

# UK Household Longitudinal Study

Wave 6 technical report



# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1. Fieldwork design</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2. Contact and co-operation</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>3. Movers and tracing</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>4. Translations</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>5. The interview</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>6. Piloting</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>7. Briefings and interviewer materials</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>8. Response</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>9. Data preparation</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Appendix 1: Wave 6 interview content</b>	<b>30</b>

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# Introduction

The UK Household Longitudinal Study (UKHLS) is known to sample members as Understanding Society. This major longitudinal household panel survey started in 2009, and is the largest study of its kind, with around 40,000 households interviewed at Wave 1. The study collects data from household members aged 10 and above on an annual basis.

It is commissioned by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and led by the Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER) at the University of Essex.

This report gives details of Wave 6 of Understanding Society, which was undertaken by TNS BMRB with the exception of fieldwork in Northern Ireland, which was conducted by Millward Brown<sup>1</sup>.

## Overview of methodology

Households were issued in 24 monthly batches, with all households being issued in the same quarter as they were in previous waves. The vast majority of fieldwork was completed using face to face interviewing (CAPI), supplemented by a small amount of telephone interviewing (CATI).

As with previous waves, there were a number of different elements to the study:

- A household enumeration questionnaire, completed once per household to confirm who is currently living there;
- A household questionnaire, completed once per household to gather some household level information;
- An individual questionnaire, completed by anyone aged 16 or more in each household;
- A paper self-completion questionnaire, completed by children aged 10 to 15;
- Consents for linking to administrative records.

The median questionnaire lengths were 2 minutes and 16 seconds for the household enumeration grid, 10 minutes and nine seconds for the household questionnaire, and 46 minutes and six seconds for the individual interview.

## Survey content

The Wave 6 survey covered many topics, including some sets of questions that are asked every year, and other 'rotating' content that had been included in some previous waves but not all. A full list of modules included in the survey can be found in Appendix 1.

## Outputs

Data from Understanding Society is deposited at the UK Data Archive after each wave is completed. As more completed waves of data have become available the number of research projects using

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<sup>1</sup> Millward Brown interviewers used TNS CAPI systems for conducting fieldwork so all data was returned to and processed by TNS, and Northern Ireland fieldwork was also monitored by TNS.

Understanding Society data have increased. The latest publications, working papers and media coverage of Understanding Society are available on the study website ([www.understandingsociety.ac.uk](http://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk)).

# 1. Fieldwork design

This section gives details of the sample that was issued at Wave 6, and the overall fieldwork design.

## 1.1 Sample

The Understanding Society sample was selected at Wave 1, for details of how this was done please refer to the Wave 1 technical report. Since Wave 1 some households have dropped out of the study, either due to adamantly refusing, continuous non-participation, or moving to an unknown location. Additional households have also been created where households have split, for example, where grown up children have moved out of their parents' home.

The total number of household issued at Wave 6 was 26,420. This included three different sample types:

- The general population (GP) sample, originally sampled at Wave 1 of Understanding Society
- The ethnic minority boost (EMB) sample, originally sampled at Wave 1 of Understanding Society
- The British Household Panel Survey (BHPS) and Northern Ireland Household Panel Survey (NIHPS) samples that were incorporated into Understanding Society at Wave 2.

The issued sample at Wave 6 included 18,027 GP households, 2,465 EMB households, and 5,928 BHPS/NIHPS households. The BHPS/NIHPS sample was all issued in year 1 of fieldwork.

There were additional 'dormant' households in the sample that was drawn by ISER for Wave 6. These were mostly cases with no known address. These were included in the sample files sent to TNS BMRB, but only issued to field if an update was received during fieldwork (any that were issued are included in the counts above).

### 1.1.1 CATI only sample

Within the sample, there were a small number of issued households (249) who had previously indicated they would prefer to take part by phone. For the purposes of sampling and allocation to interviewers these were treated the same as the rest of the Understanding Society sample. However, face to face interviewers were instructed to only contact these cases by telephone and to interview them by telephone as long as that was still their preference. Some of these households opted to take part face to face at Wave 6.

## 1.2 Fieldwork structure

Sample was provided to TNS BMRB in eight quarterly batches. This ensured each household was issued in the same quarter as it had been at previous waves. As Wave 6 was TNS BMRB's first wave of fieldwork, there was no need to ensure consistency of allocation to sample points or interviewers, so when each quarter of sample was received by TNS BMRB it was clustered into sample points as efficiently as possible and then roughly the same number of sample points were allocated to each month within the quarter.

Sample was then issued to field in 24 monthly batches, the first in January 2014 and the last in December 2015.

### 1.2.1 Fieldwork timings

Fieldwork started on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month, with the exception of January which started on the 8<sup>th</sup>. Fieldwork for each monthly batch of sample then lasted 23 weeks. The following structure was then followed:

**Table 1.1: Fieldwork timings**

<b>Fieldwork weeks</b>	<b>Activity</b>
Weeks 1 to 8	CAPI assignments with original interviewer. Interviewers aimed to have final outcomes for all sample after 8 weeks
Weeks 9 and 10	CAPI mop up weeks with original interviewer
Weeks 11 to 13	Sample recalled from original CAPI interviewer and batched for re-issue
Weeks 14 to 19	CAPI re-issue period
Weeks 20 to 23	CATI mop up period

In reality, there was some flexibility around these timings. Original interviewers could hold on to sample after 10 weeks if there was a good reason to do so. For example if they had made contact with a household and that household were willing to take part but unable to do so until later in fieldwork. CAPI re-issues could start earlier than week 14.

### 1.2.2 CATI mop up fieldwork

In the last four weeks of fieldwork, outstanding cases could be contacted by telephone. Not all live sample was transferred to the CATI mop up, some face to face interviewing was still carried out during these last four weeks.

A number of approaches to CATI mop up fieldwork were trialled during Wave 6.

Initially, households and individuals included in the CATI mop up were left with face to face interviewers who were told at the start of week 20 that they could now start telephoning people. This approach yielded some success, but was not felt to be working as well as it might.

The second approach was to use TNS's telephone unit. However, the telephone interviewers were using CAPI laptops for sample management and for accessing the CATI version of the questionnaire script<sup>2</sup>.

The third approach was to re-issue the CATI mop up cases to a small group of face to face interviewers who were happy to work from home, making telephone calls. This third approach was the most effective and so was adopted for the rest of Wave 6.

<sup>2</sup> Setting up a separate telephone sample management system to allow for both household and individual level interviewing would have taken considerable time and investment, which had not been allowed for in the Wave 6 budget.

## 2. Contact and co-operation

Understanding Society puts much effort into contacting respondents and keeping them engaged with the study. As well as contact for each year's interview, there are also between wave mailings and emails to sample members to feedback findings from the study and encourage people to keep their contact details up to date. This chapter describes the contact strategy for Wave 6, including the between wave mailings.

