answer codes.

The full questionnaire can be found with the documentation deposited on the UK Data Archive.

2.2 Questionnaire programming

Once finalised with the Department the questionnaire was programmed: using the same interviewing software for all three modes. Variables from Sweep 3 were also used in the questionnaire programming, so that some questionnaire routing and question text was based on Sweep 3 variables. For example, if a respondent had provided details at Sweep 3 of the university they were at, and the course they were doing, then at Sweep 4 they were asked to confirm that the details we held were still correct, rather than being asked for this information again.

Once programmed, the CAWI (Computer Assisted Web Interviewing), CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) and CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing) questionnaires were then checked thoroughly by the research team. This checking was intended to ensure all the filtering and question wording was correct and matched the Word document.
2.3 Dress rehearsal

A dress rehearsal was held between 10th February and 7th March 2010 to test survey procedures and the full questionnaire. The dress rehearsal only included online and telephone stages, as it was considered a face-to-face stage would be of minimal benefit, and yet would add significantly to the cost of the dress rehearsal.

The initial stage of the dress rehearsal was an online survey - advance letters (including incentives) and emails were sent to sample members asking them to take part.

After one week, the telephone stage of the dress rehearsal commenced, and all sample members who had not completed the online survey were telephoned. Telephone interviewers were fully briefed by the research team before starting fieldwork. Dress rehearsal interviews were also monitored by members of the research team so that researchers could take note of any questionnaire issues while interviewers concentrated on the task at hand.

Young people that had taken part online were called back by members of the research team and asked about how they found the questionnaire.

The sample for the dress rehearsal comprised young people who had taken part in the Sweep 1 dress rehearsal, and had not refused to take part, or been uncontactable at the Sweep 2 or Sweep 3 dress rehearsal. Of the 14 young people included in the sample, 2 completed the online survey and 5 completed a telephone interview. While this seems like too small a number to meaningfully test the questionnaire, the YCS dress rehearsal was combined with the LSYPE dress rehearsal and, in total, 20 web interviews and 23 telephone interviews were achieved. As all questions included on the YCS questionnaire were also included on the LSYPE questionnaire, any questionnaire changes made as a result of the LSYPE dress rehearsal were also applied to YCS.

After the dress rehearsal, some changes were made to the YCS and LSYPE questionnaires. Some key findings from the dress rehearsal were:

- In the activity history and current activity section there was no option for respondents to say there were ill or disabled and unable to work. This was therefore added as an option before the main stage of fieldwork.
• The question that asked whether respondents had got better, worse, or the same grades as in their offer from the university they were attending (‘GradeBet’) did not make sense for people that had applied to that university after getting their exam results (either during their gap year, or through clearing). As a result an option was added to this question for respondents to say they already knew their grades when they applied.

2.4 Cognitive testing

In addition to the dress rehearsal, cognitive testing was used to test the activity history and current activity section of the questionnaire, as this section was designed differently to previous Sweeps\(^4\). The main findings of the cognitive interviewers were:

• Respondents were sometimes confused as to whether changing to a different job counted as starting a new activity or not. In light of this it was decided to collect an employment history as part of the activity history section, so question wording was changed to make it clear that a different job counted as a new activity.

• Some young people were doing more than one activity at a time and were unsure which to choose. Question wording was therefore revised to ask them to choose what they considered to be the main thing they were doing.

\(^4\) At Sweeps 2 and 3, the activity history started at the respondent’s current activity and worked backwards from there to the time of the last interview. At Sweep 4 the activity history started with the activity at the previous interview and worked forwards from there to the respondent’s current activity.
3. Fieldwork

3.1 Fieldwork process

There were three stages to fieldwork:

**Online survey** – all sample members invited to take part via advance letters and (where an email address was available) emails.

**Telephone survey** – all sample members who had not completed the online survey and who had a telephone number in the sample were called.

**Face-to-face survey** – sample members who had not completed the online survey and had not been successfully contacted at the telephone stage were included in this face-to-face stage.

**Online survey**

All sample members were sent letters and (where an email address was available in the sample) emails asking them to take part in the online survey. The letters and emails gave the web address and the young person’s unique password for accessing the survey. The letters included an unconditional incentive (£8 high street voucher).

