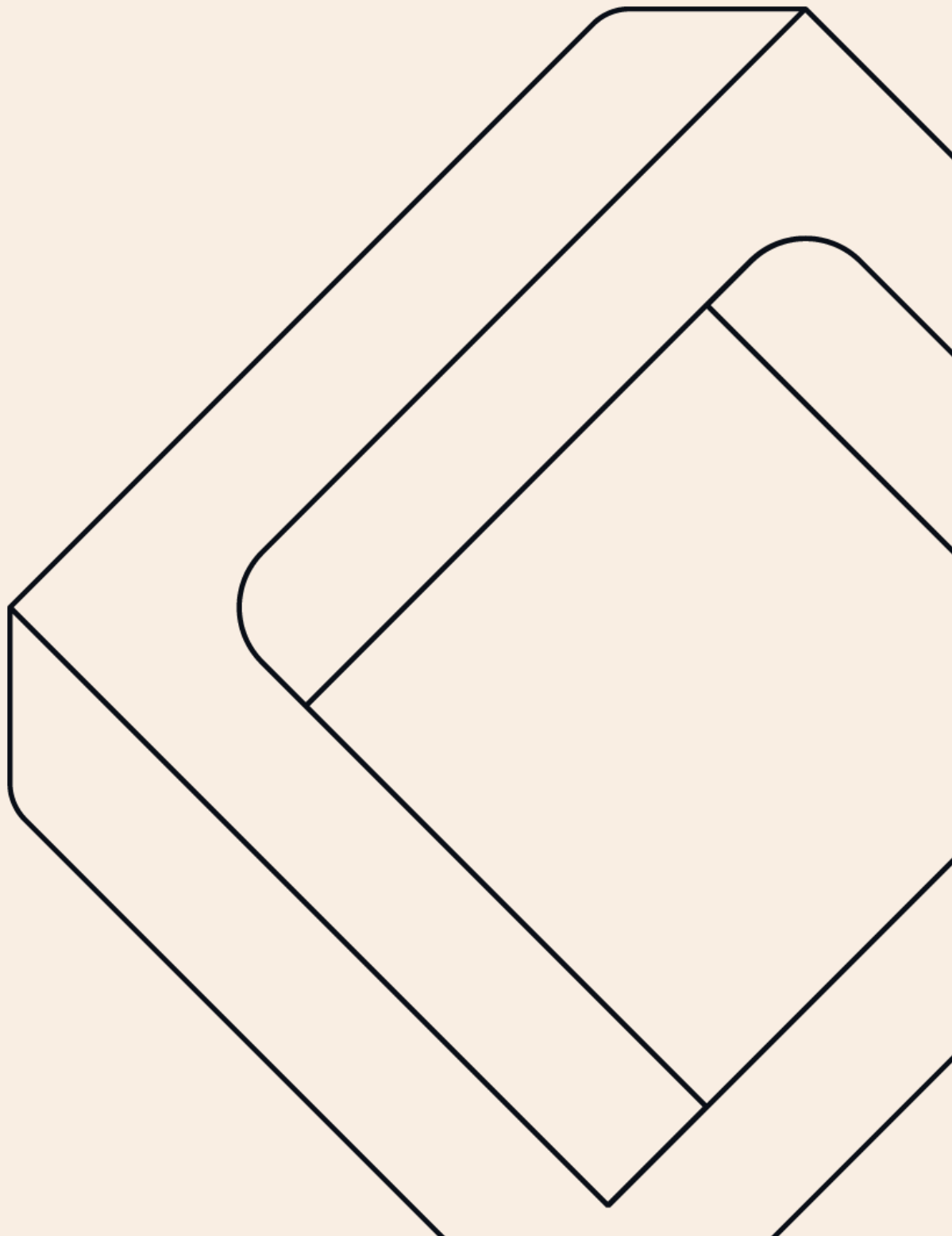


Understanding Society: Wave 14 boost technical report

October 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. This study 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 the wave 14 boost of Understanding Society, which was undertaken by Verian and NatCen Social Research, working in consortium. The original aim of the wave 14 boost project was to recruit 10,000 new households to the study. The boost was the first time a new general population sample has been added to Understanding Society since the study's inception.

Fieldwork response was impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Fieldwork started in January 2022 (a year later than originally planned, due to the Covid-19 pandemic) and was impacted by an industry-wide reduction in response rates observed after the pandemic, as well as the challenge of rebuilding and growing interviewer panels as face-to-face fieldwork restarted across the UK. Length of interview also likely affected response. The planned individual interview length was 40 minutes, but adult interviews actually lasted around 60 minutes on average.