### 2.1 Advance mailing

For each sample month, all eligible sample members aged 16 or over were sent a letter shortly before the start of fieldwork for that month. This included a letter explaining that an interviewer would call soon, a change of address card attached to the bottom of the letter, a freepost return envelope for the change of address card, and a findings postcard that varied from quarter to quarter – some examples of these are included in section 2.2.

There were five variations of the advance letter depending on individual circumstances. In part this was to deal with different incentive types for different adults. The five types were:

1. Adults who completed an interview at the previous wave
2. Adults in households that were not contacted in the previous wave
3. Adults in households that refused at the previous wave
4. Non responding adults in productive households at the previous wave
5. 'Rising 16s' – these are individuals who have recently turned 16 and so were being asked to complete an adult interview for the first time.

For all addresses in Wales, the letter was sent in both Welsh and English. Individuals who had previously been interviewed in one of the other eight translated languages (Arabic, Bengali, Cantonese, Gujarati, Punjabi Gurmukhi, Punjabi Urdu, Somali, Urdu) were sent a letter in that language.

All letters were designed with Understanding Society branding, and were signed by the Director of Understanding Society.

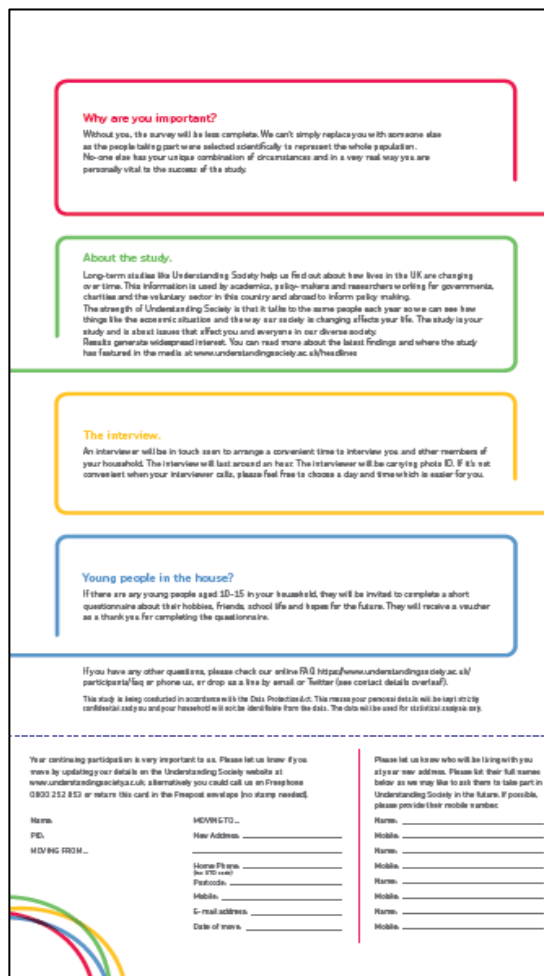
Letters were sent to the most up to date address available for each sample member. If a sample member had moved from this address and so did not receive their letter, then interviewers were able to give them a generic copy of the advance letter.

**Fig 2.1: Example Wave 6 advance letter including change of address card**

Side 1



Side 2



## 2.2 Incentives

The incentive amounts at Wave 6 varied depending on whether a household had taken part at the previous wave. The majority of sample members were sent an unconditional incentive in their advance letter, but not all. Table 2.1 details the incentives for adults.

**Table 2.1: Incentive amounts for adults**

Adult type	Amount and administration of incentive
Previous wave responding adult	£10 gift voucher included in advance letter
Adults in households that were not contacted at the previous wave	£20 conditional gift voucher – handed out by interviewer at end of interview
Adults in households that refused at the previous wave	£20 gift voucher included in advance letter
Non responding adults in productive households at the previous wave	£10 gift voucher included in advance letter
Rising 16s	£10 gift voucher included in advance letter



All incentives were 'Love2Shop' vouchers or gift cards, that could be used at a variety of shops. Where incentives were conditional, the CAPI script prompted interviewers to hand these out at the end of the interview. The CAPI script also asked interviewers to check, at the end of the interview, that respondents had received their advance letter and incentive. If they had not, the CAPI script prompted interviewers to hand out another voucher of the requisite amount.

### **2.2.1 Youth incentives**

Young people aged 10-15 were given a £5 gift voucher for completing the paper youth self-completion questionnaire. This was partially unconditional as interviewers would hand out the voucher at the same time as the paper questionnaire, so it was not conditional on the questionnaire being completed. However, it was not completely unconditional as interviewers would not hand out vouchers if they were not able to make contact with the household, or if the young person or their parent refused to accept the paper questionnaire.

### **2.3 Between wave mailings**

Each quarter a between wave mailing was sent to around half the sample (those currently not in field). This would usually include:

- A covering letter
- A postcard or short booklet highlighting some recent findings from the study
- A change of address card and freepost envelope in which to return it.

Sample members who were sent an advance letter in that quarter would receive the same findings postcard/booklet in their advance letter. So each adult would receive three mailings a year.

The purpose of these mailings was to thank respondents for their participation with the aim of encouraging future participation, and to encourage them to keep ISER informed of any changes of address. Figure 2.2 below shows an example of one of the findings postcards included in an between wave mailing.

Fig 2.2: Example between wave mailing findings postcard

**WHAT'S CHANGED IN 25 YEARS?**

How have our lives changed since the 1990s? Do we care more or less about big issues like politics, religion and education?

It has been 25 years since the British Household Panel Study (BHPS) first started collecting data in 1991. By comparing BHPS with more recent Understanding Society data, we can see how much people's attitudes and behaviour have changed.

How do you think the UK has changed in the last 25 years? Test yourself to see if your guesses match our research findings...

- In 1994, young people said they wanted to get married at 21. What is the average age now?
  - A. 23 years old
  - B. 26 years old
  - C. 30 years old
- In 1994, young people said they wanted to start a family at 23 years old, this has increased to...?
  - A. 24 years old
  - B. 27 years old
  - C. 35 years old
- In 1991, 20% of people thought that the household cooking should be shared. How many think that now?
  - A. 25%
  - B. 35%
  - C. 45%
- In 1991, 50% of people thought that pre-school children suffer if their mother works. How many think that now?
  - A. 20%
  - B. 30%
  - C. 40%
- In 1991, 55% of people said both partners should contribute to the household income. This has risen to what percentage?
  - A. 60%
  - B. 70%
  - C. 80%
- In 1991, 25% of UK couples shared the household cleaning. How many share the load now?
  - A. 30%
  - B. 40%
  - C. 50%
- In 1991, 32% of people were satisfied with our jobs. How many of us are happy at work nowadays?
  - A. 7%
  - B. 17%
  - C. 27%
- In 1991, 54% of us said we were managing our finances well, what percentage is it now?
  - A. 55%
  - B. 65%
  - C. 75%
- In 1991, 51% of people said that they were interested in politics. Since then our interest has dropped - what was it in 2014?
  - A. 23%
  - B. 33%
  - C. 43%
- In 1991, 62% of the UK belonged to a religious group. How many people do now?
  - A. 30%
  - B. 40%
  - C. 50%
- In 1992, 13% of people lived together out of wedlock. What proportion of residents now cohabit?
  - A. 24%
  - B. 44%
  - C. 64%
- In 1991, 90% of people said they like living in their neighbourhood. How many of us get on with our neighbours now?
  - A. 34%
  - B. 64%
  - C. 94%

Turn to see how well you did...

