

# NatCen

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# UK Household Longitudinal Study

## Wave 4 Technical Report



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**Prepared for: The Institute for Social and Economic Research, University of Essex**

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# Introduction

## Background

This report sets out the methodology used in the fourth wave of mainstage data collection for the UK Household Longitudinal Study (UKHLS).

UKHLS, also known as Understanding Society, is a major longitudinal household panel study 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, with fieldwork conducted by NatCen Social Research and its partners. Taken as a whole, it is the largest study of its kind in the world, with approximately 40,000 households interviewed across the UK in its first wave.

The survey collects data from all household members aged 10 and above on an annual basis, allowing the tracking of relatively short-term or frequent changes in people's lives and the factors that are associated with them. By interviewing all members of the household, researchers are able to see how change in one household member's circumstances can impact on another's. As the number of waves of the survey continues to build up, researchers will be able to look at longer-term outcomes for sample members.

With three waves of data available from November 2013, Understanding Society is already providing valuable new information about the beliefs, experiences, behaviours and lives of people in the UK, with the data being used by a range of users such as academic researchers, third sector researchers, journalists and policy-makers within government.

## Overview of Methodology

### Sample

Sample for mainstage of the fourth wave of Understanding Society comprised of three groups:

- **General Population (GP) sample** – sample from successful interviews at Wave 1 of a Postcode Address File (PAF) sample in Great Britain and the Land and Property Services Agency (LPSA) list of domestic properties in Northern Ireland.
- **British and Northern Ireland Household Panel Survey (BHPS/NIHPS) sample** – sample from these existing research panels were incorporated into Understanding Society at Wave 2.
- **Ethnic Minority Boost (EMB) sample** – a boosted sample group, recruited at Wave 1 through the over-sampling of areas with a higher population density of targeted ethnic minority groups.

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A fourth sample group related to Understanding Society is the Innovation Panel sample. The Innovation Panel is a separate, smaller, longitudinal panel with similar content to the mainstage UKHLS survey and each wave launched around nine months ahead of the mainstage schedule. Its purpose is to allow methodological research to inform the mainstage UKHLS fieldwork process as well as the wider research community. This sample is kept separate from the mainstage sample; and more information can be found in the separate Innovation Panel Technical Reports.<sup>1</sup>

## **Methodology**

As in previous waves, the Wave 4 interview consisted of a number of elements:

- A household questionnaire (completed by one household member aged 16+ per household).
- An individual questionnaire for each household member aged 16+ (including a self-completion section).
- A youth self-completion questionnaire for participants aged 10-15.
- Consent for linking to administrative records.

The household and individual adult questionnaires were administered in most cases by face-to-face computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI), with the self-completion section using computer assisted self-interviewing (CASI). In some cases, household and/or individual adult questionnaires were conducted over the telephone using computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI). For youths, a paper self-completion questionnaire was used.

## **Survey content**

The Wave 4 adult interview covered a range of topics, many of which included the same questions as in previous waves of the study to allow longitudinal comparisons. Some modules were asked specifically of participants in the EMB sample or of a particular age group, and others only of those taking part in the study for the first time.

Topics covered in the adult questionnaire included wealth, assets and debt, financial behaviour and attitudes, employment, health, family relationships, environment related topics, mental health & well-being, and values and attitudes. The youth self-completion questionnaire included questions about leisure, family, friends, education, health, risky behaviour and future intentions.

Details of the modules included in the Wave 4 interview can be found in Appendix A.

## **Outputs**

Data from Understanding Society is increasingly being used in academic and other studies, and gaining wider attention in the media. The latest publications, working papers, and media coverage of Understanding Society can be found online at [www.understandingsociety.ac.uk](http://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/documentation/innovation-panel/technical-reports>

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# 1 Fieldwork Design

This section sets out the sample issued to the field at Wave 4, and the structure of the fieldwork design.

## 1.1 Sample

A total of 31,230 households were issued to field for Wave 4 of Understanding Society. This included households that were both productive and unproductive at Wave 3, although cases where the household had adamantly refused to take part or moved to an unknown location were not issued.

For full information on the original sampling approach used in Wave 1 of Understanding Society, please refer to the UKHLS Wave 1 Technical report.<sup>2</sup>

### Allocation to Interviewers

Interviewers were allocated households from a mixture of different sample groups, although response rates were monitored separately.

From JA1 to JU1, sample points were 'paired', with geographically proximate households allocated to the same interviewer, in the same fieldwork month, in order to maximise field efficiency.

From AU1 onwards, the allocation process was altered, with the pairing of sample points discontinued, with the focus shifting to maintaining levels of interviewer continuity across waves where possible with the aim of increasing response rates.

### 1.1.1 Understanding Society sample

The Understanding Society sample consisted of a General Population (GP) sample and Ethnic minority Boost (EMB) sample recruited at Wave 1, with the EMB sample sampled and recruited independently, with a screening phase to identify eligible households.

The EMB sample and a subset of the GP sample (the 'General Population Comparison Sample' (GPC)) received an additional set of questions lasting around 5 minutes. The GPC sub-sample allows the comparison of responses to the additional questions asked of the EMB sample to responses of a non-ethnic minority population without lengthening the questionnaire for the entire GP sample population.

### 1.1.2 BHPS and NIHPS samples

Samples from the BHPS and NIHPS studies, initially incorporated at Wave 2 of Understanding Society, were included in interviewer assignments in the first year of fieldwork only (JA1 to DE1), and were allocated to interviewers on the same basis as the Understanding Society sample.

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<sup>2</sup> [www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/d/10/Wave\\_1\\_Technical\\_Report.pdf](http://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/d/10/Wave_1_Technical_Report.pdf)



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## BHPS CATI sample

Within the issued BHPS sample, a total of 330 households who had previously indicated they would prefer to be interviewed over the telephone were issued directly to NatCen's Telephone Unit. These households were split into four groups and issued to the Telephone unit in MR1, JE1, SE1, and DE1 sample months.

## 1.2 Fieldwork structure

### 1.2.1 Fieldwork months

The sample was issued in 24 fieldwork months from January 2012 (JA1) to December 2013 (DE2). Households in the Understanding Society sample were issued in the same fieldwork quarter that they were issued to at Wave 1, and BHPS/NIHPS households were issued in the same fieldwork quarter they were incorporated into in Wave 2, always in the first year of fieldwork.

Unlike at previous waves of the study, households could be allocated to a different fieldwork month than at the previous wave (albeit within the same fieldwork quarter). This was done to allow for the combining of similar sample points to improve fieldwork efficiency, and also to allow for greater interviewer continuity across waves if the interviewer was away for a set period of time.

### 1.2.2 Fieldwork model

Each fieldwork month in the Great Britain began on the 8<sup>th</sup> of the month, except in August and December, when interviewers began on the 1<sup>st</sup> due to the holiday period. In Northern Ireland, fieldwork began on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month.

The fieldwork model consisted of four sections: CAPI first issue, CAPI re-issue, CAPI mop-up, and CATI re-issue.

#### CAPI fieldwork

The Wave 4 CAPI fieldwork model differed between the first and second year of fieldwork.

##### Year 1

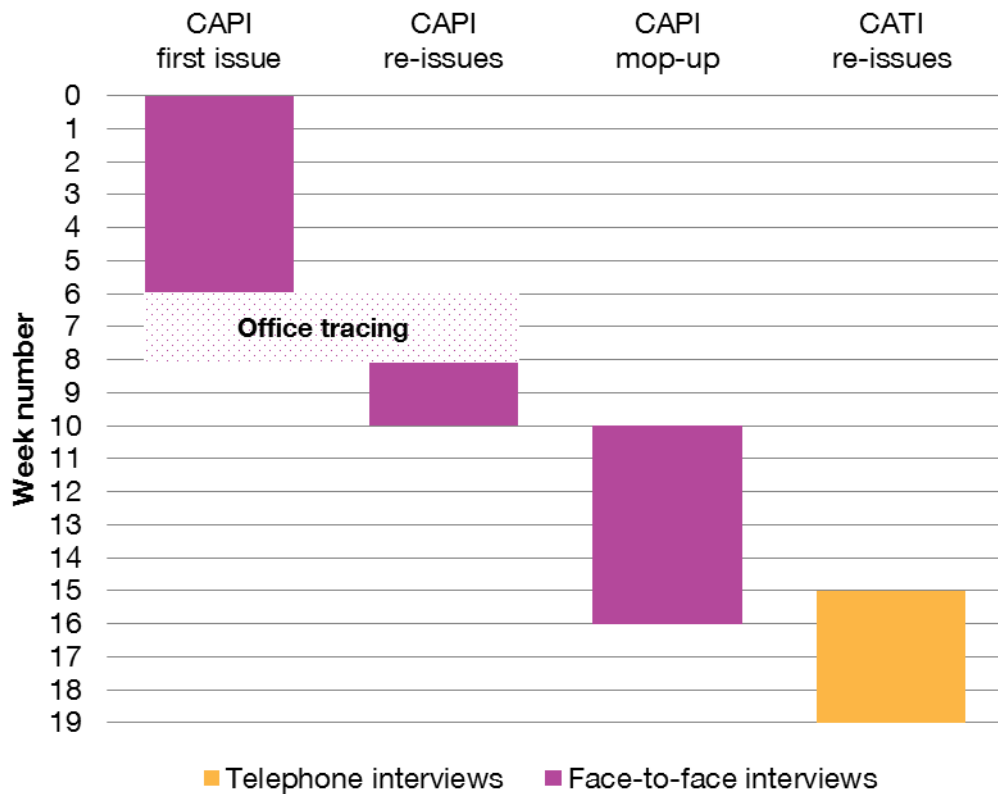
For the first year of Wave 4 (Figure 1:1), the first issue period lasted six weeks, with interviewers instructed to visit all households within the first four weeks and use the final two weeks for appointments and tracing movers (although tracing began as soon as a mover was identified). This was followed by a two week break, with all cases returned to the office to be reviewed whether or not a reissue was required, as well as time allowed for ISER to conduct office tracing.