The wave 14 boost ran in parallel to the wave 14 main survey. The content of the wave 14 boost questionnaire was largely the same as the main wave 14 survey, so the questionnaire was scripted to cover both samples, and data for the main and boost samples was processed together. There were significant differences between the two projects in relation to contact procedures due to the boost only contacting households who were new to the study. Given this, the boost was treated as a standalone project.

The content of this report focuses on the features unique to the boost. Due to the crossover between the wave 14 boost and the wave 14 main survey this report will, at times, direct to the wave 14 main survey technical report for further information.

1. Sample design

This chapter outlines how the sample was selected for the wave 14 boost.

1.1. Sample selection

The sample for the Wave 14 Boost Sample survey was clustered in Great Britain but unclustered in Northern Ireland.

1.1.1. Great Britain

Primary sampling units in Great Britain were based on postcode sector (e.g. all the addresses in all the postcodes starting 'TN15 6' would be included in the 'TN15 6XX' sector) but with some merging of neighbouring sectors where one or more contained fewer than 500 residential addresses¹ in the October 2021 edition of the Postcode Address File.² In total, there were 8,679 primary sampling units: 8,330 of these (96.0%) contained only one postcode sector; 269 (3.1%) contained two sectors; and the remaining 80 (0.9%) contained three or more sectors, up to a maximum of 21.

The primary sampling units in GB were sorted before a systematic sample of 960 was drawn. Each primary sampling unit had a selection probability that was proportionate to the number of residential addresses it contained.

The sort order for primary sampling units was determined by:

1. Broad region (Scotland and Wales separately but combining English regions into four super regions: (i) NE England, Yorkshire and Humberside, NW England; (ii) E Midlands, W Midlands, E England; (iii) SE England, SW England; (iv) London [6 strata in total])
2. *Within broad region, except London*: urban/not urban [$5 \times 2 + 1 = 11$ sub-strata in total])
3. *Within previous level stratum*: index of multiple deprivation ((i) most deprived 33%, (ii) middle 33%, (iii) least deprived 33% [$11 \times 3 = 33$ sub-strata in total])
4. *Within previous level stratum but in England only*: ethnic diversity ((i) most diverse 33%, (ii) the rest [$21 \times 2 = 42$ sub-strata in total, plus the 12 in Scotland and Wales formed at the previous step])
5. *Within previous level stratum*: geographic sort (local authority (2019), then within local authority, alphanumeric listing based on the code of the 'main' sector within the primary sampling unit).

The sources used to determine the sort order at steps 2, 3, and 4 were: (2) ONS neighbourhood classification based on 2011 Census data, with the primary sampling unit

¹ More properly, postage delivery points coded as 'residential' rather than confirmed residential addresses.

² One part of rural Scotland could not reasonably be combined with any other and was allowed to be its own primary sampling unit, despite containing only 449 addresses.

assigned to the modal class; (3) within-country neighbourhood-level indices (2019 for England and Wales, 2020 for Scotland) 'best fit' (by ONS) to postcode sector and then mean-aggregated at primary sampling unit level; (4) 2011 Census data at the neighbourhood level, aggregated to primary sampling unit level. Ethnic diversity (step 4) was calculated as the sum of squared estimated population shares for five subgroups: White ethnic groups, Mixed ethnic groups, Asian ethnic groups, Black ethnic groups, and Other ethnic groups.

For analysis purposes, the 54 sub-strata constructed after stage 4 of the sorting process may be treated as sample strata: the minimum number of selected primary sampling units per stratum was five (the required minimum per stratum for accurate sampling variance estimation is two).

As noted above, 960 primary sampling units were selected, each with a sampling probability proportional to the number of residential addresses it contained. In each sampled primary sampling unit, either 54 or 56 addresses were sampled, with the intention that half of these (i.e. 27 or 28) would be issued, with the remainder allocated to a reserve pool. To do this, the 960 selected primary sampling units were listed by their original sort order and the number of addresses to be sampled (54 or 56) was determined through rotation after a random start.

The next step was to allocate the selected primary sampling units (PSUs) to the 24 issue months (January 2022 through to December 2023): 40 per month. The 960 selected PSUs were listed by their original sort order and divided into groups of 24 (so the first group consisted of the first 24 in sort order, etc.). Within each group, PSUs were allocated at random, one to each of the 24 sample months. ISER carried out this part of the work.