**YOUR SCORES**

**9-12**  
Well done! This is an excellent score

**5-8**  
Good result, try quizzing your family & friends

**0-4**  
A fair result but try reading [www.understandingsociety.ac.uk](http://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk) more regularly for the latest research findings

\*These answers are based on data from the British Household Panel Survey wave A, B & D) and Understanding Society (waves 3 & 4).

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Or check our website for news about the study and how we're hitting the headlines:  
[www.understandingsociety.ac.uk](http://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk)

**What do you think?**  
We hope you have enjoyed this quiz. We're always pleased to hear what you think of the mailings we send you, so if you have any feedback please email us at [contact@understandingsociety.ac.uk](mailto:contact@understandingsociety.ac.uk) or call 0800 252 853.

**YOU'VE CHANGED!**  
THE UK SINCE THE 90S

Understanding Society

## 2.4 First contact with sample members

Interviewers were instructed to attempt contact with all households within two weeks of the start of fieldwork to minimise the time between sample members receiving their advance letters and receiving a visit from their interviewer. First contact was always attempted face to face with the exception of the small number of telephone only households. It was considered that face to face contact was particularly important at Wave 6 as TNS BMRB was conducting Understanding Society fieldwork for the first time so households experienced a change of interviewer. Interviewers therefore used their first face to face contact as a chance to introduce themselves.

Where interviewers had made repeated unsuccessful face to face contact attempts they would start attempting contact by telephone.

## 2.5 Sample information sheets

The majority of information about households and sample members was held electronically on interviewers' encrypted CAPI laptops. However, a sample information sheet was also produced for each household so that interviewers would have some basic information easily to hand. The front page of the sample information sheet included household level information including: address; home telephone number; outcome last wave; the day and time the household questionnaire was completed at the last wave; and comments from the previous wave interviewer. The back page had individual level information including: names ages and genders; outcome at the previous wave; language interviewed in at the last wave.

## 2.6 Doorstep documents

Interviewers were provided with a number of materials that they could use on the doorstep to help with contacting sample members and persuading them to take part. All materials with Understanding Society branded. These included:

- **'Interviewer cards'** – these were for interviewers to use as calling cards (if they had called at a household and no one was in), appointment cards and broken appointment cards. Aside from the Understanding Society logo and a freephone number for TNS BMRB these cards were blank for interviewers to include their own message or write in appointment details. Interviewers were asked to always include their name on the card and encouraged to include their mobile phone number if they were willing to do so.
- **Laminated generic advance letter** – as this was Wave 6 of Understanding Society, and the study branding had remained the same throughout, interviewers found that holding a document with the Understanding Society logo visible when they first attempted contact was useful as sample members would recognise the logo and immediately know why the interviewer was there. This laminated copy of the advance letter was a useful document for interviewers to hold in this situation, it could also be shown to respondents who might not have received their advance letter. Interviewers also had non-laminated copies that they could leave with respondents.
- **'Information for participants' leaflet** – these leaflets included some information about Understanding Society, they were primarily aimed at new entrants to the study but interviewers could also give them to continuing sample members who wanted a bit more information.
- **Case study leaflets** – four of these were produced to be used with respondents who might need a bit of persuading to take part. They emphasised the importance of the study by highlighting a particular policy area, detailing some findings from Understanding Society data in that area, coverage in the media and implications for policy.

- **Copies of recent participant materials** – interviewers were given copies of recent between wave mailings so they could show these to respondents who might not have received them.
- **Laminated 'Understanding Society in the news' document** – this was a A4 sheet that included news headlines that had come from Understanding Society data, interviewers could show it to respondents to demonstrate the relevance of the study and what happens to the data.

## 3. Movers and tracing

As with any longitudinal study, tracing people who move is a crucial part of maintaining a representative panel. The overall strategy for tracing movers has multiple strands, some of which are undertaken by ISER. These include:

- Providing a change of address card (and freepost return envelope) with all mailings to sample members, and at the end of interviews for those that did not receive an advance letter;
- Offering multiple options for sample members to update their contact details – posting a change of address card, a freephone telephone number, and through the Understanding Society website;
- Offering sample members a £5 gift card in return for updating their contact details;
- Interwave mailings (and corresponding emails) to sample members between fieldwork waves;
- During interviews, collecting a variety of contact details (and then verifying these at later waves) including email addresses, mobile and work telephone numbers, and up to two stable contacts;
- Interviewer tracing of movers during fieldwork;
- Using commercial databases to try to find sample members that are known to have moved.

This chapter focuses on the tracing of movers during fieldwork by interviewers.

When trying to contact households and individuals, interviewers could encounter two different types of move. A **whole household move**, where none of the sample members were still living at the issued address, and a **split off move**, where one or more sample members had moved from the issued address, but at least one sample member remained at that address.

### 3.1 Tracing procedures

Tracing procedures were covered in interviewer briefings, and also detailed in interviewer instructions. Interviewers were instructed to start tracing procedures as soon as they became aware of a household move in order to maximise the time available to trace and then interview sample members.

The methods used by interviewers to trace sample members included asking current occupiers or neighbours, using telephone numbers, and contacting stable contacts. Interviewers were also provided with letters they could use to help with tracing:

- A **tracing letter** – this was for use in situations where the interviewer made contact with someone who did not have contact details for a sample member, but was not comfortable giving these to the interviewer. The tracing letter was addressed to the sample member and left with the contact to pass or post to them. This letter asked the sample member to get in touch with ISER with their new contact details;

- A **stable contact letter** – this was for use if interviewers were unable to contact stable contacts by phone or in person, the letter was posted to them. The letter asked stable contacts to get in touch with ISER and provide new contact details for the sample member.

Where interviewers successfully traced a household, they were able to visit the new address straight away if it was in their area. If the new address was further away they would assign the household an outcome code of “moved out of area” and enter the new address if their electronic contact sheet. This would create an update within the sample management system, alerting the sampling team that the household required re-assigning to a new interviewer.

Where interviewers exhausted their tracing options and were unable to find a new address, cases were passed back to ISER for further tracing. This was done via a weekly file, produced throughout fieldwork, which included all individuals that had moved and were untraced. If this second stage of tracing was successful, an address update would be returned to TNS BMRB and then re-issued to field either to the same interviewer, or to a different interviewer if the new address was in a different area.