A two-week CAPI re-issue period then began in week 9 and ran until the end of week 10.

The final 'CAPI mop-up' period then continued for a further six weeks following the end of the re-issue period, to allow for extra time as required to complete any late mover cases or translation cases.



Figure 1:1 Wave 4 Year 1 Fieldwork Model



**Year 2**

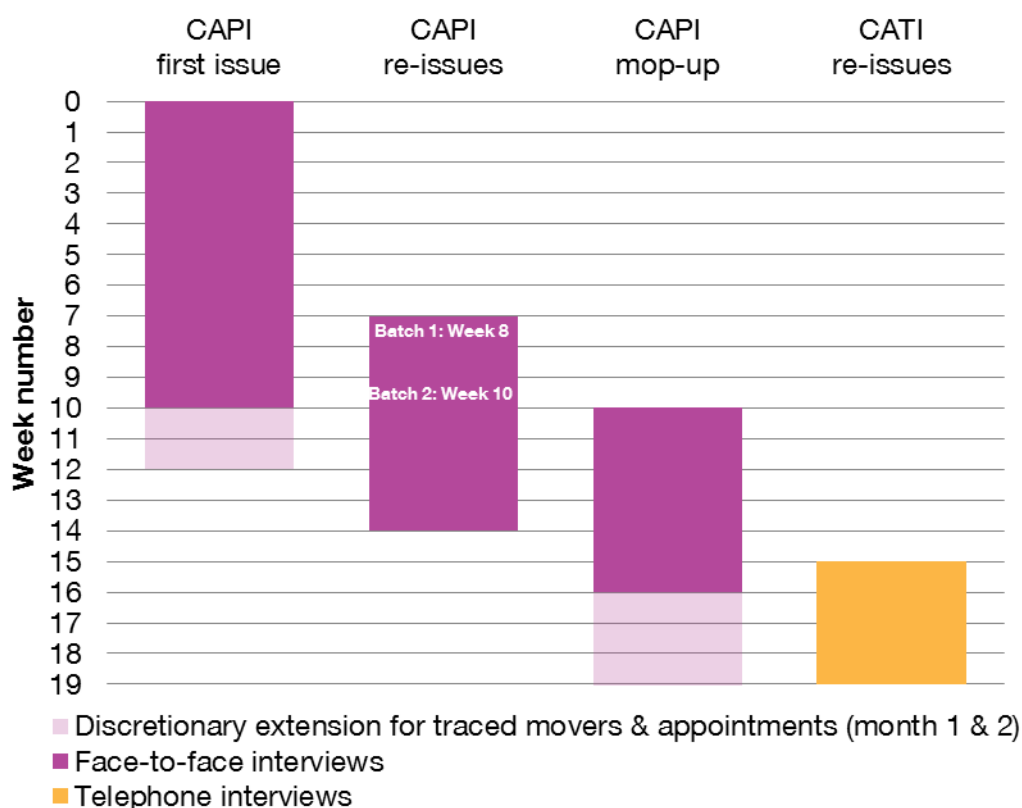
For the second year of fieldwork for Wave 4 (Figure 1:2), the fieldwork model was altered to lengthen the issue periods and allow more flexibility in the field in order to improve response rates.

The first issue period was lengthened from six to ten weeks, with an additional, discretionary, two week extension for firm appointments or traced movers. However, interviewers were instructed that they should still start cases early on, and progress was monitored closely.

The two week gap for reissue review and office tracing was removed for the second year of fieldwork. Tracing was conducted on an ongoing basis, parallel to ongoing fieldwork. Cases were re-issued in two batches: the first at week 8 to include cases completed earlier in fieldwork, and a second at week 10 once first issue fieldwork was completed. This initially ran until the end of week 12, although this was altered to week 14 from MR2 to give more time for re-issue cases issued in week 10.

Finally, following re-issue fieldwork, the ‘CAPI mop-up’ period was extended until the end of the quarter’s fieldwork for all three months. Where appropriate, interviewers therefore had an extra eight weeks in the first month and four weeks in the second month for tracing or to interview traced movers and firm appointments.

Figure 1:2 Wave 4 Year 2 Fieldwork Model



### CATI re-issue fieldwork

CATI re-issue fieldwork lasted for approximately four weeks following the completion of the majority of face-to-face fieldwork. At week 16 a proportion of households that had remained partially productive or unproductive were (re-)issued to NatCen’s Telephone Unit to be approached by telephone interviewers. Households that were unproductive due to non-contact, soft refusal or inability to locate, and had not refused at the previous wave, were eligible for CATI re-issue, as well as partially productive households that contained individuals who were recorded as non-contact, soft refusal, having broken their appointment, or being ill or away during the fieldwork period. Eligible sample was also reviewed in-office to exclude cases which would be inappropriate to reissue at this wave. For example, interviewer comments were checked to identify adamant refusals or cases where a participant had asked to be removed from the study, or where a participant was seriously ill or recently bereaved.

The CATI survey instrument used was identical to the CAPI version of the questionnaire, with slight alterations to take account of the different interview mode (for example references to showcards were removed), and the removal of some self-completion questions which were considered too sensitive to be asked over the telephone.

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## 2 Contact and Co-operation

In this section we describe the documents and procedures used for contacting participants and encouraging participation.

### 2.1 Between-wave mailings

To keep participants informed and engaged with the study, mailings were sent on a quarterly basis to panel members.

Although specific mailings varied, at the start of Wave 4, participants were sent mailings approximately 6 months after their previous interview (and therefore 6 months before the next one), with around a quarter of the sample included in each mailing. From November 2012, the proportion of sample mailed at each quarter was doubled to include all fieldwork quarters not currently in field or about to go into field.

Mailings were sent in branded envelopes to all adults (although the content was in some cases tailored to target specific groups) and included:

- An Understanding Society-branded cover letter thanking participants for their continued participation, and highlighting the importance of the contribution (in mailings up to and including June 2013).
- A change of address form, either attached to the cover letter or separately. This form was mail-merged with participants' contact details, encouraging participants to update them if they had changed. Participants were offered a £5 voucher issued by ISER if they returned updated address information.
- A freepost envelope to return the change of address form.
- A findings report based on previous analysis of Understanding Society data, or examples of how the data has been used and made an impact. These varied in format from six page A5 leaflets to short 'findings postcards' (e.g. Figure 2:1).

Figure 2:1 'Poverty shapes' findings postcard

Side 1



Side 2



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## 2.2 Advance mailing

Ahead of each month's fieldwork, an advance mailing was sent to all eligible adults in sample households, scheduled to arrive around a week before the start of fieldwork. The advance mailing consisted of a branded covering letter, a change of address card, a freepost return envelope, an incentive and (in later fieldwork months) the findings report used in the preceding between-wave mailing. Participants in Northern Ireland were not sent an up-front incentive if they did not take part at Wave 3.

A number of different versions of the advance letter were used, with the specific letter a participant received depending on their sample type (Understanding Society or BHPS) and whether they had participated at the previous wave. Participants who had turned 16 since the previous wave of the ('rising sixteens') were also sent a different letter, welcoming them to the study. In later fieldwork months, advance letters were targeted further, based on whether or not a participant was a member of the EMB sample, and also the participant's age (aged 16-24 or 25+).

Participants who were previously interviewed in a language other than English (Arabic, Bengali, Cantonese, Gujarati, Punjabi Gurmukhi, Punjabi Urdu, Somali, Urdu or Welsh) were sent a translated version of the advance letter in their mailing. All participants living in Wales were sent a Welsh version alongside an English version.

All letters were designed with Understanding Society branding, and were signed by the Director of Understanding Society, Professor Nick Buck (for example, see Figure 2:2).