Within selected primary sampling units allocated to year 1 (2022), all residential addresses that were listed in the October 2021 extract of the Postcode Address File were eligible to be sampled. These addresses were sorted alphanumerically by postcode and then by first line of addresses before a systematic sample of 54 or 56 was drawn. In total, 26,374 addresses were sampled from across the 480 primary sampling units allocated to year 1. The same process was repeated for year 2 (2023) primary sampling units but using an updated version of the Postcode Address File. Due to this update, the overall address sampling probability varied slightly between years and was only exactly uniform in year 1.

In each primary sampling unit, one half of the sampled addresses was allocated to the reserve pool, leaving either 27 or 28 for primary release. In the event, only a small number of reserve issue addresses were released, restricted to primary sampling units allocated to issue months 19-24 and averaging only one additional address in each.

In addition, a small number of addresses were removed by ISER before issue because they matched the (updated) address of an existing Understanding Society panel household. In grand total, 26,485 addresses were issued in Great Britain, slightly more than the initial intention of 26,400.

1.1.2. Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland, a systematic equal probability sample of 1,536 addresses was drawn. Before the sample was drawn, the Postcode Address File in Northern Ireland was sorted by (i)

local authority, (ii) urban/not urban, (iii) index of multiple deprivation decile, (iv) super output area code, (v) census output area code, (vi) postcode, and (vii) first line of addresses. The sources for (ii) and (iii) were the same as for the Great Britain sample, albeit with no aggregation to higher levels of geography. Using the same sort order, half of the sampled addresses were allocated to the reserve pool using the same rotation system as was applied within primary sampling units in Great Britain (see above).

ISER then allocated the 1,536 sampled addresses in Northern Ireland to the twelve months of year 1 (2022). The addresses were listed by their original sort order and divided into groups of 120 (so the first group consisted of the first 120 in sort order, etc.). Within each group, addresses were allocated at random, ten to each of the 12 months (the last group contained only 48 addresses, so 4 were allocated at random to each month). Verian formed fieldwork assignments from addresses assigned to the same quarter, using a maximum distance algorithm. In general, these assignments contained fewer addresses than equivalents in Great Britain due to greater travel time between addresses. No assignments were allocated to year 2 (2023).

In the event, only the main sample issue of 768 addresses was activated (no reserve sample addresses were issued). Four of these addresses were removed by ISER before issue because they matched the (updated) address of an existing Understanding Society panel household. So, 764 addresses were issued in Northern Ireland.

1.2. Additional generated households

In most cases, the addresses selected for the survey contained only one household, but for a small number of addresses they included more than one dwelling unit (e.g. where a house had been split into two flats) or more than one household sharing the same address. In these cases we created additional 'split off' households in the sample so that up to three households sharing the same address could participate in the survey. As a result, an additional 172 households were issued for fieldwork.

2. Fieldwork design

This section gives details of the sample that was issued at wave 14 boost and the overall fieldwork design.

2.1. Fieldwork Structure

Sample was issued to field in 24 monthly batches, the first in January 2022 and the last in December 2023.

2.2. Allocation to issue mode

The original plan for allocation to mode was 50% face-to-face first and 50% web first. However, fieldwork started in the first quarter of 2022, this was when face-to-face fieldwork was just restarting across a number of studies in the UK after restrictions imposed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. There was some concern about how selected households might react to receiving a letter saying an interviewer would visit them at home. For the first quarter a decision was taken to issue 80% of household web first (and 20% face-to-face first) so that most household would have the opportunity to take part online rather than receiving an interviewer visit. For Q2 through to Q4, we reverted to the original plan of 50% face-to-face first and 50% web first. From Q5 to Q8 the decision was made to go back to the 20% face-to-face and 80% web first split. This was due to the web first sample achieving higher response rates across Q1 to Q4.

2.3. Fieldwork timings

The web first sample had an initial web fieldwork period of 5 weeks. At the end of 5 weeks any households that had not completed online were issued to an interviewer. Both the web first and face-to-face first sample was issued to interviewers at the same time, 19 weeks before the end of fieldwork.

The web survey remained open throughout fieldwork so the web first sample could still complete online after they had been issued to an interviewer. Once interviewer fieldwork started, interviewers were able to assist with online completion (e.g. supplying households with their login details and the web survey address) if household members had a strong preference for completing online rather than by face-to-face.

Table 1.1 shows the timing schedule by allocation to mode.