### **3.2 Split off households**

If an interviewer identified a sample member that had split from their original household, they would attempt to find a new address for that sample member in the same ways used for whole households moves, although in many cases the remaining household members were able to provide a new address for the person that had moved out. Where interviewers found a new address, they entered this in the electronic contact sheet. This then caused an update in the electronic sample management system, and a new household was created for that individual, then issued to field.

### **3.3 Institutions**

With the exception of those that were in prison, sample members who had moved to an institution remained eligible for interview at their new address. Interviewers were instructed to attempt to interview participants where possible, but briefed about the need to contact gatekeepers in advance in some circumstances, and also about allowing for sensitivities relating the reasons for the participants moving into an institution (for example a nursing home).

## 4. Translations

The questionnaire was translated into nine different languages to help the survey be inclusive of people that would otherwise be unable to take part, in particular those in ethnic minority groups. For other languages, interviewers could still attempt to interview people, but would use someone else in the household to translate.

### 4.1 Formal translations

For the nine translated languages, core survey materials and the questionnaire script were translated into these languages. The interview was conducted in translation either by an interviewer that had been accredited in that language, or by an interviewer accompanied by an interpreter.

The table below shows the nine languages in which the translated script and materials were available, and also the number of individual interviews conducted in that language.

**Table 4.1: Number of translated interviews conducted in each language**

<b>Language</b>	<b>No. individual interviews</b>
Arabic	0
Bengali	74
Cantonese	3
Gujarati	32
Punjabi Gurmukhi	14
Punjabi Urdu	35
Somali	0
Urdu	81
Welsh	6

#### 4.1.1 Accreditation of interviewers

In order to conduct interviews in translation, interviewers had to be briefed on Understanding Society and had to pass an accreditation process. They were sent an extract of the questionnaire that had been translated into the relevant language, then had a telephone call with a translator who spoke the language. The call would be conducted in the relevant language and the interviewer would run through the questions they had been sent with the accreditator acting as a respondent. If the accreditator was satisfied that the interviewer was fluent in both reading and speaking the language, then the interviewer was allowed to conduct translated interviews.

#### **4.1.2 Interpreters**

Where a translated interview was required and there was not a TNS interviewer available to conduct it, an agency interpreter was used. In these cases the interpreter would accompany a TNS interviewer to conduct the interview. The interviewer would deal with the administration of the interview and use of the CAPI laptop, while the interpreter would read out the questions and ensure the interviewer selected the appropriate answer.

#### **4.1.3 Identifying cases for translation**

As Understanding Society is a longitudinal study, most individuals that required a translated interview were already identified in the sample as they had also required a translated interview at previous waves. However, there were some cases where new joiners to households required a translated interview.

If interviewers were in a situation where no one in a household spoke English (or no one who was there when they called) they had some materials they could use to help identify which language the sample member spoke and therefore whether a formal translation was required.

#### **4.2 Informal translations**

If a sample member did not speak English or one of the nine translated languages, they could still be interviewed. In these cases the interviewer would use someone else to translate – usually another household member but sometimes a family member or friend of the sample member who lived nearby.

#### **4.3 Welsh translations**

For all households in Wales, advance letters were sent in both English and Welsh. The youth self-completion questionnaire was also translated into Welsh. However, very few interviews were conducted in Welsh and the Welsh youth questionnaire was rarely used.



## 5. The interview

The main component of the Wave 6 interview was the individual adult questionnaire. This was administered using a CAI script, and interviews were attempted with all individuals aged 16 or more in the household. Most interviews were conducted face-to-face, and the CAPI questionnaire also included a self-completion (CASI) section. Other elements of the Wave 6 interview were:

- The household enumeration grid and household questionnaire (completed once per household)
- The youth self-completion questionnaire for 10-15 year olds
- A proxy interview for adults that were unable or unwilling to complete a full interview

A full list of the topics covered by the Wave 6 questionnaire can be found in Appendix 1.

### 5.1 Questionnaire length

The questionnaires were heavily routed depending on an individual's circumstances so the length of interviews varied. Interview lengths were generally longer for people who were employed, had children, or were being interviewed for the first time. Sample members in the ethnic minority boost and GP comparison samples were also routed to additional questions.

**Table 5.1: Median interview lengths (minutes)**

	<b>GP</b>	<b>EMB and GP comparison</b>	<b>BHPS</b>	<b>Total</b>
Household questionnaire (including enumeration)	13:07	12:51	13:06	13:03
Individual adult CAI questionnaire	37:44	37:53	36:43	37:31
Individual adult CASI questionnaire	8:04	7:43	7:39	7:56
CAI proxy questionnaire	4:20	3:24	4:16	4:08

### 5.2 Questionnaire programming

The CAI instrument was programmed using IBM Data Collection Software (now called Unicom Intelligence), which is able to handle the complexity of the Understanding Society questionnaire. The same script was used for both CAPI and CATI, with some minor modifications to allow for mode type. Two scripts were created, the first was at household level and included the household enumeration grid, the household questionnaire and administrative content such as call records. The second was the individual level script which included the adult interview, proxy interview and administration of the youth self-completion questionnaire.

### 5.3 Youth self-completion questionnaire

Youth questionnaires for sample members aged 10 to 15 were completed on paper, although the individual level script included information to help interviewers administer these. Firstly interviewers sought verbal consent from a parent or guardian, then asked the young person if they would complete

the questionnaire. The interviewer used information from the CAI instrument to fill in some details on the front of the questionnaire, before handing it to the young person along with an envelope in which to seal it when completed, and a £5 voucher. Ideally the young person would complete the questionnaire while the interviewer was in the household, but this was not always possible.

Interviewers could also leave questionnaires with parents to be given to the young person.

Interviewers were encouraged to go back to households to collect completed questionnaires, but as a last resort sample members could be left with a reply paid envelope in which to return the questionnaire

Fig 5.1 Youth Self completion questionnaire – front cover

The image shows the front cover of a 'Youth Self completion questionnaire (10-15 yrs)'. The background is red with a repeating pattern of the text 'YOUR QUESTIONNAIRE YOUR QUESTIONNAIRE YOUR QUESTIONNAIRE'. A red circular sticker in the top right corner says 'Your questionnaire'. A yellow banner in the center reads 'Self-completion questionnaire (10-15 yrs)'. Below this is a white form area with a '+' sign in each corner. The form contains the following fields:

INTERVIEWER: WRITE IN FROM CAPI SCREEN

Serial	Person number
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

First name	Interviewer number	Month
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

At the bottom left is the 'Understanding Society' logo, and at the bottom right is the number '380113342 000'.

## 6. Piloting

To test CAI questionnaires, fieldwork procedures and materials a pilot was conducted in September and October 2013. The pilot was designed to mirror main stage fieldwork as closely as possible in order to test all elements of fieldwork procedures with the exception of translations. No translated interviews were conducted as part of the pilot.

