



UK Household Longitudinal Study

Wave 7 technical report

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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 7 of Understanding Society, which was undertaken by Kantar Public with the exception of fieldwork in Northern Ireland, which was conducted by Kantar Millward Brown¹. This report covers all of Wave 7, including Northern Ireland.

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 majority of fieldwork was completed using face to face interviewing (CAPI), supplemented by a small amount of web interviewing (CAWI) and telephone interviewing (CATI). Web interviewing had previously been used on the Innovation Panel of Understanding Society, but Wave 7 was the first main wave to incorporate this mode.

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 3 minutes exactly for the household enumeration grid, 6 minutes and 50 seconds for the household questionnaire, and 35 minutes and 39 seconds for the individual interview.

Survey content

The Wave 7 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 A.

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 Understanding

¹ Interviewers from Kantar Millward Brown used the same CAPI systems for conducting fieldwork so all data was returned to and processed by Kantar Public, and Northern Ireland fieldwork was also monitored by Kantar Public.

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).

1. Fieldwork design

This section gives details of the sample that was issued at Wave 7 and the overall fieldwork design.

1.1 Introducing online interviewing

Online interviewing was used for the first time on the main Understanding Society survey at Wave 7, having previously only been used on the Innovation Panel. A minority of households were included in the web-first sample and were invited to take part online initially, before being followed up by a face-to-face interviewer. It was almost entirely households that were unproductive at the previous wave that were included in the web first sample.

1.2 Web only households

Having made the necessary adjustments to the sample management and questionnaire script to allow for web interviewing at Wave 7, it was deemed a good opportunity to try to bring back elapsed sample members into the study. 'Dormant sample' consisted of households that had not been a part of the study for at least two waves but had not asked to be permanently withdrawn from the study. Adults in these households were sent letters and emails (if they had an email address) asking them to take part in the web survey. If they did not take part they were not then followed up by an interviewer and remained 'dormant'. If they did take part the households were re-incorporated into the active sample at the following wave.

1.3 Sample

The majority of 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. Additional sample was introduced to the study as part of an immigrant and ethnic minority boost (IEMB), conducted alongside Wave 6 of Understanding Society, for further details please refer to the IEMB technical report. This IEMB sample was incorporated into the main part of the study for the first time at Wave 7.

The total number of 'active' households issued at Wave 7 was 27,838. This included four different sample types:

- The general population (GP) sample, originally sampled at Wave 1 of Understanding Society – 17,062 GP households were issued at Wave 7
- The ethnic minority boost (EMB) sample, originally sampled at Wave 1 of Understanding Society – 2,258 EMB households were issued at Wave 7
- The British Household Panel Survey (BHPS) and Northern Ireland Household Panel Survey (NIHPS) samples that were incorporated into Understanding Society at Wave 2 – 5,691 BHPS/NIHPS households were issued at Wave 7
- The immigrant and ethnic minority boost (IEMB) sample, originally sampled at Wave 6 of Understanding Society – 2,827 IEMB households were issued at Wave 7.

The BHPS/NIHPS sample was all issued in year 1 of fieldwork, and the IEMB sample all issued in year 2.

The 'dormant' sample issued as web only at Wave 7 included 4,790 households in total.

The number of individuals in the issued sample is shown in table 1.1.

Table 1.1 Number of individuals in the issued sample

	Adults (16+)	10 – 15s	Under 10s
GP	33,864	3,177	4,490
EMB	5,629	886	1,141
BHPS/NIHPS	11,491	1,065	1,497
IEMB	6,246	751	1,363
Dormant	9,002	857	984

1.3.1 CATI only sample

Within the sample, there were a small number of issued households (n=241) 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.

1.4 Fieldwork structure

Sample was provided to Kantar Public in eight quarterly batches. This ensured each household was issued in the same quarter as it had been at previous waves. Each quarterly sample was then split into three roughly evenly sized monthly batches. Where households were issued to the same address as the previous wave they were allocated to the same sample point and each sample point was usually issued in the same month as it had been at Wave 6.

Where possible, sample points were issued to the same interviewer that had worked on that sample point at Wave 6. This meant that, at Wave 7, of households issued to the same address as the previous wave, 73% were issued back to the same interviewer.

Sample was issued to field in 24 monthly batches, the first in January 2015 and the last in December 2016.

1.4.1 Fieldwork timings

Fieldwork for each monthly batch started on the 8th of the month and then lasted for 23 weeks. The structure was slightly different for the CAPI first and web first samples, so that interviewers received their CAPI first sample at the start of fieldwork, and any web first cases that had not completed online three weeks later. The web survey remained open throughout fieldwork so the web-first sample could still complete online after they had been issued to a face-to-face interviewer. A web mop up was also introduced for the CAPI first sample. CAPI first sample members who had not been contacted were sent invitations to complete the web survey after 14 weeks of fieldwork.

Table 1.2 Fieldwork timings

Fieldwork weeks	CAPI first sample	Web first sample
Weeks 1 to 3	CAPI assignments with original interviewer. Interviewers aimed to have final outcomes for all sample after 8 weeks	Sample members invited to take part online
Weeks 4 to 8		Unproductive households issued to interviewers and incorporated into CAPI assignments
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 At the end of week 14 sample members that had not been contacted were sent a letter and email inviting them to complete the web survey	CAPI re-issue period
Weeks 20 to 23	CATI mop up period	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.