Advance letters were sent to the most up-to-date address details for the participant; if, for example, a participant contacted ISER to inform them of a change of address since their previous interview then the advance mailing was sent to the updated address.

In cases where the participant was found to have moved address following tracing during fieldwork (so would not have received their advance mailing), or where a participant was a new entrant to the study (and would therefore not have been sent the mailing), interviewers provided participants with a generic copy of the advance letter along with a change of address card and freepost return envelope. If a productive interview was obtained, the interviewer then notified the office to provide a new incentive, leaving a 'promissory note' with the participant which indicated how much the participant was to receive, when they could expect to receive it, and noted their personal identifiers so they could contact the office with any queries or problems they might have.



Figure 2:2 Example Wave 4 Advance letter with an attached Change of Address card

Side 1

**Understanding Society**

RESP\_NAME  
FF\_ADDRESS1  
FF\_ADDRESS2  
FF\_ADDRESS3  
FF\_ADDRESS4  
FF\_ADDRESS5  
FF\_POSTCODE

Date

Dear <resp\_name>.

Many thanks for your help with Understanding Society last year. What you told us about the way your life is changing generated widespread interest in the media and for policy makers. If you didn't see the pieces in newspapers or on the TV, you can read more about what we've found so far on our website.

The value of your information increases each time we interview you because it enables us to look at how things change – or stay the same – over time. That's why many of the questions in this year's interview will be familiar to you – it allows us to see whether things have changed since we last spoke to you.

The survey is all about change – and it's all about YOU. No-one else can replace you, as no-one else has your particular mix of circumstances. And to say thank you for giving us your views, I've enclosed a £10 voucher, which you can cash at any Post Office.

If you have any questions, please contact us using the number below. We'd like to send you updates about how the information you have given is being used, so please either give your interviewer your email address or write to us at [contact@understandingsociety.ac.uk](mailto:contact@understandingsociety.ac.uk)

With your help, Understanding Society is going from strength to strength and is now one of the most respected sources of information for the UK. By taking part, your voice is heard so I very much hope you will be able to take part again this year.

Many thanks for being part of Understanding Society.

*Nick Buck*  
Professor Nick Buck  
Director, Understanding Society  
Institute for Social and Economic Research  
University of Essex

P3028AJA1

Side 2

**Why are you important?**

Without your unique input, the survey will be less complete. We can't simply replace you with someone else as the people taking part were selected scientifically to represent the whole population. No-one else has your unique combination of circumstances and in a very real way you are personally vital to the success of the study. The strength of Understanding Society is that it talks to the same people each year so we can see how things like the economic situation and the way our society is changing affects your life. The study is your study and is about issues that affect you and everyone in our diverse society.

**About the study.**

Long-term studies like Understanding Society help us find out about issues that matter to all of us – how the recession is affecting people in different parts of the country, what standard of facilities you have – or don't have – in your area, our attitudes towards health and the environment. The information collected can inform Government policy and is used by academics, policy-makers and researchers working for charities and the voluntary sector in this country and abroad.

**The interview.**

An interviewer will be in touch soon to arrange a convenient time to interview you and other members of your household. The interview will last around an hour. The interviewer will be carrying NatCen Social Research photo ID. If it's not convenient when your interviewer calls, please feel free to choose a day and time which is easier for you. You may remember that last year we included some memory, word and number games which were new for us and opens up new uses of the survey by those who study health. These questions are not included this time, and so we expect the interview to be shorter than last year.

**Young people in the house?**

If there are any young people aged 10-15 in your household, I hope they will be willing to complete a short questionnaire about their hobbies, friends, school life and hopes for the future. Each one will receive a voucher as a thank you for completing the questionnaire.

**Contact us:**  
Web: [understandingsociety.ac.uk](http://understandingsociety.ac.uk)  
Email: [contact@understandingsociety.ac.uk](mailto:contact@understandingsociety.ac.uk)  
Phone: 0800 252 853  
[@usociety](https://twitter.com/usociety)

This study is being conducted in accordance with the Data Protection Act. This means your personal details will be kept strictly confidential and you and your household will not be identifiable from the data. The data will be used for statistical analysis only.

**Moving home? Take us with you.**

[www.understandingsociety.ac.uk](http://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk)  
[contact@understandingsociety.ac.uk](mailto:contact@understandingsociety.ac.uk)  
FREEPOST R90X-KEKJ-JGKS  
Understanding Society, University of Essex  
Wivenhoe Park, Colchester, CO4 3SU

Please help us to keep in touch  
If any of your details have changed or are incorrect, please write in the correct details and return the slip to us. If you have moved, please fill in your new address and date of move, return the slip to us and we will send you a £5 voucher to say thank you.  
A freepost envelope is provided.

Our ref: HD <HID>  
PID <PID>

Moving to...  
New Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_  
Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Who has moved with you? Please let us know about everyone at your new address, including children. We may ask them to take part in Understanding Society in the future.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

Previous details:  
name \_\_\_\_\_  
address1 \_\_\_\_\_  
address2 \_\_\_\_\_  
address3 \_\_\_\_\_  
address4 \_\_\_\_\_  
address5 \_\_\_\_\_  
postcode \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of move: \_\_\_\_\_

You can also tell us about any changes by **freephone, email or online**  
0800 252 853 | [contact@understandingsociety.ac.uk](mailto:contact@understandingsociety.ac.uk) | [understandingsociety.ac.uk](http://understandingsociety.ac.uk)

## Re-issue letters

Participants that were re-issued during CAPI fieldwork were sent a re-issue letter ahead of the interviewer contacting them. Re-issue letters were sent at the household level, and were mailed to the principal contact.

As with the first-issue advance letters, a number of different versions were used, with the specific version of the letter depending on the household's sample type, outcome at the previous wave, and country of residence.

Translated versions of the letters were not provided, except for households in Wales or that were part of the 'Living in Wales' sample which received a double-sided English/Welsh letter.

From JU1 sample month onwards, different versions of the re-issue advance letters were sent depending on whether or not participants were eligible for a re-issue incentive (see Section 2.3.3).

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## 2.3 Incentives

### 2.3.1 Adults

All adult participants, except those in Northern Ireland who did not participate at Wave 3, were sent an up-front, unconditional, incentive as part of their advance mailing. All adults received a £10 incentive, either in the form of a High Street Gift Voucher (HSGV) for BHPS and NIHPS sample or a Post Office (PO) voucher for members of the Understanding Society Sample.

### 2.3.2 Youths

Unlike adult participants, youth participants (aged 10-15) were not sent an advance mailing or up-front incentive, and incentives were awarded on-completion of the paper self-completion questionnaire.

Incentive amounts for youths varied by sample type, and also changed during fieldwork. For approximately the first three months of fieldwork Understanding Society sample members received a £3 PO voucher while BHPS sample members received £5. This was then increased for Understanding Society sample members so that all youth participants received a £5 incentive.

Interviewers did not hand vouchers directly to youth participants who had completed a questionnaire, but issued a promissory note and requested via the CAPI programme the amount to be issued. Interviewer documentation noted which sample group each participant was in and therefore how much to promise each participant. The vouchers were sent to youths from the office within ten days of being requested by an interviewer. Any youth participants who sent their questionnaire directly to the office (using a pre-paid envelope provided) instead of completing it during fieldwork and handing it to an interviewer were similarly sent a voucher by the office.

From the AP2 sample month onwards the process was altered so that youth participants that returned the paper self-completion questionnaire directly to the interviewer immediately received a plastic £5 high street gift card, which was then activated by the office. Youth participants that returned their questionnaires by post continued to receive £5 PO vouchers by mail.

### 2.3.3 Re-issue incentives

#### CAPI re-issues

From the JU1 sample month onwards, an additional incentive of a £20 HSGV was made available at the CAPI re-issue fieldwork stage in order to improve response rates. This additional incentive was conditional on the household giving a fully or partially productive interview, and was to be shared across the whole household.

For households that had taken part at Wave 3, but refused to participate during first-issue fieldwork of Wave 4, the incentive was available to all households and mentioned in their re-issue advance letter. However, for households that had been



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unproductive at first issue due to non-contact or broken appointments, the incentive was offered at the discretion of the interviewer, and not mentioned in the advance letter. Interviewers were guided to only offer the extra incentive if they felt that the household would not participate without it.

Interviewers did not pass incentives directly to participants, but again left a promissory note for the £20 voucher. Incentives were mailed out from the office once the interview was submitted by the interviewer, with the interviewer coding whether or not they had offered the incentive in cases where the bonus incentive was discretionary.

## **CATI re-issues**

An additional on-completion incentive was also available to participants that completed the interview at the CATI re-issue fieldwork stage. All individuals that were interviewed during CATI re-issues were mailed a £10 PO voucher by the office once the case was submitted by the telephone interviewer.

## **2.4 First contact with sample members**

Following the advance mailing, first contact with participating households was attempted via a personal visit from the interviewer at the issued address. Interviewers were instructed not to make first contact with households issued face-to-face via the telephone unless the participants had explicitly requested it at the previous wave. The exception to this was BHPS CATI sample who were first contacted by telephone once they had received their advance letter.