The Understanding Society pilot sample included a high number of telephone only cases and so not all of these were issued to field. The remaining sample size was quite small and so some additional households ('fresh' sample) were recruited as part of the Wave 6 pilot. The pilot sample therefore consisted of:

- 90 households from the existing Understanding Society pilot sample that were issued to CAPI. Two of these had become ineligible, 71 were productive.
- 44 households from the existing Understanding Society pilot sample that were issued as telephone only cases, 26 of these were productive.
- 113 'fresh' households. Nine of these were not residential addresses with a resident household. From the remainder, 55 were productive.
- There were also 12 split off households created from the existing pilot sample. 10 of these were not issued to field as they were either no longer eligible, or no address could be found. The remaining 2 were issued to interviewers, one was productive.

Once pilot fieldwork had finished, debriefs were held with the interviewers who had worked on the pilot. The purpose of these was to gather feedback on fieldwork procedures, questionnaires, briefings and fieldwork materials so that improvements might be made before main stage fieldwork.

# 7. Briefings and interviewer materials

## 7.1 Briefings

Wave 6 was the first wave of fieldwork conducted by TNS BMRB and so all interviewers required a full briefing on Understanding Society. Briefings were conducted face to face, usually with groups of around 15 interviewers, and lasted approximately 6 hours.

Briefings were run by researchers from TNS BMRB and ISER, and covered the following:

- An introduction to Understanding Society, the background to and purpose of the study;
- Examples of the impact Understanding Society had had so far;
- Information about the sample, different types, length of time in the study;
- Procedures for contacting households, minimum call requirements and tracing movers;
- Achieving a high response rate, avoiding refusals;
- The questionnaire, different components, topics covered by each, and who should be answering each element;
- Rules for who should be included in the household enumeration grid;
- When and with whom to conduct proxy interviews;
- Procedures for administering the 10-15 paper questionnaire;
- Consents for data linkage;
- Special procedures: translations; interviewing people in institutions; interviewing people with disabilities;
- The importance of collecting and updating contact information.

The briefings also included a session with interviewers using their laptops to follow sections of the CAPI script that a researcher led them through. This was used to ensure interviewers knew how to access all the different elements of the CAPI script.

## 7.2 Interviewer materials

Interviewers were provided with a range of materials to help them when conducting fieldwork. These included a set of project instructions which included all of the information covered in briefings as well as further details such as a full list of outcome codes. These were intended as a reference document that interviewers could use if they needed reminding of any fieldwork procedures.

Other materials included:

- Sample information sheet – one per household, these included a few details about each household and the sample members living there, most of this information was held electronically on interviewers' laptops;
- Copies of advance letters, including a laminated copy;
- Interviewer cards to be used as calling cards, appointments cards and broken appointment cards, other than the Understanding Society logo and a freephone telephone number for TNS BMRB these cards were blank for interviewers to write a message or appointment time on;
- Information for participants leaflets;
- Case study flyers – these were four flyers that highlighted different findings from Understanding Society and how these had been used. The purpose of the leaflets was to help interviewers demonstrate the purpose of the study to any sample members that queried this;
- Showcards;
- Incentives for use where sample members had not received an incentive in their advance letter;
- Youth self-completion questionnaires, envelopes marked 'confidential' to seal them in, and pre-paid return envelopes;
- Data linkage consent leaflets and forms and a consent flowchart to demonstrate the information flow during the data linkage process;
- Change of address cards and pre-paid return envelopes;
- Thank you leaflets;
- Tracing letters and stable contact letters, envelopes and stamps;
- Translation cards to help identify the language of non-English speakers.

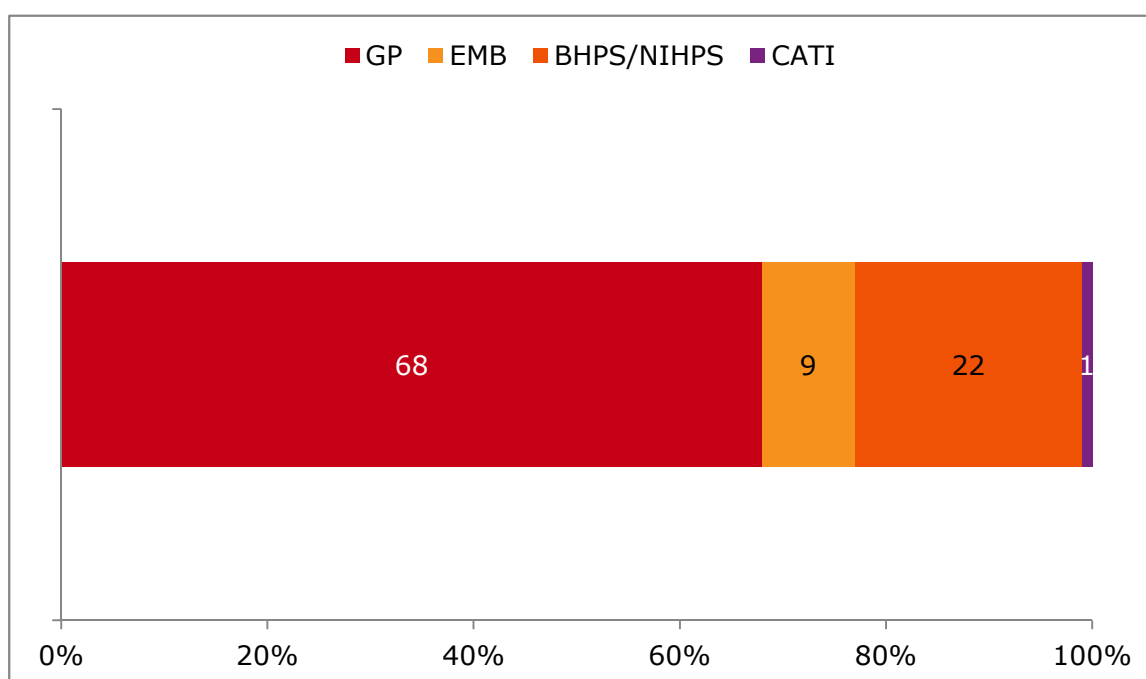
## 8. Response

### 8.1 Household level response

#### 8.1.1 Sample composition

A total of 26,420 households were issued at Wave 6. Of these, 17,995 were in the General Population (GP) sample, 2,461 were in the Ethnic Minority Boost (EMB) sample, 5,715 were in the British/Northern Irish Household Panel Survey sample (BHPS/NIHPS), and 249 were telephone only households (CATI).

**Chart 8.1: Issued sample (households) by sample type**



#### 8.1.2 Response rates

Table 8.1 details household response rates for the different sample types, dependent on whether the households had been productive at the previous wave. As would be expected, households that had been productive at Wave 5 were much more likely to be productive again at Wave 6 than those that had not responded.