1.4.2 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.

Cases to be included in the CATI mop up were re-issued to a small group of face to face interviewers who were happy to work from home, making telephone calls. Using face to face interviewers allowed the same sample management system to be used for the CATI mop up as for CAPI. Creating a bespoke telephone sample management system that allowed for both household and individual level interviewing would have required significant investment which had not been allowed for in the Wave 7 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 7, including the between wave mailings.

2.1 Advance mailing

The advance mailing varied a little depending on whether sample members were part of the CAPI first sample or the web first sample.

For the CAPI first sample, 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, and a freepost return envelope for the change of address card.

For the web first sample, all eligible sample members aged 16 or over were sent a letter on the first day of fieldwork for that month asking them to complete the survey online and providing the web address and their login details for doing so. The letter also explained that, if they were unable to complete the survey online, an interviewer would contact them as usual. The letters also included a change of address card and freepost return envelope. If an email address was available, these sample members were also sent an email with a unique link to start the web survey.

Sample members in web only households also had different letters to ask them to take part online.

In the first year of Wave 7, letters for all sample types also included a findings postcard that was being used for the most recent between wave mailing. In year two of Wave 7 the pattern of between wave mailings was changed so that only one was sent to each sample member each year. So in year 2 findings postcards were no longer included in advance letters.

There were 15 different types of advance letter, depending on individual circumstances, as well as 3 types of letter for new entrants in households completing by web. In part different letter types were to deal with different incentives types and mode types, but they also used slightly different messages tailored to the circumstances. The letter types are shown in table 2.1.:

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 11 translated languages (Arabic, Bengali, Cantonese, Gujarati, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi Gurmukhi, Punjabi Urdu, Somali, Turkish, 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.

2.1.1 New entrant letters

As web interviewing had been introduced at Wave 7, it was necessary to have a mechanism to contact individuals who had been added to households during household grids done on the web. Letters were sent to these individuals to provide them with their web login details and ask them to take part in the study online. These letters also included a change of address card and freepost return envelope.

Table 2.1: Letter types used at Wave 7 by issue mode

Household type	Adult type	CAPI first	Web first	Web only
Responding household at Wave 6	All adults except those in IEMB sample who were unproductive at Wave 6	Letter 1 (£10 unconditional incentive)	Letter 13 (£10 unconditional incentive)	n/a
	Adults in the IEMB sample that were unproductive at Wave 6	Letter 19 (£10 unconditional incentive)	n/a	n/a
	Rising 16s ²	Letter 4 (£10 unconditional incentive)	Letter 14 (£10 unconditional incentive)	n/a
	New entrants	n/a	Letter 17 (£10 conditional incentive)	n/a
Non-contacted (or other unproductive) household at Wave 6	Adults	Letter 2 (£20 conditional incentive)	Letter 7 (£20 conditional incentive)	Letter 11 (£10 conditional incentive)
	Rising 16s	Letter 5 (£20 conditional incentive)	Letter 9 (£20 conditional incentive)	Letter 12 (£10 conditional incentive)
	New entrants	n/a	Letter 15 (£20 conditional incentive)	Letter 16 (£10 conditional incentive)
Refusal household At Wave 6	Adults	Letter 3 (£20 unconditional incentive)	Letter 8 (£20 unconditional incentive)	Letter 11 (£10 conditional incentive)
	Rising 16s	Letter 6 (£20 unconditional incentive)	Letter 10 (£20 unconditional incentive)	Letter 12 (£10 conditional incentive)
	New entrants	n/a	Letter 15 (£20 conditional incentive)	Letter 16 (£10 conditional incentive)

² Rising 16s were sample members that had recently turned 16 and were therefore being asked to complete the adult survey for the first time at Wave 7, while in previous years they may have completed the youth paper questionnaire. They received different letters to those who were adults at Wave 6, although the incentives were the same.

Fig 2.1: Example Wave 7 (CAPI first) advance letter including change of address card



2.2 Incentives

The incentive amounts at Wave 7 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 2.2 details the incentives for adults.

Table 2.2: Incentive amounts for adults

Adult type	Amount and administration of incentive
Previous wave responding adult	£10 gift voucher included in advance letter
Non responding adult/rising 16 in productive households at the previous wave	

Adults in households that were not contacted at the previous wave	£20 gift voucher handed out by interviewer at the end of the interview (or posted for web respondents)
Adults in households that refused at the previous wave	£20 gift voucher included in advance letter
Adults/rising 16s in the CAWI only sample	£10 gift voucher posted to respondents after the interview

All incentives were 'Love2Shop' vouchers or gift cards³, 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.

Where households completed online, the youth paper questionnaire, along with the £5 voucher, was sent to a parent with a covering letter asking the parent to pass both the voucher and the questionnaire on to the young person to complete and return in the freepost envelope provided.

2.3 Between wave mailings

In year one of Wave 7 a quarterly mailing was sent to around half the sample (those not currently 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.

