

Technical Report of the National Child Development Study: 2008-2009 Survey

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Date: April 2010

Prepared for: Centre for Longitudinal Studies, Institute of Education



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Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all of the cohort members who generously gave their time to participate in this project and without whom this survey would not have been possible.

At the National Centre for Social Research, we would like to thank all of our colleagues, who have been involved in the setting up and implementation of this project.

We also wish to express our thanks to the interviewers who worked on this survey, and on whom so much of the success of the fieldwork depended.

1 Introduction

1.1 The National Child Development Study

The National Child Development Study (NCDS), is one of Britain's world famous national longitudinal birth cohort studies, three of which are run by the Centre for Longitudinal Studies at the Institute of Education, University of London.

Britain has a unique tradition of carrying out national birth cohort studies, following the same group of people from birth into and through adulthood, and providing a picture of whole generations. There are four such surveys, of which the NCDS is the second:

- National Survey of Health and Development (started in 1946)
- National Child Development Study (started in 1958)
- 1970 British Cohort Study (started in 1970)
- ➤ Millennium Cohort Study (started in 2000)

Each follows a large number of individuals born at a particular time through the course of their lives, charting the effects of events and circumstances in early life on outcomes and achievements later on. The questions on health, education, family, employment and so on are put together by academic researchers and policy makers to understand and improve life in Britain today and in the future.

1.2 Background to the study

NCDS started life as the Perinatal Mortality Survey, which was designed to examine the social and obstetric factors associated with stillbirth and infant mortality. In the first survey, data were collected about the births and families of 17,638 babies born in Great Britain during one week in March 1958. Since then, there have been seven surveys gathering information from respondents living in England, Scotland and Wales¹, in order to monitor their health, education, social and economic circumstances. These surveys were carried out in 1965 (age seven), 1969 (age eleven), 1974 (age sixteen), 1981 (age 23), 1991 (age 33),1999/2000 (age 42) and 2004/2005 (age 46). As part of the 1991 survey, information was additionally collected on the children of one in three cohort members; this included assessments of the behaviour and cognitive development of around 5,000 co-resident children. There have also been surveys of sub-samples of the cohort: most recently, in 1995 (age 37) a 10% representative sub-sample was assessed for difficulties with basic skills. In addition, during 2002-2004, 9,340 NCDS cohort members participated in a bio-medical survey, carried out by qualified nurses.

Data for NCDS have so far been collected from a number of different sources; the midwife present at birth, the cohort members' parents, the head and class teachers, school health service personnel, the cohort members themselves, their spouses, cohabitees and children, and the 1971 and 1981 censuses. Data has also been collected using a variety of; paper, electronic and self-completion questionnaires, clinical records, medical examinations, physical measurements, ability

¹ Including the Channel Islands, Isle of Man and other offshore islands.

tests, educational assessments and diaries.² The previous sweep of NCDS was conducted for the first time as a telephone interview (CATI)³.

The Centre for Longitudinal Studies (CLS) at the Institute of Education, University of London (and formerly the Social Statistics Research Unit at City University), has been responsible for the study since 1985. The study is funded by the ESRC (the Economic and Social Research Council). NatCen in collaboration with CLS were responsible for the development, fieldwork and initial data preparation for the 1999/2000 survey, the 2002/2004 bio-medical survey and the 2004/2005 survey⁴.

1.3 Current sweep

Following competitive tender, the Centre for Longitudinal Studies commissioned the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) to carry out the instrument development, data collection and initial data preparation for the eighth sweep of the NCDS.

This report provides an account of the design, development and conduct of the eighth follow-up survey which took place in 2008/9.

² For further information on NCDS sweeps see: Power, C. and Elliott, J. (2005) Cohort Profile: 1958 British birth cohort (National Child evelopment Study). *International Journal of Epidemiology*, 2005, Information can also be found on the CLS website http://www.cls.ioe.ac.uk.

³ CATI stands for Computer Assisted Telephone Interview

⁴ The bio-medical survey involved collaboration between the Institute of Child Health, St George's Hospital Medical School, the Centre for Longitudinal Studies and the National Centre for Social Research.

2 Sample Design

2.1 Introduction

The NCDS selected all babies born in Great Britain during one week in March 1958. In later sweeps, the cohort was augmented by additional children who were born outside Great Britain but within the target week in 1958. These children had moved to and were educated within Britain before the age of sixteen (see Table 2.1). Immigrants were included at sweeps NCDS 1-3, but no further attempts were made to augment the sample.

Table 2.1 Number of Cohort Members ever participating in NCDS			
		No. of cohort	
		members	%
Births during one week in March 1958		17,638	95.0
Immigrants to a	ge 16	920	5.0
Total Cohort Me	embers	18,558	100.0

As in previous sweeps of the NCDS, the target sample for the survey was all cohort members currently living in England, Scotland or Wales⁵, excluding permanent refusals. The sample definition was subsequently refined, and some cohort members were excluded for specific reasons. The sample issued for the eighth follow-up study (i.e. cohort members invited to take part in the 2008/2009 survey) comprised 12,369 cohort members. Further details are given below.

2.2 Issued sample at NCDS8

Of the 18,558 cohort members who have ever participated it was possible to issue 12,316 to interviewers. The issued sample was comprised of three groups:

- 1) Those who had participated in NCDS6 (2000), NCDS Biomedical Survey (2002) or NCDS7 (2004) and had not subsequently died, emigrated or permanently withdrawn from the study (n=11,320).
- 2) Those who had not participated in any of the above but had personally confirmed their address by responding to a birthday card mailing or in some other fashion since 2000 (n=387).
- 3) Those who had not participated in any of the above but for whom recent contact details had recently been obtained via tracing exercises conducted in collaboration with the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and the National Health Service Central Register (NHSCR) (n=609).

The cases which were not interviewed were those who had previously indicated that they wished to permanently withdraw from the study, those who have emigrated, those who have died, those for whom no contact details had been confirmed or collected since 2000 and those who had either been interviewed in the Dress Rehearsal or had been approached during the Dress Rehearsal but refused to participate (See Table 2.2).

⁵ Including the Channel Islands, Isle of Man and other offshore islands

Table 2.2	Cases not issued to NatCen	
		No. of cohort members
Permanent refu	sals	1,252
Emigrants		1,240
Deaths		1,355
Interviewed or refused to participate in Dress Rehearsal		85
Untraced (after all pre-fieldwork tracing)		2,310
Total		6,242

The sample issued to NatCen comprised of 12,369 cohort members. However, 53 cases were not issued by NatCen after being informed by CLS, shortly after the sample was delivered, that they were permanent refusals. While the majority (76%) of cohort members had participated in a telephone interview in 2004/2005, the sample did include cohort members who had either never been interviewed in person (<1%) or had not participated in the study in a significant length of time (see Table 2.3).

Table 2.3 NCDS8 Sample by last sweep cohort member participated in			
Sweep last participa	ated in	No. of cohort members	%
NCDS 2004		9350	76
NCDS 2000		1942	16
NCDS 1991		353	3
NCDS 1981		301	2
NCDS 1974		286	2
NCDS 1969		50	<1
NCDS 1965		20	<1
Perinatal Mortality Su	ırvey (1958)	14	<1
Total		12,316	100%

2.3 Sample structure

The sample was divided into two batches: the first batch contained 11,707 cases which had confirmed or satisfactory contact information when the initial sample file was delivered in advance of fieldwork in June 2008; the second batch was delivered in December 2008 and was comprised of the 609 cases mentioned above for whom recent contact information had been obtained via tracing exercises conducted in collaboration with the DWP and NHSCR.

There were four cases which were issued in error as part of the second batch of sample, having been issued previously in the first batch. The duplicate cases in the second batch were coded as outcome code 780 (Ineligible - issued in error).

2.4 Serial Numbers

Each NCDS cohort member has a unique serial number that was allocated at the beginning of the study in 1958. In order to facilitate fieldwork management and data processing, and to increase confidentiality, each cohort member in the issued sample was allocated a unique NatCen serial number, specific to this sweep of fieldwork. The NatCen serial number was used on the advance letter, the Address Record Form (ARF), the sample information sheet and on most other documents which were returned to the NatCen Operations Department for coding and editing. The CLS serial number was used on tracing and occupier letters and was also included on the ARF and sample information sheet.

2.5 Allocating the sample to waves

To manage fieldwork, the sample was allocated to seven fieldwork waves. Each fieldwork wave lasted for eight weeks. The second wave began four weeks after the first wave and so on, so that there was an overlap of four weeks with the previous wave and a four week overlap with the subsequent wave. The first two waves contained more cases than the following waves to prevent fieldwork delays at the end of fieldwork (i.e. this allowed more time to locate and interview cases in the earlier waves which had moved or were untraced). Cases in Scotland and Wales were evenly distributed throughout the waves rather than being batched into a particular wave(s).

The seventh wave contained only cases from the second batch of sample (cases whose inadequate contact information had been updated as part of the DWP tracing exercise). This was the smallest wave, with only 5% of the sample. It was released six weeks after the sixth wave began.

Table 2.4	Allocation of sample to waves		
	Date wave issued	Fieldwork end date	No. of issued cohort
Wave		for wave	Members
1	August	September	2561
2	September	November	2471
3	October	December	1850
4	November	January	1734
5	December	January	1778
6	January	March	1313
7	February	April	609
Total			12,316

2.6 The sample files

CLS was responsible for providing sample information for cohort members who are part of the 1958 National Child Development Study to NatCen and for ensuring that this information was as accurate and up-to-date as possible.

The sample information that was provided to NatCen was split into two types: fixed sample, and live sample. The fixed sample files contained details of all sample members, and contained information that was not subject to change, such as:

- Serial numbers
- Survey outcome from previous sweep
- Information from previous sweep, such as:
 - Date and time of last interview
 - o Address at last interview
 - Number of household members
 - Number of children in the household

The live sample file contained information that could change and needed to be as up-to-date as possible. Live sample files were produced for each wave, and included the following information:

Serial numbers

- Survey status code
- · Cohort member details
 - Full name
 - Sex
- Contact details
 - The last known address and telephone numbers for the household
 - Stable address details, i.e. the contact details of another family member or friend not resident in the household which could be used for tracing if required
 - Up to seven additional telephone numbers which could be used for tracing if required

Two additional fields relating to contact details were also provided: an address status, and the date this status was assigned. The address status was determined by CLS, and related to whether or not the cohort member was confirmed as resident at the address provided, and the date at which this was confirmed.

2.6.1 Delivery of sample files to NatCen

The fixed sample file was delivered to NatCen twelve weeks before the start of fieldwork and contained all 18,558 cases ever included in the study. The live sample file for the first batch of cases was delivered ten weeks before the start of fieldwork. For the second batch of cases, the live sample file was delivered once the data was received from DWP which was four months after fieldwork began.

Once the sample was delivered to NatCen, it was loaded on NatCen's fieldwork management systems. This was then used to produce the paper documents containing sample information for interviewers and advance letters; details of these documents can be found in section 0. The information was also loaded into the CAPI programme.⁶

2.6.2 Other sample information

In addition to the fixed and live sample files, a single 'feed-forward' file was also delivered to NatCen before the start of fieldwork. This contained the answers cohort members had given to key questions in previous interviews. Like the fixed sample file, this file contained all 18,558 cases ever included in the study.

The answers contained in the file were loaded or 'fed-forward' into the current CAPI questionnaire. For example, the cohort member's job title and economic activity was fed forward and the respondent was asked if that was still their job.

As well as information from previous interviews being added to question text, it was also used in question routing. For example, a question such as, 'Is your mother still alive' would be routed past if the cohort member had said at a previous interview that their mother had died.