In the case that interviewers were unable to make face-to-face contact at the issued address (for example because the household had moved address), interviewers made use of other contact information such as stable contact address, telephone numbers, etc. (see Section 3 on movers and tracing for more details).

## **2.5 Address Record Forms and Sample Information Sheets**

To enable interviewers to plan and tailor their first contact with each household, interviewers' work packs contained an Address Record Form (ARF) and Sample Information Sheet (SIS) for each address in their allocated sample.

The ARF contained basic information such as the household composition, its participation at previous waves, and contact details, but also more detailed information such as whether or not the household had previously been re-issued (to CAPI or CATI) and any 'useful comments' from the interviewer from Wave 3. It also contained space for interviewers to keep a record of their attempts to contact the household during fieldwork and to track their progress in achieving individual interviews and self-completions.

The SIS contained further, more detailed information about the household such as individuals' employment statuses, comments entered by interviewers about individuals at the previous wave, if it was suspected someone had moved out of the

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household, and information about stable contacts should the interviewer be unable to contact the participant at the issued address.

## 2.6 Doorstep documents

Interviewers were provided with a number of documents for use on the doorstep to help them encourage participation:

- **Branded appointment and broken appointment cards.** These allowed interviewers to conform interview times, to leave a note when the participant was not available at the agreed time, and encouraged participants to contact the office with any messages for the interviewer.
- **Laminated generic advance letter.** This was an un-tailored version of the advance letters participants would have received in the advance mailing, for use with those who did not receive, or did not remember receiving, their advance mailing. Non-laminated copies were also provided to be left with the participant if necessary.
- **'Information for Participants' leaflet.** This included background to the study and more information on the interview itself. While this was primarily designed for new entrants, it was also available for continuing sample members.
- **A branded A5 flyer.** This was a small flyer which could be left behind with participants outlining the importance of Understanding Society.
- **Laminated 'crib sheet' for interviewers** (Figure 2:3). This was a graphically designed A4 sheet outlining some key facts about Understanding Society for interviewers to talk through with participants. It included information on what is special about Understanding Society as a study, some examples of it being used in the media, and illustrations of where data from it was related to key policy issues.

Figure 2:3 Laminated crib sheet for interviewers

Side 1



**NatCen**  
Social Research that works for society

## Understanding Society - Key facts for interviewers

Understanding Society is the world's biggest longitudinal social research study. It is used every day by government departments, academics, researchers and charities trying to get a better understanding of British Society today.

As a longitudinal study, Understanding Society allows researchers to see how people's circumstances change (or don't) over time. It is vital that everybody continues to take part to let us know how things such as the recession, increases in tuition fees, or changes to tax/benefits impact them and their community.

Some of the questions asked on Understanding Society are very personal. We therefore try to make sure that we send the same interviewer back to a household every year - so participants know they are speaking to someone they can trust.

**90%**

of interviews are conducted by the same interviewer as the year before.

Understanding Society provides key data for the government's measures on national well-being and child poverty.



Understanding Society currently contains approximately

**3 billion**

data points of information, and growing. This data has been so useful that there are now plans to run similar studies around the world.



There has been no national study of Britain's main ethnic minority groups since 1994. Understanding Society is the first national household study to talk to substantial numbers of people from minority groups year on year, allowing key policy insights to be made.

Side 2

## In the news

### The Telegraph

Almost no couples with children who stay unmarried stay together

"A study by the Marriage Foundation calculates that cohabiting couples who have children are more than twice as likely to split up as those who had tied the knot beforehand."

### the guardian

Teenagers value the simple things in life

"Close friends, playing sport and a stable home life are more important to the happiness of children aged 10-15 than the wealth of their parents"

### the INDEPENDENT

One-third of Britons are too poor to 'join in with society'

"Just under a third of people in Britain are excluded from mainstream society because they cannot afford to join in cultural activities such as going to the cinema, taking a holiday or buying consumer goods"

## Policy

As a well-respected research study, Understanding Society can, and has, assisted understanding of key government policy areas, and the impact they are having. For example:



### Immigration

As the UK government announced plans to change the immigration rules for skilled migrants, Understanding Society data demonstrated that new migrants from central/eastern Europe, Africa or India are more likely to be over-qualified for their job than a UK native.



### The Recession

The UK recession has had a huge impact on the nation. Understanding Society data has been used to see in what ways it has affected individuals and communities differently. Unemployed people and the with long-term sick have been the worst affected. Pensioners have shown the smallest increase in financial difficulties, but they are also the most likely to think they will be worse off in a year's time.



### Family

As UK society continues to change, and the government brings in new rules for paternity leave, researchers from the University of East Anglia and NatCen social research have looked at how the role of fathers has changed, both at home and at work. Understanding Society has also shown how important grandparents have been during the recession - increasing the total number of hours of childcare they provide from 1.3 to 1.7 billion hours per year.

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## 3 Movers and tracing

A particular issue with longitudinal research is keeping track of participants if they move address between waves. To minimise the impact of ‘losing’ households that move, every effort was made to ensure that up to date contact information was held for participants, for example by providing a change of address card at each point of contact with participants, and offering a £5 incentive if the participant provided updated contact details.

Three categories of mover were defined as:

- **Whole household moves.** All participants moved away from the original address (to one or several new addresses).
- **Split-off moves.** One or more (but not all) participants moved to another address, while one or more members remained at the original address.
- **Moves to institutions.** Where participants moved to an ‘institution’ (e.g. prison or nursing home). These may be whole household or split-off moves. People in institutions remained eligible for interview except for those who had gone to prison.

### 3.1 Tracing procedures

Interviewers were instructed to begin field tracing of a household as soon as they learnt of a household move. Tracing procedures were contained in the interviewer briefings and in the project instructions, and a tracing procedure checklist included in the ARF.

Field tracing involved a number of components, including attempting contact by phone (where telephone details were available), contacting current occupants/ neighbours, contacting ‘stable contacts’, contacting letting agents/landlords, and checking the electoral register. Were any of these third-party contacts uncomfortable with providing the interviewer with new address information, a ‘tracing letter’ was issued. This was designed to be sent to the participant on the interviewer’s behalf, asking for them to provide updated address information.

Where tracing was successful, the interviewer would then follow-up the case and attempt first contact again or, if the household had moved to another area of the country, returned the case to the NatCen Operations unit to be re-allocated to another interviewer nearer to the address.

Where these field tracing methods failed to identify an updated address, the case was passed to ISER for office tracing, along with information about tracing activities already carried out. Where the tracing was successful, the case was then passed back to NatCen to contact the household, either via the original interviewer or a new one if they have moved to another area of the UK.

For CATI sample, tracing was conducted through any additional phone numbers available and through contacting stable contacts if they had been provided. A

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software package which includes publicly-available records for up-to-date information was also consulted.

## 3.2 Split-off households

In some instances interviewers had advance notice via the ARF that a participant had split off from the original household (for example they may have sent a change of address card since their previous interview). In these circumstances, the participant was still issued as part of the original household and interviewers were instructed to visit that household first to confirm that the participant in question did not live there. If the participant no longer lived at the original address with the original household then interviewers created a new household in the CAI program and coded that the participant was now resident at another address.

## 3.3 Institutions

Sample members who had moved to an institution remained eligible for interview at their new address, except for those who were in prison. Interviewers were instructed to attempt to interview participants where possible, allowing for sensitivities relating the reasons for the participants moving into an institution (for example a nursing home), and the potential difficulty of negotiating access to an institution via gatekeepers.

Where sample members had gone to prison, they were coded as 'temporarily absent' from the household if other household members indicated that they were likely to return to the household after release. In the cases of single-person households and sample members who would not be returning to the household, sample members that had gone to prison were coded out as ineligible.

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## 4 Translations

In order to capture the experiences and attitudes of those often excluded from social research projects (in particular among ethnic minority groups) the UKHLS used translations to attempt to include those who would not be able to complete an interview in English.

### 4.1 Formal translations

For formal translations, both the CAPI script and all interview materials were translated into the relevant language. The interview was then administered by an accredited bi-lingual interviewer or, if one was not available, by an English-speaking interviewer accompanied by an interpreter.

Formal translations were available in nine different languages: Arabic, Bengali, Cantonese, Gujarati, Punjabi Gurmukhi, Punjabi Urdu, Somali, Urdu, and Welsh. Apart from Welsh, these were chosen as the languages most widely spoken among ethnic minority groups within the sample, but where English is not likely to also be spoken (for example Hindi is one of the most widely spoken languages in the UK, but it was not included as the majority of Hindi speakers also speak English).

#### 4.1.1 Translation process

For formal translations, all core survey materials, including advance letters, showcards, and the CAPI script, were translated into the relevant language.