In year two of Wave 7 the between wave mailings were reduced in order to fund initiatives to increase web response on Wave 8. Two mailings were sent (one in January and one in July) to half the sample each time so each adult only received one between wave mailing per 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 a between wave mailing.

³ Paper vouchers were included in advance letters as unconditional incentives. Where interviewers handed out incentives, these were gift cards.

Fig 2.2: Example between wave mailing findings postcard

If you move, please tell us and we'll send you a voucher for £5

Your continuing participation is very important to us and if we can't contact you, the study will not be able to collect vital data which is used to influence national and local decision-making. Our hard-working interviewers will also have to put in lots of effort trying to find you.

There are three easy ways to tell us:

Fill out the online form:

www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/participants/change-of-address

Call our participants team on:

0800 252 853

Write to us:

Understanding Society
University of Essex
Wivenhoe Park
FREEPOST RROX-KEKJ-JGKS
Colchester CO4 3SQ
UK

Follow us on Twitter: @usociety

Like us on Facebook: Understanding Society - UK Household Longitudinal Study

Or check our website for news about the study and how we're hitting the headlines: www.understandingsociety.ac.uk

Understanding Society

MAKE THE RIGHT MOVE

Tell us

What do you think of the mailings that are sent to you on behalf of Understanding Society? We would like to hear your feedback. Please email us contact@understandingsociety.ac.uk or call 0800 252 853

7 THINGS TO DO WHEN YOU MOVE...

- Inform your water, gas, electricity and broadband suppliers of your switch-off date
- Tell your present council of the date that you're moving home. They'll arrange for a refund of any council tax that is due.
- Notify the post office of your impending change of address. There'll be a charge for a redirection of mail service.
- Don't forget to update all of your car documents including your license and insurance
- Have three piles: pack, donate and rubbish
- Pack a moving day survival kit (which includes toiletries, bottles of water & snacks)
- Tell Understanding Society that you are moving home**

Based on your data, we have been able to identify the moving habits of the UK:

18-30

Moves peak early in young adulthood (18-30), and the frequency of moving declines rapidly after age 35

35+

Women with children are more likely to move near their mothers

5%

of our sample members have lived at the same address their whole life

2 OUT OF 5

immigrants to the UK live within 5 miles of the place they first lived in the UK and only a quarter live more than 100 miles away

OVER 20%

of the people born in the UK have lived abroad in their lifetime

Moving to a greener urban area significantly improves the mover's mental health

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 usually attempted face to face with the exception of the small number of telephone only households and also households that had expressed a preference at the previous wave to be contacted by telephone first to make an appointment.

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: mode allocation (CAPI first or web first); outcome last wave; and the day and time the household questionnaire was completed at the last wave. The back page had individual level information including: first names, ages and genders; outcome at the previous wave; working status last wave; incentive type; and language interviewed in at the last wave.

The sample information sheet also included web login details for each sample member. This was so, if sample members expressed a strong preference for completing online, the interviewer could facilitate this.

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 Kantar Public 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 7 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.

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 address;
- Between wave 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 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 Kantar Public 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

In year one of Wave 7 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. Three additional languages were added in year two (Polish, Portuguese and Turkish) as the IEMB sample was incorporated into Wave 7 in year two. For other languages, interviewers could still attempt to interview people, but would use someone else in the household to translate.

The web version of the questionnaire was not translated, so translated interviews could only be conducted face to face.

4.1 Formal translations

For the 12 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 12 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

Language	No. individual interviews
Arabic	1
Bengali	61
Cantonese	0
Gujarati	27
Polish	16
Portuguese	2
Punjabi Gurmukhi	7
Punjabi Urdu	25
Somali	3
Turkish	3
Urdu	201

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 accreditor acting as a respondent. If the accreditor 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 Kantar interviewer available to conduct it, an agency interpreter was used. In these cases the interpreter would accompany a Kantar 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. These materials were:

- A translation card – this was shown to household members to establish which language they spoke. The card included over 30 languages, each with the phrase “I speak <language>” (for example, in Bengali, it read “I speak Bengali”).
- A translation booklet – where a household member identified that they spoke a language that Understanding Society has been translated into, interviewers would show them the translation booklet which, in each of the 12 languages, explained a bit more about the study and asked for a name and phone number so a translator could contact them about taking part.

4.2 Informal translations

If a sample member did not speak English or one of the 12 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 7 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 7 interview were:

- The household enumeration grid and household questionnaire (completed once per household)
- The youth self-completion questionnaire for 10-15 year olds (on paper)
- 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 7 questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.

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, GP comparison, and IEMB samples were also routed to additional questions. Table 5.1 shows the median interview lengths for different sample types for CAPI and CATI interviews only.

Table 5.1: Median interview lengths (minutes) by sample type

Questionnaire element	GP	BHPS	EMB	IEMB	Total
Household questionnaire (including enumeration)	10:27	10:16	9:40	10:22	10:21
Individual adult CAI questionnaire	27:26	25:53	25:43	26:57	26:56
Individual adult CASI questionnaire	8:10	7:59	7:20	7:20	8:00
CAI proxy questionnaire	4:18	4:22	3:12	4:17	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 to complexity of the Understanding Society questionnaire. The same script was used for CAPI, CATI and CAWI, 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 themselves.