Amongst the different sample types, the BHPS/NIHPS sample achieved the highest response rate, while the EMB sample achieved the lowest.

**Table 8.1: Household response by sample origin and whether productive at the last wave**

	GP – productive last wave		GP – unproductive last wave		EMB – productive last wave		EMB – unproductive last wave		BHPS/NIHPS – productive last wave		BHPS/NIHPS– unproductive last wave		CATI – productive last wave		CATI – unproductive last wave	
<i>Base: All issued sample</i>																
Issued	16471		1524		2142		319		5295		420		178		71	
Split households	937	6%	162	11%	120	6%	35	11%	330	6%	38	9%	8	4%	2	3%
Total households	17408		1686		2262		354		5625		458		186		73	
<i>Base: Total households</i>																
Ineligible households	416	2%	88	5%	44	2%	16	5%	187	3%	27	6%	3	2%	5	7%
Eligible households	16992		1598		2218		338		5438		431		183		68	
<i>Base: Eligible households</i>																
Fully productive	11162	66%	406	25%	1135	51%	62	18%	3872	71%	140	32%	94	51%	7	10%
Partially productive	3361	20%	217	14%	631	28%	56	17%	946	17%	65	15%	58	32%	5	7%
No contact	143	1%	77	5%	45	2%	24	7%	36	1%	16	4%	1	1%	10	15%
Refusal	1338	8%	553	35%	208	9%	119	35%	314	6%	140	32%	20	11%	27	40%
Other unproductive	988	6%	345	22%	199	9%	77	23%	270	5%	70	16%	10	5%	19	28%

Table 8.2 shows household response rates broken down by whether the household was an original issue household or a split off created during Wave 6 fieldwork. In the case of splits, whether or not they were productive last wave is based on the household they split from. Response rates are much lower among split off households with most being 'other unproductives' – many of these are untraced movers.

**Table 8.2: Household response rate by household type**

	<b>Original HH – productive last wave</b>	<b>Original HH – unproductive last wave</b>	<b>Split HH – productive last wave</b>	<b>Split HH – unproductive last wave</b>	<b>Total</b>
Fully productive	67%	26%	25%	20%	62%
Partially productive	21%	14%	11%	10%	20%
No contact	1%	5%	3%	4%	1%
Refusal	8%	36%	8%	7%	10%
Other unproductive	4%	18%	53%	59%	7%
<i>Base: eligible households</i>	23861	2273	970	162	27266

## 8.2 Individual level response

Individual response rates were examined separately for adults that had been interviewed at the previous wave and those that had not. The response rate is calculated as the proportion of eligible adults in each group that gave interviews at Wave 6.

For adults that had been interviewed at the previous wave, the overall response rate was 84%, the response rate was 24% for adults that had not been interviewed at the previous wave, and 50% for new entrants and rising 16s.

Previous wave productive adults were the particular focus for maximising response at Wave 6 and so it is this group that are detailed further below.

Table 8.3 shows the response rate amongst previous wave productive adults broken down by sample type.

**Table 8.3: Individual response rate by sample origin**

	<b>GP</b>	<b>EMB</b>	<b>BHPS/NIHPS</b>	<b>CATI</b>	<b>Total</b>
Productive	85%	76%	87%	87%	84%
Proxy interview	2%	4%	1%	0%	2%
No contact	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%
Refusal	9%	12%	7%	10%	9%
Other unproductive	4%	6%	3%	2%	4%
<i>Base: Previous wave productive adults</i>	26,877	9,137	3,893	251	40,158



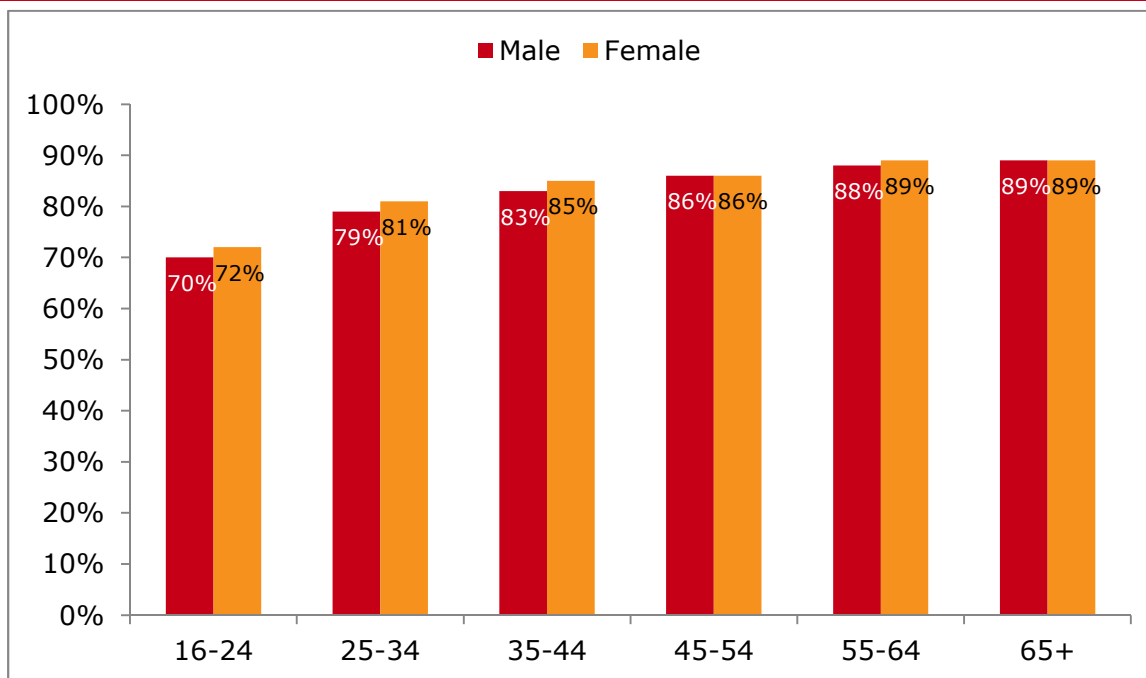
There was a small variation in response rate by country, this is shown in table 8.4.

**Table 8.4: Individual response rate by country**

	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	Total
Productive	85%	83%	85%	81%	84%
Proxy interview	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%
No contact	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Refusal	9%	10%	9%	13%	9%
Other unproductive	3%	4%	3%	3%	4%
<i>Base: Previous wave productive adults</i>	<i>30,251</i>	<i>2,935</i>	<i>3,875</i>	<i>2,655</i>	<i>40,158</i>

Response rates did not tend to vary by gender, but response rates did increase with age. Those aged 45 or over were more likely to participate than younger sample members. The 16-24 age group were particularly difficult to achieve interviews with.