One week after the online survey had started, reminder emails were sent to all young people for whom an email address was available and who had not already completed the survey, asking them again to complete the online survey.

**Telephone survey**

Two weeks after the online survey had started telephone survey fieldwork began. All sample members who had not completed the online survey (and for whom a telephone number was available) were included in the telephone survey.

As the online survey was left active throughout telephone fieldwork, a system was employed to remove respondents to the online survey from the telephone survey on a daily basis to make it unlikely that young people would be called for the telephone survey after completing the online survey.
Face-to-face survey

The sample members to be included in the face-to-face survey were selected in two batches. When all telephone numbers had been called at least once (and most had been called several times) on the telephone survey the first batch of young people were selected. This first batch comprised:

- Young people who did not complete the online survey and for whom we had no telephone number;
- Young people who did not complete the online survey for whom we had a telephone number that was ineffective when called (either it did not connect at all, or it connected, but the respondent had moved/was unknown at the number);
- Young people who did not complete the online survey and who could not be interviewed over the telephone (for example, if they were deaf);
- Young people who were not available during the telephone fieldwork period, but would be available during face-to-face fieldwork (which finished later).

When telephone fieldwork was coming to an end a second batch was selected for the face-to-face survey. This comprised:

- Any further young people who were identified as having an ineffective number or as having moved (and had not completed the online survey);
- Young people who did not complete the online survey and had been called many times without being interviewed (with outcomes such as ‘no answer’, ‘general call back’, ‘number busy’ or ‘answering machine’).

Young people included in the face-to-face stage were sent an additional letter to let them know they would be contacted by a face-to-face interviewer.

3.2 Fieldwork dates

The online survey started on 18th May 2010 and was kept open throughout the telephone and face-to-face stages, finishing on 12th October 2010.

Telephone fieldwork took place between 1st June and 30th September 2010.

Face-to-face fieldwork took place between 26th July and 12th October 2010.

Fieldwork progress across all modes was reported to the Department on a weekly basis.
3.3 Interviewer briefing

Telephone stage
All telephone interviewers were personally briefed by a member of the research team. The briefing covered:

- Background information – who the survey was for, why it was being done, what had happened at Sweeps 1, 2 and 3;

- Sweep 4 methodology (online then telephone then face-to-face);

- Advance letters and emails, incentives and the respondent website;

- Methods to minimise refusals and maximise response rate, and the importance of a high response rate;

- The questionnaire – structure, key questions, and an explanation of any areas interviewers might not be familiar with.

Face-to-face stage
A video briefing was recorded by the research team and sent to all interviewers to watch before they started fieldwork. The briefing included:

- Background information – who the survey was for, why it was being done, what had happened at Sweeps 1, 2 and 3;

- Sweep 4 methodology (online, then telephone, then face-to-face);

- Sending advance letters;

- The importance of a high response rate;

- Contact procedure – how to introduce the survey, tracing movers, recording outcomes;

- The questionnaire – structure, key questions, and an explanation of any areas interviewers might not be familiar with.

In addition to the briefing interviewers were provided with written instructions which covered the topics above, as well as more administrative information.
3.4 Fieldwork documents

Advance letters and emails

All young people who had taken part at Sweep 3 and not refused to be re-contacted for Sweep 4 were sent an advance letter. The letter was sent to the address the young person had been living at when they were interviewed at Sweep 3 (unless they had since contacted the Department or TNS-BMRB to update their address). If the young person had provided an email address at Sweep 3 they were sent an email as well as a letter. Letters and emails were sent out at the beginning of the online stage of fieldwork.

There were two different types of letter and email:

- One for young people who had provided a telephone number at previous Sweeps – this asked the young person to complete the online survey and said that if they did not complete the online survey they would be called and asked to take part in a telephone survey;

- One for young people who had not provided a telephone number at previous Sweeps – this asked the young person to complete the online survey and said that if they did not complete the online survey then an interviewer would visit them at home to ask them to take part. This letter also said that if the young person would rather take part by telephone they should contact TNS-BMRB (or the Department) to provide a telephone number.

The advance letters and emails also introduced the Sweep 4 survey; thanked respondents for the time they had given so far; and informed them what would be done with the information they provided. The text of the emails was very similar to that of the letters.