There were slightly different versions of the youth self-completion questionnaire for Northern Ireland and for the rest of the UK. The only differences were in questions on religion and political parties.

5.3.1 Households completing via web

Where the household completed the survey online, questionnaires were posted to a parent (who had completed online) with a request to ask their child to complete and return the paper questionnaire.

6. Piloting

To test CAI questionnaires, fieldwork procedures and materials, and the sample management between the web and CAPI stages of the study a pilot was conducted in late September to early November 2014. 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 some of these were issued as web only households at the Wave 7 pilot. The pilot sample therefore consisted of:

- 132 households issued CAPI first (none of these were telephone only cases). Three of these had become ineligible, 103 were productive.
- 47 households issued web first (39 of these were telephone only cases). One of these was no longer eligible, 35 were productive.
- 37 households issued as web only. Six of these were productive.
- There were also 18 split off households created from the existing pilot sample. 12 of these were not issued to field as they were either no longer eligible, or no address could be found. The remaining 6 were issued to interviewers, 4 were 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

Two different types of briefing were used for Wave 7 of Understanding Society:

- 'Refresher' briefings for interviewers that had already worked on Wave 6 of Understanding Society;
- 'Full' briefings for interviewers that had not previously worked on the study.

Both types of briefing were conducted face to face and were usually with groups of around 15 interviewers. Researchers from Kantar Public and ISER jointly ran the briefings.

7.1.1 Full briefings

Full briefings lasted around 6 hours 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;
- Multimode elements of the study and interviewers responsibilities for web first households;
- 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.

7.1.2 Refresher briefings

Refresher briefings were shorter (around 3 hours) and covered anything that was new to Wave 7, the key area being the introduction of web interviewing and how interviewers needed to handle web first households. These briefings also aimed to refresh interviewers on 'standard' Understanding Society procedures that had not changed since Wave 6. As a result refresher briefings were more informal and interviewers were encouraged to raise any queries or issues they had encountered while working on Understanding Society so

that these could be addressed in the briefing. There was also a section in the refresher briefings to discuss response – what difficulties interviewers had faced in securing interviews, and what techniques they had used to persuade people to take part. This information, while useful to share in individual briefings, was also used to update a ‘Top tips for interviewers on Understanding Society’ document. This was shared with all interviewers working on the project but was intended to be particularly useful for interviewers new to the project. It included advice from interviewers on assignment planning and how to achieve a high response rate.

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:

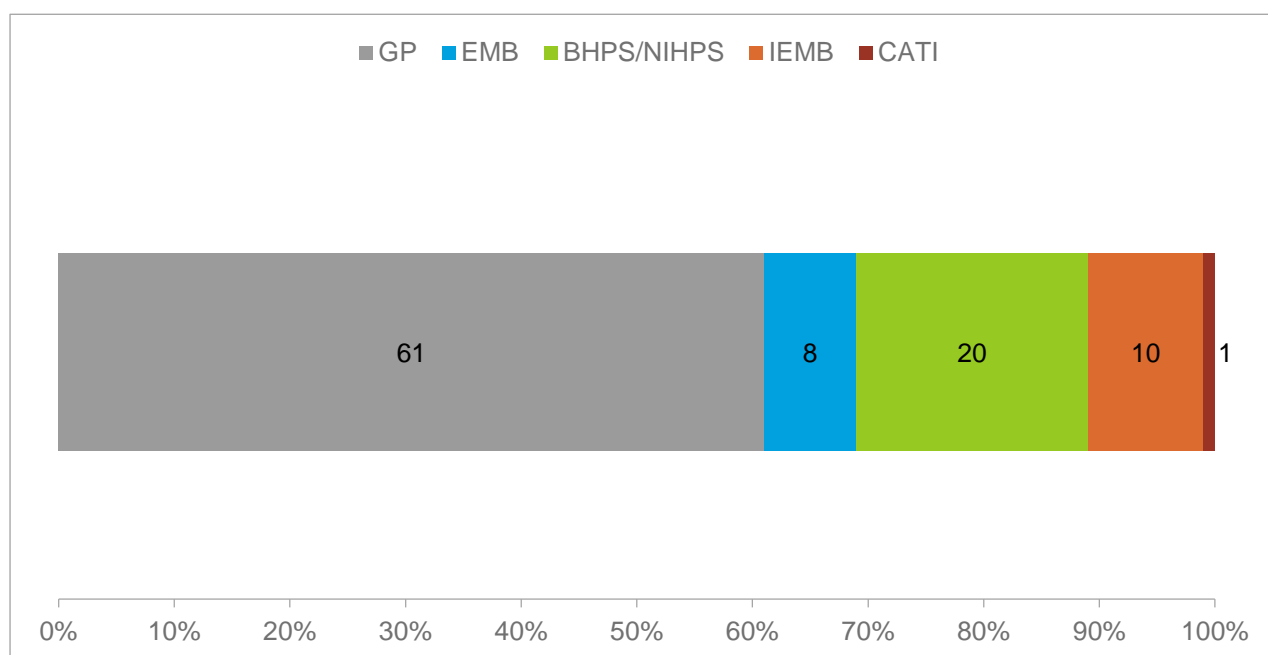
- Sample information sheet – one per household, these included a few details about each household and the sample members living there, most of this information was held electronically on interviewers’ laptops;
- Copies of advance letters, including a laminated copy;
- Interviewer cards to be used as calling cards, appointments cards and broken appointment cards, other than the Understanding Society logo and a freephone telephone number for Kantar Public 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 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

Excluding the dormant households that were issued web only, a total of 27,838 households were issued at Wave 7. Of these, 17,030 were in the General Population (GP) sample, 2,255 were in the Ethnic Minority Boost (EMB) sample, 5,485 were in the British/Northern Irish Household Panel Survey sample (BHPS/NIHPS), and 241 were telephone only households (CATI).