**Chart 8.2: Individual response rate by age and gender**

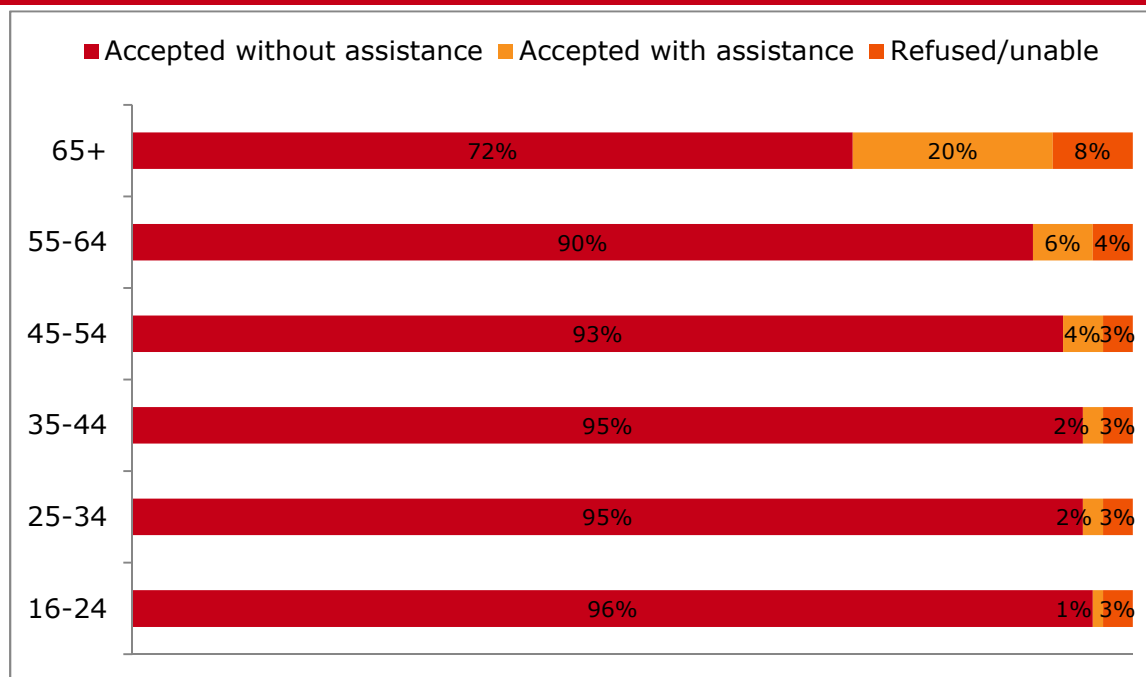


*Base: All eligible adults that had been productive at the last wave. Men: 16-24 (2,217); 25-34 (2,198); 35-44 (2,894); 45-54 (3,350); 55-64 (2,826); 65+ (4,334). Women: 16-24 (2,469); 25-34 (3,023); 35-44 (3,871); 45-54 (4,292); 55-64 (3,477); 65+ (5,206).*

### 8.2.1 Adult self-completion interviews

As part of the adult interview there was a self-completion (CASI) section. The vast majority of adults completed this on the CAPI laptops themselves without assistance. Amongst older respondents (aged 65 or more) it was more common for assistance to be required. Chart 8.3 shows these results.

**Chart 8.3: Self-completion response rate by age**



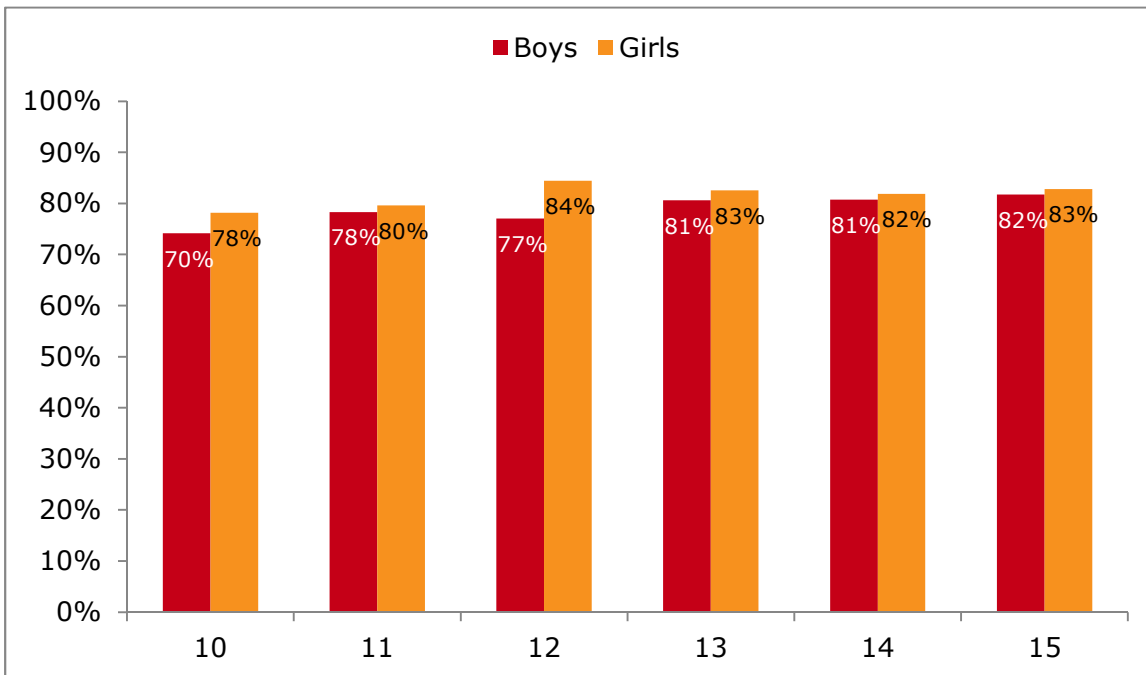
*Base: All fully productive adults that reached the CASI section of the questionnaire. 16-24 (4,591); 25-34 (4,708); 35-44 (6,022); 45-54 (6,923); 55-64 (5,806); 65+ (8,769).*

### 8.2.2 Youth self-completion questionnaires

In households that were productive (at least one adult completed an interview), 80% of 10 to 15 year olds completed and returned a paper questionnaire. This proportion varied a little by sample type, it was 80% amongst the GP sample, 85% amongst the BHPS/NIHPS sample, and 73% amongst the EMB sample.

Chart 8.4 shows the youth self-completion response rate by age and gender. Response was a little higher amongst girls than boys, and amongst 12 – 15 year olds compared with 10 and 11 year olds.

**Chart 8.4: Youth response rate by age and gender**



Base: All eligible 10-15s in productive households. Boys: 10 (337); 11 (410); 12 (335); 13 (407); 14 (394); 15 (400). Girls: 10 (376); 11 (338); 12 (334); 13 (395); 14 (370); 15 (355).