Included in all advance letters was an £8 high street voucher.

Letters for face-to-face stage

Young people who were included in the face-to-face stage (those who did not complete the online survey, and were not successfully contacted during the telephone survey) were sent another letter before being contacted by a face-to-face interviewer. The purpose of this letter was to remind the young person about the survey and inform them that an interviewer would be visiting them at home soon. These letters were sent by interviewers themselves.
3.5 Tracing movers

At Sweep 3 attempts were made to collect sufficient information to enable young people who moved before Sweep 4 to be traced. Where possible, mobile telephone numbers, email addresses and details of a ‘stable contact’ were collected. Also, respondents were asked if they were intending to move in the next year and if they knew the address they would be moving to. Finally, change of address cards and reply-paid envelopes had been left with all respondents at Sweep 1, and all respondents who had been interviewed face-to-face at Sweeps 2 and 3, and respondents were asked to return these to TNS-BMRB with their new contact details if they moved.

Not all young people provided such details at Sweep 3, but if they had, this contact information was used to attempt to trace movers at each stage.

Online survey
Invites to take part in the online survey were sent to young people by post and email, so young people who had moved but were still using the same email address would receive the email even if they did not receive the letter.

Telephone survey
Where young people had provided both a mobile and landline telephone number the landline number was called first, but if this proved ineffective (either it did not connect, or it did connect but the young person had moved) then the mobile telephone number was called.

Where interviewers were told that the young person had moved they always asked current occupants if they had a new telephone number for the young person, and if they did then this number was called. If no new telephone number was available the interviewer would ask for a new address for the young person (from which a telephone number could be looked up).

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A ‘stable contact’ was a close friend or relative of the young person who lived at a different address and who would know where to find them if they had moved.
Face-to-face survey
Where a face-to-face interviewer found that the young person was no longer resident at the address there are various measures they would use to try to find new contact details for the young person:

- Asking the current occupants of the address – if the young person’s family were still living at the address they were sometimes willing to provide new contact details for the young person. If new occupants who did not know the young person were living at the address this was generally less successful.
- Asking neighbours – as long as the current occupants of the address had not refused to pass on new contact details, interviewers would ask neighbours if they knew where the young person had moved to.
- If the young person had a mobile telephone number the interviewer would try calling this.
- If the young person had provided details of a ‘stable contact’ the interviewer would try contacting them and asking for the young person’s new address and telephone number.

3.6 Response rate and fieldwork figures
Interviews were achieved with 4,829 young people, with an overall response rate of 89 per cent.

As Sweep 4 is the final Sweep of YCS Cohort 13, it is useful to look at the response rate as a proportion of all cases selected at Sweep 1:

- 10,878 young people were selected for Sweep 1
- 7,525 young people took part at Sweep 1 (69 per cent)
- 6,295 young people took part at Sweep 2 (58 per cent)
- 5,411 young people took part at Sweep 3 (50 per cent)
- 4,829 young people took part at Sweep 4 (44 per cent).

Table 3.1 shows the fieldwork outcomes for all 5,409 young people who had agreed to be re-contacted for Sweep 4.

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6 This excludes 52 young people who had been selected for Sweep 1, but were found to be boarders and so were ineligible for the study.
Table 3.1: Final Sweep 4 fieldwork figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>TOTAL %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total sample</td>
<td>5409</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total interviews</td>
<td>4829</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online interviews</td>
<td>1956</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone interviews</td>
<td>2265</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face to face interviews</td>
<td>608</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total refusals</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young person refusal (tel)</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young person refusal (f2f)</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young person refusal part-way through interview (tel)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proxy refusal (tel)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mover – not traced</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other outcomes</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unavailable during survey period</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young person said had/would complete the online survey but did not</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young person has died</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unproductive after 30+ calls (tel)</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other unproductive</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is also possible to look at response rate broken down by sample variables. Table 3.2 shows final outcomes for young people who were at maintained sector schools in Year 11, and those who were at independent schools in Year 11. As the table shows, the response rate was higher amongst young people who were at independent schools.