Chart 8.1: Issued sample (households) by sample type



8.1.1 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 6 were much more likely to be productive again at Wave 7 than those that had not responded.

Amongst the different sample types, the BHPS/NIHPS sample achieved the highest response rate, while the IEMB sample achieved the lowest. It is to be expected that the response rate is lower for the IEMB sample than other sample types since this is only the second wave of the study for the IEMB sample.

Table 8.1: Household response rate by sample origin and whether productive 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	IEMB – productive last wave	CATI – productive last wave	CATI – unproductive last wave									
<i>Base: All issued sample</i>																		
Issued	15167	1863	1889	366	5010	475	2827	163	78									
Split households	840	5%	125	6%	111	6%	15	4%	278	5%	30	6%	181	6%	4	2%	2	3%
Total households	16007		1988		2000		381		5288		505		3008		167		80	
<i>Base: Total households</i>																		
Ineligible households	420	3%	70	4%	36	2%	12	3%	141	3%	13	3%	91	3%	0		0	
Eligible households	15587		1918		1964		369		5147		492		2917		167		80	
<i>Base: Eligible households</i>																		
Fully productive	10701	69%	437	23%	1084	55%	83	22%	3727	72%	135	27%	1302	45%	86	51%	9	11%
Partially productive	3016	19%	237	12%	540	27%	59	16%	900	17%	52	11%	570	20%	52	31%	8	10%
No contact	177	1%	164	9%	27	1%	21	6%	60	1%	41	8%	163	6%	1	1%	7	9%
Refusal	755	5%	604	31%	139	7%	115	31%	232	5%	178	36%	323	11%	18	11%	30	38%
Other unproductive	938	6%	476	25%	174	9%	91	25%	228	4%	86	17%	559	19%	10	6%	26	33%

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 7 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. IEMB households are excluded from this table.

Table 8.2: Household response rate by household type

	Original HH – productive last wave	Original HH – unproductive last wave	Split HH – productive last wave	Split HH – unproductive last wave	Total
Fully productive	70%	24%	27%	15%	63%
Partially productive	20%	13%	11%	2%	19%
No contact	1%	8%	3%	4%	2%
Refusal	5%	34%	6%	6%	8%
Other unproductive	4%	22%	54%	73%	8%
<i>Base: eligible households excluding IEMB sample</i>	22036	2735	829	124	25724

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 7.

Excluding the IEMB sample, for adults that had been interviewed at the previous wave, the overall response rate was 88%, the response rate was 24% for adults that had not been interviewed at the previous wave, and 57% for new entrants and rising 16s. Response rates for the IEMB sample were lower, which is to be expected as the IEMB sample were only being contacted for the second time at Wave 7. Amongst the IEMB sample the response rate was 65% for adults interviewed at the previous wave, 21% for adults that had not been interviewed at the previous wave, and 56% for new entrants and rising 16s.

Previous wave productive adults were the particular focus for maximising response at Wave 7 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. The total column excludes the IEMB sample.

Table 8.3: Individual response rate by sample origin for adults interviewed at the previous wave

	GP	EMB	BHPS / NIHPS	CATI	Total excl. IEMB	IEMB
Productive	88%	81%	90%	81%	88%	65%
Proxy	1%	3%	1%	2%	1%	1%
No contact	1%	2%	1%	2%	1%	7%
Refusal	6%	9%	5%	13%	6%	13%
Other unproductive	3%	5%	2%	3%	3%	14%
<i>Base: previous wave productive adults</i>	24369	3456	8481	253	36559	4280

