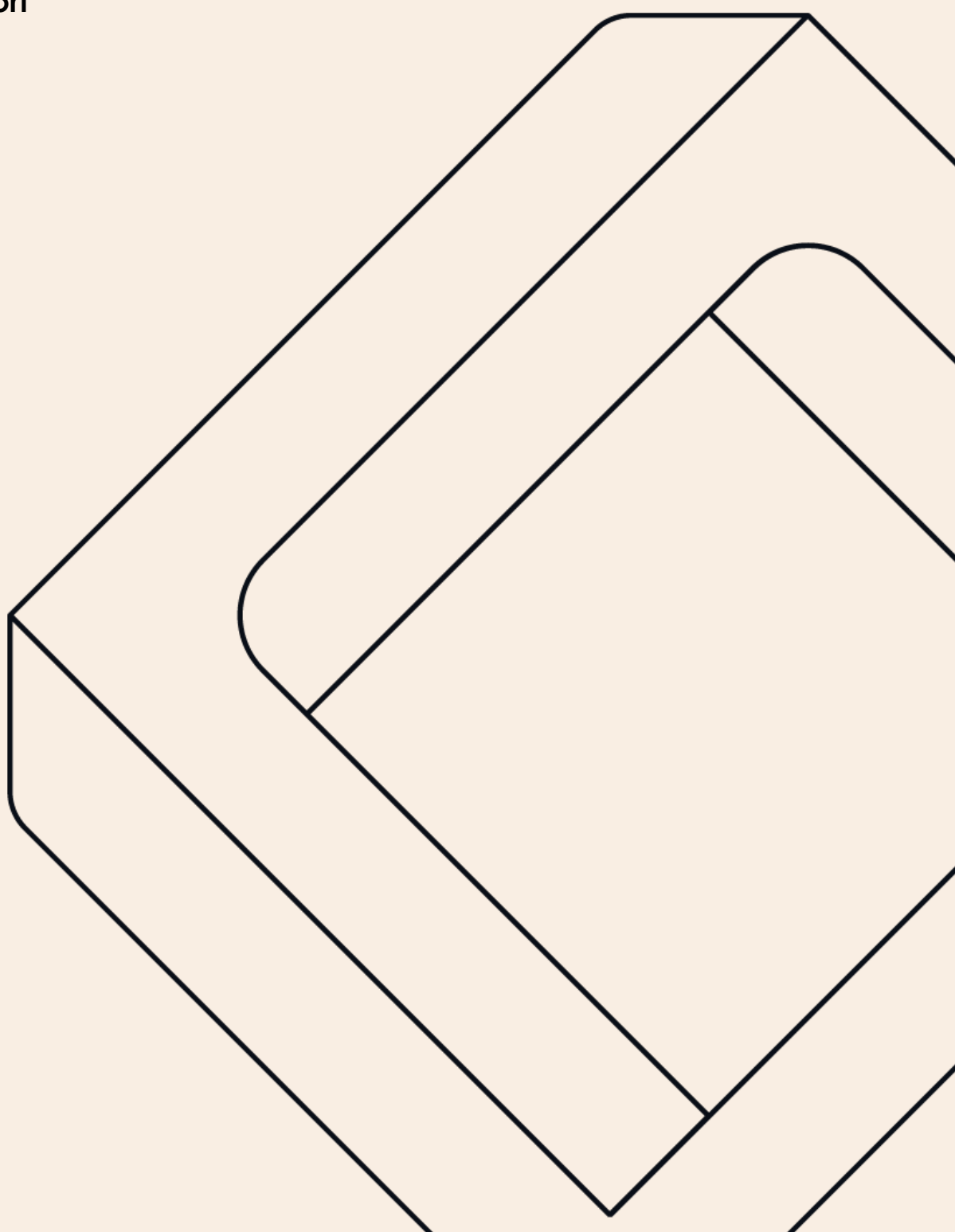


Understanding Society Innovation Panel Wave 16

Technical Report
August 2024

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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.

Main fieldwork is complemented by an Innovation Panel which tests significant innovations in methods of data collection and study delivery such as mixed-mode interviewing, differential incentives, question layout and question wording experiments.

This report provides an account of the sixteenth wave of the Innovation Panel (IP16) of Understanding Society, which was undertaken by Verian and NatCen Social Research, working in consortium.

Overview of methodology

IP16 households were issued to one of two modes:

- CAWI first (60% of households)
- CAPI first (40% of households)

CAWI first households that did not fully complete online, were issued to interviewers for follow up by CAPI. During the CAPI stage, interviewers were able to conduct interviews by telephone if that was the preference of the respondent. The web survey also remained open throughout CAPI fieldwork.

The different elements of the study were broadly consistent with previous waves:

- 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 self-completion questionnaire, completed by children aged 10 to 15 - this could be completed online or on paper.

Outputs

Data from Understanding Society is deposited at the UK Data Archive after each wave is completed.

1. Sample composition

The sample for the Innovation Panel is entirely separate from that of the main study. Originally selected from the Postcode Address File (PAF), the IP sample is representative of households in Britain. Unlike the main study it does not cover Northern Ireland.

There have been refreshment samples at several previous IP waves to increase the overall sample size: IP4, IP7, IP10, IP11 and IP14, and the sample for IP16 included a mixture of households from the original (wave 1) IP sample and each of these refreshment samples.

In total, 2,465 'active' households were issued at IP16. This included:

- 571 households from the original (wave 1) IP sample
- 253 households from the IP4 refreshment sample
- 305 households from the IP7 refreshment sample
- 213 households from the IP10 refreshment sample
- 378 households from the IP11 refreshment sample
- 745 households from the IP14 refreshment sample.