The original translation of the survey materials was conducted by a translation agency specialising in multi-language services including translation, proof-reading and type setting. These translations were then checked by a second agency, with comments and queries logged and then reviewed by the original agency. This translated text was then transferred into the original survey material templates and formatted before being further proof-read by the original translation agency to ensure the sentence construction was correct.

A similar process was used for the translation of the CAPI questionnaire, but using NatGen's bespoke Language Management Utility (LMU), an online platform used to facilitate and track the translation process of the different questions, in different languages, between the different agencies.

#### 4.1.2 Accreditation of bi-lingual interviewers and interpreters

For formal translation requests, only NatGen accredited bi-lingual interviewers or interpreters were permitted to conduct the actual interview. Interviewers were put through a robust accreditation process involving an oral and reading test, a comprehension test in both English and the language they were being assessed for, a dummy interview, and assessment by a panel of independent agency interpreters.

Bi-lingual NatGen interviewers were trained to manage the CAPI and therefore to conduct the interview themselves without support. NatGen interpreters did not have

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experience of using CAPI software and so were accompanied by an English-speaking NatCen interviewer who not only helped to manage the technical aspects but also to bring their skills and experience to build rapport and provide quality assurance.

### 4.1.3 Translations fieldwork

In most cases, feed-forward data from previous waves of the study identified where an interview would require a translation, and translated advance letters were sent out and bi-lingual interviewers/interpreters organised as appropriate. These cases were grouped together into the same fieldwork month of each quarter in order to improve fieldwork efficiency. This was initially the third sample month of each quarter, although this was later moved to the second month as translation cases often benefitted from the extra time available in the extended fieldwork model.

Where there had been no translation request at the previous wave (for example if the household contained a new joiner than required a translation) interviewers used a translation card to find out which language the participant required translation into. Arrangements were then made by the office for these to be carried out.

## 4.2 Informal translations

Where a translation was required but the participant did not speak one of the nine formally translated languages, an ‘informal’ translation was conducted. In these instances the interview was administered by an English-speaking interviewer but facilitated by family members, neighbours, or friends that spoke the relevant language. Interviewers were asked to ensure that they had confidence in the ability of the informal translators to understand and interpret the questionnaire content sufficiently well.

## 4.3 Welsh translations

Unlike the other eight translated languages, all participants in Wales received a translated version of the advance letter. However, only in households where an individual requested to be interviewed in Welsh at the previous wave were participants in Wales automatically allocated a bi-lingual interviewer or interpreter.

Welsh was also the only language which the youth self-completion questionnaire was translated into, using the same process as set out in Section 4.1, although in practice very few of these would have actually been used.



## 5 The interview

The main survey instrument for Wave 4 was a CAI, administered by an interviewer to all eligible household members aged 16+, either face-to-face or over the phone. Face-to-face interviews also included a CASI module, and a paper self-completion questionnaire for household members aged 10-15.

### 5.1 Adult questionnaire

#### 5.1.1 Questionnaire content

The main adult questionnaire was an interviewer-administered CAI questionnaire, and had a number of distinct parts:

- A household questionnaire, including the enumeration of the household.
- An individual adult CAI questionnaire for all household members aged 16+.
- An individual adult CASI questionnaire for all household members aged 16+.
- A CAI proxy questionnaire used when the named participant is unable to take part.

The full details of the modules included in the Wave 4 CAI questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.

#### 5.1.2 Questionnaire length

The CAI questionnaire contained extensive routing and interview lengths therefore varied significantly between individuals and households. The main factors affecting routing, and therefore interview length were employment status, number of children in the household, whether or not the participant receives benefits, and whether or not the participant was a new entrant. Participants in the EMB and GP comparison sample were also asked extra questions, increasing their mean interview length.

Table 5.1 shows the median interview length of different sections of the adult interview

Section	GP	EMB & GP comparison	BHPS	Total
Household questionnaire	13.33	13.45	13.02	13.30
Individual adult CAI questionnaire	30.10	32.68	29.66	30.32
Individual adult CASI questionnaire	10.52	10.22	9.99	10.38
CAI proxy questionnaire	3.75	3.13	3.77	3.63

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### 5.1.3 Questionnaire programming

As in previous waves of the study, the CAI instrument was programmed using Blaise software which is well suited to the complex and longitudinal nature of the Understanding Society questionnaire. The same instrument was used for both the CAPI and CATI versions of the questionnaire, with slight adjustments made to account for mode type.

The CAI instrument was split into five types of ‘parallel blocks’, which the interviewer could move between as required:

- The household questionnaire
- The individual questionnaire (one block per household member aged 16+)
- The self-completion block (for recording outcome for youth paper self-completions)
- Split-household parallel block (to display mover information in case of household splits)
- Admin

## 5.2 Youth self-completion questionnaires

The youth self-completion questionnaire continued to be administered on paper (Figure 5:1).

Interviewers asked a parent or responsible adult for verbal assent before giving a self-completion questionnaire to a young person in the household. However, parents were not permitted to help the young people complete the questionnaire and blank envelopes were provided to youth participants so that they could seal the questionnaires before returning them to ensure confidentiality. If parents were anxious about the content of the questionnaire they were shown a blank questionnaire so that they could assess the content of the questions. If the participant required any help with the questionnaire they were encouraged to ask the interviewer for help rather than their parents.

Interviewers were instructed to encourage participants to complete the questionnaire and return it while the interviewer was still at the address, or to collect it at a subsequent visit in order to secure a higher return rate. If this was not possible, interviewers were able to leave a questionnaire with a pre-paid return envelope for participants to complete at a later date.

Figure 5:1 Youth self-completion questionnaire

**Your questionnaire**

**Self-completion questionnaire (10-15 yrs)**

INTERVIEWER: WRITE IN FROM CAPI SCREEN

Serial	<input type="text"/>	Address	<input type="text"/>	HH.No	<input type="text"/>	ChkL	<input type="text"/>	P.No	<input type="text"/>
First name	<input type="text"/>	Int No	<input type="text"/>	F/Area	<input type="text"/>	F/Month	<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>

Understanding Society

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## 6 Piloting

Ahead of Wave 4 mainstage fieldwork, a dress rehearsal was conducted from September to November 2011 to test the CAI questionnaires and the fieldwork materials and procedures.

To ensure as many procedures and systems as possible were testing (e.g. mover tracing), longitudinal sample from previous pilots was used, covering a range of different sample types, although formal translations were not tested during the pilot fieldwork.

A total of 228 households were issued as part of the pilot sample, with 22 created through splits and 8 excluded as ineligible. There were therefore 220 eligible households available to interview, split into the following sample groups:

- Understanding Society pilot GP sample – 65 issued, 44 productive interviews.
- BHPS pilot face-to-face sample – 54 issued, 45 productive interviews.
- BHPS pilot telephone sample – 101 issued, 56 productive interviews.

Half-way through the dress rehearsal fieldwork, a face-to-face debrief was conducted with interviewers to get feedback on contact and co-operation from participants, the fieldwork materials and procedures, and the CAI script, focusing on any changes since Wave 3. This feedback was then fed into the set-up of the mainstage fieldwork.

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## 7 Briefings and interviewer materials

### 7.1 Briefings

#### 7.1.1 Conference briefings

The majority of interviewers working on Wave 4 of Understanding Society would have worked on the previous three waves of the study, as well as waves of the Innovation panel and, in some cases, earlier waves of the BHPS/NIHPS. As a result, most interviewers were already aware of the nature of the Understanding Society project.

In order to be more efficient in the way interviewers were briefed (given that most had existing experience of working on the study), field interviewers from around the country were brought together for four, large, ‘conference briefings’ in London, Glasgow, Liverpool, and Birmingham run by researchers from NatGen and ISER and NatGen field staff who had been trained in briefing on the study.

As well as providing interviewers with an introduction to the new wave and any changes to the questionnaire or fieldwork processes, these briefings also focused on motivating interviewers (for example showing how research using Understanding Society has made an impact and recognising interviewers that had performed well in previous waves).

Topics covered in the briefing included:

- Changes to the household grid in the CAPI script
- Fieldwork documents
- Response rate and coverage targets
- Changes to the ARFs
- How to approach movers, split households, and tracing
- Interview structure, self-completions and consent forms
- Admin tasks

The briefings also included ‘breakout sessions’ which focused on ‘contact and cooperation’ and on tracing split households and outcome codes, with interviewers discussing their experiences and feeding back suggestions to the rest of the attendees.

#### 7.1.2 New interviewer briefings

For interviewers that had not worked on Understanding Society at previous waves, separate ‘new interviewer briefings’ were held. These were conducted in smaller groups and, as well as covering the same ground as in the conference briefings, also

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went into more detail on the background of the study, making contact, sample eligibility, questionnaire structure, etc.