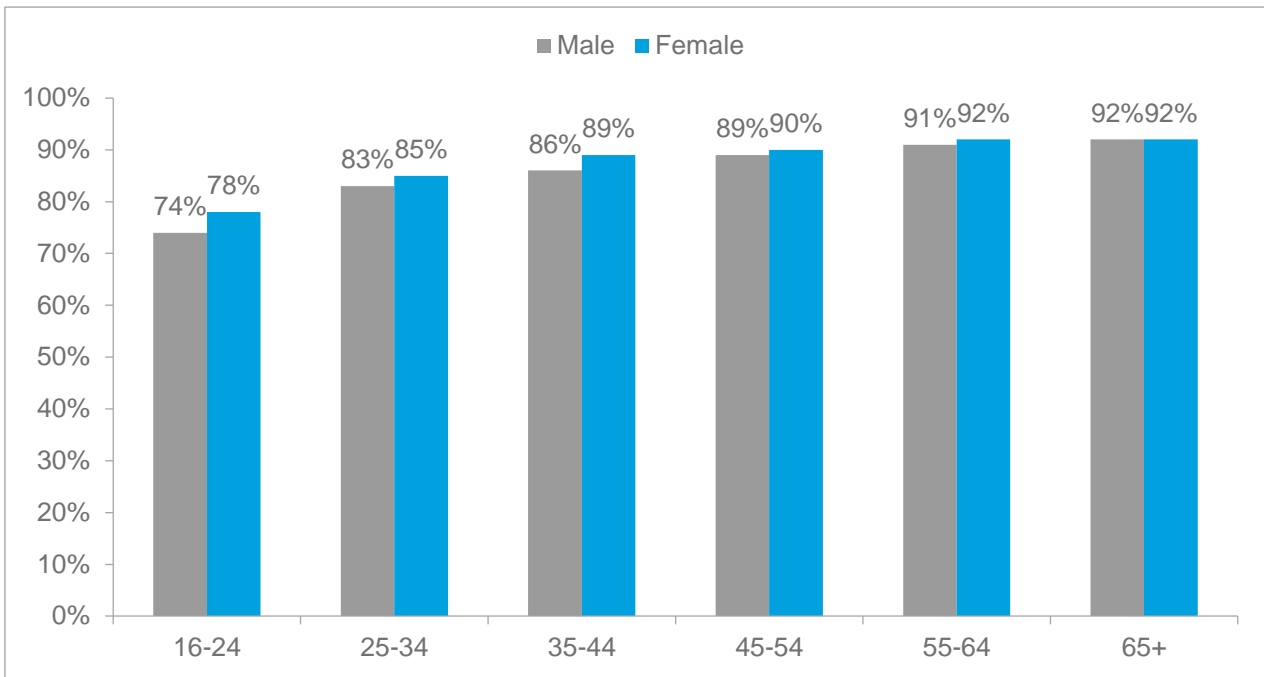
There was a small variation in response rate by country, this is shown in table 8.4. The IEMB sample is excluded from this table.

Table 8.4 Individual response rate by country for adults interviewed at the previous wave

	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	Total
Productive	88%	85%	89%	86%	88%
Proxy	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%
No contact	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%
Refusal	6%	8%	6%	9%	6%
Other unproductive	3%	4%	3%	2%	3%
<i>Base: previous wave productive adults</i>	28128	2652	3264	2515	36559

Response rates did not tend to vary by gender, but response rates did increase with age. The 16-24 age group were particularly difficult to achieve interviews with. Chart 8.2 shows response rate by age and gender for adults that had been interviewed at the previous wave. The IEMB sample has been excluded from this chart.

Chart 8.2: Individual response rate by age and gender

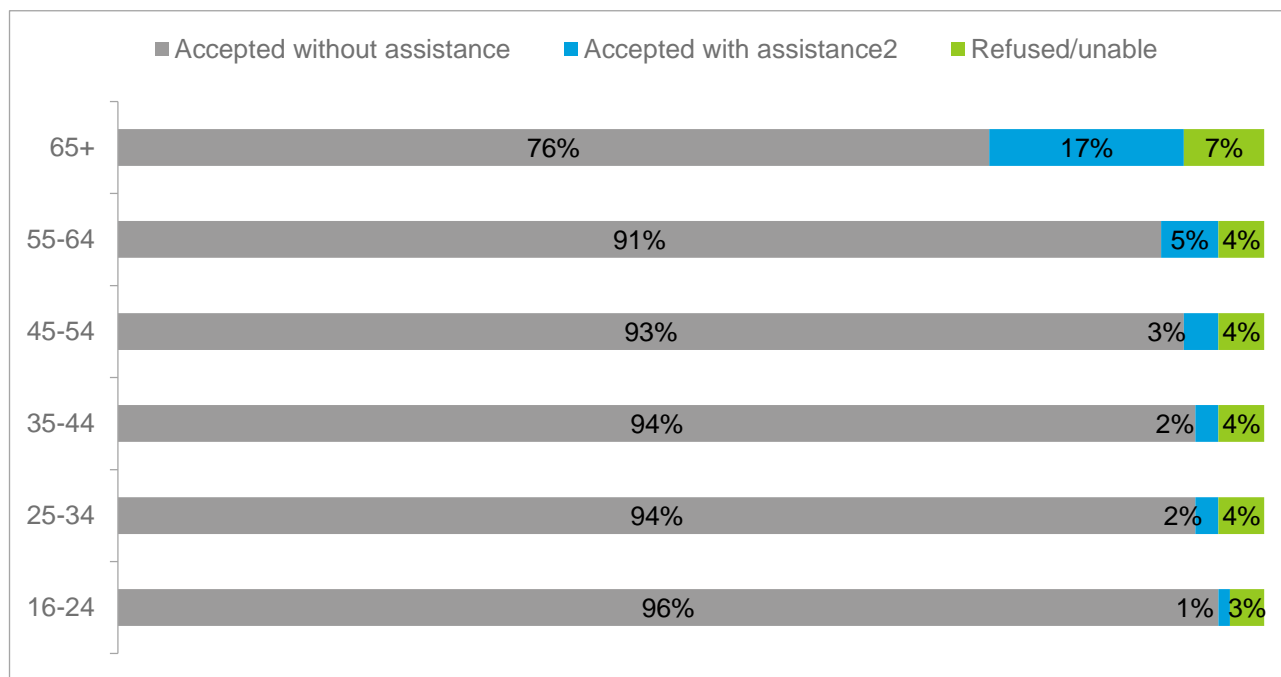


Base: All eligible adults that had been productive at the last wave. Men: 16-24 (1,929); 25-34 (1,946); 35-44 (2,513); 45-54 (3,082); 55-64 (2,674); 65+ (4,075). Women: 16-24 (2,185); 25-34 (2,594); 35-44 (3,455); 45-54 (3,916); 55-64 (3,291); 65+ (4,899).