⁶ CAPI stands for Computer Assisted Personal Interview

2.7 Sample updates

CLS continued to trace cohort members until the start of fieldwork for each wave. In some cases, CLS received information about cohort members after the sample had been sent to NatCen. CLS would begin sending sample updates six weeks before each wave of fieldwork began. If updated information was sent six weeks before the wave began, NatCen were able to use this for the advance letters and to incorporate the data into the CAPI for the forthcoming wave. CLS continued sending updates on a weekly basis for all waves that were underway.

These sample updates consisted of three types:

- Changes in classification information: eligibility status, participation status, status of address
- Changes to contact information: change of address, telephone numbers, names, sex, dates of birth, stable address details, etc
- Other information useful for contacting and tracing

The action taken as a result of the sample updates depended on the type of sample update and the progress of the case, that is whether interviewers had already worked on a case or not. For details of how sample updates were handled by NatCen, see section 5.10.

2.8 Return of sample to CLS at the end of fieldwork

NatCen was responsible for updating contact information for cohort members that were interviewed at this sweep of fieldwork and transferring this updated information to CLS at the end of fieldwork. Updated contact information was also supplied, where possible, for cases who were not interviewed at this sweep.

3 Overview of the elements of the study

The 2008 sweep of the 1958 National Child Development Study comprised of a 60 minute face to face (CAPI) interview and a 16 page paper self-completion questionnaire.

3.1 The NCDS interview

The following elements were included:

CAPI interview

- > Household composition
- Absent children
- Housing
- Relationship history
- > Other relationships
- Births
- Adopted children
- Family and social relationships and support
- > Family income
- > Employment
- Partner's employment
- Qualifications
- Courses and skills
- > Computer use
- > Health
- Cognitive function (Memory and Concentration tasks)
- Smoking and drinking
- Exercise
- Height and weight
- Social participation
- Social support
- CASI questionnaire
 - Political attitudes
 - Drinking behaviour
 - o Domestic division of labour
 - Attitudes to work and pensions
 - Well-being
 - Retrospective questions about childhood
 - Menopause
- Collection of consents for linkage to routine
 - o Health records
 - o Economic records
- Collection of contact information
- Collection of contact information for Parents Study
- Neighbourhood observation

- > Daily life, leisure time and leisure activities
- Physical health
- Emotional well being
- Feelings, opinions and attitudes

This chapter contains a brief description of each element of the study. Details of the development work for the study are contained in Chapter 4.

3.2 Who could be interviewed

If the cohort member could not understand the questions (even through an interpreter) or communicate the answers for themselves, the interviewer attempted to conduct a proxy interview with a carer or family member. The proxy interview was approximately 20 minutes long. Questions were asked about the cohort member's marital status and household composition, where they currently live, their fertility history and their current activity status. There were also questions about the cohort member's educational attainment, their key measurements and their health. No other elements of the study were administered.

3.3 CAPI interview

The main stage CAPI survey took approximately 60 minutes to complete and aimed to update information on the cohort member's circumstances and key events in their lives. The time period which the questions referred to depended on when the cohort member was last interviewed. This is discussed in greater detail below. The majority of questions in the interview were asked in earlier sweeps of the NCDS and in BCS70 which allows comparisons to be made across the NCDS sweeps and with the BCS70 cohort.

3.3.1 Event histories

The CAPI interview included four event history modules: Housing, Relationship history, Births and Employment. These modules ask cohort members to update their situation in these areas from a point set by the CAPI program.

Cohort members interviewed **since** 1st October 1999 (i.e. in sweep 6 (2004 – 2005) and/or sweep 7 (1999 – 2000) of NCDS) were asked to update their situation from the date of their last interview.

Cohort members who had <u>not</u> been interviewed since 1st October 1999 (and may never have been interviewed) were asked to update their situation from a set start point, the 1st January 2000, for all modules except the Births module. For the Births module, these cohort members were asked to update their situation from the date of their sixteenth birthday.

For this sweep of NCDS, forward recall was employed for all the event histories. Research into how respondents best recall life events conducted on other NatCen longitudinal studies, found that most respondents prefer to recall events in chronological order and feel that this is how they best remember their life histories. As a result this approach was adopted to improve the accuracy of data collected in these sections of the study.

As well as updating circumstances from a set start point, the Relationship History module was designed to improve the quality of data in this domain from the previous sweep of the study, where this was necessary. Post-fieldwork editing and cleaning of the relationship history data collected in the previous sweep of the study (the 2004-5 follow-up) revealed that there were a number of problems with the routing of the questions in this module which lead to flaws in the information obtained about the period between the 1999/2000 follow-up and the 2004/5 follow-up. Cases which were affected by these errors were flagged as 'repair cases' and a revised introduction to the relationship history module was triggered which explained that when interviewed in 2004/5 there was a problem with the data that was collected about their relationship history and that as a result it was necessary to recollect some information. These cohort members were then asked for a full relationship history from the date of their 1999/2000 follow-up interview through to the date of their 2008/2009 follow-up interview.

3.3.2 Cognitive function

The Cognitive Function module comprised of four Memory and Concentration tasks. Each task is designed to measure different aspects of the respondent's cognitive function, including memory, speed and mental flexibility.

The four tasks were:

- Word list learning: a test of verbal learning and recall, where the cohort member had to recall a list of 10 common words read out by the CAPI program.
- Verbal fluency: a test of how quickly cohort members could think of words in a particular category, in this case, naming as many different animals as possible, within one minute.
- ➤ Letter cancellation: a test of attention, mental speed and visual scanning where the cohort member was given a page of random letters and asked to cross out as many 'Ps' and 'Ws' as possible within one minute.
- ➤ Delayed word list recall: where the cohort member was asked to recall the same list of 10 common words after a delay to test verbal learning and delayed recall.

The Memory and Concentration task booklet was used to administer these tasks, alongside the CAPI interview (see appendix). The results of three of the four tasks were recorded by the interviewer in the CAPI. Results for the letter cancellation task were not entered by the interviewer but are calculated in a specific post-interview edit using the Memory and Concentration task booklet. Once the four tasks had been attempted, interviewers were able to specify, if necessary, why some tests could not be completed (i.e. due to poor eyesight, difficulty using a pen etc.).

3.3.3 Paper self-completion questionnaire

Eligible cohort members were sent a paper self-completion questionnaire, to be completed in advance of the main CAPI appointment with the interviewer. The paper self-completion questionnaire took approximately 20 minutes to complete, and focused on how the Cohort Member spends their leisure time, how they rate their health and whether their health impacts on their daily life and overall well being. Where cohort members had not completed the paper self-completion by the time the interviewer arrived, they were asked if they could spare the extra time at the end to complete it then and there. Where this was not possible, the interviewer arranged to return to pick up the completed questionnaire or left a free post envelope for the respondent to return it to the office themselves.

3.3.4 CASI interview

At the end of the main CAPI interview the cohort member was asked to complete the self-completion questionnaire (CASI). This section comprised of a ten minute interview covering attitudinal questions and issues which are more sensitive. Cohort members were encouraged to answer this section themselves but the interviewer could read the questions to the cohort member if they were not able to do so. At the end of this section, the cohort member was asked to hand the computer to the interviewer. The final question allowed the interviewer to 'lock up' the CASI section so that the answers could not be looked at by the interviewer.

3.3.5 Collection of consents

Interviewers were prompted to collect consent from cohort members to link the data collected in the study over the years with information from records which are routinely collected by government departments and agencies. These records are held by the National Health Service and the Department for Work and Pensions respectively. The information contained in the health records focus on details of hospital visits, any long lasting health conditions, treatments received and medications prescribed. The economic records include details of benefits being received, national insurance and tax payments, and a full employment history. Cohort members' cohabiting partners were also asked for these consents.

Cohort members and their partners had to consent separately and distinct consent forms were provided, one for the cohort member and one for the partner. They were asked to give two consents: one to allow CLS to access information relating to health records and one to allow access to economic records. Both consents were included on each consent form but the cohort member and partner could opt to consent to both, one or neither consent. The consent form was carbon-backed and printed in duplicate. One copy was retained by the cohort member and/or partner, and the other copy returned to NatCen's operations department.

An information leaflet explaining why CLS wanted to link to records and the records they would be looking at was provided by the interviewer when seeking consent. In circumstances where the partner was not available, the cohort member was asked to pass on the consent form and leaflet to their partner. Copies of the consent forms and leaflet can be found in the appendix.

3.3.6 Collection of contact information

The Contacts block was placed at the end of a productive interview with the cohort member or proxy informant. Cohort members and proxy informants were asked to confirm or update their/the cohort member's full name, telephone (home, work, mobile and extra) numbers, address and email address details. They were also asked to provide details of a stable contact who could be approached should contact be lost in the future. The block allowed interviewers to enter these updates directly into the CAPI at the time of interview (rather than in the interviewers' admin block post-interview).

3.3.7 Collection of contact information for Parents Study

Cohort members with living parents were told of a potential follow up research project to interview the parents of NCDS cohort members. Cohort members were asked permission for CLS to contact

⁷ CASI stands for Computer Assisted Self Interview

their parents and to confirm their parents' contact details, so that they could be approached to be involved in a prospective research project looking at inter-generational transfers.

3.3.8 Neighbourhood observation

This element consisted of two questions that are asked as standard in NatCen surveys:

- whether or not there are any physical barriers to entry present at the cohort member's house/ flat/ building (such as a locked common entrance or gates)
- > what type of accommodation the cohort member lives in

3.4 Paper self-completion questionnaire

3.4.1 Content of the self-completion questionnaire

The 16 page paper self-completion questionnaire was designed to measure attitudes and opinions and assess emotional and physical well being. The questionnaire took approximately 20 minutes to complete. At the end, an open question asked the cohort member to imagine what life will be like in ten years time when they are aged 60.

3.4.2 Procedures for administering the self-completion questionnaire

Once the interviewer had made contact with the cohort member and arranged an appointment for the CAPI interview, the self-completion questionnaire and covering letter were mailed out to cohort members so that they would receive them 7-10 days before the CAPI appointment (see appendix for copies of the documents). This gave the cohort member time to complete the self-completion so that it could be collected when the interviewer conducted the CAPI interview. If the cohort member had not completed the questionnaire in advance, the interviewer either waited for the cohort member to complete the questionnaire or arranged a time to return to collect it. A pre-paid, pre-addressed envelope was provided for instances where the cohort member wished to return the self-completion themselves. However, cohort members were encouraged to return the questionnaire to the interviewer in order to reduce non-response.

4 Development Work

4.1 Scope of the development work

The pilot and development stages of NCDS were conducted over an 11 month period from June to May 2008.

The programme of development work included a pilot study and a dress rehearsal. These development stages helped determine the content and order of the interview, the interview length, interviewer protocols and instructions, and the design of the survey documents. The dress rehearsal also tested sample management procedures.

4.2 First pilot survey

4.2.1 Objectives

The first pilot survey took place in November - December 2007. The main aims of the pilot were to:

- Test the questions and accompanying procedures for the CAPI and paper self-completion questionnaire. This included checking for routing errors, identifying problematic or sensitive questions and detecting any administrative or procedural concerns.
- > Estimate how long the interview would take in a home setting.
- Establish a separate panel of respondents who could be interviewed at the development stage of future sweeps of NCDS. This would enable the main sample of cohort members to be retained for main stage fieldwork once the instruments and procedures had been refined.

4.2.2 Elements included in the first pilot

Two elements were piloted during the fieldwork period:

- A face to face (CAPI) interview, including:
 - o A ten minute CASI
 - Memory and Concentration tasks to test cognitive function
 - A module on past and present pensions
- A paper self-completion questionnaire

4.2.3 Pilot briefing and fieldwork

A group of 13 interviewers from a wide range of urban and rural locations in England were briefed by NatCen researchers, with contributions from the CLS research team. There was a one day briefing and a one day de-briefing.

The pilot was carried out from the 28th November with a de-brief on 19th December 2007. Additional interviews were allowed up to the 24th December 2007.