Table 1.1: Fieldwork timings

Fieldwork weeks	Face-to-face first sample	Web first sample
Web fieldwork (5 weeks)	No fieldwork for face-to-face first sample	Sample members invited to take part online
Interviewer fieldwork weeks 1 to 12	Assignments with original interviewer - interviewers aimed to have final outcomes for all sample after 12 weeks	Unproductive households issued to interviewers to work face-to-face assignments (web survey remains open throughout fieldwork)
Interviewer fieldwork weeks 13 to 19	Face-to-face re-issue period ³	Face-to-face re-issue period
CAWI mop up period weeks 16 to 19	Households that were still 'live' (e.g. did not have a final outcome) and had not completed any interviewing, and households with final non-contact outcomes, were sent a final letter inviting them to take part online.	

In reality, there was some flexibility around these timings. Original interviewers could hold on to sample after 12 weeks of fieldwork if they were still working the assignment.

³ Re-issues were worked predominantly by CAPI, but interviewers were also able to offer CATI interviews at any point during fieldwork.

3. Contact and co-operation

This chapter describes the contact strategy for Wave 14 Boost.

3.1. Advance mailing

As all sample members in the Wave 14 boost were new to the project, initial contact was made through sending letters to their home address. The letters were addressed to 'Dear Resident' as the names of household members were unknown. For addresses in Wales letters were sent in both English and Welsh. The advance mailing varied a little depending on whether sample members were part of the face-to-face first sample or the web first sample.

For the face-to-face first sample, all households were sent a letter shortly before the start of face-to-face fieldwork for that month. The letter explained that an interviewer would call soon.

For the web first sample, all households were sent a prenotification letter a week prior to web fieldwork start. The letter notified respondents that they would shortly receive another letter with details for completing online, and should they not be able to complete the interview online, an interviewer would contact them.

Invite letters were then sent on the first day of web fieldwork for that month asking web first respondents to complete the survey online, providing the web address and their login details for doing so. The letter again explained that, if they were unable to complete the survey online, an interviewer would contact them.

All letters were designed with Understanding Society branding and were signed by the Director of Understanding Society. All advance letters were accompanied by an information leaflet, including further details about the study, and another leaflet which explained the protocols being used to work in a Covid-secure manner.

3.2. Experiments with QR codes and government logos

During January to March 2023 (quarter 5 of issued sample), half of all prenotification and advance letters were sent in envelopes that included the HM Government logo in the top right corner. The other half of the sample were sent letters in plain envelopes.

Also during January to March 2023, half of web first invite letters contained a QR code. When scanned, the QR code took respondents directly to their interview, without need for entering login details. The other half of the sample received letters without a QR code.

The objective was to test whether the use of government logos on envelopes and QR codes impacts on response. The results showed that both were effective in increasing response, and so, from April 2023 onwards all letters were sent in envelopes that included a government logo, all letters inviting households to complete the web survey had a QR code, and all letters had a government logo on the letter itself. For Q7 and Q8, the government logo was adapted by region, with the Welsh Government logo used for sample in Wales and the Scottish Government logo for sample in Scotland.

3.2.1. Examples of the CAWI first and CAPI first advance letters.

Figure 3.1 CAWI first advance letter


HM Government

Tell us what your life is like and receive

up to **£30** as a thank you

RESP_Name
ff_Address1
ff_Address2
ff_Address3
ff_Address4
ff_Address5
ff_PostCode

XX/XX/XXXX

Dear Resident,

You can now take part in **Understanding Society**, the largest study of its kind in the UK. Every year tens of thousands of UK households tell us about their health, work, education and family life. To welcome you to the study we have enclosed a **£5 gift card**.

How to take part?



1. Go to: **www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/survey-web**
2. Enter your household access code: **XXXX XXXX XXXX**
3. Complete the survey and receive a **£20 voucher** each to spend online or donate to charity (if you complete by **[xx date]** you'll receive an extra **£10**)





If you cannot take part online, an interviewer from Kantar Public or NatCen Social Research will contact you and invite you to take part in-person or by phone.

Why take part?



After Covid-19 and now with a cost-of-living crisis there has never been a more important time to have your say. Please contribute to research that is used to make decisions that make our lives better.

Who can take part?



Everyone in your household aged 16 and over can use the access code to take part. The study takes around **45-60 minutes** to complete.

How can I find out more?



The leaflet that came with this letter tells you more or you can visit <https://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/participants>. You can also email or phone us using contact@understandingsociety.ac.uk or (freephone) **0800 252 853**.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to welcoming you to Understanding Society.

Yours faithfully



Michaela Benzeval
Director, Understanding Society.



The information you give us is protected by law and is treated as confidential. It will only ever be used for the purposes of this study.