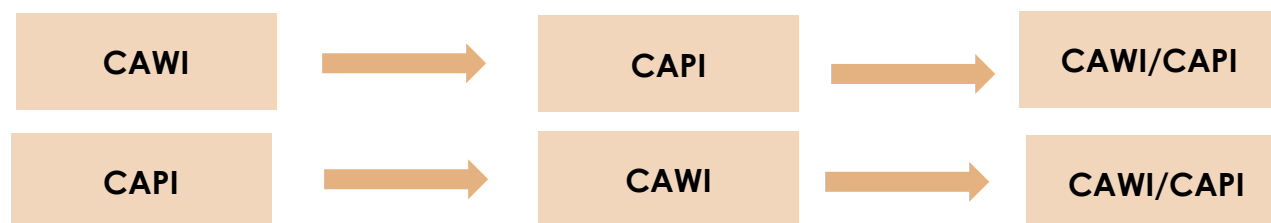
The number of individuals in the issued sample is shown in table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Number of individuals in the issued sample, by sample type			
	Adults (16+)	10-15	Under 10
Original IP sample	1124	89	96
IP4 refreshment sample	505	43	39
IP7 refreshment sample	604	54	75
IP10 refreshment sample	416	37	49
IP11 refreshment sample	744	75	88
IP14 refreshment sample	1407	105	173

2. Fieldwork design

Fieldwork structure

Fieldwork took place between 21st June and 8th December 2023. Households were allocated to one of the two modes, CAWI-first or CAPI-first, then followed the mixed mode design shown below.



Fieldwork for the CAWI first sample followed a sequential mixed mode design. Households were initially invited to take part online. At the end of the initial web fieldwork period any individuals or whole households that had not taken part online were issued to a face-to-face interviewer. From this point on most of the interviewing was completed face-to-face although the web survey remained available for sample members to complete that way. Telephone interviews were available throughout if requested by respondents. Additionally, there was a CAWI 'mop' up letter which was sent during week 14 of face-to-face fieldwork. This letter was sent to all those who had not yet completed it and included an additional £10 incentive if respondents completed it before the end of fieldwork.

For the CAPI first groups 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). During face-to-face fieldwork the web survey was technically available to these groups (and some sample members requested web login information so they could complete online), but it was not offered until the last 3 weeks of fieldwork when anyone who had not yet taken part (and did not have an unproductive outcome that would make it inappropriate) was sent a letter (and email, if an email address was available) inviting them to take part online.

For IP16, there was also a mini survey related to a Red Book experiment which took place before the main survey launched. This mini survey took place between May and June 2023. For this survey, we used IP15 data on household composition to determine who would be eligible for the Red Book experiment (i.e., respondents who had children under the age of 16 in the household). Half of those eligible for the red book experiment were asked to provide details (i.e., a photo or information on their child's Red Book) online ahead of the interview and the other half during the interview. Those in the pre-interview group that did not provide the photo or information were asked to do so in the interview along with the second group.

Interviewer fieldwork in England and Wales was split between Verian and NatCen, and Verian undertook all interviewer fieldwork in Scotland.

Fieldwork timings

The CAWI first sample had an initial web fieldwork period of five weeks. At the end of this period any households that had not completed online were issued to a face-to-face interviewer. The time allowed for face-to-face fieldwork was 18 weeks, with a focus on using telephone and online options to 'mop up' any hard-to-reach cases in the final weeks. Details are included in table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1: Fieldwork timings	
CAWI first	CAPi first
Red book mini-survey (24 th May – 21 st June 2023)	
Web only fieldwork 5 weeks	
Face-to-face fieldwork (web survey remains open) 18 weeks	Face-to-face fieldwork 18 weeks
Online mop up (week 14)	Online mop up (week 14)

Contact with sample members

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 section describes the contact strategy for IP16.

Red Book mini-survey

For IP16, there was also a mini survey related to a Red Book experiment which took place before the main survey launched. This mini survey took place between May and June 2023. Eligible adults were invited via a letter and email which provided an explanation and instructions on how to take part. The letter and email also mentioned there was a £2 incentive for providing for each child's Red Book information provided. There were no reminders for this mini-survey.

Advance mailing

The advance mailing varied a little depending on issue mode and experiment allocation. For both the CAWI and CAPi first sample, there were a number of different conditions which determined what version of the Advanced Letter they received.

Firstly, for adults who responded at the last wave, advance letters include the respondent's incentive (£20 or £30). For IP16, adult sample members who were eligible for the unconditional incentive were randomly allocated to two groups. One group received the standard Love2Shop gift card. The second group were invited to go online and claim their unconditional Merit voucher in their advance letter/email. Additionally, for those who received their unconditional incentive via the online Merit voucher there were one of the following four different motivational messages added to the advanced letter:

- no additional message;
- "e-incentives are more eco-friendly" message;
- "e-incentives are easier to use" message, or
- both messages.

For adults who did not respond at the last wave, advance letters did not contain incentives (their incentives were conditional upon completion at IP16). There was also no additional messaging.

For the CAPi first sample, all eligible sample members aged 16 or over were sent a letter shortly before the start of face-to-face fieldwork. The letter explained that an interviewer would visit soon. A change of address card was attached to the bottom of the letter, and the mailing also included a freepost return envelope for the change of address card.

For the CAWI first sample, all eligible sample members aged 16 or over were sent a letter on the first day of web fieldwork 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. If an email address was available, these sample members were also sent an email with a unique link to start the web survey.

Both CAPI first and CAWI first letters also included an information leaflet that gave more details about their annual interview. Additionally, those who were eligible for the Red Book experiment received additional information with slight variation in text in their advanced letter depending on whether they were in the pre-interview group or during interview group. The advanced letter for both groups mentions an additional £2 for each photo or screenshot submitted from a Red Book.

There were 70 different types of advance letter. This number was required because of the various different experiments included on the study. For all addresses in Wales, the letter was sent in both Welsh and English. All letters were designed with Understanding Society branding and were signed by the Director of Understanding Society.

New entrant letters

For the households issued CAWI-first at IP16, 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.