4.2.4 Pilot sample

Interviewers were asked to use doorstep screening and snowballing techniques to meet a quota sample of respondents aged between 45 – 55 years old, with a roughly equal split of men and women. Interviewers were not tied to a specific post code sector so could move around geographically, and they were also able to recruit respondents that were known to members of their own social group as long as they were not a direct contact.

To encourage response, interviewers were supplied with various materials which they could use including key findings from NCDS, laminated photocopies of recent media coverage and a show letter detailing the importance of the study. Respondents were also given a £10 high street voucher for participating and interviewers given a bonus if they achieved or exceeded their quota.

Respondents were recruited to complete either the CAPI or paper self-completion element of the study so as not to overburden the new respondent who had no prior experience of the study. However, several respondents were happy to complete both elements.

A total of 65 CAPI interviews were achieved. The recruited sample for the CAPI element contained 23 males (35%) and 42 females (65%) aged between 46 and 55. Only three respondents refused to be re-contacted for a pilot study of a future sweep of NCDS. There were 42 respondents successfully recruited to complete the self-completion questionnaire, again aged between 46 and 55 years old and split in a similar ratio between men and women.

4.2.5 Key findings and changes

Overview

Both respondents who completed the CAPI and those who completed the self-completion questionnaire found them interesting and varied. Revisions needed for the dress rehearsal were mainly either minor amendments to wording, layout or routing, or cuts required due to the overly long interview.

Length

The CAPI questionnaire exceeded the target length of 60 minutes, with a median of 75 minutes. Interviews varied considerably in length (39 to 119 minutes) because the extent of change in respondents' circumstances has such an impact on length. The CAPI programme required extensive revisions for the dress rehearsal in order to reduce the length to 60 minutes.

'Dummy' previous interview dates were pre-set for each pilot respondent which determined whether circumstances needed to be updated from 2000 or 2004, and affected the route taken through the questionnaire. This ensured that the pilot CAPI interview replicated the key routes that would be taken by actual cohort members and meant the data reflected a realistic range of possible timings. As expected, respondents updating their circumstances from 2004 had shorter interviews than their counterparts updating from 2000.

However, respondents who had the longest interviews were not necessarily those who followed the 1991/2000 route. Reporting changes in the event histories did increase interview length: those respondents in the top quartile were more likely to report a change in employment status (57 per

cent compared to 31 per cent), or to report a change of address (36 per cent compared to 24 per cent).

The longest modules were: the CASI section (12.5 minutes), employment (7.6 minutes), the Memory and Concentration tasks (8 minutes) and family income (6.7 minutes).

The self-completion questionnaire was completed within the suggested time of 20 minutes.

Sample

Recruitment was a challenge for interviewers due to the nature of the sampling method and the timing of the pilot fieldwork (pre-Christmas). The achieved number of interviews (65 CAPI interviews and 42 completed self-completion questionnaires) did fall short of the target of 85 for the CAPI element and 50 for the self-completion questionnaire.

CAPI

Respondents were generally comfortable with the flow and usability of the CAPI. In particular, respondents felt that the position of the CASI and the Memory and Concentration tasks helped to break up the main body of the interview. No one module stood out as being particularly burdensome.

The event history modules were easy to follow and interviewers thought that they worked well. It was felt that some respondents did struggle with recalling dates and that there was some underreporting of the number of terminations and miscarriages in the pregnancies block.

The Memory and Concentration tasks were well received and provided a good break in the interview. The Menopause section was also well received.

Although some corrections were needed to routing, and clarifications in the instructions given to interviewers, there was no evidence of major routing problems or high levels of missing data.

Cuts were required to numerous modules including extensive cuts to the Family Income block. In addition, the Pensions block was replaced by a single question asking cohort members which current or past pension they contribute to or have previously contributed to.

Self-completion

The questions included in the self-completion questionnaire are established questions that have been used on a variety of other long running studies, including the English Study of Ageing and the British Household Panel Survey. For this reason, the questionnaire was not cognitively tested.

Respondents generally found the questionnaire straightforward and were able to complete it by themselves without problems or the need for clarification. Respondents were happy and comfortable with the layout and order of the questions. A few respondents struggled to understand certain measurement scales, or found particular question items ambiguous. Only minor changes to wording and layout were required for the dress rehearsal.

Materials

Interviewers felt that the show letter was useful for providing background information for respondents. It was felt that the other materials provided were too in depth and detailed for use on the doorstep.

4.3 Second pilot survey – the Dress Rehearsal

4.3.1 Objectives

The second pilot survey was a dress rehearsal and took place in April - May 2008. The sample for the dress rehearsal was drawn from cohort members, which allowed the whole survey process to be tested. The main aims of the dress rehearsal were:

- > Test the use of feed forward data in the CAPI.
- Ensure any amendments or corrections made to the CAPI and self-completion questionnaire as a result of the pilot were correct.
- Establish the timings and test the questions and routing of modules that were added following the pilot. These modules were: the consents module which collected consent to link data with routine economic and health records; the contact module where cohort members' contact details were checked and updated; and the parents questions which asked cohort members with living parents to provide contact details for their parents so that they could be contacted in future about a possible research project looking at intergenerational transfers.
- > Establish the effectiveness of the procedures and documents for collecting the consents and to gauge the rate at which cohort members and their co-resident partners gave consent.
- Assess the feasibility of sending the self-completion questionnaire in advance of the CAPI interview.
- To field two versions of the final open question of the self-completion questionnaire and assess which would elicit a fuller response.
- > Test the protocols for contacting and tracing cohort members.
- Test the procedures governing the exchange of sample updates between the organisations.
- > Test the wording of the advance letter and other materials, as well as the use of sample data for survey documents.

4.3.2 Elements included in the Dress Rehearsal

Two elements were piloted during the fieldwork period:

- > A face to face (CAPI) interview, including a
 - o Ten minute CASI
 - Memory and Concentration tasks to test cognitive function
 - o Contact block to update cohort member's details
 - Consent block to collect cohort member and co-resident partners' consents
- A paper self-completion questionnaire
 - Two versions of the final 'open' question were tested: half of the sample received a
 retrospective question focusing on the past five years, and half of the sample was
 given a question about the future.

4.3.3 Dress rehearsal briefing and fieldwork

Eight interviewers worked on the dress rehearsal covering a range of urban and rural locations in England. Interviewers were briefed by NatCen researchers, with contributions from the CLS research team. There was a one day briefing and a one day de-briefing.

The pilot was carried out from the 7th April to the 8th May 2008. Interviewers were de-briefed on the 6th May.

4.3.4 Dress rehearsal sample

Unlike the first pilot where interviewers recruited members of the general population, the dress rehearsal used a named sample of 108 cohort members living in Great Britain.

The main sampling criteria was geographical location: the sample was determined by where the cohort members were currently living and the sample was designed to be as clustered as possible based on the most up to date information held by CLS. In addition, cohort members were selected according to two secondary criteria:

- Whether the cohort member had incomplete relationship history data due to a questionnaire error at the previous sweep of NCDS
- ➤ Whether the cohort member was last interviewed before 1st October 1999

Boosting the number of cases with incomplete relationship history data and the number of pre-2000 cases in the issued sample was intended to increase the likelihood of certain routes being answered in the CAPI.

All cohort members were sent a letter and leaflet about the study by NatCen. The letter was printed on NCDS headed paper and was signed by Jane Elliott and Matt Brown from the research team at CLS. The letter and leaflet introduced the latest sweep of the study, outlined what was involved and who was conducting the research, and gave cohort members the opportunity to opt out prior to fieldwork.

4.3.5 Response

All 108 issued addresses were attempted by interviewers during the fieldwork period. CAPI interviews were conducted with 77 cohort members, equating to a response rate of 71 per cent. This exceeded the expected target of 60 productive interviews. There were 72 self-completion questionnaires returned (92 per cent of cohort members who completed a CAPI interview also returned a self-completion). Of those returned, 69 self-completions were returned by the interviewer and three were sent back to NatCen's operations department by the cohort member.

The achieved sample contained 48 males and 29 females. There were a total of 11 repair cases and seven cases who had not been interviewed since 1st October 1999.

4.3.6 Key findings and changes

Overview

Feedback received from interviewers and cohort members about the dress rehearsal study was generally very positive. The dress rehearsal and subsequent data checking of the data collected

showed there were no major problems with the CAPI. Changes made to the CAPI after the dress rehearsal focused on improving the usability and flow of certain modules such as the contact block, designing a 'conversion' block to simplify the relationship history data out, making minor routing adjustments, and making a small number of cuts (e.g. the fraud questions were removed from the Family Income module). The CAPI was also made suitable for proxy informants and transgender cases before the main stage of fieldwork.

The self-completion was well received; the only revision needed was to include only one of the two versions of the final questions tested during the dress rehearsal.

There were no substantial changes made to the survey materials, with only minor amendments made to the layout of certain documents (such as the consent forms), and the wording of the ARF and consent leaflet was improved.

Length

The CAPI questionnaire was within range of the target length, with a mean of 61 minutes excluding the time taken to request consent for data linkage. As a result, no further cuts were required to the questionnaire in advance of the main stage of fieldwork. The median interview length of cohort members last interviewed in 2004 was shorter than those last interviewed in 2000 or before the 2000 sweep. The self-completion questionnaire was also completed within the suggested time of 20 minutes. It was estimated, using timings data and interviewer feedback, that the process of collecting consents and keying this information into the CAPI would take approximately 4 minutes. This exceeded pre-dress rehearsal estimates of two minutes per respondent.

CAPI

The CAPI element was well received by cohort members who found it varied and interesting. The remodelled event history modules were easy to follow and interviewers felt these worked well. The Memory and Concentration tasks were positively received. No one module was found particularly burdensome.

The contact module, in which interviewers updated the cohort member's contact details, needed some revision in advance of the main stage in order to make it more user-friendly for interviewers. However, interviewers were positive about the process of entering updated contact information directly into the CAPI during the interview, rather than recording this on paper and entering the details into the admin block at a later time. This was considered a positive step towards increased information security.

A set of four questions focusing on card fraud and identity theft were included in the dress rehearsal CAPI. These were cut from the main stage questionnaire due to time constraints. The Pensions module was removed prior to the dress rehearsal to make time savings. A general question asking respondents which type of pension scheme they have contributed to in the past or are currently contributing to was included in the main stage CAPI.

Data checking showed that there were no high levels of missing data or substantial routing problems. In addition to data checking, a separate data flooding exercise to thoroughly test the relationship history was undertaken. This showed that there were no major routing problems. However, the exercise did show the complexity of the relationship history data. In order to make the data more usable, NatCen designed a conversion block which derived variables within the program so that ready made and easy to use variables would be available when producing the SPSS datasets.

Consent to data linkage

Cohort members were receptive to the idea of linking their survey data to information from routine health and economic records. The consent rate for date linkage was encouraging: 89 per cent of cohort members and 52 per cent of partners consented to some form of data linkage. In almost all these cases, consent was given to link to data from both sources, with only two cohort members and one partner consenting to only health records being linked to.

The CAPI was designed so that the consent block could be accessed at any point in the interview. This was useful if the co-resident partner was leaving the household during the appointment and enabled the interviewer to assess when a strong enough rapport had been established for the consents to be asked for. Half of the interviewers asked for consents when first prompted (after the household grid), whilst half of the interviewers collected them at the end of the interview. Interviewers agreed that the consents block could be anchored at the end of the CAPI, as this would allow the co-resident partner's name and N.I. number to be fed forward into that block, making it easier for interviewers to administer the consents. For the main stage of fieldwork, all consents were collected at the end of the interview.

Each household was given an information leaflet explaining why CLS wanted to link to their records. The interviewer provided this when asking for consent. Although the leaflet was well received it was felt necessary to review the content of the information leaflet to make the nature of the data linkage exercise more transparent. Following the dress rehearsal, there were some slight changes to the wording and layout to make the leaflet clearer. An additional note was included to assure cohort members that none of the information collected during the NCDS interview would be disclosed to the NHS, DWP or HMRC for any other purpose. The CLS email address and freephone number were also included for cohort members who had further questions.

