# **KANTAR PUBLIC**



# **UK Household Longitudinal Study**

Wave 13 technical report

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#### Introduction

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

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

This report gives details of Wave 13 of Understanding Society, which was undertaken by Kantar Public and NatCen Social Research, working in consortium.

## Overview of methodology

Households were issued in 24 monthly batches, starting in January 2021, with all households being issued in the same quarter as they were in previous waves. The sample was separated into two issue modes: 'CAWI first' and 'CAPI first'. The allocation of households to issue mode was done by ISER.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, fieldwork for Understanding Society was modified for much of Wave 13. For the first 15 sample months (January 2021 to March 2022 samples), all sample was issued CAWI first. Any households that did not complete online were issued to interviewers to contact and interview by telephone. Interviewers could also encourage adults to complete the survey online during this time.

For the remainder of fieldwork (samples issued from April 2022 to December 2022) around 87% of households were issued web first, and 13% were CAPI first. For these samples, any households that did not complete online were issued to an interviewer to be interviewed face-to-face, although interviewers were also able to offer telephone interviews as an option. Interviewers working on January to March 2022 samples were also able to make face-to-face contact attempts from April 2022.

#### **Survey elements**

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

A household enumeration questionnaire, completed once per household to confirm who is currently living there;

A household questionnaire, completed once per household to gather some household level information:

An individual questionnaire, completed by anyone aged 16 or more in each household;

A paper self-completion questionnaire, completed by children aged 10 to 15;

Consents for linking to administrative records.

The median questionnaire lengths were 3 minutes and 49 seconds for the household enumeration grid, 11 minutes and 47 seconds for the household questionnaire, and 40 minutes and 34 seconds for the individual interview.

## Survey content

The Wave 13 survey covered many topics, including some sets of questions that are asked every year, and other 'rotating' content that had been included in some previous waves but not all. A full list of modules included in the survey can be found in Appendix A.

## **Outputs**

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

working papers and media coverage of Understanding Society are available on the study website (www.understandingsociety.ac.uk).

## 1. Fieldwork design

This section gives details of the sample that was issued at Wave 13 and the overall fieldwork design.

#### 1.1 Allocation to issue mode

Restrictions imposed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic meant no face-to-face interviewing was possible from the start of Wave 13. For the first 15 sample months (January 2021 to March 2022 samples), all sample was therefore issued CAWI first. For samples issued from April 2022 to December 2022, there was an allocation to issue mode. ISER used a model to identify the 13% of households least like to respond online and these were allocated to CAPI first. The remaining households were then allocated to CAWI first.

## 1.2 Sample

The majority of Understanding Society sample was selected at Wave 1, for details of how this was done please refer to the Wave 1 technical report. Since Wave 1 some households have dropped out of the study, either due to adamantly refusing, continuous non-participation, or moving to an unknown location. Additional households have also been created where households have split, for example, where grown up children have moved out of their parents' home. Additional sample was introduced to the study as part of an immigrant and ethnic minority boost (IEMB), conducted alongside Wave 6 of Understanding Society, for further details please refer to the IEMB technical report. This IEMB sample was incorporated into the main part of the study for the first time at Wave 7.

The total number of 'active' households issued at Wave 13 was 20,673. This included four different sample types:

- The general population (GP) sample, originally sampled at Wave 1 of Understanding Society – 13,129 GP households were issued at Wave 13
- The ethnic minority boost (EMB) sample, originally sampled at Wave 1 of Understanding Society – 1,633 EMB households were issued at Wave 13
- The British Household Panel Survey (BHPS) and Northern Ireland Household Panel Survey (NIHPS) samples that were incorporated into Understanding Society at Wave 2 – 4,510 BHPS/NIHPS households were issued at Wave 13
- The immigrant and ethnic minority boost (IEMB) sample, originally sampled at Wave 6 of Understanding Society 1,401 IEMB households were issued at Wave 13.

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

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

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> After this a small number of adjustments were made for the sake of practicality. For example, each wave a small number of households are issued to the same address. The most common cause of this is a grown up child moving out of their parents' home (e.g. to attend University) so that a new 'split off' household is created for them. They later move back to their parents' address and inform ISER of this between waves. Therefore at the next wave both the original household (containing the parents) and the split off household (containing the grown up child) are issued to the same address. Interviewers are aware of this situation and know how to deal with it so that the two households are merged back together. To ensure this would happen any households issued to the same address were issued CAPI first.

Table 1.1: Number of individuals in the issued sample

	Adults (16+)	10 – 15s	Under 10s
GP	25,125	2,300	2,542
EMB	4,096	574	601
BHPS/NIHPS	8,791	772	894
IEMB	3,262	503	578

## 1.2.1 CATI only sample

Within the sample, there were a small number of issued households (n=139) who had previously indicated they would prefer to take part by phone. Because of the changes to fieldwork meaning all households were issued web first and followed up by telephone for the first 15 months of fieldwork, and because all these cases are in year 1 of the sample, these cases were treated the same as the rest of the sample for Wave 13.

#### 1.3 Fieldwork structure

Sample was provided to Kantar Public in eight quarterly batches. This ensured each household was issued in the same quarter as it had been at previous waves. Each quarterly sample was then split into three roughly evenly sized monthly batches. Sample was then issued to field in 24 monthly batches, the first in January 2021 and the last in December 2022.