Reminder letters and emails

Adults were sent four reminder emails (if an email address was available) and two reminder letters if they had not completed online by the time these reminder mailings were being prepared. These reminders were sent during the initial five-week CAWI fieldwork period before households were issued to an interviewer. Additionally, there was a CAWI mop-up reminder letter sent during week 14 of fieldwork to all those who had not completed or refused.

Interviewer contact attempt with sample members

Where households had been productive at the previous wave, interviewers were instructed to attempt first contact by telephone so they could make an appointment to complete the survey. This can be more convenient for respondents and more efficient for interviewers.

For households that had not taken part at the previous wave, first contact was attempted face-to-face. Households that have not taken part at the previous waves are less likely to take part at the current wave, and an in-person visit from an interviewer is less likely to elicit a refusal than a telephone call. Where interviewers had made repeated unsuccessful face-to-face contact attempts, they would start attempting contact by telephone.

3. Experiments

On IP16, there were a total of 17 different experiments. Of these, there were seven procedural experiments:

- Mixed modes (CAWI-CAPI-CATI)
- Incentives (£20/£30)
- MERIT (e-vouchers) for unconditional incentives
- How to use proxy nominations
- Youth online survey
- Asking for Red Book pictures
- Test of Government logo on envelopes for continuing sample

Additionally, there were ten questionnaire experiments.:

- Anchoring our understanding of Satisfaction with life
- Anticipated gender discrimination in the labour market
- Regular use of paid domestic work - considering platforms
- Time Perception
- Measuring flexibility stigma: Double whammy or femininity stigma
- Cognitive reflection and politically motivated reasoning
- Robustness of climate change worries measurement
- Understanding of the long-term future
- Mental health questions comparisons
- Spatial cognition app consent

Whilst many of the experiments at IP16 were contained within the questionnaire, there were two notable experiments which required respondents to undertake action outside of the main interview: Red Book pictures and the spatial cognition app game. For the Red Book experiment, participants with children under 16 in the household were asked to upload a photo of one page from their child health record ("Red Book") or provide information from the Red Book. For the spatial cognition app game, participants will be asked to download the game app on their smartphone.

Mixed Modes (CAWI/CAPI/CATI)

IP16 was the same as IP15 with one-third of households allocated to the CAPI-first design, with the other two-thirds allocated to the WEB-first design. At IP16, all households in samples taken prior to the IP14 refreshment sample maintained the allocations made at IP13.

Incentives

The incentives' experiment has been running since IP1. At IP16, most respondents received a £20 incentive, with just those that had previously been in the £30 incentive group continuing to receive £30, as a reduction to their incentive could adversely impact response rates.

MERIT for unconditional incentives

For IP16, adult sample members eligible for an unconditional incentive were randomly allocated to two groups. One group received the standard Love2Shop gift card. The second group were invited to claim their unconditional Merit voucher online in their advance letter/email.

Additionally, there were four different 'motivational' messages added to the various letters for those who have received their incentive online experimentally:

1. no additional message;
2. "e-incentives are more eco-friendly";
3. "e-incentives are easier to use", and
4. both messages.

How to use proxy nominations

At IP16, there was an experiment related to proxy interviews. As usual, proxy interviews are conducted when we are unable to interview a household member. They could have moved into a care home, for example, or be away on holiday or business. Proxy interviews allow us to find out more information about these respondents from a person, usually a household member, who would know the most about them. A proxy interview is like the full interview but is a shortened version and has questions about a care home if applicable. Sometimes a proxy could be embedded within another proxy. There was also a separate module called Care Home Proxy module which asked about 'care home leavers'. This module was directly triggered by the script and appeared in all modes.

For IP16, there were three different types of proxy interviews:

1. Full Proxy Interview – The usual full proxy interview which could be selected where the household member in question did not refuse a proxy at IP14. Only available in CAPI.
2. Proxy interviews which were shorter versions of the full interview, but with care home questions (if applicable). Only available in CAPI.
3. A separate Care Home Proxy Module, which asked about 'care home leavers'. This module was triggered directly by the script. Available in all modes.

Youth online survey

For IP16, 10-15-year-olds also had the option of completing the youth questionnaire online. Usually this can only be completed on paper. Children who were part of a household that completed the grid online, in addition to the paper youth questionnaire, would have also received the following:

- A covering letter with a QR code, URL and access code to complete online
- An unconditional incentive
- Either a leaflet targeted at the parent or targeted at the young person

In half of the households, the covering letter mentioned that if the child completes the survey online, they would be sent an additional £5 gift card. For children in CAPI households with the offer of an additional conditional incentive, the leaflet and link to the online survey was included in the first reminder that was sent from the office.

Asking for Red Book pictures

As noted in earlier sections, the Red Book experiment asked respondents with children under 16 in the household to upload a photo of or provide Red Book information. A personal child health record (or 'Red Book') is given to new parents in the UK and shows important information about children's health and how they are growing.

Based on IP15 data on household composition, half the sample with children under 16 were allocated to being asked to provide the details online ahead of the interview and the other half had been informed they would be asked within the interview. Those in the pre-interview group that did not provide the photo or information were asked to do so in the interview along with the second group. Similarly, any new parents identified in the IP16 interview were also asked to provide a photo or information within the interview.

Those with children under one year old were asked to upload a picture, and if not, report from the Red Book, the height and weight of children at age 6-8 weeks or the date closest to that. Respondents with children aged one or older were asked for these for when the children were one year old or the closest time to that. Respondents providing these details were given a conditional £2 incentive for each child for whom information was provided (either photo or data entry).

Test of Government logo on envelopes for continuing sample

With newly selected addresses that were not already part of Understanding Society, it was shown at the Wave 14 boost that the use of an HM Government logo on the envelopes for mailings had a positive impact on response. At IP16, this was tested with continuing sample members.

At IP16, half of the sample received the standard envelopes whilst the other half received the HM Government logo envelopes.