Table 3.2: Final Sweep 4 fieldwork figures broken down by school sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Maintained</th>
<th></th>
<th>Independent</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total sample</td>
<td>5112</td>
<td></td>
<td>297</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total interviews</td>
<td>4545</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total refusals</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mover – not traced</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other outcome</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 3.3 shows final outcomes broken down by ethnicity. Ethnicity data were not available for all sample members, only those from maintained schools. As this table shows the response rate was particularly high amongst Indian young people.
Table 3.3: Final Sweep 4 fieldwork figures broken down by ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total sample</td>
<td>299</td>
<td></td>
<td>338</td>
<td></td>
<td>282</td>
<td></td>
<td>255</td>
<td></td>
<td>275</td>
<td></td>
<td>212</td>
<td></td>
<td>3451</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total interviews</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>3060</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total refusals</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mover – not traced</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other outcome</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.4 shows outcomes broken down by academic attainment in Year 11, comparing those with less than five D to G grades at GCSE or intermediate GNVQ (‘lower’ attainers) with those who achieved more than this (‘higher’ attainers). As with ethnicity, these attainment data were only available for maintained sector sample.

As the table shows the response rate was higher for higher attainers than for lower attainers. However, a response rate of 78 per cent was still obtained amongst young people with less than five D to G grades, which represents a considerable improvement on previous Cohorts of YCS (conducted via alternative modes).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Lower attainers</th>
<th>Higher attainers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total sample</td>
<td>704</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total interviews</td>
<td>546</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total refusals</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mover – not traced</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other outcome</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Data processing

4.1 Coding

Coders looked at all questions where ‘other specify’ had been given as an answer. The aim of this exercise, commonly known as backcoding, was to see whether the answer given could actually be coded into one of the original pre-coded response options. Where answers could not be backcoded, new codes were created if necessary.

For fully open ended questions code frames were drawn up by TNS-BMRB and approved by the Department. Standard coding procedures were applied. Not all open ended questions were coded.

Where questions remained the same, codeframes were kept consistent with those used at previous Sweeps, and consistency was also maintained with LSYPE where questions were included on both surveys.

SIC2007 and SOC2000 coding was also used to classify the industry and occupation of the jobs done by young people.

In addition, for young people who were at a college (or school), the name of the college was collected as well as the town this was in. This information was matched to a Department database of schools or colleges in order to code what type of school or college each institution was.

4.2 SPSS output

The data output from YCS Sweep 4 was combined with the data from LSYPE Wave 7, and SPSS data files were provided to the Department. The data consisted of a main interview SPSS file and two smaller hierarchical files. The two hierarchical files contained the variables from the young person’s activity history and the household grid. The main file incorporated all the other variables from the questionnaire that were coded with the exception of these two sections and the recontact information.

Most questions were asked of all respondents but some were survey specific. Where variables were only asked of LSYPE respondents the prefix “w7” was used, other wise the prefix “c4” was used.
Specific codes were used throughout the dataset to signify certain common responses and these are listed below:

-1 = Don’t Know
-91 = Not applicable (this indicates that the respondent did not fulfil the filter criteria for the question)
-92 = Refused
-97 = Unable to classify (applies to SIC and SOC only)
-997 = Problem with script (where a respondent was not asked a question they should have been due to a script error)
-999 = Skipped grid – not to be asked household composition questions (applies to household grid questions only – one YCS respondent was intentionally routed around these questions as there were concerns about the feed forward data from Sweep 3).

4.3 Data linkage

The YCS data has been linked to administrative data held within the Department on the National Pupil Database (NPD). The NPD is a pupil level database which matches pupil and school characteristic data to pupil level attainment.

The available data include pupils’ Key Stage 2, 3, and 4 attainment and data about the pupil such as free school meal eligibility and Special Education Need status. These data can be linked to the deposited survey data using a unique survey identification code. In each file there is one record per case.

Due to the potentially disclosive nature of some of these variables, the linked administrative data have not been included on YCS files deposited in the UK Data Archive. Researchers requiring access to the linked administrative files should contact the Longitudinal Surveys Team at the Department directly. Data can be provided upon submission of a confidentiality form, which is available with the deposited YCS documentation on the UK Data Archive. The Longitudinal Surveys team can be contacted via:
Team.longitudinal@education.gsi.gov.uk