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. This chart is based on adults who completed CAPI interviews, as for telephone and web modes the respondent was not asked about willingness to complete this section.

Chart 8.3: Self completion response rate by age



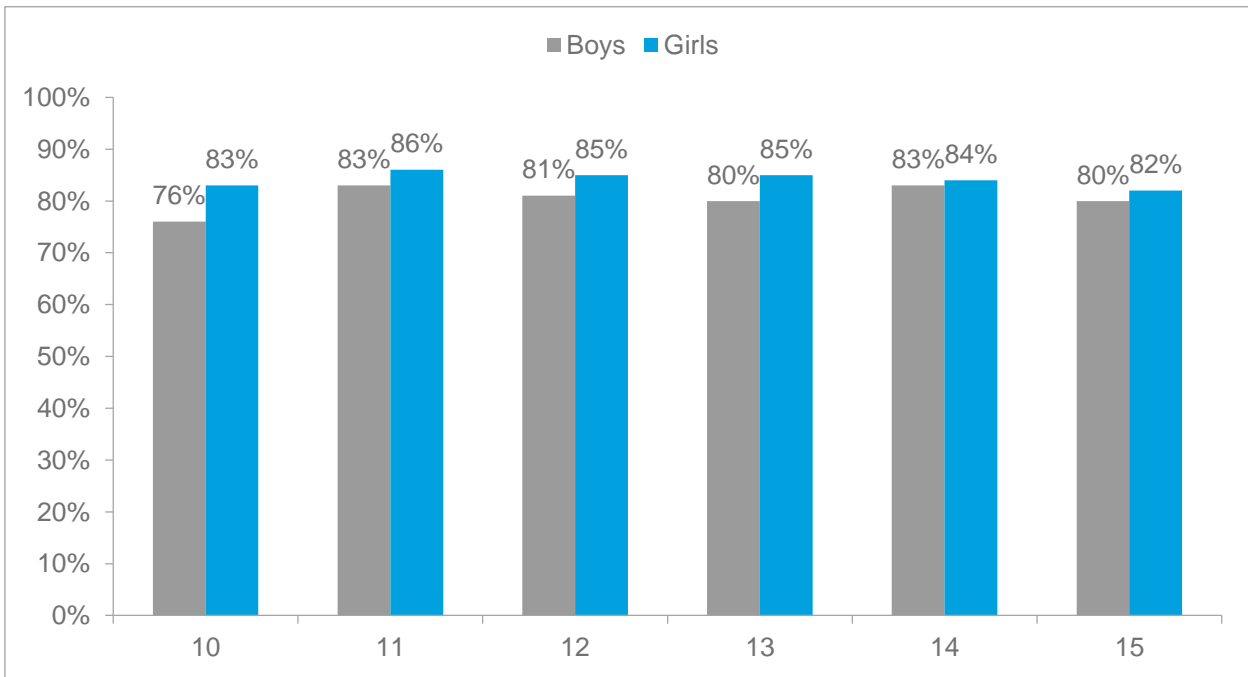
Base: All fully productive adults that completed by CAPI and reached the CASI section of the questionnaire. 16-24 (4,637); 25-34 (4,813); 35-44 (6,220); 45-54 (6,869); 55-64 (5,833); 65+ (8,662).

8.2.2 Youth self-completion questionnaires

In households that were productive (at least one adult completed an interview), excluding IEMB sample, 82% of 10 to 15 year olds completed and returned a paper questionnaire. This proportion varied a little by sample type, it was 82% amongst the GP sample, 89% amongst the BHPS/NIHPS sample, and 75% amongst the EMB sample. Amongst the IEMB sample 62% of 10-15 years olds in productive households completed and returned a paper questionnaire.

Chart 8.4 shows the youth self-completion response rate by age and gender. IEMB sample is excluded from this chart.

Chart 8.4: Youth response rate by age and gender



Base: All eligible 10-15s in productive households, excluding IEMB sample. Boys: 10 (353); 11 (327); 12 (384); 13 (319); 14 (368); 15 (316). Girls: 10 (322); 11 (375); 12 (317); 13 (301); 14 (385); 15 (352).

9. Data preparation

9.1 Combining CAPI and CAWI data

Unlike Wave 6 where all data (apart from youth questionnaires) came from the CAPI script (CATI interviews were also completed on the CAPI script) at Wave 7 there were two sources of CAI data to be merged – CAPI and CAWI. This meant an additional stage of combining the CAPI and CAWI data was incorporated into the data processing and checking process at Wave 7.