Anchoring our understanding of Satisfaction with life

This was a single additional question to the core module CASI: Satisfaction. The question asked respondents about life satisfaction compared to the last time they were surveyed

Anticipated gender discrimination in the labour market

This research explored respondents' expectations of facing gender discrimination in the labour market in the UK, and how and when these expectations are formed. This was a single additional question to the individual questionnaire and a single additional question to the youth questionnaire.

Regular use of paid domestic work - considering platforms

The aim of this experiment was to capture casual use of paid housework by household. This would allow better understanding of important aspects of inequality in modern modes of social reproduction. This includes who can outsource at least part of the housework and how widespread this has become in the rise of the gig economy. These questions were asked in the Household Questionnaire rather than in the individual interview.

Time Perception

Unemployment has been found to be associated with weaker daily structures. Given these weaker structures, it may be that the experience of being unemployed causes the subjective experience of the passage of time to deviate from 'clock time'. There were five questions about the subjective speed of the passage of time for various specified time frames

Measuring flexibility stigma: Double whammy or femininity stigma

This experiment used a vignette design to examine what the rise in homeworking practices means with regards to gender inequality in the labour market. The study had the following objectives:

- i. to capture flexibility stigma against homeworkers (post-pandemic in the UK) through experimental vignette surveys;
- ii. to examine who is most likely to hold stigmatising views against homeworkers;
- iii. to examine whose homeworking is likely to be stigmatised, especially focusing on the homeworkers gender intersected with parental status; and
- iv. to examine whether organisational contexts are likely to help remove stigmatising views against homeworkers.

Employed respondents between ages 18-65 were shown three vignettes, all with the same basic narrative describing candidates for a job based on their background and work circumstances. These candidates varied across five dimensions:

1. Gender (men / women);
2. Parenthood status (no child / two children);
3. Home/hybrid working practice (1. Works in the office; 2. Works from home 1-2 days a week on a regular basis; 3. Works from home 3-4 days a week on a regular basis);
4. Prevalence of hybrid working in the company (1. less than 20% work from home regularly 2. about 50% work from home regularly 3. more than 80% work from home regularly);
5. Company policies (1. No policy on hybrid-working 2. Policy that allows hybrid-working).

After each of the three vignettes, respondents were asked their views on the worker. Thereafter, respondents were asked if they would recommend the candidate for the job; whether they perceive the candidate as committed to work; how productive the candidate is; and how much of a team-player the candidate is. All these questions were measured on a scale of 0 to 10.

Cognitive reflection and politically motivated reasoning

This experiment used a variation of a known cognitive reflection test (CRT) to test whether politically motivated reasoning is a manifestation of deliberative thinking or use mental shortcuts to simplify problems and avoid cognitive overload.

There were four questions asking cognitive ability questions such as: "if you're running a race and you pass the person in second place, what place are you in?". The political questions asked about a petition that requires a verified identification to open a social media account.

Robustness of climate change worries measurement

This experiment compared two versions of a single question on worry about climate change. Since the effects of climate change aggravate over time, it may mostly impact future generations. For this reason (elderly) people's worries about climate change partly capture their valuation of the welfare of future generations.

Understanding of the long-term future

This experiment explored how good people's grasp of the long-term rather than short-term future is, whether this understanding is related to own remaining life expectancy and if this understanding depends on whether its measurement is framed in a specific context such as climate change. Respondents were asked two sets of questions:

1. Financial Numeracy Questions and/or
2. Environmental Numeracy Questions

Mental health questions comparisons

The main survey questions about diagnoses of health conditions remained close to static for the first nine waves of the main survey. At Wave 10 and then again at Wave 14 of the main survey the question wording changed to whether a doctor had ever diagnosed mental health conditions. Reviewing the data, there is some evidence that the change in wording has resulted in changes in how people respond.

There were three different versions of the question on diagnoses of mental health conditions at IP16:

1. Version 1 (Wave 8) - The main survey questions about diagnoses of health conditions remained close to static for the first nine waves of the main survey.
2. Version 2 (Wave 10) – Wording changes to whether a doctor had ever diagnosed mental health conditions.
3. Version 3 (Wave 14) – Current version.

Spatial cognition app consent

At IP16, we asked respondents to download a game app called Sea Hero Quest (SHQ) for their smartphones. The data derived from playing this game can be used to measure spatial cognition, which is important in several aspects of life and has been shown to be related to general cognition. The game was developed for the charity Alzheimer's Research and takes you on a journey on a boat to help a son recover his father's memories. While you play, the game keeps track of how you move around to help scientists learn more about how people find their way around. It doesn't collect personal identifying information.

The app is a game and intended to be fun and less work than other app studies. Respondents were randomly assigned to an incentive condition; half being offered £10 or £30 to participate. The SHQ App is not mentioned in the advanced letters but is introduced in the interview and then in a post-interview email. For CAPI, interviewers would hand over a leaflet to respondents. During the interview (CAWI or CAPI), respondents would be able to scan the QR Code for the Apple or Google Play Store using the camera on their device or searching for the app by name. Respondents were asked to try login and install on their device but would play the game after the interview.

4. Fieldwork documents

The experimental nature of IP16, and the experiments relating to Red Book and Sea Hero Quest App meant there were some additional documents required to support fieldwork.

Advance letters

As covered in section 2, the advanced letters sent to respondents varied depending on issue mode and experimental allocation. All adults were sent an advanced letter to inform them that fieldwork was starting for the study.

The advance mailing varied a little depending on issue mode and experiment allocation. For both the CAWI and CAPI first sample, there were several different conditions which determined what version of the Advanced Letter they received. Included with the letter there was a participant information leaflet to inform study members of the study.