In light of feedback from the dress rehearsal, the consent forms for the cohort member and partner were made more distinct with clearer titles and a different colour for each one. Interviewers were asked to sign the bottom of the form to confirm that they had explained the nature of data linkage to the cohort member and partner. However, there were some cases in the dress rehearsal where interviewers could not explain the consents directly to the partner because they were not present. Following the dress rehearsal, an additional box was added to the partner consent form for interviewers to tick to confirm consent was explained to the cohort member in the partner's absence.

Parents Study

Cohort members with living parents were asked to provide contact details for their parents so that they could be contacted in future about a possible research project looking at inter-generational transfers. Of the 52 cohort members who had living parents, 73% said they were happy to pass on their parent's contact details. The reasons given for refusing centred on cohort member's concerns for their parents' health, their age or their mental capacity.

Self-completion

The 16 page self-completion questionnaire was sent out a week to ten days in advance of the CAPI interview and cohort members were asked to hand the completed questionnaire back to the interviewer at their CAPI appointment. A covering letter accompanied the questionnaire, reminding the cohort member of their scheduled CAPI. Two different open questions were piloted at the dress rehearsal: assignments 1-4 were issued version A, focusing on the cohort member's life over the past five years, and assignments 5-8 were issued version B which focused on the future.

The self-completion was generally well received by cohort members who had few problems completing the questionnaire and did not find it too long or burdensome. Self-completion data checks showed a low number of missing values (errors of omission) and only one multicode error (error of commission), indicating that cohort members were able to comprehend the questions.

Of the 72 self-completions returned, 58 cohort members completed the final open question. CLS reviewed the answers given to the two versions of this question. A higher response and fuller data for the version asking cohort members what they imagine life to be like at age 60, led to this question being used for the main stage of fieldwork.

Contact procedure

The contact and tracing procedures, including the associated documents, were found to work well. First contact with cohort members was made by advance letter approximately a week prior to the fieldwork period. Interviewers were required to try and make telephone contact with the cohort member in order to arrange a convenient time for the CAPI interview. At this point, interviewers were asked to confirm the cohort member's resident address so the self-completion could be sent out to them. If no telephone number was available or if the cohort member could not be contacted after six attempts by telephone, then interviewers were required to make attempts to call in person at the last recorded address for the cohort member.

Nearly all cohort members received the advance letter and were expecting a telephone call. Contact procedures for cohort members interviewed since 2000 remained unchanged for the main stage of fieldwork. However, interviewers felt that they could be more effective at encouraging participation if first contact was face to face with cohort members last interviewed before 2000. Contact procedures for cohort members last interviewed before 2000 were therefore changed for the main stage of fieldwork.

Interviewers advised that they would benefit from having key research findings from the study, especially for cohort members who questioned the need for their continued participation. Some key study findings were included in the main stage interviewer instructions and interviewers were provided with copies of the 'Changing Britain, Changing Lives' and 'Now we are fifty' publications for use during the main stage fieldwork (these documents had previously been sent to cohort members by CLS). This made interviewers more aware of the study's overall communications strategy which was useful when responding to questions on the doorstep.

Movers and tracing

Interviewers were required to trace the cohort member if they had moved or the address provided was insufficient. Interviewers were provided with tracing letters that could be left with any informant who was hesitant to reveal the cohort member's forwarding address and 'occupier letters' which could be left at an address where the interviewer was unable to establish whether the cohort member was resident.

The proportion of movers was lower than anticipated (12 per cent of the issued sample compared to a pre-dress rehearsal estimate of 20 per cent). Of the 108 addresses issued, only 9 cohort members were returned to CLS for tracing movers within the fieldwork period. The interviewers also managed to identify and successfully trace a further 4 cases. The interviewers who made use of the tracing documents had no problems with their content or administration, and found the tracing procedures straight forward to follow. For the main stage, instructions for interviewers to

pass all paperwork immediately to the operations team so the case could be reissued to another interviewer if necessary were included in the interviewer project instructions

Sample Updates

Although update files and mover files were exchanged during dress rehearsal fieldwork, the very small number of updates and movers meant the dress rehearsal did not provide a full test of this procedure.

Survey materials

All survey materials were well received and only minor changes to layout and the addition of the office hours for making contact with CLS or NatCen's operation department.

5 Conduct of fieldwork

Interviewing in England, Wales and Scotland was carried out by NatCen's interviewers. A total of 288 interviewers worked on the study.

5.1 Briefings

All interviewers were required to attend a briefing before starting work on the study. A total of 21 briefings were conducted, starting in August 2008, and finishing in November 2008. The majority of interviewers were briefed in August. All briefings were led by researchers from NatCen, with contributions from a member of the research team at CLS. The number of interviewers at each briefing varied. Most briefings were attended by 14 interviewers, although this fluctuated on occasion between 9 and 17 interviewers.

All briefings for NatCen interviewers had a Briefing Manager from NatCen's field force. The role of the Briefing Manager was to oversee and control the briefing, ensure its smooth running, deal with any inappropriate behaviour, including unnecessary interruptions and digressions by interviewers, and monitor the quality of the dummy interviews. In addition they were responsible for covering all interviewer administration. The Briefing Manager was also responsible for carrying out the risk assessment for the venue. If there was a mixture of new and experienced interviewers attending the briefing, a Briefing Assistant was also present to support the Briefing Manager in their role.

Each briefing lasted one day, and covered the following topics:

Day 1

Overview of the National Child Development Study

- Background to study
- Overview of sweep 8

Sample, Fieldwork and assignments

- Description of the sample
- Fieldwork timetable and coverage targets
- Assignment size

Contact and Tracing Procedures

- First contact with cohort member
- Advance mailing and doorstep materials
- Tracing procedures and tracing documents
- Address Record Form (ARF) and Sample Information Sheet (SIS)

Data Linkage Consents

- Nature of data linkage
- Procedure of administering data linkage consents
- Data linkage consent forms

Self-completion questionnaire

- Overview of self-completion questionnaire
- Procedure of administering self-completion questionnaire

Cognitive function assessments

- Overview of cognitive function assessments
- Procedure of administering cognitive function assessments
- Practice session of cognitive function assessments

CAPI questionnaire

- Overview of content, CASI, proxy interview and feed forward data
- Practice of CAPI interview

Interviewers were also given a number of practice cases and asked to conduct at least two practice interviews to familiarise themselves with the questions, especially the sensitive topics such as the fertility history, the cognitive function assessments and the admin block including recording tracing activities.

The majority of the interviewers who worked on NCDS were highly experienced, with many having worked on a previous wave of the study or on another longitudinal project.

5.2 Materials for interviewers

Interviewers were supplied with the following materials for use on the study:

Advance materials to be sent to respondents

Advance letters (and postage-paid envelopes)

Survey leaflet - to be sent to respondents with advance letter

Contact documents

Address Record Form (ARF) – cohort member
Sample information sheet (attached to back of ARF)
Tracing letter (plus post-paid envelope and reply paid envelope)
Occupier letter (plus envelope and reply paid envelope)

Consent forms

Data linkage consent leaflet Cohort member form (blue)- health and economic data linkage Partner form (green)- health and economic data linkage

Self-completion questionnaire

Self-completion questionnaire and freepost envelope for return to Brentwood Blank envelope

Cognitive function Assessments

Interviewer recording book

Showcards

Interviewer instructions

Project instructions

Miscellaneous

CLS National Child Development Study leaflet for interviewers
CLS Pre-notification leaflet (Now we are Fifty) for interviewers
CLS Information leaflet (Changing Lives, Changing Britain) for interviewers
Envelopes for return of work
Appointment cards

Laminated copy of advance letters backed with pre-notification letter

5.3 Interviewer assignments

In England, Wales and Scotland, (see section 2.5 for description of waves) the sample was grouped into interviewer assignments, or points within each wave. These points were defined in consultation with NatCen's fieldwork managers to reflect local geography, but addresses in some, particularly rural, areas were widely spread. The size of the assignments varied from 4 to a maximum of 20 addresses.

In terms of productive interviews, each interviewer on average achieved 41 productive interviews.

Table 5.1 Number of productive interviews per interviewer			
Number of productive interview	Number of interviewers	% of all interviewers	
1 to 10		18	6
11 to 20		54	19
21 to 30		69	24
31 to 40		49	17
41 to 50		46	16
51 to 60		27	9
61 or more		25	9
Total		288	100
Mean		41	

5.4 Issuing sample to interviewers

NatCen's interviewers were issued with their assignment at the beginning of each wave.

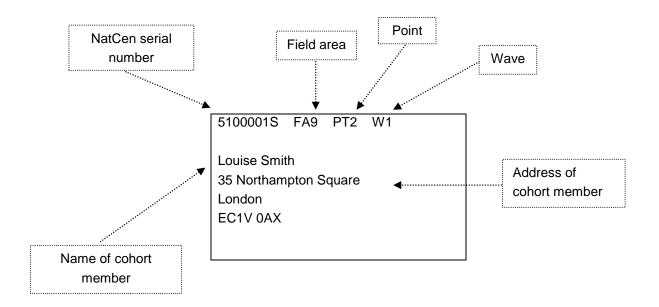
Sample information was provided on an Address Record Form (ARF), supplemented with a Sample Information Sheet (SIS). The information printed on these documents came from the sample files provided by CLS (see section 2.6 for details).

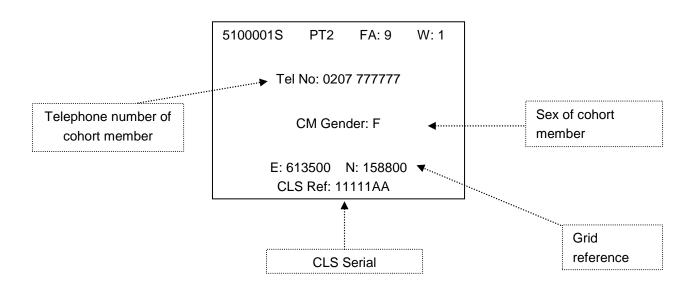
All interviewers were instructed to review their assignments when they received them in order to plan their work. The issued sample contained cases which had not been interviewed since 1991 and also cohort members who had moved. Interviewers were advised to start work on their assignments early to make contact with, and trace, these cases.

5.4.1 The Address Record Form (ARF)

One standard version of the ARF was used on the study, with additional sections for recording tracing activities and follow up addresses.

The sample information on the ARF was provided on two labels attached to the front page. Details of the layout and content of these labels are shown below.





The first label was printed with NatCen's serial number, NatCen's field area, point number and the allocated wave, together with the cohort member's name, and last known address of the cohort member.

The second label contained the cohort member's sex and also a telephone number for them if available. Grid references for the issued address were also given, along with the CLS serial number for the cohort member.

As well as the sample information, the ARF contained space for interviewers to record all attempts made to contact the respondents, including any tracing done, follow up addresses found and interview outcomes.

A copy of the ARF can be found in the appendix.

5.4.2 The Sample Information Sheet

The Sample Information Sheet included the following information:

Cohort member details

Name

Gender

Date of birth

Cohort member contact details

Address

Telephone numbers (home, work, mobile)

Email address

Address status (this indicated that on the date shown, the cohort member had either been confirmed as being resident at that address, or that they had been confirmed as not living at that address).

Date address status assigned

Cohort member information

This section provided interviewers with personal information which could be useful when attempting to contact and interview the cohort member, such as sight or hearing difficulties, disability, and reading problems.

Tracing information

Stable contact details (including name, address, telephone number(s) and email address where available)

Additional contact numbers associated with the cohort member (including the type of number and who the number belonged to e.g parent, cohort member, if available)

Information from previous surveys

Outcome from the last sweep of the survey

Date, day and time of the last interview

Outcome from the Bio-Medical study and date of participation (if applicable)

Number of household members when last interviewed

Whether there were children in the household when last interviewed and how many

Office notes/updates

This space was used to record any updates to sample information received from CLS before a final outcome had been assigned to a case.