## 7.2 Interviewer materials

Interviewers were provided with a number of materials to help them with the project and in the field:

- Project instructions
- Address Record Forms with Sample Information Sheets
- Laminated generic advance letter
- Appointment and broken appointment cards
- Information for participants leaflet
- Doorstep flyer
- Living in Britain leaflet
- Showcards (for CAPI interview)
- Youth self-completion questionnaire and pre-paid return envelopes
- Promissory notes
- Change of address cards
- Understanding Society branded pens
- Pre-paid envelopes for change of address cards, tracing letters and stable contact letters
- Tracing and stable contact letters
- Translation cards
- Laminated 'crib sheet' for interviewers
- Consent forms and leaflets

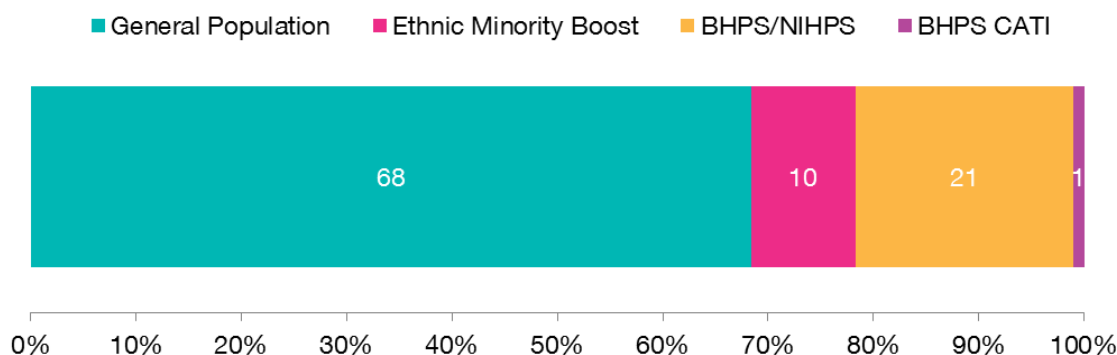
## 8 Response

### 8.1 Household level response

#### 8.1.1 Sample makeup

A total of 31,230 households were issued to interviewers in Wave 4. Of these, 21,356 were in the GP sample; 3,086 were in the EMB sample; 6,458 were in the BHPS/NIHPS sample; and 330 were issued to the NatCen telephone unit as CATI cases.

Figure 8:1 Distribution of sample types within issued sample



Base: All issued sample (31,230)

#### 8.1.2 Response rates

Different response household response rate targets were set for different sample groups. A response rate target of 89% was set for eligible GP households that were productive at Wave 3, 86% for eligible EMB households that were productive at Wave 3, and 93% for BHPS/NIHPS households that were productive at Wave 3. For all eligible households that were unproductive at Wave 3, a flat response rate target of 25% was set. Individual interviewers were then set a 'composite' response rate target depending on the makeup of their allocated sample.

##### General Population Sample

Of the 21,356 GP sample households issued to interviewers at Wave 4:

- 1,251 additional households were generated as a result of households splitting since Wave 3 and 1,110 households were ineligible for interview (for example through death or leaving the UK). This left a total of 21,497 GP households that were eligible for interview.
- Of the 19,401 eligible GP households that were productive at Wave 3, 88% were productive at Wave 4 (67% fully productive)



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- Of the 2,096 eligible GP households that were unproductive at Wave 3, 35% were productive at Wave 4 (20% fully productive)

### **Ethnic Minority Boost Sample**

Of the 3,086 EMB sample households issued to interviewers at Wave 4:

- 244 additional households were generated as a result of household splits and 220 households were ineligible for interview. This left a total of 3,110 EMB households that were eligible for interview.
- Among the 2,641 of these that were productive at the previous wave, 81% were productive at Wave 4 (53% fully productive)
- Among the 469 eligible EMB households that were unproductive at Wave 3, 43% were productive at this wave (22% fully productive)

### **BHPS and NIHPS Sample**

Of the 6,458 BHPS/NIHPS sample households issued to interviewers at Wave 4:

- 424 additional households were generated through household splits and 379 households were ineligible for interview. This left 6,503 BHPS/NIHPS households eligible for interview.
- Of the 6,132 eligible BHPS/NIHPS households that were productive at Wave 3, 89% were productive at Wave 4 (72% fully productive)
- Of the 371 eligible BHPS/NIHPS households that were unproductive at Wave 3, 44% were productive at Wave 4 (32% fully productive)

### **BHPS CATI Sample**

Of the 330 BHPS sample households that were issued directly to the NatCen telephone unit at Wave 4:

- 12 additional households were generated through household splits and 5 households were classed as ineligible. This left 337 BHPS CATI households eligible for interview.
- Of the 231 eligible BHPS CATI households that were productive at Wave 3, 76% were productive at Wave 4 (42% fully productive).
- Of the 106 eligible BHPS CATI households that were unproductive at Wave 3, 16% were productive at Wave 4 (6% fully productive)

Table 8.1 Summary of household sample and response rates by sample type and previous wave outcome

	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		BHPS CATI – productive last wave		BHPS CATI – unproductive last wave	
<i>Base: All issued sample</i>																
Issued	18887		2469		2531		555		6004		454		224		106	
Split households	1150	6%	101	4%	209	8%	35	6%	399	7%	25	6%	11	5%	1	1%
Total households	20037		2570		2740		590		6403		479		235		107	
<i>Base: Total households</i>																
Ineligible households	636	3%	474	18%	99	4%	121	21%	271	4%	108	23%	4	2%	1	1%
Eligible households	19401		2096		2641		469		6132		371		231		106	
<i>Base: Eligible households</i>																
Fully productive	13038	67%	429	20%	1391	53%	105	22%	4396	72%	120	32%	96	42%	6	6%
Partially productive	3944	20%	308	15%	748	28%	95	20%	1064	17%	45	12%	79	34%	11	10%
No contact	583	3%	324	15%	137	5%	93	20%	151	2%	61	16%	8	3%	13	12%
Refusal	1602	8%	940	45%	328	12%	160	34%	423	7%	132	36%	42	18%	37	35%
Other unproductive	234	1%	95	5%	37	1%	16	3%	98	2%	13	4%	6	3%	39	37%

## Different nations of the UK

The household response rates varied somewhat between the different nations of the UK. Households in Northern Ireland were most likely to take part, followed by those in England and Wales, and then in Scotland.

Table 8.2 Household response rates by country of the UK

<i>Base: Eligible households</i>	<b>England</b>	<b>Wales</b>	<b>Scotland</b>	<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>Total</b>
Fully productive	62%	63%	61%	64%	62%
Partially productive	20%	20%	19%	21%	20%
No contact	4%	4%	4%	5%	4%
Refusal	12%	11%	13%	8%	12%
Other unproductive	2%	1%	3%	2%	2%
<i>Bases</i>	<i>23909</i>	<i>2410</i>	<i>2974</i>	<i>2154</i>	<i>31447</i>

## 8.2 Individual level response

### 8.2.1 Adult individual interviews

Individual response rates were calculated as a proportion of eligible individuals within productive households that gave productive interviews, as the number of eligible individuals in unproductive households is unknown.

Among productive households in the GP sample, 84% of eligible adults aged 16 or over completed an individual interview and a further 0.3% partially completed the individual interview. In some instances an eligible adult was unable to take part, and proxy data was collected for 8% of eligible adults in productive GP households. On average, each participating household in the GP sample contained 1.9 eligible adults, of who 1.6 were interviewed.

Within the EMB sample, 75% of eligible adults in productive households completed an individual interview, and 0.5% partially completed. Proxy interviews were completed for an additional 12% of eligible adults. On average 1.8 individual interviews were conducted per productive EMB household, out of an eligible 2.4 adults.

The individual response rate for BHPS/NIHPS sample was 87%, with a further 0.2% partially completing the individual interview. Additional information was collected for 5% of eligible adults via a proxy interview. An average of 1.7 adult interviews were conducted per productive household, with an average of 2.0 adults eligible for interview.

Finally, 66% of eligible adults from productive households in the BHPS CATI sample completed individual interviews, with a further 1.8% partially completing. No proxy data was collected for this sample group. On average, each CATI productive CATI household contained 2.0 eligible adults, of who 1.3 were interviewed.