Interviewer materials

At IP16, there were a number of documents required to support interviewers when conducting fieldwork. Prior to beginning fieldwork interviewers received a work pack. Interviewers received Core Instructions – a large document containing core information that covers all waves of Understanding Society and detailed information about a variety of elements of the survey, such as: tracing respondents, maximising response, and practice interviews. Additionally, interviewers also received Project Instructions – which covered elements of interviewing that were specific to IP16. Interviewers also received specific Instructions to help navigate undertaking the Red Book experiment. The following list shows what the initial pack contained, with items in bold unique to IP16:

- Change of address Card
- Project instructions
- Laminated generic advance letter
- Research case studies
- Thank you card
- MRS leaflet
- Sample Information Sheet
- Contact us screenshot
- FAQs screenshot
- Stable contact letter
- Tracing letter
- Stable contact leaflet
- Information leaflet
- **SHQ app leaflet**
- **SHQ app user guide**
- **Red book leaflet**
- Interviewer card Verian/NatCen
- Showcards
- GDPR showcards
- Youth questionnaire & leaflet
- Maps
- **Red Book Instructions – Verian/NatCen**
- **Parent and Child Leaflets**

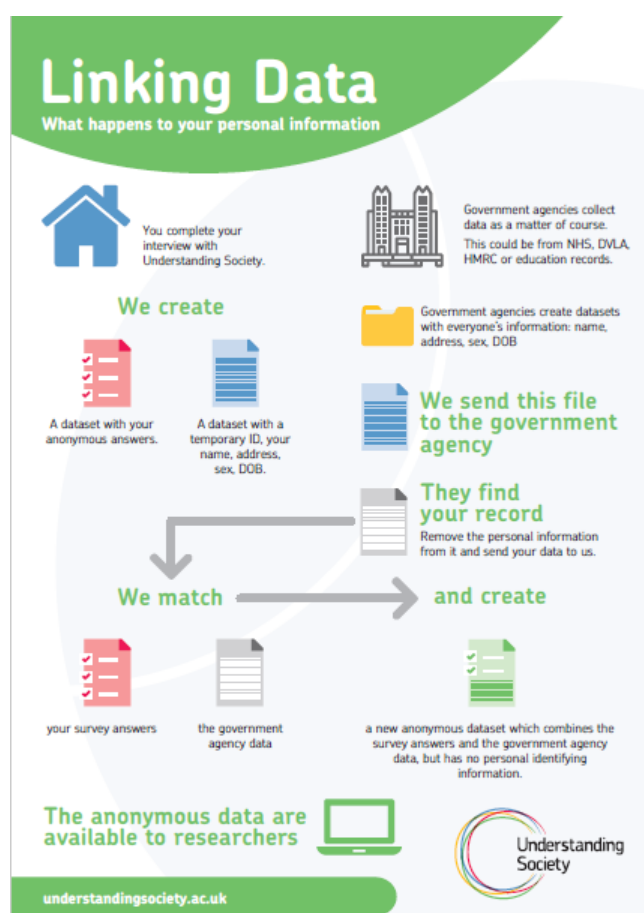
Consent documents

At IP16, all consent was collected verbally. Interviewers were instructed to read the relevant text from the CAPI script and then hand the leaflet to the respondent. Thereafter, finally confirming in the script that this had been done.

As per each wave, for the Youth Questionnaire – interviewers were required to obtain parental permission for any 10–15-year-olds to complete the questionnaire. Additionally, consent from the 10–15-year-old was also required.

Interviewers were provided with the consent flowcharts which were to be referenced if the respondent had any questions.

Figure 4.1: Linking data flowchart



SHQ App Leaflet and App User Guide

The SHQ app leaflet and user guide provided details on the purpose of the app and how to install the app on your device. Interviewers were provided copies of the SHQ App leaflet and user guide for participants. These were also available online on the Understanding Society website, with a link in the leaflet, too.

Figure 4.2: SHQ App Leaflet

Sea Hero Quest is a game that helps scientists find out about spatial navigation – how well we can find our way around spaces.

The game has been developed by specialist dementia researchers, together with Alzheimer's Research UK, to find out how people's navigation abilities change over time. One of the first signs of dementia is getting lost, but we don't know why that is. Researchers want to find out about navigation abilities in different people and in different countries, so we can understand more about how dementia and Alzheimer's might develop.

Sea Hero Quest is the first game that allows people to take part in scientific research on a world-wide scale. Over 4.3 million people have played the game so far – and now Understanding Society participants have the chance to join them.

How to play Sea Hero Quest

Download the game

The Sea Hero Quest game is available for iPhones, iPads and Android devices in the app store – search for "Sea Hero Quest".

Or you can use the following links:

Apple App Store:

<https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/sea-hero-quest-research/id1485726615>

Google Play Store:

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.aruk.shqresearch>

Where can I find out more about how my information is used?

You can find out more about how we use your information by going to www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/projects/seahero

What if I change my mind during the study?

You don't have to take part. You have the right to change your mind about taking part, or withdraw from the study, at any time without explanation.

What if I have concerns about the way the study was carried out?

Please contact

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Understanding Society

Sea Hero Quest

Play the game that's helping dementia research



Information for Participants








Figure 4.3: User Guide

USER GUIDE

Sea Hero Quest

STEP 1

When you open the app you'll be asked to sign in using your unique Participation Code. Enter the code and click on **Log in**.

STEP 2

You will then see a sequence of the following three screens introducing the organisations involved in developing the app.

STEP 3

On the next screen you can read about how your app data will be stored and who will be using the data.

STEP 4

You will then be asked to answer 10 anonymous questions about yourself in the Q&A section. You do not need to answer all of these questions if you don't want to and you can return to them later by clicking **Maybe later**. This information is used to analyse the results of the game and so completing them makes the research even more valuable.

These include your gender, age, country, hand you write with, education, daily travel time, level of your navigation skills, hours of sleep, environment you grew up in, and hours of physical activity per week.

STEP 5

You can find out more information about this game if you click on **How does this game help fight dementia** at the bottom of the screen.

STEP 6

After you finish with these Q&A screens click **Let's play**.

Begin playing all of the levels of the game in order, starting with Task 1. Click on **Task 1**. There are 17 levels. Do not replay any of the levels.

You can complete as many or as few tasks as you would like, but each new task is only unlocked when you've completed the previous level. We hope you complete all of them because they are fun but don't worry if you're not able to complete the whole game, it is designed to be challenging.