5.5 Pre-notification of cohort members

All cohort members were sent a pre-notification mailing from CLS. The mailing contained a prenotification letter and also a publication, "Now We Are Fifty", containing a condensed analysis of interesting findings from the study since it's inception. The mailing had two purposes: to inform cohort members about the next sweep of the study and to explain NatCen's role; and to feed back interesting findings from the study to those who have been involved in providing the data. Pre-notification mailings were sent in four batches throughout the fieldwork period, approximately three weeks before the start of Waves 1, 3, 5 and 7. The first batch was sent to all those allocated to Waves 1 and 2, the second batch to those allocated to Waves 3 and 4, the third to those allocated to Waves 5 and 6 and the fourth to those allocated to Wave 7 only.

A copy of the letter is included in the appendix.

5.6 Informing the Police

NatCen's interviewers were required to check in at the local police station before they started work. They were asked to tell the police what the survey was about, give them a copy of the police letter and explain how long they would be working in the area. Interviewers were also asked to make a note of the name of the officer to whom they spoke and the date of their call so that they were fully covered in the event of any query or complaint to the police.

The reason interviewers were asked to contact the police is that it is reassuring for cohort members, as well as other people interviewers come into contact with, to be told that the police are aware the interviewer is working in the area.

5.7 Contact procedures

5.7.1 Stage 1: Advance letter and survey leaflet

An advance letter was produced for each cohort member in the sample. The letter introduced the study, stated its importance and the importance of cohort members' continuing participation. The letter also reminded cohort members about data confidentiality, provided a freephone number and explained NatCen's role in the survey. The advance letter was signed by Jane Elliott and Matthew Brown from CLS.

A leaflet describing the study was also produced which covered the study in more detail, including the face to face interview, paper self-completion and data linkage elements.

Copies of the advance letter and leaflet can be found in the appendix.

NatCen's interviewers were asked to send out an advance letter and leaflet to each of the cohort members in their assignment no more than ten days before the start of each fieldwork wave.

5.7.2 Stage 2: Telephone contact with cohort members

If a cohort member had participated in the previous sweep of NCDS (2004/5) and a telephone number for that cohort member was available, interviewers were required to attempt to make first contact with the cohort member by telephone.

Interviewers were required to use all of the telephone numbers supplied to them on the sample information sheet to make contact if necessary.

If interviewers were unable to successfully arrange an appointment by telephone, they were required to make a personal visit to the address.

5.7.3 Stage 3: Personal visits

For those cohort members who did not participate in the previous sweep, or where telephone contact was unsuccessful, interviewers were required to make one or more personal visits.

If no one was at home, interviewers were instructed to leave a NatCen appointment card to inform the residents of their visit, and try again at a later date. Interviewers were advised to use the study freephone number on the card as a contact number, if necessary.

If interviewers were not able to contact respondents by telephone or through the personal visit, then they were expected to make reasonable attempts to trace the respondents, as outlined in the next section.

5.7.4 Stage 4: Email contact

In some cases it was not possible to make contact with the cohort member via telephone or personal visits. If NatCen had an email address for the cohort member, the operations team would send an email on the interviewer's behalf. The email outlined that the interviewer had been attempting to make contact, introduced the study and provided the study freephone number.

5.8 Tracing cohort members

If an interviewer found that a cohort member had moved, they were expected to attempt to find their new address, and there were several steps they had to follow before returning a case to NatCen for further tracing by CLS.

In order to obtain a new address, interviewers asked the current residents of the original address or neighbours. These people might know the whereabouts of the cohort member or be able to direct interviewers to friends or relatives nearby who would know how to contact the cohort member.

If this means of tracing was unsuccessful, interviewers were required to contact the stable address if they had been provided with a telephone number on the Sample Information Sheet, or if the stable address was in their area.

If interviewers were successful in finding a new address for a cohort member that had moved, then they would manually update the sample details on the ARF and in the CAPI. If the address was in their area, they would follow the contact procedures outlined in section 5.7 at the new address. If the new address was outside of the interviewer's area, the interviewer would return the case to NatCen's operations department so it could be reallocated to another interviewer.

If interviewers were unsuccessful in finding a new address for a cohort member, the case would be returned to the operations team at NatCen who would return the case to CLS for further tracing. Cases which needed to be traced by CLS were sent on a weekly basis (every Thursday) in a 'Mover file' which contained details of the tracing activities already undertaken and the information found by NatCen interviewers.

When tracing, interviewers were not to mention the name of the study to anyone other than the cohort member; they were instructed to say that the cohort member was part of a research study if asked.

5.8.1 Tracing letter

In instances where interviewers found someone who knew where the cohort member was living but was unwilling to give this information to the interviewer, a tracing letter could be used.

Interviewers completed these letters, and placed them in an envelope containing a blank pre-paid envelope. They then asked the person who knew the cohort member's whereabouts to post or pass on the letter to the cohort member. The letter explained that NCDS8 was taking place, and that an interviewer from NatCen had tried to contact the cohort member. The cohort member was asked to send their new contact details to CLS so that an interviewer could get in touch with them.

A copy of the Tracing Letter can be found in the appendix.

5.8.2 Occupier letter

If interviewers were not able to make contact with anyone at the last known address of the cohort member, and were not able to establish their whereabouts from neighbours or the stable address, then they were asked to post an occupier letter through the letterbox at the last known address of the cohort member.

This letter was addressed to the current occupants and explained that CLS was trying to contact the cohort member who was part of a very important research project, and that this was the last known address for that cohort member. The letter asked the recipient of the letter to contact CLS, or to forward the letter to the cohort member, if their new address was known.

A copy of the Occupier Letter can be found in the appendix.

5.8.3 Incomplete addresses

If any of the addresses provided were incomplete, or could not be found, interviewers were asked to check the address with local residents, maps, directories, the police etc to seek to find the correct address.

5.9 Making appointments

Before they started work, interviewers were aware that it might be necessary to make more than one appointment to cover all elements of the survey, depending on the availability of the cohort members.

Interviewers were advised to arrange appointments within the first two weeks of the fieldwork period. It was suggested that interviewers prioritised those cohort members who did not participate in sweeps 6 and 7 of the study, those where no telephone numbers or stable contact details were available and those who lived furthest away.

Once interviewers had arranged an appointment they sent out the paper self-completion questionnaire, with covering letter, to the cohort member. The covering letter reminded the cohort member of the appointment and who their interviewer was, whilst inviting them to complete the enclosed self-completion questionnaire.

A copy of the self-completion questionnaire and covering letter can be found in the appendix.

5.10 Sample management during fieldwork

5.10.1 Sample updates from CLS

CLS continued to trace cohort members until the start of fieldwork for each wave. In some cases, CLS received information about cohort members after the sample had been sent to NatCen. CLS would begin sending sample updates six weeks before each wave of fieldwork began. If updated information was sent six weeks before, NatCen were able to use this for the advance letters and to incorporate the data into the CAPI for the forthcoming wave. CLS continued sending updates on a weekly basis (every Tuesday) for all waves that were underway.

These sample updates consisted of three types:

- Changes in classification information: eligibility status, participation status, status of address
- Changes to contact information: change of address, telephone numbers, names, sex, dates of birth, stable address details, etc
- Other information useful for contacting and tracing

The action taken as a result of the sample updates depended on the type of sample update and the progress of the case, that is whether interviewers had already worked on a case or not.

Table 5.2 summarises the actions taken by NatCen's operations department as a result of sample updates from CLS.

Changes to other contact information, such as names, sex, dates of birth, etc. were not normally notified to NatCen.

Respondents sometimes contacted NatCen's head office or operations department with information. This information was handled in the same way as the sample updates from CLS.

Table 5.2	Actions ta	ken as a resul	t of	samp	le ur	odates
10000				- Oup		, , , , , , ,

	Not yet issued to	Issued to interviewer,	Issued to interviewer
Type of undate	interviewer	but not yet returned to NatCen	and returned to NatCen
Type of update	N (0 : 1d		
Change in eligibility status, i.e. death or emigration of cohort member	NatCen assigned the appropriate outcome code, and the case was not issued to an interviewer.	NatCen notified the interviewer of change of status, and the interviewer assigned the appropriate outcome code and returned the case to NatCen.	If the case had been returned with a productive outcome code, no action was taken. If the case had been returned with an unproductive outcome code, a new survey outcome code was assigned
Change in participation status	As above	As above	No action, but NatCen ensured cases with unproductive outcomes were not reissued
Change in status of address, i.e. it became known that the cohort member was no longer living at the address, but the new address was not known		NatCen notified the interviewer of the change, the interviewer manually updated the ARF/ Sample Information Sheet, and attempted to trace the cohort member	No action
Change to contact information	As above	As above	If the case had been returned with a productive outcome code, NatCen stored the new address as the most recent address until the case was returned to CLS. If the case had been returned with an unproductive outcome code but the interviewer had made contact with the respondent, NatCen stored the new address as the most recent address until the case was returned to CLS If the case had been returned with a non-
			contact outcome code the case was reissued.

The following table shows the number of cases that were sent to CLS in the 'mover file' and the number of cases sent to NatCen in the sample update file (see section 2.7 for details).

Table 5.3 Number of cases in mover file and sample update file by month						
	No. of cases in Mover file sent	No. of cases in Sample Update				
Month	to CLS	file sent to NatCen				
June	0	26				
July	0	59				
August	0	262				
September	0	212				
October	0	173				
November	23	162				
December	82	107				
January	132	125				
February	94	201				
March	348	122				
April	73	124				
May	7	315				
Total	759	1888				

5.10.2 Updating sample information by interviewers

Interviewers were responsible for updating the contact information for all the cases issued to them.

For productive cases, the sample information was checked, and updated if necessary, during the interview, directly into the CAPI Contact block. For unproductive cases, interviewers would sometimes obtain updates to the sample information during the course of contacting or tracing the respondents, and this information was recorded on the ARF/ Sample Information Sheet, and then transferred to the CAPI admin block.

All updates and changes made to the sample information by interviewers were recorded in such a way that the new information was distinguishable from the original information.

5.11 Fieldwork progress

Fieldwork began in August 2008 and ended in May 2009. Each wave of fieldwork started on time, except for Wave 7. The cases sent to DWP for tracing were released later than anticipated and some cases could not be issued without the updated contact information (see also section 2.3). As a result, Wave 7, which contained only cases whose contact information had been updated as part of the DWP tracing exercise, was released six weeks after Wave 6 (a delay of 2 weeks).

There was an eight week mop-up period which gave interviewers time to contact and interview previously untraced cases, which had been returned with updated contact information by the Tracing Unit at CLS. This also gave interviewers more time to convert refusals and other unproductive cases which were re-issued.

Fieldwork finished as scheduled at the end of May 2009.

Table 5.4 Ma	ain stage fieldwork dates
Wave name	e Timetabled fieldwork dates
W1	August – September 2008
W2	September – November 2008
W3	October – December 2008
W4	November 2008 – January 2009
W5	December 2008 – January 2009
W6	January – March 2009
W7	February – April 2009
Mop-up	April – May 2009

Table 5.5	Interviews achieved by m	onth						
Total: 9790								
	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6	Wave 7	Total
Fieldwork mor	nth							
August	295	0	0	0	0	0	0	295
September	1327	394	0	0	0	0	0	1721
October	376	1205	438	0	0	0	0	2019
November	31	329	832	593	0	0	0	1785
December	2	9	155	606	286	0	0	1058
January	6	4	8	142	968	378	0	1506
February	46	40	16	23	153	539	19	836
March	42	27	25	28	26	116	169	433
April	24	13	15	10	10	14	38	124
May	1	2	2	0	2	1	5	13
Total	2150	2023	1491	1402	1445	1048	231	9790

5.12 Progress reporting

Fieldwork progress reports were sent to CLS weekly, and more substantial progress reports were provided each month. The weekly reports comprised a breakdown of survey response (broadly, into categories of productive, non-productive, ineligible and outstanding cases) by fieldwork wave and by country (England, Scotland and Wales). The monthly reports had additional breakdowns: by Government Office Region, prior response, type of initial contact (face to face or telephone), response to the different elements of the survey (self-completion, consents, Memory and Concentration tasks, CASI, Parents questions) and an analysis of movers.