2

262400330 / W14 Boost Invite Letter 2

Figure 3.2 CAPI first advance letter



Tell us what your life is like and
receive **£20** as a thank you

RESP_Name
ff_Address1
ff_Address2
ff_Address3
ff_Address4
ff_Address5
ff_PostCode

XX/XX/XXXX

Dear Resident,

Understanding Society is the largest study of its kind in the UK. Each year tens of thousands of people tell us what their life is like. The results are used by the Government and other decision makers to deliver services and make decisions that make our lives better. As Director of this study at the University of Essex, I would like to invite you to take part. To welcome you to the study we have enclosed a **£5 gift card**.

Why take part?

 After Covid-19 and now with a cost-of-living crisis there has never been a more important time to have your say. You'll receive a **£20 voucher** for taking part in the study.

What happens next?

 An interviewer from Kantar Public or NatCen Social Research will soon be in touch to arrange a convenient time to talk to you. All our interviewers carry photo identification so you can be confident of who they are when they visit you.

 We do not currently have a telephone number for you. If you would rather be contacted by phone please get in touch to let us know your phone number.

Who can take part?

 This is a household study so everyone you live with, aged 16 and over will be invited to take part. The study takes around **60 minutes** to complete.

How can I find out more?

 The leaflet that came with this letter tells you more or you can visit <https://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/participants>. You can also email or phone us using contact@understandingsociety.ac.uk or (freephone) **0800 252 853**.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to welcoming you to Understanding Society.

Yours faithfully



Michaela Benzeval
Director, Understanding Society.



The information you give us is protected by law and is treated as confidential. It will only ever be used for the purposes of this study.

262400330 / W14 Boost CAPI Letter 6

3.3. Reminder letters

Reminder letters were sent to all web-first households who met the following criteria:

- Were yet to start the household grid
- Had completed the household grid and/or household questionnaire, but individual interviews had yet to be completed
- Had not opted out of the survey

Where a grid had not been completed, reminders were sent at household level. Where a grid had been completed, details from the grid were used to send reminder letters to any adults in the household that had not yet completed an individual interview.

As for the advanced mailings, for all addresses in Wales, the letter was sent in both Welsh and English. From January to March 2023 half of the reminder letters contained a QR code and/or a government logo on the envelope. From April 2023 all reminder letters contained a QR code and government logo, and had a government logo on the envelope.

3.4. Incentives

The standard incentive amount at Wave 14 was £20 for all adult sample members, and this was conditional on taking part in the survey.

In addition to this there was a £10 'early bird bonus' incentive for CAWI first respondents. This was conditional on them completing the web survey in the first five weeks of fieldwork, before households were issued to interviewers.

This additional £10 was also re-introduced at the CAWI mop up stage, so that anyone who took part in the last three weeks of fieldwork (in any mode) received £30 rather than the standard £20.

All incentives were 'Love2Shop' gift cards, that could be used at a variety of shops. For the first year of fieldwork, conditional incentives were posted to sample members after their interview, irrespective of mode of participation. In the second year of fieldwork, for CAPI interviews, interviewers would hand out conditional incentives at the end of the interview. Interviewers were not able to hand out incentives in the first year of fieldwork due to Covid related health and safety protocols which minimised passing documents and other items between interviewers and respondents.

3.4.1. Incentive experiment

From January to March 2023 (quarter 5 of issued sample), there was an experiment to include a £5 unconditional incentive in advance letters for half the sample. This showed a positive impact on early response for that quarter and so was adopted for all sample from April 2023 onwards (quarters 6 to 8).

3.5. Youth incentives

Young people aged 10-15 were given a £10 gift card for completing the paper youth self-completion questionnaire.

In the first year of fieldwork, irrespective of the mode of completion for other household members, the youth paper questionnaire, along with the £10 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. In the second year of fieldwork, where an interviewer completed any CAPI interviews in the household, they would also hand out the youth incentives and paper questionnaires. Interviewers were not able to hand these out in the first year of fieldwork due to Covid related health and safety protocols which minimised passing documents and other items between interviewers and respondents.

3.6. First contact with face to face interviewers

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 (or final web reminder letters) and receiving a visit from their interviewer. In reality this was not achieved on many cases for the W14 boost fieldwork due to interviewer capacity constraints.

Before any contact was made with households, the only contact information available to interviewers was the address. Therefore all initial contact was attempted face-to-face. Once interviewers had made contact with households they were able to offer interviews by telephone at any point during fieldwork. This was so any individuals who were uncomfortable with inviting an interviewer into their home (particularly due to concerns over Covid) could still take part.