There were measures in place within the electronic sample management on Wave 7 to minimise the chances of duplicate interviews being conducted on CAPI and CAWI. Data was passed between the CAPI and CAWI systems daily but the transfer of information to and from CAPI was reliant on interviewers synchronising their laptops. In general interviewers would synchronise each day that they worked on Understanding Society but there could be circumstances under which they did not. There were therefore a very small number of duplicate interviews across CAPI and CAWI and the data merging process needed to take account of these. If both interviews were fully complete then the more recent interview was usually selected.

It was also possible for a respondent to start their interview on CAWI and complete it via CAPI. In these cases the interview would restart at the beginning of the first incomplete module (so respondents might be re-asked a few questions) rather than the specific question at which the interview had finished on CAWI. Such cases were extremely rare but, again, the data merging process needed to allow for this and stitch the two partial interviews together.

While Wave 7 used the same CAI script across modes (with routing to correct question wording depending on the mode), there were some questions which had to be scripted separately for different modes because different question layouts were used. For example at some questions the CAWI script made use of drop down lists rather than standard response lists. In raw data there would be two versions of the question, one for CAPI (and CATI) and one for CAWI so the formatted data needed to draw data from both of these.

9.2 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.

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, name, date of birth and gender.

9.3 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.

9.4 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.

9.5 Data issues at Wave 7

There were some small errors in the wave 7 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 7. The questions and modules affected were:

- For the first month of fieldwork a derived variable in the migration history module (DVAGE2UK) was not being calculated correctly in all cases.
- In the young adults module there was a (non-asked) variable SIBLING which controlled the routing for some questions in the module. This actually needed to be a grid variable in order to be set correctly. This was corrected after around 3 months of fieldwork.
- For the first six months of fieldwork there was an issue with grid variables NPDA and EYCA not being set correctly, which meant some respondents missing questions on consent to link to EYC and NPD data for their children.
- For the first nine months of fieldwork grid variables HGBIOAD1 and HGBIOAD2 were not being set correctly in all cases which led to some respondents missing questions in the child maintenance module.
- Questions about children's schools in the parents and children module were being missed because the script was referencing feed forward information about the parent (the respondent) rather than their children. This section was corrected to correctly reference feed forward data about the respondent's children after nine months of fieldwork.
- Routing in the migration history module that controlled variables MINTENT and DV2UK16 was corrected after 16 months of fieldwork as these questions were not being asked of all eligible respondents.
- Question PREGM in the annual event history module was being missed for people who had had more than one pregnancy since the previous interview, this was corrected after 19 months of fieldwork.

Appendix A – Wave 7 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 7 household questionnaire

Theme	Module name
HH Composition	Household grid
Consumption	HH: Consumer durables
Consumption	HH: Expenditure
Expenditure	HH: Fuel type and expenditure
Financial behaviour and attitudes	HH: Financial strain
Housing Characteristics	HH: Structural characteristics
Housing Characteristics	HH: Home tenure
Housing Characteristics	HH: Taxation

Table A2: Content of Wave 7 adult questionnaire

Theme	Module name
Individual interview modules (repeated annually)	
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 and social care utilisation	Use of health services
Health and social care utilisation	Use of social care
Health status	SF-12 (self-completion)
Health status	Self-assessed health status (self-completion)
Health status	Disability
Health status	Activities of daily living
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)
Individual interview modules conditional on age (repeated annually)	
Expectations	Retirement planning
Family relationships	Child development (self-completion)
Family relationships	Parenting styles (self-completion)
Individual interview modules (rotating)	
Family relationships	Family networks
Family relationships	Parents and children
Family relationships	Partner relationships (self-completion)
Financial behaviour and attitudes	Child maintenance

Health behaviour	Nutrition
Health behaviour	Physical activity
Health behaviour	Current smoking
Health behaviour	Alcohol consumption (self-completion)
Leisure participation	Olympic games/Commonwealth games (Scotland only)
Mental health and well-being	Sleep quality
Mental health and well-being	Mental well-being
Political and social engagement	General election
Individual interview modules – ethnicity strand (rotating)	
Harassment	Harassment
Employment conditions	Discrimination
Financial behaviour and attitudes	Remittances
Modules asked only once (included for new entrants)	
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

Table A3: Content of Wave 7 youth self-completion questionnaire

Theme	Module name
Demographic	
Leisure	TV

Leisure	Computer use
Leisure	Online social networks
Leisure	Activities outside school
Family	Meals
Family	Support
Family	Supervision
Family	Other
Family	Talking/quarrelling
Step parent relationship	
Behaviour	Bullying at home
Friends	Friendship networks
Behaviour	SDQ (Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire)
Happiness	
Local neighbourhood	
Fear of crime	
Education	Aspirations
Education	Truancy
Education	Parental involvement
Education	Misbehaviour
Behaviour	Bullying at school
Saving behaviour	
Pocket money	
Earnings	
Caring	
Health	Nutrition
Health	Smoking (including e-cigarettes)

Health	Alcohol
Vandalism	Fighting
Identity	Ethnicity
Identity	Religion
Political attitudes	
Future intentions	Leave home
Future intentions	Future job