The first weekly report was provided on 4th September 2008, and the first monthly report in September 2008, with reports continuing throughout fieldwork.

5.13 Translations

Cohort members living in Wales received the advance letter in English and Welsh (double sided). This was the only document that was translated and because all cohort members were educated in the British school system, interpreters were not necessary for the CAPI interview.

5.14 Thank you letter

Thank you letters were sent to all cohort members who had taken part in the study. This included cohort members who completed a partial interview and cases where the interview was completed, or partially completed by a proxy respondent on the cohort member's behalf. Thank you letters were not sent to cohort members who had requested since the completion of the interview that they did not wish to be contacted again, or cases where NatCen or CLS had been informed that the cohort member had died since the interview. A copy of the thank you letter can be found in the appendix.

The contact information for productive cases was cleaned before sending the thank you letters. It was anticipated that thank you letters would be sent six weeks after the cohort member was interviewed. However, in practice, the time taken to set up the cleaning process and to develop the file meant that the first thank you letters were not sent until January 2009. Contact information was cleaned in batches rather than on a case by case basis as part of the edit. The thank you letters and Contact Information files were delivered in three batches (there were originally four batches scheduled but the final two batches were merged due to the relatively small number of cases). The following table shows the number of thank you letters sent by month. A contact information file was provided to CLS at the same time as each thank you letter mailing.

Table 5.6	5.6 Number of thank you letters sent by month					
Month		Number				
January 20	009	6446				
March 200	9	2793				
May 2009		551				
Total		9790				

5.15 Fieldwork Quality Control

All interviewers were required to attend a one-day briefing. During the briefing, interviewers conducted dummy interviews, and were instructed to practice further at home before starting work.

The majority of NatCen interviewers working on the study were experienced interviewers, and many had worked on previous cohort studies at NatCen. Interviewers' work was checked when it was returned to the office to ensure that sufficient tracing was undertaken where necessary, that outcome codes were assigned correctly, and that all necessary paperwork, such as consent forms and paper self-completion questionnaires, was returned. If it was felt that an interviewer had not

tried hard enough to trace respondents that had moved, then the case was returned to the interviewer for further tracing.

It is standard practice at NatCen for interviewers to be supervised in the field twice a year, and for their work to be reviewed on an on-going basis. In addition, standard NatCen checking procedures applied: 10% of cohort members interviewed were re-contacted by telephone or letter, and interviewers were supervised regularly. Interviewers whose performance was below expectation were contacted and offered further briefing and support.

The interviewer's route through the CAPI questionnaire was programmed so that all relevant questions came on route according to the cohort member's earlier answers. Consistency checks of values and measurements were built into the CAPI. The 'hard' checks did not allow entries outside a given range, and the 'soft' checks asked the interviewer to confirm what he or she had entered. Soft checks were usually triggered where values were implausible but not impossible. All checks were reviewed when the data were edited.

5.16 Fieldwork complaints

NatCen has a standard procedure for dealing with complaints from respondents about interviewers, but this procedure was altered slightly for NCDS because of the longitudinal nature of the study, and the fact that respondents could contact the sponsors directly.

If complaints were made directly to CLS, the matter would be referred to NatCen for further investigation. Once fully investigated, either NatCen or CLS would respond, depending on the nature of the complaint. If the complaint concerned an interviewer's conduct, NatCen would forward the complaint to Field Services.

If complaints were made directly to the NatCen research team, the matter would be investigated fully, and then forwarded to CLS and to Field Services.

If the complaint concerned an interviewer's conduct, Field Services would contact the interviewer's Area Manager explaining that a complaint had been made, and requesting the interviewer's account of events in writing. At this stage, the nature of the complaint was not explained in detail to the interviewer as this could influence the interviewer's account. Once the interviewer's version of events was received, Field services responded to the Area Manager with fuller details of the complaint, which the Area Manager relayed to the interviewer, asking if the interviewer wished to add anything to their original account. If the complaint was justified, then action was taken against the interviewer. The action taken would depend on the type of incident, and the severity of the matter.

The table below summarises the complaints received during the fieldwork period from NCDS cohort members.

Table 5.7 Summary of complaints from NCDS cohort members during the fieldwork period

Reason for complaint	Number
Interviewer conduct	6
Incorrect sample information used on	
correspondence	1
Proximity of cohort member's residence to the	
interviewer's	2
Lack of correspondence from CLS	1
Past experience of the NCDS interview	1
Inappropriateness of tracing by linking to	
government databases	1
Contact after firm refusal	1
Questions too intrusive	1
Total	14

5.17 Safety, Consent and Confidentiality Issues

5.17.1 Safety Issues

Before starting work, interviewers had to follow standard NatCen procedures and notify the local police. The interviewers explained what the survey was about, and gave them a copy of the NatCen police letter and NCDS advance letter. The interviewers also presented their identity card and left their name and a contact telephone number.

5.17.2 Confidentiality issues

In order to maintain confidentiality, interviewers were instructed to avoid mentioning the title of the study to anyone but the cohort member or their parents. As mentioned in the advance letter, the cohort member's answers were treated in strict confidence in accordance with the Data Protection Act. In addition, interviewers were not permitted to interview anyone known to them personally, such as a friend, a neighbour or a colleague. Such instances were re-assigned to other interviewers.

6 Survey Response

6.1 Summary

A total of 9,790 cohort members were successfully interviewed between August 2008 and April 2009, a survey response rate⁸ of 80.4% of the potentially eligible sample with a co-operation rate (or interviewer response rate)⁹ of 85.4%.

Of the 12,316 cohort members issued in the total sample, 93.1% (n=11,461) were successfully traced and eligible. The remaining 6.9% were made up of sample members who were confirmed to be ineligible (1.2%) or movers whose eligibility was uncertain as they could not be traced (5.8%). Where ineligibility was confirmed, it was found that 101 cohort members had emigrated and 37 had died. The remaining 4 cases had been issued in error by CLS as part of the second batch of the sample, having previously been issued in the first batch. The 'uncertain ineligible' category was made up mainly of cohort members who had moved and could not be traced by either NatCen or CLS, and some cases where there was no time to reissue or trace.

For completeness the response rates detailed in the tables of this chapter show both the "interviewer response rate" (base excludes both confirmed and uncertain ineligibles) and the "survey response rate" (base excludes confirmed ineligibles only). For reasons of clarity the text accompanying the tables generally quotes figures for one of these only, and that is the interviewer response rate. .

Table 6.1 Summary of sample eligi								
	No. cohort members	% of issued sample						
Confirmed eligible	11461	93.1						
Confirmed ineligible	142	1.2						
Died	37	0.3						
Emigrated	101	0.9						
Issued in error (duplication)	4	0.0						
Uncertain ineligible	713	5.8						
Movers returned by CLS untraced	676	5.5						
Ran out of time	37	0.3						
Total issued sample	12316	100						

6.2 Details of Survey Response

Productive interviews were completed for 85.4% of the confirmed eligible sample. Productive cases were for the most part *fully productive personal* interviews (85.1%), with the remaining 0.3% made up of proxy or partially productive interviews.

⁸ The survey response rate is the percentage of productive interviews from the sample with known/possible eligibility, that is excluding those confirmed ineligible cohort members

⁹ The interviewer response rate or co-operation rate is the percentage of productive interviews from the sample of confirmed eligible cohort members, that is excluding confirmed and uncertain ineligibles.

The unproductive cases were largely refusals (10.6%), made either directly to the office (1.6%), to the interviewer in person (7.9%) or by broken appointment (1.1%). Broken appointments are treated as disguised refusals, as these cohort members were consistently unavailable after several attempts by interviewers to follow-up and reschedule.

	No. cohort members	% of confirmed eligible sample	% of confirmed a uncertain eligib sample	
Issued	12316	-	<u>-</u>	
Confirmed ineligible	142			
Uncertain eligible/ ineligible	713			
Eligible - includes confirmed eligible only	11461	100.0		
Eligible - includes confirmed and uncertain eligible	12174		100.0	
	%	%	%	
Productive	9790	85.4	80.4	
Fully productive (personal)	9758	85.1	80.2	
Fully productive (proxy)	22	0.2	0.2	
Partially productive (personal)	10	0.1	0.1	
Partially productive (proxy)	0	0.0	0.0	
Unproductive	1670	14.6	13.7	
Non- contact	125	1.1	1.0	
Refusals	1214	10.6	10.0	
- Office refusal	182	1.6	3	1.5
- Refusal to interviewer	909	7.9)	7.5
- Broken appointment	123	1.1	1	1.0
Other unproductive	332	2.9	2.7	
- III during fieldwork period	28	,	k	1
- Away during fieldwork period	57	,	k	1
- Physically or mentally incapable	29	,	k	1
- Language difficulties	0	,	k	,
- Data lost on laptop	6	,	k	1
- Other reason	211	•	k	1
- Productive - but respondent asked for data				
deletion	1	,	k	+

6.2.1 Response by survey wave

The sample was issued in two batches. The first batch (11,707 cohort members) was issued across waves 1-6 from August 2008 to January 2009. The second batch (609 cohort members) was issued at wave 7 in February 2009. See Section 2.5 for more information on allocation of the sample to waves.

Table 6.3 shows the variation in response and contact rates across the 7 waves of fieldwork. The rate of productive interviews ranged from 88.5% to 84.9% across waves 1 to 6. As expected, Wave 7 had the lowest response rate at 51.8%.

The breakdown of unproductive cases at wave 7 shows that the unproductive cases are mostly attributable to respondents refusing or breaking appointments (35%). Across the first 6 waves refusals also account for the greater proportion of unproductive cases, with a slight gradual increase in the refusal rate from 7.8% at wave 1 to 11.8% at wave 6.

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6	Wave 7	Total
	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Ν
Total issued sample	2561	2471	1850	1734	1778	1313	609	12316
Ineligible	26	22	23	18	23	18	12	142
Uncertain ineligible	106	124	89	81	101	61	151	713
Base 1: Total sample with								
confirmed eligibility	2429	2325	1738	1635	1654	1234	446	11461
Base 2: Total sample including								
uncertain eligibility	2535	2449	1827	1716	1755	1295	597	12174
Productive	2150	2023	1491	1402	1445	1048	231	9790
Unproductive	279	302	247	233	209	186	215	1671
Non-contact	20	18	19	22	11	11	24	125
Refusal	189	218	175	167	164	145	156	1214
Other unproductive	70	66	53	44	34	30	35	332
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Interviewer response rate (BAS	E = confirm	ed eligibilit	y only)					
Productive	88.5	87.0	85.8	85.7	87.4	84.9	51.8	85.4
Unproductive	11.5	13.0	14.2	14.3	12.6	15.1	48.2	14.6
Non-contact	0.8	0.8	1.1	1.3	0.7	0.9	5.4	1.1
Refusal	7.8	9.4	10.1	10.2	9.9	11.8	35.0	10.6
Other unproductive	2.9	2.8	3.0	2.7	2.1	2.4	7.8	2.9

Survey response rate (BASE includes uncertain eligibility)								
Productive	84.8	82.6	81.6	81.7	82.3	80.9	38.7	80.4
Unproductive	15.2	17.4	18.4	18.3	17.7	19.1	61.3	19.6

6.2.2 Response by country of issue

Table 6.4 below shows how response rates varied by country of issue. There was slight variation between countries in response rates, with England and Scotland having slightly higher rates of productive interviews (both 85.7%) than Wales (80.6%).