3.7. Doorstep documents

Interviewers were provided with a number of materials that they could use on the doorstep to help with contacting household members and persuading them to take part. All materials were 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 either Verian or NatCen 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** – all contact with households prior to face-to-face fieldwork was done through letters. It was important, therefore, that interviewers were provided a reusable copy of this advance letter. Showing this to respondents was a quick way of reminding them about the letters they had received. In addition to the laminated letter, Interviewers also had non-laminated copies that they could leave

with respondents. This was most helpful for respondents who had not received, or had lost the letter.

Information for participants leaflet – these leaflets included further information about Understanding Society: the purpose of the; how households were selected; and information about data confidentiality.

- **Case study leaflets** – eight 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.

4. Translations

4.1. Formal translations

The questionnaire was translated into nine different languages to help the survey be inclusive of people that would otherwise be unable to take part, in particular those in ethnic minority groups. Most translated interviews were done online. Where a CAPI or CATI translated interview was required, the interview was conducted in translation either by an interviewer that had been accredited in that language, or by an interviewer accompanied by an interpreter.

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

Table 4.1: Number of translated interviews conducted in each language

Language	No. individual interviews
Bengali	1
Gujarati	0
Polish	10
Portuguese	1
Punjabi Gurmukhi	0
Punjabi Urdu	0
Turkish	0
Urdu	3
Welsh	3

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.

4.2. Informal translations

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

4.3. Welsh translations of materials

For all households in Wales, advance letters were sent in both English and Welsh. The youth self-completion questionnaire was also translated into Welsh.

5. The interview

This chapter gives an overview of the Wave 14 Boost questionnaire.

5.1. Wave 14 and Wave 14 Boost questionnaire

The questionnaire for the Wave 14 Boost was based on the Wave 14 main questionnaire. It included:

- A household enumeration (or household grid) to gather information about the individuals living in the household;
- A household questionnaire which asked for information (such as utility bills and home tenure) at household level;
- An adult interview (for those aged 16 and above);
- A proxy interview for adults that were unable or unwilling to complete a full interview;
- A youth paper self-completion questionnaire for those aged 10–15.

As all respondents in the boost were new to the project, their routing through the survey largely mirrored that of 'new entrants' to the main survey. Given this, separate questionnaire specifications for the boost were not required. Rather, any questionnaire differences that were specific to the boost sample, when required, were indicated by the sample variable `ff_hhorig`, with `ff_hhorig=21` indicating a boost respondent. Adaptations made for the boost sample were to ensure that all questions and any wording shown were applicable to entirely new households.

5.2. Youth questionnaire

The Youth Questionnaire for the Wave 14 boost was the same questionnaire that was used for the Wave 14 mainstage. No adaptations were made for Wave 14 boost sample. For more details on the administration of the youth questionnaires please see section 5.3 of the Wave 14 mainstage technical report.

5.3. Length of interview

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, or who had children.

Table 5.1 shows the median length of interview by mode of completion.

Table 5.1: Median interview lengths (hours, minutes and seconds) by mode

Questionnaire element	CAWI	CAPI	CATI
Household questionnaire (including enumeration)	0:18:36	0:18:43	0:17:31
Individual adult questionnaire – total	0:48:38	0:59:40	1:03:10
CAI proxy questionnaire	-	0:06:07	-

6. Briefings and interviewer materials

This chapter outlines how interviewers were briefed the documentation they were provided to aid fieldwork.

6.1. Interview briefings

All interviewers who worked on the project were briefed prior to starting fieldwork. Briefings took place online over Teams both prior to and during fieldwork, depending on when the interviewers were starting their assignment.

Interviewers who had not previously worked on Understanding Society took part in a longer, full day briefing. The briefing covered the following:

- Background to Understanding Society
- Objectives of the W14 Boost
- Fieldwork design and timetable
- Structure of the survey (including observational questions, household grid, household questionnaire, individual interview and youth survey)
- Overview of their assignment and how to perform various key tasks
- Interviewing on telephone and transferring respondents to web
- Review of the fieldwork documentation
- Overcoming reluctance training
- Where to find more information and further support

Interviewers who had experience working on Understanding Society took part in a shorter, half day briefing. The briefing covered the following:

- Objectives of the W14 Boost
- Fieldwork design and timetable
- Refresher on their assignment
- Review of the fieldwork documentation
- Overcoming reluctance training
- Where to find more information and further support

6.2. Interviewer documents

Interviewers were sent documentation packs in advance of starting their assignment. The packs contained training documents, documents to be used during interviews, reference materials and other task-related documentation. Details are provided below.