Memorise the map

Every Task will involve using your navigation skills. You will be told what your mission is and how to steer. In brief, to go forward, put your thumb or finger on the boat and swipe upwards towards the top of the phone. Then put your thumb or finger back on the boat and gently swipe sideways to steer in that direction.

STEP 7

You can stop playing whenever you want and just close the app. To carry on where you left off, you can just launch the app again and it will take you to where you left off. If at any point you exit the app using the icon on the bottom of the page you will need to click **sign out** in the bottom left corner of the home page and re-enter your Participation Code in order to finish playing all of the levels.

Thank you and good luck!

Red book Leaflet

For those in the pre-interview group, alongside the invite to take part in the mini-survey, they were also provided with a Red Book leaflet which detailed why they should provide their child's Red Book information and the purpose of this. For those in the in-interview group and allocated to CAWI-first, this

was part of the advanced mailing alongside their advanced letter. For CAPI, interviewers handed this over to eligible respondents.

Figure 4.4: Red book Leaflet



Red Book Instructions for interviewers

Interviewers were required to undertake the Red Book component on a different device to the standard CAPI machine used for Understanding Society. Due to this, Verian and NatCen interviewers received an instructions guide specific to each agency which detailed the step-by-step process of undertaking the Red Book component of the interview.

Parent and Child Leaflets

As noted in section 3, for children in households that completed the grid online, alongside the youth questionnaire and invite there was also a leaflet targeted at the parent or the young person. For those completing via CAPI – this would be included in the reminder for those that did not complete. Interviewers also had copies of both leaflets and could determine whether they thought it was useful to hand over either of the leaflets.

Figure 4.5: Parent Leaflet

Children are really important to Understanding Society, as their survey answers help us understand more about issues that directly affect them.

Every participant in Understanding Society represents thousands of other people living in the UK. We ask everyone in the household to complete an interview, to help us see how families are changing over time.

Very few studies in the world ask children and teenagers about their experiences over several years. Ours is the **only study in the UK** that captures children's experiences in this way. This makes the information that your child gives to Understanding Society **extremely important** – and we are very grateful when children and their families take part.

Please encourage your child to complete their survey because it is helping thousands of other children in the UK when they take part.



What if you have questions?

If you are worried about any of the questions we ask your child(ren), you can contact our participant liaison team.

You can visit our website:
www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/participants

You can contact our participant liaison team by email:
contact@understandingsociety.ac.uk

By Freephone:
0800 252 853

Or write to us:
FREEPOST RRXX-KEKJ-JGKS, Understanding Society,
University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester, CO4 3SQ.



ESER
University of Essex

ESRC
Economic and Social Research Council

IPS16 Youth Leaflet (Parent)

Your child and Understanding Society

Why do we ask children to take part?



Why do we give children their own survey?

The questions we ask your child cover the key areas of their life and include things like family life, friends, school, social media, health and leisure. Some of these topics may include questions about more serious issues, such as bullying, drinking alcohol or vaping.

Giving children their own survey allows us to tailor the questions to their experiences and to ask about things that happen at home, at school or in the street, that parents might not experience.

Children have told us that they like having their own special survey, as it shows that their experiences are important and they have a vital role in Understanding Society.

Are your child's survey answers confidential?

Yes. Your child's personal details such as name, address and date of birth are removed from their survey answers, so that they cannot be identified. Their details are never made available to anyone outside the Study team.

Just like your survey, we want you to treat your child's answers to their survey as confidential. When they have completed their questionnaire, they should seal it in the envelope and hand it back to the interviewer, or give it to you to post back.

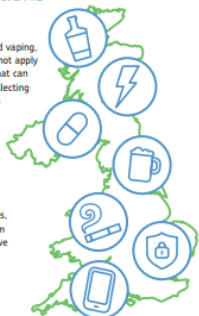
CONFIDENTIAL

Why do we ask questions on sensitive topics?

Topics such as drinking alcohol, smoking and vaping, drug use, bullying, and internet safety may not apply to your child directly, but these are issues that can impact children within this age range. By collecting this information, we are able to track what's happening with children across the UK.

We are careful to include only topics that your child will have learnt about at school, as part of the National Curriculum. The survey questions are developed with help from specialist researchers who work with children.

If you are worried about any of the questions, you can contact our Participant Liaison Team who can provide more information on why we ask these kinds of questions.



Why do we include questions on...

Alcohol?

In your child's survey we ask whether they have friends who drink alcohol. If they drink alcohol themselves and, if they do, how often.

Information from children's surveys in Understanding Society has helped researchers look at what makes young people less likely to drink or smoke. They discovered that children who know about the harmful effects of drinking and smoking were less likely to do either. Also, that children who reported higher happiness levels were less likely to drink or smoke.

Bullying?

We ask children if they experience bullying at school, at home, or online. We also ask if they have bullied someone.

Bullying is a big issue for children in the UK – and there are many reasons why children bully each other. Researchers have used Understanding Society to look at how children's behaviour has changed since the Covid pandemic. They found that the pandemic school closures have increased children's stress levels, and this has made them more likely to bully and fight. This research has been shared with organisations that support teachers and with the UK government.

Wellbeing?

Children in Understanding Society are asked how they feel about different aspects of their life. We are interested in how they feel about their appearance, their family, their friends, school, and life as a whole.

Information on children's wellbeing is vital for planning support services for children and their families. Each year The Children's Society produces The Good Childhood Report on the mental health of children in the UK, using information from children in Understanding Society. This report shows that children's happiness levels have been falling over time for things like school and appearance, but that most children remain happy with their family life.

If completing their survey makes your child want to talk to someone outside their family about the issues raised, we include a number of **helplines** that they can call or text.



Why do we ask you to allow your children to complete their survey in private?

Experience tells us that completing surveys on their own allows children to feel more open when they answer the questions. They can give their answer, rather than the 'right' answer.