	England V N		Scotland N	Total N	
Total issued sample	10446	717	1153	12316	
Ineligible	125	9	8	142	
Uuncertain ineligible	618	37	58	713	
Base 1: Total sample with	0700	074	4007	44404	
confirmed eligibility	9703	671	1087	11461	
Base 2: Total sample including uncertain eligibility	10321	708	1145	12174	
3 ·			-		
Productive	8317	541	932	9790	
Unproductive	1386	130	155	1671	
Non-contact	109	7	9	125	
Refusal	1009	98	107	1214	
Other unproductive	268	25	39	332	
Interviewer response rate (BA	% SE = confirmed e	% ligibility only)	%	%	
Productive	85.7	80.6	85.7	85.4	
Unproductive	14.3	19.4	14.3	14.6	
Non-contact	1.1	1.0	0.8	1.1	
Refusal	10.4	14.6	9.8	10.6	
Other unproductive	2.8	3.7	3.6	2.9	
Survey response rate (BASE in	ncludes uncertain	eligibility)			
Productive	80.6	76.4	81.4	80.4	
Unproductive	19.4	23.6	18.6	19.6	

6.2.3 Response by sweep of last interview

Table 6.5 shows how contact and response rates varied according to the survey sweep in which cohort members last participated. Refusals by the cohort member (either directly or by broken appointment) accounted for the greatest proportion of unproductive cases, regardless of previous sweep of participation. The refusal rates ranged from 25% of cases last interviewed in 1958, to a high of 47.4% of cases last interviewed in 1981. The refusal rate was considerably lower amongst those who participated in the previous sweep o fthe study in 2004 (5.2%). The overall productive response rate for this group was 92.9%.

	Year of las	t intervie	w						
	1958	1965	1969	1974	1981	1991	2000	2004	Tota
	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Total issued sample	14	20	50	286	301	353	1942	9350	12316
Total ineligible	0	1	1	15	7	6	40	72	142
Died	0	0	0	4	0	1	10	22	37
Emigrated	0	0	1	10	7	4	29	50	101
Issued in error (duplication)	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	4
Uncertain ineligible b	2	1	10	59	66	72	313	190	713
Base 1: Total sample with									
confirmed eligibility	12	18	39	212	228	275	1589	9088	11461
Base 2: Total sample including									
uncertain eligibility	14	19	49	271	294	347	1902	9278	1274
Productive	5	7	21	104	92	143	1019	8399	9790
Unproductive	7	11	18	108	136	132	570	689	1671
Non-contact	2	1	2	10	9	12	44	45	125
Refusal	3	5	13	83	108	103	430	469	1214
Other unproductive	2	5	3	15	19	17	96	175	332

-									
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Interviewer response rate	(BASE = confi	irmed elig	jibility on	ly)					
Productive	41.7	38.9	53.8	49.1	40.4	52.0	64.1	92.4	85.4
Unproductive	58.3	61.1	46.2	50.9	59.6	48.0	35.9	7.6	14.6
Non-contact	16.7	5.6	5.1	4.7	3.9	4.4	2.8	0.5	1.1
Refusal	25.0	27.8	33.3	39.2	47.4	37.5	27.1	5.2	10.6
Other unproductive	16.7	27.8	7.7	7.1	8.3	6.2	6.0	1.9	2.9
Survey response rate (BA	SE includes un	ncertain e	ligibility)						
Productive	35.7	36.8	42.9	38.4	31.3	41.2	53.6	90.5	80.4
Unproductive	64.3	63.2	57.1	61.6	68.7	58.8	46.4	9.5	19.6

6.3 Telephone Contact

Interviewers were required to make first contact by telephone, with cohort members who last participated at the 2004/2005 sweep, and for whom a telephone contact number was available. Table 6.6 below shows the response to telephone contact.

First contact by telephone was attempted with 70.9% of cohort members, and was in the range of 73.7% to 74.5% for waves 1 to 6. Attempted first contact by telephone was much lower at wave 7, with an attempted telephone contact rate of only 9.5%. This figure was low was because most of the wave 7 sample was ineligible for first contact by telephone, as they had not participated in the previous sweep of the survey.

Out of those attempted calls, contact was made with 83.8% of cohort members. There was again little variation between waves, except for contact made at wave 7 which was 55.2% compared with an average of 83.9% across the earlier 6 waves. Out of those cohort members with whom contact was actually made by telephone, the success rate in achieving an appointment booking was 93.1%. There was little variation between waves.

Overall, telephone appointments were made with 55.3% of the total issued sample, again with very little variation by wave, except for wave 7 where only 4.9% were contacted by telephone (as most of that wave was ineligible for initial contact by telephone).

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6	Wave 7	Total
	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
A. Total sample	2561	2471	1850	1734	1778	1313	609	12316
B. Telephone contact attempted	1896	1826	1368	1278	1330	978	58	8734
C. Telephone contact made	1587	1539	1168	1069	1120	803	32	7318
D. Appointment made	1480	1445	1089	983	1051	737	30	6815
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Telephone contact attempted (as % of A)	74.0	73.9	73.9	73.7	74.8	74.5	9.5	70.9
Telephone contact made (as % of B)	83.7	84.3	85.4	83.6	84.2	82.1	55.2	83.8
Appointment made (as % of C)	93.3	93.9	93.2	92.0	93.8	91.8	93.8	93.1
Overall percentage of sample where appointments made by telephone	57.8%	58.5%	58.9%	56.7%	59.1%	56.1%	4.9%	55.3%

6.4 Movers and Tracing

14% of cohort members were identified as movers, that is they no longer lived at the issued address. The frequency of movers, by survey wave, is shown in Table 6.7 below. There was little variation in the mover rate between waves 1 to 6 (ranging from 11.8% to 14.6%). However at wave 7 just over one third of the issued sample were identified as movers (34.6%).

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6	Wave 7	Total
	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Base: Total issued sample	2561	2471	1850	1734	1778	1313	609	12316
Non-movers	2259	2176	1615	1492	1519	1132	398	10591
Movers	302	295	235	242	259	181	211	1725
Traced movers	196	171	146	161	158	120	60	1012
Untraced movers	101	113	79	79	98	55	151	676
Outstanding	5	11	10	2	3	6	0	37
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Non-movers	88.2	88.1	87.3	86.0	85.4	86.2	65.4	86.0
Movers	11.8	11.9	12.7	14.0	14.6	13.8	34.6	14.0

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6	Wave 7	Total
	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Base: Total movers	302	295	235	242	259	181	211	1725
Traced movers	196	171	146	161	158	120	60	1012
Traced by interviewer	164	132	121	116	119	92	45	789
Address within own area	120	107	95	95	103	79	37	636
Address outside own area	26	9	11	12	6	10	1	75
Address overseas	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Traced by CLS	32	39	25	45	39	28	15	223
New address	31	39	23	50	40	27	12	222
Emigrated	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	5
Refusal/ineligible	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	3
Untraced/ outstanding								
movers	106	124	89	81	101	61	151	713
Not traced	101	113	79	79	98	55	151	676
Ran out of time	5	11	10	2	3	8	0	37
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Traced movers	64.9	58.0	62.1	66.5	61.0	66.3	28.4	58.7
Traced by interviewer	54.3	44.7	51.5	47.9	45.9	50.8	21.3	45.7
Traced by CLS	10.6	13.2	10.6	18.6	15.1	15.5	7.1	12.9
Untraced/ outstanding	35.1	42.0	37.9	33.5	39.0	33.7	71.6	41.3
Not traced	33.4	38.3	33.6	32.6	37.8	30.4	71.6	39.2
Ran out of time	1.7	3.7	4.3	0.8	1.2	3.3	0.0	2.1

Of the 1,725 movers identified, 58.7% were successfully traced. As Table 6.8 above shows, this was a combination of tracing efforts by interviewers (45.7%) and tracing by CLS (12.9%). In total 41% of movers remained untraced at the end of the fieldwork period although this proportion was considerably higher at Wave 7 (71.6%).

The outcomes for all 1012 traced movers are shown in Table 6.9. Overall, about 10% of these had emigrated. For the remaining eligible sample, productive interviews were achieved with 76.1%. There was little difference in the response rates between cohort members traced by interviewers NatCen, and those traced by CLS. Overall refusals were the most common cause of an unproductive outcome (14.5%).

Table 6.9 Response rates of rei	ssued traced movers		
	Movers traced by	Movers traced by	
	interviewer	CLS	Total
	N	N	N
Base: Total traced movers	789	223	1012
Ineligible	78	23	101
Died	0	0	0
Emigrated	78	23	101
Productive	543	150	693
Fully productive (personal)	538	148	686
Fully productive (proxy)	4	1	5
Partially productive (personal)	1	1	2
Partially productive (proxy)	0	0	0
Unproductive	168	50	218
Non-contact	29	6	35
Refusal	98	34	132
Other unproductive	41	10	51
Base: Total eligible traced movers	711	200	911
Ğ	%	%	%
Productive	76.4	75.0	76.1
Fully productive (personal)	75.7	74.0	75.3
Fully productive (proxy)	0.6	0.5	0.5
Partially productive (personal)	0.1	0.5	0.2
Partially productive (proxy)	0.0	0.0	0.0
Unproductive	23.6	25.0	23.9
Non- contact	4.1	3.0	3.8
Refusals	13.8	17.0	14.5
Other unproductive	5.8	5.0	5.6

6.5 Response to individual survey elements

6.5.1 Paper self-completion questionnaires

All eligible cohort members were sent a paper self-completion in advance of the mainstage interview, which could be completed prior to the interview appointment and collected by the interviewer (see section 3.3.3 for information on content). Out of 9,790 productive interviews, 8,844 paper questionnaires were completed (90.3%). There were no instances where a paper questionnaire was received but there was no main or partner interview.

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6	Wave 7	Total
	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Base: All productive interviews	2150	2023	1491	1402	1445	1048	231	9790
Total completed and returned	1940	1834	1345	1280	1298	978	169	8844
Not returned	210	189	146	122	147	70	62	946
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total completed and returned	90.2	90.7	90.2	91.3	89.8	93.3	73.2	90.3
Not returned	9.8	9.3	9.8	8.7	10.2	6.7	26.8	9.7

6.5.2 Computer Assisted Self Completion

A ten minute CASI¹⁰ followed the main CAPI interview (see section 3.3.4 for content), and respondents had the option to complete this by themselves or with the help of the interviewer if required. In total 98.6% of respondents agreed to complete the CASI. Just 2.3% of respondents required the help of the interviewer to complete the module. Response to the CASI was lower at wave 7 than at the other 6 waves, with only 83.5% agreeing to complete these questions compared with an average of 99% across the other waves.

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¹⁰ CASI stands for Computer Assisted Self Interview

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6	Wave 7	Tota
	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Base: All productive personal								
interviews (excluding proxies)	2145	2018	1487	1397	1442	1048	231	9768
Total completed	2124	1999	1479	1384	1419	1038	193	9636
Completed independently	2086	1958	1452	1357	1391	1000	170	9414
Completed with help of interviewer	38	41	27	27	28	38	23	222
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total completed	99.0	99.1	99.5	99.1	98.4	99.0	83.5	98.6
Completed independently	97.2	97.0	97.6	97.1	96.5	95.4	73.6	96.4
Completed with help of interviewer	1.8	2.0	1.8	1.9	1.9	3.6	10.0	2.3

6.5.3 Cognitive Function Assessments

Memory and concentration tasks which assess cognitive function were administered by means of a task booklet alongside the CAPI interview (see section 3.3.2 for more information). The cooperation rate was very high for this cognitive function module, with 98.8% of cohort members who completed a personal interview being willing to complete the four tasks.