## 9. Data preparation

### 9.1 Data scanning and reconciliation

The vast majority of Understanding Society data was collected using CAI scripts. The scripts made use of consistency checks and range checks to clarify any data discrepancies with respondents as they arose. This means there was little need for any cleaning or editing of the data after fieldwork.

The exception to this was the data from the youth self-completion questionnaires. As these were completed on paper there could be data inconsistencies such as missing data, routing errors, multiple answers at single choice questions, and values out of range. Youth self-completion questionnaires were scanned to capture the data, and then a series of checks were undertaken to find any inconsistencies. Rules were agreed for how to handle data inconsistencies and edits applied in accordance with these rules.

For both the youth self-completion data and the paper consent form data, scanned data needed to be reconciled against CAI data to ensure data was attributed to the correct sample member. This was done using serial number and name for both types of data, and also date of birth and gender for youth self-completion data.

### 9.2 SIC and SOC coding

Questions from the employment and proxy sections of the questionnaire were coded to 4 digit SIC and SOC codes. The codes and verbatims were included in the data.

### 9.3 Data checking

Once data from all sources had been combined and formatted, a series of checks were undertaken to validate the data and ensure consistency of format. Three rounds of checking were employed:

- Administrative checks on individuals and households – these were to ensure that all households and individuals were included in the data with a final outcome, that individuals were finally located in one household, that outcomes were consistent with the presence of raw data, and that and joiners added to the household grid were accounted for.
- Structural checks on all files – these checked the format of files, and also that the right households and individuals were included in each file.
- Routing checks – these checked, for every variables, that responses were present when there should be a response, and not present where there should not be a response, according to questionnaire routing.

### 9.4 Data issues at Wave 6

There were some small errors in the wave 6 script, most of which only affected a small number of questions, and were fixed during the course of fieldwork. For this reason there are some questions with missing data, particularly in the earlier quarters of Wave 6. The questions and modules affected were:

- In the first month of Wave 6 fieldwork a problem with question JSEMP meant that modules on employment, self-employment, job satisfaction, commuting behaviour and work conditions were

missed by some respondents. Most of the respondents who missed these sections were recontacted by telephone and asked the missing questions.

- Also in the first month of fieldwork, there were issues with the grid variables LIVPAR and GPCOMPARE which led to some respondents missing questions that were routed from these. Again, most of these respondents were recontacted by telephone and asked the missing questions.
- In the first two months of fieldwork question XPHSDCT in the household questionnaire was missed for most households.
- In the first two months of fieldwork question FTEDANY was missed for most individuals.
- In the first three months of fieldwork the grid variables SPOUSE and PARTNER were not always being set correctly. This led to RELUP not being set correctly in all cases, so some people being asked/not asked MARSTATSAM and COHAB incorrectly.

# Appendix 1: Wave 6 interview content

Understanding Society includes many different topics in the questionnaire. Some topics are included at all waves, while others vary from wave to wave.

**Table A1: Content of Wave 6 household questionnaire**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Module name</b>
HH Composition	Household grid
Consumption	HH: Consumer durables
Consumption	HH: Expenditure
Expenditure	HH: Fuel type and expenditure
Financial behaviour and attitudes	HH: Financial strain
Financial behaviour and attitudes	HH: Material deprivation
Financial behaviour and attitudes	HH: Child deprivation
Financial behaviour and attitudes	HH: Pensioner deprivation
Housing Characteristics	HH: Structural characteristics
Housing Characteristics	HH: Home tenure
Housing Characteristics	HH: Taxation
Local Neighbourhood	HH: Neighbourhood conditions

**Table A2: Content of Wave 6 adult questionnaire**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Module name</b>
<b>Individual interview modules (repeated annually)</b>	
Basic Demographics	Demographics
Caring	Caring
Change in Characteristics	Annual event history
Childcare	Childcare
Employment	Current employment
Employment	Employees

Employment	Self-employment
Employment	Job satisfaction
Employment	Non-employment
Employment	Mothers return to work
Employment	Second jobs
Expectations	Educational aspirations
Family relationships	No co-resident relationships (self-completion)
Financial behaviour and attitudes	Household finances
Health status	SF-12 (self-completion)
Health status	Self-assessed health status (self-completion)
Health status	Disability
Income and earnings	Unearned income and state benefits
Mental health and wellbeing	GHQ (self-completion)
Political and social engagement	Politics
Satisfaction	Life satisfaction (self-completion)
<b>Individual interview modules conditional on age (repeated annually)</b>	
Expectations	Retirement planning
Family relationships	Child development (self-completion)
Family relationships	Parenting styles (self-completion)
<b>Individual interview modules (rotating)</b>	
Employment conditions	Commuting behaviour
Employment conditions	Work conditions
Financial behaviour and attitudes	Charitable giving
Financial behaviour and attitudes	Personal pensions
Financial behaviour and attitudes	Savings
Health behaviour	Smoking
Identity	Britishness (self-completion)
Local Neighbourhood	Local Neighbourhood
Local Neighbourhood	Neighbourhood belonging (self-completion)
Political and social engagement	Groups and organisations
Political and social engagement	Political engagement

Political and social engagement	Political efficacy
News and media use	
Social and friendship networks	Social networks
Social and friendship networks	3 best friends
Time use	Voluntary work
Time use	Domestic labour
Travel behaviour	Transport behaviour
<b>Individual interview modules – ethnicity strand (rotating)</b>	
Service use	
<b>Individual interview modules – young adults (aged 16-21) (rotating)</b>	
Identity	(self-completion)
Family	Meals (self-completion)
Happiness and self esteem	(self-completion)
Career advice	(self-completion)
Health	Alcohol (self-completion)
Risky behaviour	Drugs (self-completion)
Future intentions	Marriage
Future intentions	Children
Future intentions	10 years
Future intentions	Leave home
Future intentions	Job
<b>Modules asked only once (included for new entrants)</b>	
Chronic health conditions	Health conditions
Stable characteristics	Ethnicity and national identity
Stable characteristics	Family background
Stable characteristics	Fertility history
Stable characteristics	Initial conditions
Stable characteristics	Own first job
Stable characteristics	Partnership history
Stable characteristics	Religion
Scottish referendum	



**Table A3: Content of Wave 6 youth self-completion questionnaire**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Module name</b>
Demographic	
Leisure	TV
Leisure	Online social networks
Leisure	Activities outside school
Family	Meals
Family	Household chores
Family	Supervision
Friends	Friendship networks
Friends	Boyfriend/girlfriend
Self-esteem	
Happiness	
Education	Homework
Education	Aspirations
Education	Truancy
Health	Nutrition
Health	Obesity
Health	Exercise
Health	Smoking
Health	Alcohol
Risky behaviour	Binge drinking
Risky behaviour	Drugs
Risky behaviour	Attitudes
Environmental behaviour	Attitudes
Future intentions	Marriage
Future intentions	Children
Future intentions	10 years