Please do read the questions in your child's survey before you give it to them. You may want to discuss with them any topics that you think may confuse or worry them. Or you may want to talk to them afterwards about anything that completing the survey has made them think about.

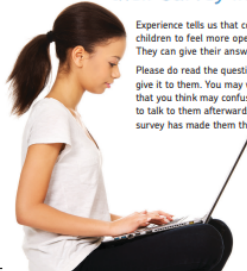


Figure 4.6: Child Leaflet



Core and project instructions

As in all Understanding Society waves, interviewers were provided with the Core Instructions and the wave specific (IP16) Project Instructions that covered all IP16 specific information.

5. The interview

The main component of the IP16 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. The majority of interviews (75%) were conducted online, with 22% completed by CAPI and the remaining 3% conducted by CATI.

Other elements of the IP16 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 or online)
- A proxy interview for adults that were unable or unwilling to complete a full interview

Interview length

Median interview lengths are given separately for different modes in table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Median interview length (hours, minutes and seconds) by interview type			
	CAWI interviews	CAPI interviews	CATI interviews
Household questionnaire (including enumeration)	0:14:41	0:17:37	0:14:48
Individual adult questionnaire – total (CAI + CASI)	0:38:16	0:42:44	0:37:44
CAI proxy questionnaire	-	0:05:09	-

Questionnaire programming

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

The Red Book element of the survey was programmed in Nfield rather than the usual Unicom platform which hosts the main Understanding Society survey. This was because of technical limitations of using existing CAPI machines and the Unicom platform. For those completing online, they were re-directed to the Red Book mini-survey at the relevant screen with another tab opening in which they entered their Red Book details and were required to enter their individual serial which was used to match-up both sets of data. For CAPI, interviewers were provided with an additional Android device which they used to administer the Red Book section of the interview. Interviewers were required to enter their interviewer number, name and the respondent's individual serial which was used to match data with the main survey.

Youth self completion questionnaire

Youth questionnaires for sample members aged 10 to 15 were completed on paper and online. These were sent by Verian's head office to respondents along with a £10 voucher.

Where the household completed the survey online or by telephone, questionnaires were posted to a parent (who had completed it online) with a request to ask their child to complete and return the paper questionnaire. For face-to-face interviews, interviewers provided 10-15-year-olds the paper questionnaire, a £10 incentive and a blank self-addressed envelope to seal the completed questionnaire within.

As noted in earlier sections, the youth questionnaire was also available for completion online. To access the youth questionnaire online, 10-15-year-olds could either scan the QR code in the letter or access via the URL and input their username and password. The online youth survey sat in the same location as the main survey with a re-direct based on the age of the respondent taking them to the relevant survey. Those eligible for the youth questionnaire were sent their login information directly from the office alongside their paper questionnaire and incentive.

Translations

The CAPI questionnaire and documents were translated into Welsh. However, no respondents required a Welsh interview.

6. Briefings

All interviewers working on the study were fully briefed in virtual briefings before the start of fieldwork. In addition to the standard briefing, the annotated version of the briefing slides were also made available to interviewers.

Interviewer briefings

Although most interviewers who worked on IP16 had prior experience working on Understanding Society, the briefings covered all aspects of general fieldwork procedures. However, briefings were primarily focused on elements that were new or unique to the study. Briefings lasted for an average of 4 hours and covered:

- Information on the Innovation Panel
- Overview of IP15 experiments results
- Overview of IP16 experiments
- Red Book experiment and details
- Interviewer task for IP16
- Interviewer materials
- Practice script setup
- Maximising response
- Field admin

The Red Book component of the briefing provided a detail step-by-step guide of how the Red Book experiment worked and the various different paths available to a respondent. This also provided general information on the android device and interviewing software used for the experiment. Additionally, other complicated experiments such as the Proxy and SHQ experiments were also detailed with relevant diagrams and screenshots were applicable.

7. Response

Household level response rate

Of the 2,465 households issued for IP16, 18 were ineligible but an additional 66 eligible 'split off' households were created during fieldwork¹, meaning there were 2,513 eligible households in total. Of eligible households, 70% were productive, but this varied for the different samples included, as shown in table 7.1 below.

Table 7.1: Household level response rate, by sample type							
	Original IP	IP4 refresh	IP7 refresh	IP10 refresh	IP11 refresh	IP14 refresh	Total
Any productive	77%	76%	71%	67%	59%	67%	70%
Fully productive	54%	58%	50%	49%	42%	50%	50%
Partially productive	23%	18%	21%	18%	17%	17%	19%
Any unproductive	23%	24%	29%	33%	41%	33%	30%
HH element(s) only	1%	2%	2%	3%	2%	3%	2%
Refusal	11%	7%	13%	16%	22%	17%	15%
Non-contact	4%	3%	6%	5%	7%	5%	5%
Other unproductive	7%	13%	8%	10%	10%	8%	9%
Base	584	261	312	220	381	755	2513

¹ A split off household is created when an original sample member moves out of the household they had been living in.

There was a big difference in response rates dependent on whether the household had taken part at the previous wave: 85% of households that had been productive at IP15 were productive again at IP16, but only 35% of households that had not been productive at IP15 were productive at IP16. This is shown in table 7.2.

Table 7.2: Household level response rate, by previous wave participation			
	Households productive last wave	Households not productive last wave	Total
Any productive	85%	35%	70%
Fully productive	64%	21%	50%
Partially productive	21%	14%	19%
Any unproductive	15%	65%	30%
HH element(s) only	2%	3%	2%
Refusal	7%	33%	15%
Non-contact	2%	11%	5%
Other unproductive	4%	18%	9%
Base	1743	770	2513

Individual level response rate

There were 4,805 eligible adults issued for IP16 (including new entrants). Of these, 2,806 (58%) completed a full adult interview and a further 25 partially completed an adult interview. There were also 22 proxy interviews (0.5%). The response rate was again much higher for adults that had taken part at the previous wave (83%, including partial interviews) than those that had not (26%). This is shown in table 7.3.