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6	Wave 7	Total
	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Base: All productive personal								
interviews (excluding proxies)	2145	2018	1487	1397	1442	1048	231	9768
Willing to complete tasks	2130	2001	1477	1379	1428	1039	195	9649
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Willing to complete tasks	99.3%	99.2%	99.3%	98.7%	99.0%	99.1%	84.4%	98.8%

6.6 Consent rates for data linkage

Cohort members who had completed a productive personal interview were asked for consent to link their survey data to information from routine health and economic records. The consent rate to link health records was slightly higher than that for economic records (78.7% compared with 70.6%). Consent was provided to the interviewer directly in most cases, with a very small proportion of respondents completing the form at a later date and returning to the office by post.

Table 6.13 Consent to data linkage – coh	ort members							
	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6	Wave 7	Total
	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Base: All productive personal interviews								
(excluding proxies)	2145	2018	1487	1397	1442	1048	231	9768
Health data linkage – consent	1656	1616	1187	1101	1130	845	154	7689
·								
Economic data linkage – consent	1486	1466	1056	995	989	770	135	6897
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Health data linkage – consent	77.2	80.1	79.8	78.8	78.4	80.6	66.7	78.7
Ğ								
Economic data linkage – consent	69.3	72.6	71.0	71.2	68.6	73.5	58.4	70.6

Cohort members who had co-resident partners were also asked if their partners would give consent to health and economic data linkage. Overall 7,746 cohort members who completed a personal interview had co-resident partners (79.3% of productive personal interviews). Forty seven per cent of partners were present at the time of the interview. Table 6.14 shows the consent rate for all co-resident partners.

In total, 43.9% of co-resident partners gave consent to health and 39.5% to economic data linkage.

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6	Wave 7	Total
	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Base: All personal productive interviews								
having co-resident partners	1686	1627	1193	1100	1175	823	142	7746
Of which, co-resident partners								
PRESENT at time of interview	845	782	561	495	538	365	72	3658
Health data linkage – consent	721	713	541	476	507	393	49	3400
Economic data linkage – consent	645	656	487	426	446	356	44	3060
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Health data linkage – total consent	42.8	43.8	45.3	43.3	43.1	47.8	34.5	43.9
Economic data linkage – total consent	38.3	40.3	40.8	38.7	38.0	43.3	31.0	39.5
Partner present at time of interviewer	50.1	48.1	47.0	45.0	45.8	44.3	50.7	47.2

Finally, cohort members who had at least one parent alive were asked for consent to contact the parent(s) for a further stage of the study (see section 3.3.7). 7,056 cohort members had a living parent, and of these 68% provided parent contact details for follow-up.

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6	Wave 7	Total
	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Base: Cohort member's with at								
least one parent alive	1564	1483	1095	1010	1021	737	146	7056
Consent given to contact parents	1083	1007	774	684	690	491	67	4796
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Consent given to contact parents	69.2	67.9	70.7	67.7	67.6	66.6	45.9	68.0

6.7 Module Timings

The mean and median interview lengths, including the completion of the household questionnaire were 72.5 minutes and 70.3 minutes respectively.

See Table 6.16 for a breakdown of individual module timings.

Table 6.16 Module timings for respondent interview				
Base: 7848	Mean time	Median time		
	(decimal minutes)	(decimal minutes)		
Household Grid	4.4	3.6		
Housing	1.6	1.0		
Relationship history & other relationships	1.1	0.6		
Births	0.2	0.0		
Adopted children	0.0	0.0		
Absent children	2.6	2.2		
Family	3.1	3.0		
Family income	4.1	3.5		
Employment	8.4	7.9		
Partner Job	1.8	1.7		
Qualifications	0.9	0.5		
Courses	0.4	0.3		
Non-Formal learning	0.8	0.7		
Health	4.9	4.3		
Cognitive Function: ALL	7.8	7.5		
- Introduction & Word memory	2.2	2.0		
- Animal naming	0.5	0.4		
- Prospective memory	1.3	1.3		
- Letter cancellation	0.9	0.8		
- Word memory revisited & performace factors	2.9	2.7		
Smoking	1.8	1.6		
Diet & exercise	0.9	0.8		
Height & weight	1.2	1.0		
Paticipation	1.4	1.2		
Support	1.9	1.8		
Self-completion	13.0	12.1		
Consents 11	3.9	3.3		
Contact information	6.3	5.7		
Respondent interview total	72.5	70.3		

¹¹ Likely to be an underestimate, as many interviewers collected consents separate from the interview

7 Coding, Editing and Data Preparation

7.1 Editing CAPI Data

In order to minimise post-interview editing, data entered into CAPI was automatically subjected to range and consistency error checks (see section 5.15). This enabled interviewers to clarify and query data discrepancies directly with the respondent during the interview. Consistency errors comprise of 'soft' and 'hard' checks. Hard checks must be resolved by the interviewer at the time of the interview, but soft checks can be suppressed by the interviewer. Where a soft check was triggered, the interviewer often opened and recorded a note explaining the situation. These notes were kept alongside the data, and could be inspected later.

However, some data checking is too complex to be carried out in the field. In addition it is not always possible to include all possible consistency checks in the program. As a result, a separate coding and editing process was required and this was carried out electronically, using a new version of the CAPI program, specially developed for this purpose using Blaise. The edit checks and coding instructions were agreed with the CLS team.

The coding and editing process required the NatCen Operations Department to conduct further data checking, resolve outstanding queries and code responses to "other-specify" open-ended questions (see Section 7.2). For each case a paper fact sheet was generated for the editor to use. This factsheet included the cohort member's details, and listed responses which had triggered a soft check during the interview, notes or remarks entered by the interviewer and all verbatim responses to "other - specify" and open-ended questions for coding.

Examples of actions taken by editors include:

- reviewing entries which had triggered a soft check (e.g. extreme values of earnings or amounts received or paid) in conjunction with interviewers' relevant notes where available
- checking and resolving interviewer queries
- back-coding "other specify" responses that interviewers had been unable to code using a revised codeframe (e.g. main reason for moving house)

Editors only made changes to the data according to the rules written in the codebook provided (see Appendix) and recorded their actions and any outstanding queries on the paper fact sheets. Queries were reviewed by the Operations Department, and, in many cases they were referred back to the NatCen researchers for guidance.

7.2 Coding open-ended and 'other-specify' questions

As mentioned in section 7.1, the CAPI interview included a number of questions where the responses were recorded verbatim and subsequently needed to be coded. These were questions where the interviewer was either unsure where to code a particular response within the existing code frame or the full range of responses could not be predicted before the interview.

7.2.1 Other-specify questions

Most of the questions that required coding were 'other-specify' questions, where the interviewer entered an answer if they were not confident of coding into the pre-specified code frame. In many cases it was possible for editors to code 'other-specify' answers back into the existing code frame (back coding). However, in some cases back coding is not always possible as new, distinct groups of responses emerge.

Therefore, before the data was passed to the Operations Department at NatCen for editing, the researchers at NatCen reviewed the early data to try to identify where additional codes were needed, and what they should be. Any new codes that were identified via this process were incorporated into the code frames.

In some cases it was still not possible for responses to be allocated to an existing code or any of the additional codes. In these instances, coders assigned a new 'other' code as appropriate. These codes were:

- code 94 other specific answer (used for most of the responses that could not be coded using the existing/additional codes in the code frames)
- > code 95 vague/ irrelevant answer (used for responses that did not answer the question)
- > code 96 editor cannot deal with this

NatCen researchers reviewed all responses given one of these codes by editors.

New or revised code frames were largely developed by NatCen researchers, with contributions from the CLS team. Final agreement on code frames was reached in March 2009. A list of all questions that were coded is provided in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1 List of coded variables			
Code frame	Module	Variable name	
SOC / SIC	BProxy BEmploy BEmploy –	PCJTitle, PCJDo, PCJFirm CJDo, CJTitle, CJFirm	
	Histories BPartJob	JTitle, JDo PJTitle, PJTtldif, PJDo	
ICD-10	BHealth	LsiCond	
Other - specify questions	BHouse	HomegO	
(For most variables, pre-existing codeframes were expanded after reviewing responses)	BFamInc BEmploy	BFinWwh, BFinBWh, Stwx, IncCode Othact1, JyOEnd , CJOthOrg , CNetOPrd, CGroOPrd, SeOType, UnempOy , YNoJobO, J21O	
	BPartJob	PNetOprd	
	BHealth3	OthCanc , HearoOh, EyePrbYp , SBGBoth	
	BCMCasi	OthParty, OthPrty, MenStpo, MenSyo	

7.2.2 SOC and SIC Coding and ICD-10

Some of the questions made use of pre-existing classification schemes, for example relating to type of occupation and industry as well as health problems. For the first group of questions, Standard Occupational Classification (SOC2000) and Standard Industrial Classifications (SIC 2003) were used; the National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC) was derived from SOC2000 and employment status, and was used as a social class measure. For health questions, coding was based on the International Classification of Diseases, 10th revision (ICD-10).

7.3 Editing Paper Questionnaire Data

Keying of the self-completion paper questionnaire data, which included an open question, was undertaken by an external agency. Once the data had been keyed the data was checked and edited in a similar way to the CAPI data. Editors needed to resolve contradictions, for example where cohort members ticked more than one response to a question where only one response was required.

Cohort members completed the letter cancellation task by crossing out as many Ps and Ws as possible in one minute from a page of letters in the Memory and Concentration task booklet. The booklets were processed by NatCen's operations department so that a score could be calculated for this task. Editors calculated a score by taking into account the number of letters that had been correctly crossed out, the amount of letters covered and the number of mistakes the cohort member made. This score was then keyed and the data was checked in a similar way to the CAPI data to ensure consistency and accuracy.

7.4 Quality Control

For the first 200 cases, all factsheets were reviewed by the NatCen Operations Department, to ensure that the editing and coding rules were being applied consistently. If any inconsistencies were found, feedback, and additional guidance, was given to the editors, and, where required, the codebook was updated with additional information that helped to ensure consistency and accuracy. Once Operations were satisfied that the coding and editing was being carried out consistently, spot checks were made to ensure continued accuracy. In addition, all editor queries were checked and referred to researchers if necessary.

7.5 CAPI Problems with the Data

The data that was delivered to CLS was of high quality. However during the fieldwork and editing process a few problems were identified:

- For a small number of cases, cognitive test scores were entered incorrectly into the CAPI programme. The NatCen Operations Department resolved this by obtaining the correct scores from the cognitive function booklets for the affected cases, and entering them into the CAPI programme.
- A minor problem with routing in the CAPI was discovered and although an update for this
 was transmitted to interviewers, 11 cases were not routed to the Menopause block.

- Cohort members who corrected the fed forward details of their children who no longer lived in their household, were not routed to the correct questions in the Absent Children block (this affected 24 cases). In addition, an incorrect filter meant that a set of questions about children aged 16 and over were not asked for all appropriate children.
- Due to a problem with transmitting feedforward data, 25 interviews were conducted using incomplete feedforward data.

All affected responses were coded as missing values during the edit. Cohort Members were not recontacted. CLS were provided with a detailed description of each of these occurrences so that this can be taken into account during analysis of the data.

7.6 Survey outputs

Table 7.2 Survey Outputs		
Output	Date Delivered	Notes
CAPI Data		
Interim data	W/C 2 March 2009 W/C 4 May 2009	
Final data	W/C 14 September 2009	
Paper self-completion		
Final data file	W/C 14 September 2009	
Cognitive Function Assessments		
Final data file	W/C 14 September 2009	
Contact Information		
Contact Information File - Final	W/C 28 September 2009	Includes both productives and unproductives. Note that contact files were delivered for each of the thank-you letter mailings, but this file superseded those.
Final Response and ParaData		
Final outcomes for each survey element	W/C 11 January 2010	Reconciled outcomes for all issued cases.
ParaData	W/C 11 January 2010	
CAPI Questionnaire Documentation		
Draft 1	W/C 2 February 2009	
Final	W/C 12 October 2009	