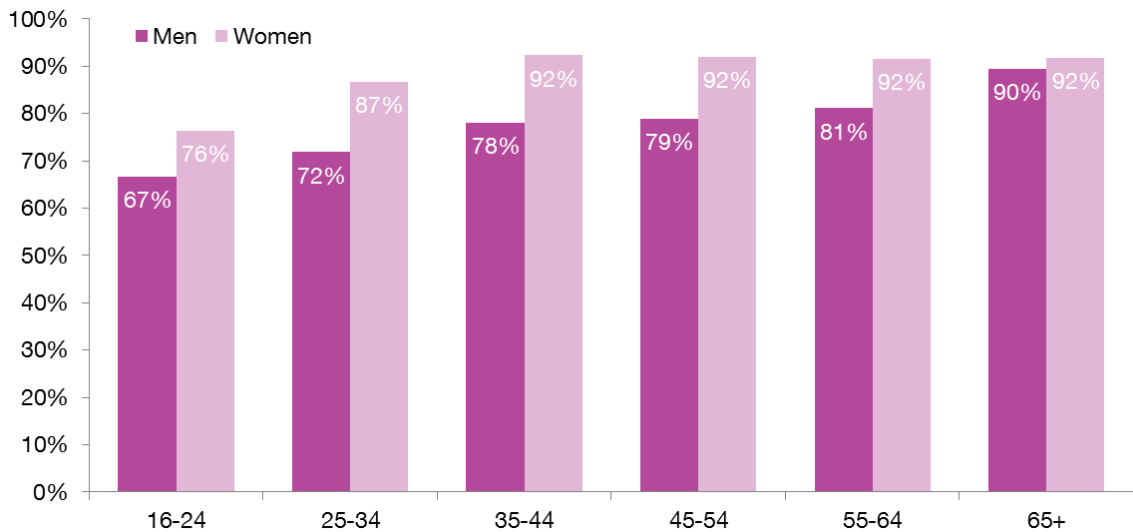
**Table 8.3 Adult individual response rates by sample group**

<i>Base: All adults aged 16+ in productive households</i>	<b>GP</b>	<b>EMB</b>	<b>BHPS/NIHPS</b>	<b>BHPS CATI</b>	<b>Total</b>
Fully productive	84%	75%	87%	66%	84%
Proxy productive	8%	12%	5%	0%	8%
Partially productive	0%	1%	0%	2%	0%
No contact	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%
Refusal	6%	8%	5%	26%	6%
Other unproductive	1%	3%	1%	5%	1%
<i>Bases</i>	<i>34445</i>	<i>5625</i>	<i>11130</i>	<i>379</i>	<i>51579</i>

## Demographics

As in previous waves of the study, individual response rates tended to be higher among women than men, and to increase with age (Figure 8:2). Overall, individual response rates for men (78%) continued to be significantly lower than for women (89%), representing a continuing challenge to panel representativeness over time.

**Figure 8:2 Adult individual response rates by sex and age group**



*Base: All eligible adults aged 16+ in productive households. Men: 16-34 (3910); 25-34 (3523); 35-44 (4219); 45-54 (4397); 55-64 (3672); 65+ (4773); Women: 16-34 (3910); 25-34 (3523); 35-44 (4219); 45-54 (4397); 55-64 (3672); 65+ (4773); Women: 16-34 (3898); 25-34 (4067); 35-44 (4748); 45-54 (4840); 55-64 (3995); 65+ (5534).*

## 8.2.2 Adult self-completion interviews

Overall, 78% of eligible participants<sup>3</sup> in productive households completed the CASI questionnaire – 6 percentage points fewer than gave productive adult CAPI interviews.

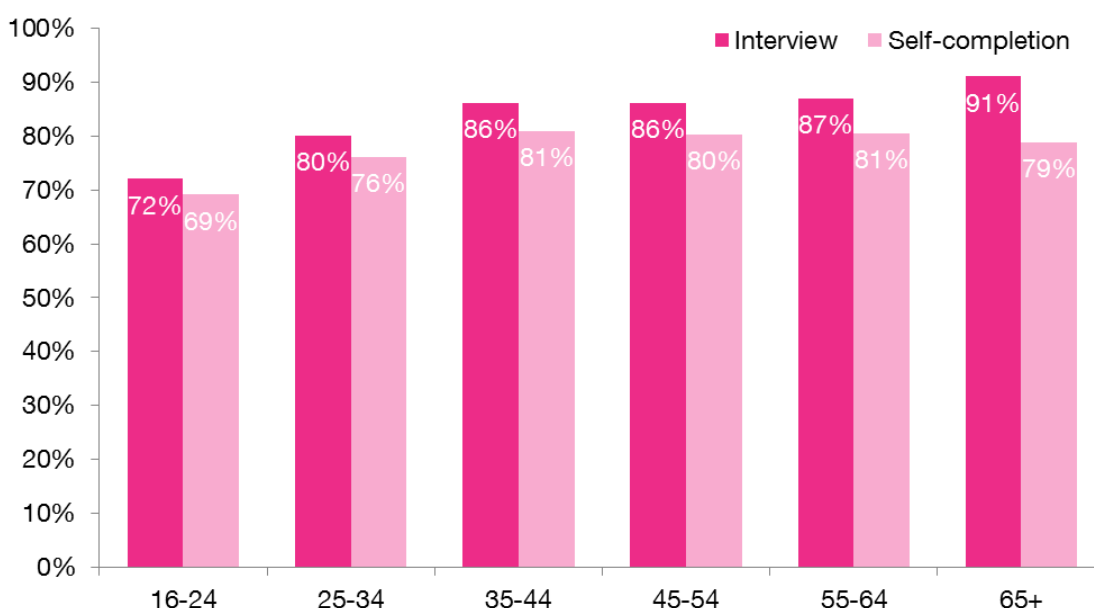
<sup>3</sup> As CASI can only be completed in face-to-face interviews, only individuals conducted face-to-face are included in this section (i.e. not proxy or CATI cases). However, a further 422 participants also completed the 'CASI' section of the questionnaire via CATI interview

Of those that gave productive individual interviews, 93% of GP sample members completed the self-completion module, compared with 83% of EMB sample members and 94% of BHPS/NIHPS sample members.

## Demographics

As with the main adult interview, younger participants (those aged 16-34) were less likely to complete the adult self-completion interview than older participants. However, younger participants that did take part in the individual interview were then more likely than older participants to complete the self-completion section (Figure 8:3).

**Figure 8:3** Adult individual interview and self-completion response rates by age group



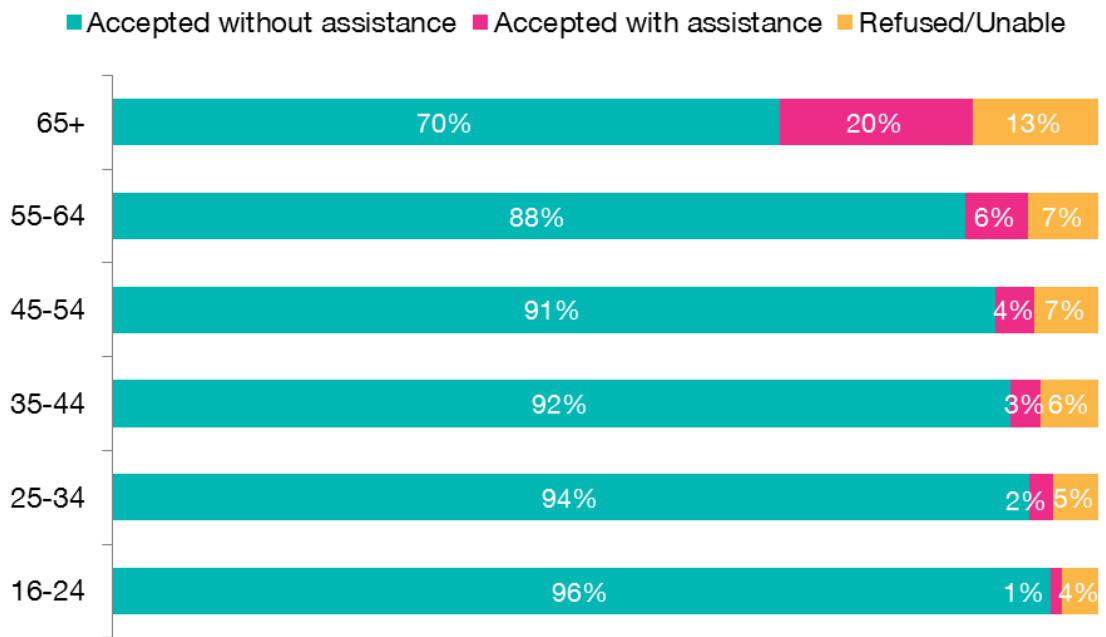
*Base: all eligible adults in productive households. 16-24 (7402); 25-34 (7328); 35-44 (8697); 45-54 (8959); 55-64 (7468); 65+ (10138).*

In some instances, individuals received assistance in completing the self-completion module. Of those that completed an individual interview, 92% agreed to complete the CASI module (85% unaided, 7% asked for the interview to complete for them, and 1% with assistance from someone else), while 5% refused and 2% were unable to attempt this section.

Figure 8:4 shows the proportion of those that completed the individual interview that accepted the self-completion module, accepted it with assistance, or refused or were unable to do it, by age group.

As at Wave 3, the proportion of participants unable to complete the CASI module without assistance, or refusing to take part, increased only gradually with age from 16 to 64. However, the proportion accepting with assistance increased substantially between those aged 55-64 and 65+, perhaps reflecting the mode of interview which requires participants to use a laptop computer unaided.