Table 7.3: Individual level response rate, by previous wave participation			
	Adults productive last wave	Adults not productive last wave	Total
Full adult interview	83%	26%	58%
Partial adult interview	1%	0%	1%
Proxy interview	0%	1%	0%
Unproductive	16%	72%	41%
Base	2716	2089	4805

In households where at least one adult took part in the survey, there were 249 eligible 10 to 15 year olds. Of these, 128 (51%) completed a youth paper questionnaire.

8. Data

Combining CAWI and CAPI data

At IP16 there were two sources of CAI data to be merged – CAPI and CAWI². This meant the first stage of data processing was combining the CAPI and CAWI data together.

There were measures in place within the electronic sample management system 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.

While IP16 used the same CAI script across modes (with routing to tailor 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 one for CAWI so the formatted data needed to draw data from both of these.

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 meant 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 many of 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. 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 from paper youth self-completion questionnaires 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.

Combining PAPI and CAWI youth data

PAPI and CAWI youth data was combined using the relevant information passed forward through the unique identifiers of respondents. As the online and paper questionnaire were identical, we were able to merge the data easily with the relevant edits applied. Scanned data from the paper youth self-completion questionnaires were reconciled against CAI data to ensure the data was attributed to

² Whilst some interviews were conducted by CATI, this was done by interviewers using CAPI systems, so the CATI data was held in the same place as CAPI data and therefore did not present an additional source of data that required merging.

the correct respondent. This was done based on serial number, parental details (serial number and name), name, date of birth and gender.

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.

Red Book data

Data collected for the Red Book experiment was also matched to the main dataset. To match respondents from the main survey and the mini survey for the Red Book experiment we were able to match based on the individual serial in both datasets. Additionally, we were also able to ensure respondents entered the correct details through their first name, last name and the details provided for their eligible child (name and date of birth) which acted as an additional data validation check.

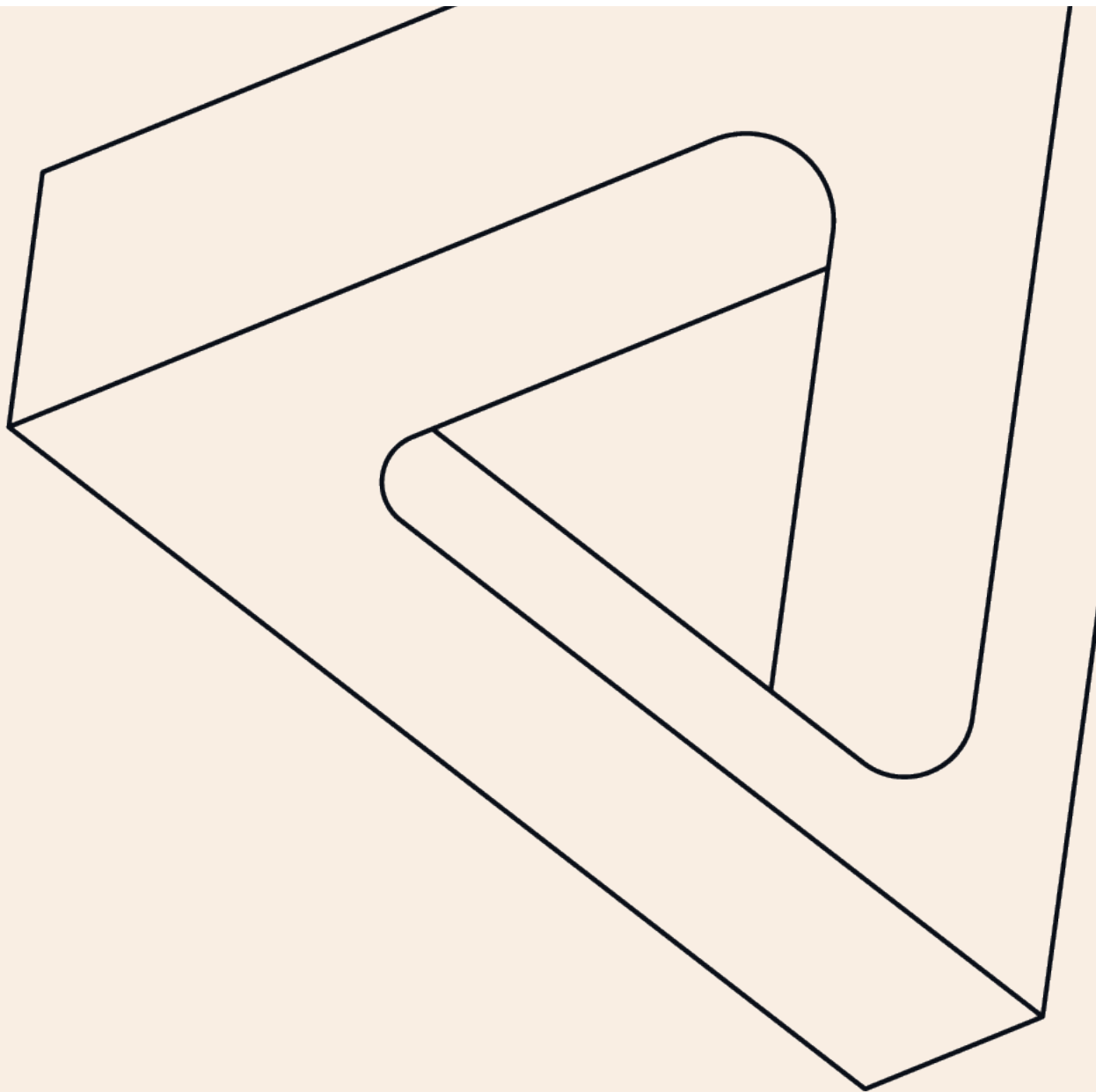
Data checking

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 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 variable, that a response was present when there should be a response, and not present where there should not be a response, according to questionnaire routing.



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that shape the world.



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