Training materials

- Core project instruction manual (wave on wave)
- Project-specific instruction manual (W14 Boost specific)

The core and project-specific instruction manuals provided detailed guidance on all aspects of the interviewer's assignment.

In-interview materials

- Showcards
- 'Thank you' leaflets
- MRS leaflet
- Consent documents
- Data linkage leaflet
- Youth questionnaires
- Incentive vouchers

Reference materials

- Copies of the advance letters sent to respondents
- Copies of case studies (how the research has been used by researchers)

Other assignment-related documentation

- PPE equipment

7. Response

This chapter gives details of response rates achieved on the Wave 14 boost sample. As discussed in the introduction to this report, the original aim for the boost sample was to recruit an additional 10,000 households to the study. Fieldwork started in January 2022 (a year later than originally planned, due to the Covid-19 pandemic) and was impacted by an industry-wide reduction in response rates observed after the pandemic, as well as the challenge of rebuilding and growing interviewer panels as face-to-face fieldwork had been able to restart.

7.1. Household response

Table 7.1 shows the overall response to the survey at household level. As the table shows, 5,761 households were productive (at least one adult in the household completed an individual interview), representing a 22% response rate, and a further 1,015 households completed a household grid (and in some cases a household interview) but no individual interviews. The most common source of non-response was refusals, but there was also 7% of sample that was not worked by an interviewer (due to challenges building interviewer field forces back up after the Covid-19 pandemic), although these households did all have the opportunity to take part online.

Table 7.1: Household outcomes

	Households	
	n	%
<i>Base: All issued sample</i>		
Issued	27,249	99
Split households	172	1
Total households	27,421	
<i>Base: Total households</i>		
Ineligible households	1,135	4
Eligible households	26,286	96
<i>Base: Eligible households</i>		
Fully productive (all adults in the household took part)	3,610	14
Partially productive (at least one adult in the household took part)	2,151	8
Household grid completed but no adult interviews	1,015	4
No contact	3,446	13
Refusal	11,348	43
Other unproductive	2,972	11
Not worked	1,744	7

7.1.1.Measures taken to increase response in year 2 of fieldwork

Relatively early on in fieldwork it was clear that response was better in sample issued web-first and that the majority of responses from this sample were from the online survey, rather than interviewer fieldwork. In year 2 of the survey (samples issued in 2023) it was therefore agreed that 80% of sample would be issued web first, rather than the original plan of 50%. We also experimented with three interventions intended to increase web response in samples issued in January to March 2023 – all three proved successful and so were introduced for all cases issued in April 2023 to December 2023. The three interventions were:

- Including government logos on the envelopes for all letters (as well as on the letters themselves);
- Including QR codes (linking directly to the survey for that household) on all web invite and reminder letters, to remove the step of entering the survey address and login information;
- Including a £5 unconditional incentive in advance letters.

These changes meant response was notably higher in year 2 of the survey than year 1, as shown in table 7.2.

Table 7.2: Household response by year

	Year 1 %	Year 2 %
Fully productive (all adults in the household took part)	11	16
Partially productive (at least one adult in the household took part)	7	10
All productive households	18	26
Household grid completed but no adult interviews	3	5
No contact	14	12
Refusal	44	42
Other unproductive	11	11
Not worked	10	4
<i>Base: eligible households</i>	13,414	12,872

7.1.2. Online household response

For households issued web-first, they had 5 weeks to complete the survey online before being issued to an interviewer. Table 7.3 shows the proportion of web first households that did any interviewing online during this five week web only fieldwork period. The web survey then remained open during face-to-face fieldwork. The measures discussed in section 7.1.1 had a notable impact on web fieldwork, so response is split by year as well as the overall figures being shown.

Table 7.3: Household response at the web stage

	Year 1 %	Year 2 %	Total
Fully productive (all adults in the household took part)	6	11	9
Partially productive (at least one adult in the household took part)	5	8	7
Household grid completed but no adult interviews	2	4	3
<i>Base: households issued web-first</i>	<i>7,967</i>	<i>10,705</i>	<i>18,672</i>

7.2. Individual response

In households where a grid was completed, there were 12,399 adults (aged 16 or over). Of these, 7,934 (64%) completed an adult interview. There were 1,120 young people aged 10 to 15 who were eligible to complete a paper questionnaire, 423 (38%) did so. There were also 1,652 children aged under 10 who were not eligible for any of the questionnaire instruments. Table 7.4 shows the full breakdown of outcomes for individuals in enumerated households.