Figure 8:4 Adult self-completion acceptance by age group



Base: all fully or partially productive adults that reached the CASI section of the questionnaire. 16-24 (5316); 25-34 (5861); 35-44 (7477); 45-54 (7707); 55-64 (6490); 65+ (9224).

### 8.2.3 Youth self-completion questionnaires

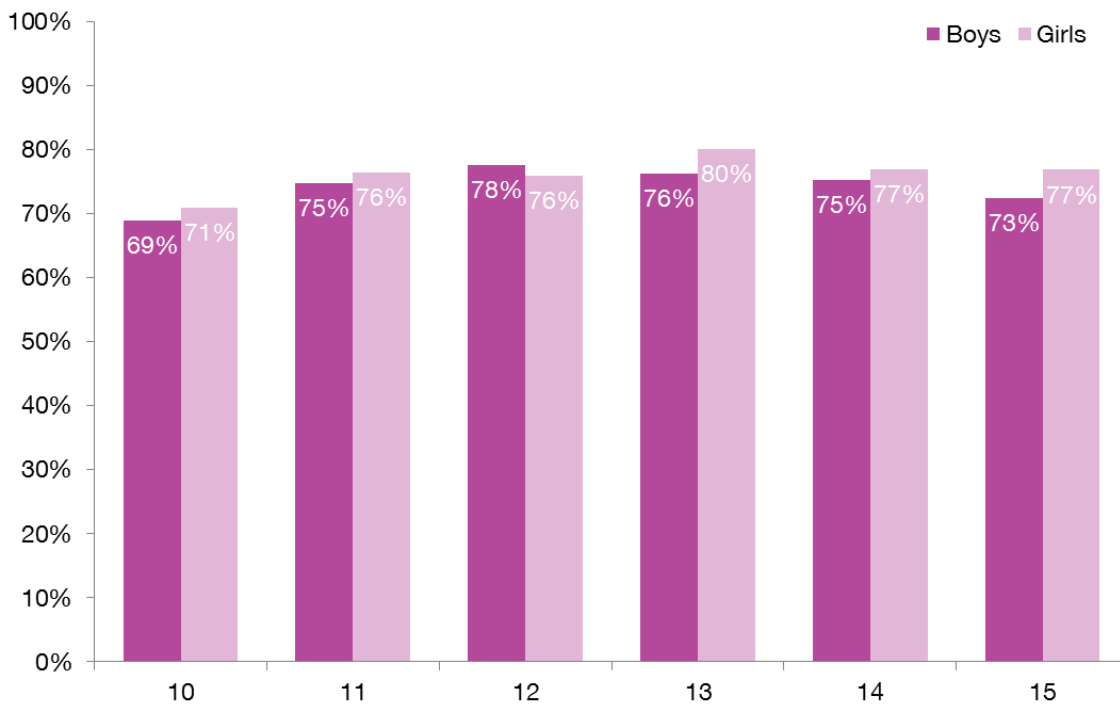
Among productive households issued face-to-face, 75% of those aged 10-15 completed and returned a paper self-completion questionnaire.

76% of youth participants in the GP sample completed the self-completion questionnaire, compared to 64% of those in the EMB sample, and 81% in the BHPS/NIHPS sample.

#### Demographics

As in previous waves, the overall response rate for girls (76%) was slightly higher than for boys (74%), although not across all age groups (Figure 8:5).

Figure 8:5 Youth self-completion response rate by sex and age group



Base: All eligible 10-15s in productive households. Boys: 10 (422); 11 (472); 12 (437); 13 (489); 14 (453); 15 (480); Girls: 10 (438); 11 (446); 12 (411); 13 (443); 14 (452); 15 (437).

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## 9 Data preparation

### 9.1 Data keying and scanning

Youth self-completions were scanned and processed by an external agency. A dataset with responses as well as images of the completed questionnaires were provided to NatCen.

### 9.2 Data coding and editing

Most data validation of the CAPI surveys is carried in the field – extensive range and consistency checks were included in the CAPI program to prompt interviewers to clarify and check and data discrepancies directly with the participant in real time. However, all cases were also passed through an in-house edit to identify any further interviewer issues. All self-completion data was passed through an edit to check for any participant routing and coding errors. There is therefore a small amount item data loss due to post-interview office data fixes. Consent forms were also reconciled with the CAPI data during the edit stage.

At the data checking stage a programming error was identified in the Child Health consents module: only one of the two feed-forward variables was included in the routing. This meant that consent for data linkage to health records was not asked in cases where the responsible adult had not previously given permission to link to the child's NHS Central Register records, but had given permission to link to the child's general health records. This affected a total of nine children.

Four-digit SIC and SOC coding was carried out in the employment and proxy sections of the questionnaire. Each coder's initial batch of work was 'blind coded', i.e. a second coder independently coded respondent's answers to SIC and SOC without seeing how they had initially been coded. Any discrepancies between the initial coder's work and the blind coding by the second coder were resolved by a coding supervisor and feedback was given to correct errors or resolve any misunderstandings.

Any amended or new household addresses were checked with a software program called Matchcode, which checks and where necessary corrects postcode for each address.



## Appendix A. Wave 4 Interview content

Understanding Society includes a wide range of content, and it is not possible to repeat all questions at each wave. Table A:1 below shows the topic content included in the Wave 4 Understanding Society adult interviews, and Table A:2 shows the content included in the Wave 4 youth self-completion questionnaire. The full Wave 4 questionnaires can be found at

[www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/documentation/mainstage/questionnaires](http://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/documentation/mainstage/questionnaires).

Appendix Table A:1 Understanding Society Wave 4 Adult Questionnaire Content

Household interview modules	
<i>Theme</i>	<i>Module name</i>
HH Composition	Household Grid
	Household Questionnaire
Housing Characteristics	HH: Structural Characteristics
Housing Characteristics	HH: Home Tenure
Expenditure	HH: Fuel Type & Expenditure
Housing Characteristics	HH: Taxation
Financial behaviour & attitudes	HH: Financial Strain
Consumption	HH: Consumer Durables
Consumption	HH: Expenditure
Environment related behaviour	HH: Environmental Behaviour
Financial behaviour & attitudes	HH: Material Deprivation
Financial behaviour & attitudes	HH: Child Deprivation
Financial behaviour & attitudes	HH: Pensioner Deprivation
Wealth & debts	HH: Assets
Individual interview modules (repeated annually)	
Basic Demographics	Demographics
Expectations	Educational Aspirations
Young adults	Future plans
Health status	Self-assessed health status
Health status	Disability
Caring	Caring
Change in characteristics	Annual events history
Employment	Current employment
Employment	Employees
Employment	Self employment
Employment	Job satisfaction
Employment	Non-employment
Employment	Mothers return to work
Employment	Second jobs
Childcare	Childcare
Income & Earnings	Unearned income and state benefits

## Appendix Table A:1 Understanding Society Wave 4 Adult Questionnaire Content

Financial behaviour & attitudes	Household finances
Political & social engagement	Politics
Health	SF-12 (self completion)
Mental health & well-being	GHQ (self completion)
Satisfaction	Life satisfaction (self completion)
Family relationships	Non-resident relationships (self completion)
Individual interview modules conditional on age (repeated annually)	
Expectations	Retirement planning
Young Adults	Youth questionnaire modules (self completion)
Family relationships	Child Development (self completion)
Family relationships	Parenting styles (self completion)
Individual interview modules (rotating)	
Stable characteristics	Religion
Employment conditions	Commuting behaviour
	Travel behaviour
Employment conditions	Work conditions
Time use	Voluntary work
Financial behaviour & attitudes	Charitable giving
Financial behaviour & attitudes	Personal pensions
Financial behaviour & attitudes	Savings
Wealth & debts	Wealth & debt (individual level)
Time use	Domestic labour
Environment related behaviour	Environmental behaviour
Leisure participation	Olympic games
Mental health & well-being	Sleep quality
Environment related behaviour	Environmental Attitudes (self completion)
Mental health & well-being	Mental well-being (self completion)
Values & attitudes	Gender attitudes (self completion)
Employment conditions	Additional work conditions (self completion)
Administrative data linkage	Consents to link
Individual interview modules – ethnicity strand (rotating)	
Identity	Ethnicity and national identity
Financial behaviour & attitudes	Remittances
Modules asked only once (included for new entrants)	
Stable characteristics	Initial conditions
Stable characteristics	Family background
Stable characteristics	Partnership history
Stable characteristics	Fertility history
Stable characteristics	Own first job
Chronic health conditions	Health conditions

## Appendix Table A:2 Understanding Society Wave 4 Youth Self-completion Questionnaire Content

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Topic</i>
Demographic	
Leisure	TV
Leisure	On-line social networks
Leisure	Activities outside school
Family	Household chores
Family	Supervision
Friends	Friendship networks
Friends	Boyfriend/Girlfriend
Self-esteem	
Happiness	
Leisure	Activities outside school
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