Table 7.4: Individual outcomes

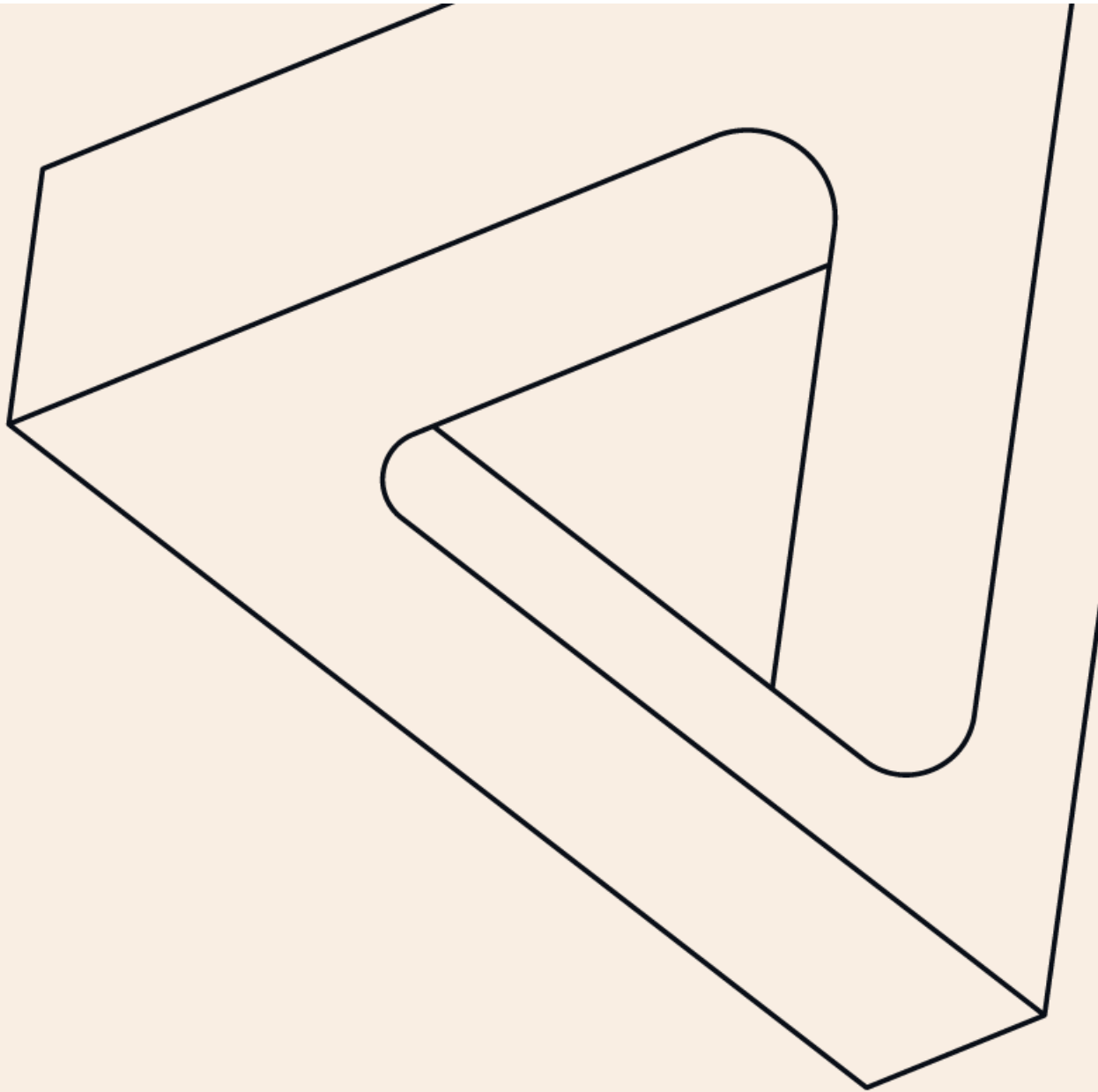
	Adults (16+)		10 – 15 year olds	
	n	%	n	%
Full interview	7,841	63	421	38
Partial interview	93	1	2	<1
Proxy interview	55	<1	-	-
Refusal	3,622	29	648	58
No contact with individual	691	6	46	4
Other unproductive	97	1	3	<1
<i>Base: individuals in households where a grid was completed</i>	12,399		1,120	

8. Data preparation

Although the boost sample at wave 14 was managed as a separate survey, it used the same CAI script as the main study. The data from the boost was therefore processed along with the rest of the wave 14 data. Please see section 8 of the wave 14 technical report for further details.



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