Where households were issued to the same address as the previous wave they were allocated to the same sample point and each sample point was usually issued in the same month as it had been at Wave 12.

In previous waves, allocating sample to the same interviewer that had contacted the household at the last wave was a priority for face-to-face fieldwork. The switch to a sequential web then telephone approach meant that, for the first 15 months of sample, it was more practical to conduct fieldwork with a smaller group of interviewers who were not necessarily geographically close to the households they were issued. Interviewer continuity was therefore not prioritised for the earlier part of fieldwork at Wave 13. Once face-to-face fieldwork resumed from the April 2022 sample, all households had had two waves of being interviewed by web or telephone only, and there had been a fairly significant level of change to the interviewer panels at both Kantar Public and NatCen. For these later sample months, a sample point was allocated back to the previous face-to-face interviewer (from Wave 10) where practical, but this was not a priority when allocating sample points to interviewers.

#### 1.3.1 Fieldwork timings

The CAWI 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 CAWI first and CAPI 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 CAWI 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. re-supplying sample members with their login details and the web survey address) if sample members had a strong preference for completing online rather than by telephone or face-to-face.

Table 1.2 Fieldwork timings

Fieldwork weeks	CAPI first sample (months 16 to 24 only)	Web first sample (all sample from month 1 to 15)
Web fieldwork (5 weeks)	No fieldwork for CAPI first sample	Sample members invited to take part online
Interviewer fieldwork weeks 1 to 10	Assignments with original interviewer - interviewers aimed to have final outcomes for all sample after 10 weeks	Unproductive households issued to interviewers in CATI/CAPI assignments (web survey remains open throughout fieldwork)
Interviewer fieldwork	CAPI/CATI re-issue period <sup>2</sup>	CAPI/CATI re-issue period <sup>3</sup>
weeks 11 to 19	At the start of week 11 sample members that had not been contacted were sent a letter and email inviting them to complete the web survey	

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

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> For the CAPI first sample, re-issues were worked predominantly by CAPI, but interviewers were also able to offer CATI interviews at any point during fieldwork.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Only CATI re-issuing could be used for the earlier sample months, but for January 2022 samples onwards, re-issues could be worked by CAPI.

## 2. Contact and co-operation

Understanding Society puts much effort into contacting respondents and keeping them engaged with the study. As well as contact for each year's interview, there are also between wave mailings and emails to sample members to feedback findings from the study and encourage people to keep their contact details up to date. This chapter describes the contact strategy for Wave 13, including the between wave mailings.

## 2.1 Advance mailing

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

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 for that month. The letter explained that an interviewer would call 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 for that month asking them to complete the survey online and providing the web address and their login details for doing so. The letter also explained that, if they were unable to complete the survey online, an interviewer would contact them. The letters also included a change of address card and freepost return envelope. If an email address was available, these sample members were also sent an email with a unique link to start the web survey. Sample members with a mobile phone number in the sample were also sent a link to the survey via SMS.

There were 10 different types of advance letter, depending on individual circumstances, as well as 2 types of letter for new entrants in households completing by web. In part different letter types were to deal with different incentives types and mode types, but they also used slightly different messages tailored to the circumstances. The letter types are shown in table 2.1.

For all addresses in Wales, the letter was sent in both Welsh and English. Individuals who had previously been interviewed in one of the other 8 translated languages (Bengali, Gujarati, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi Gurmukhi, Punjabi Urdu, Turkish, Urdu) were sent a letter in that language.

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

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

All advance letters were accompanied by an information leaflet, including further details about the study. When face-to-face interviewing resumed another leaflet was included with the advance letter which explained the protocols being used to work in a Covid-secure manner.

#### 2.1.1 New entrant letters

For the households issued CAWI-first at Wave 13, it was necessary to have a mechanism to contact individuals who had been added to households during household grids done on the web. Letters were sent to these individuals to provide them with their web login details and ask them to take part in the study online. These letters also included a change of address card and freepost return envelope.

Table 2.1: Letter types used at Wave 13 by issue mode

Household type	Adult type	CAPI first	Web first
	Productive adult at Wave 12	Letter 1	Letter 2
		(£20 unconditional incentive)	(£20 unconditional incentive)
	Unproductive adult at Wave 12	Letter 3	Letter 4
Responding household at	Onproductive addit at wave 12	(£20 conditional incentive)	(£20 conditional incentive)
previous wave	Rising 16s <sup>4</sup>	Letter 7	Letter 8
	KISING 105	(£20 unconditional incentive)	(£20 unconditional incentive)
	N	n/a	Letter 11
	New entrants	n/a	(£20 conditional incentive)
	A dulta	Letter 5	Letter 6
	Adults	(£20 conditional incentive)	(£20 conditional incentive)
Unproductive household at	Diging 46a	Letter 9	Letter 10
previous wave	Rising 16s	(£20 conditional incentive)	(£20 conditional incentive)
	Now entropte	2/2	Letter 12
	New entrants	n/a	(£20 conditional incentive)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Rising 16s were sample members that had recently turned 16 and were therefore being asked to complete the adult survey for the first time at Wave 13, while in previous years they may have completed the youth paper questionnaire. They received different letters to those who were adults at Wave 12, although the incentives were the same.

Fig 2.1: Example Wave 13 (CAWI first) advance letter, including change of address card

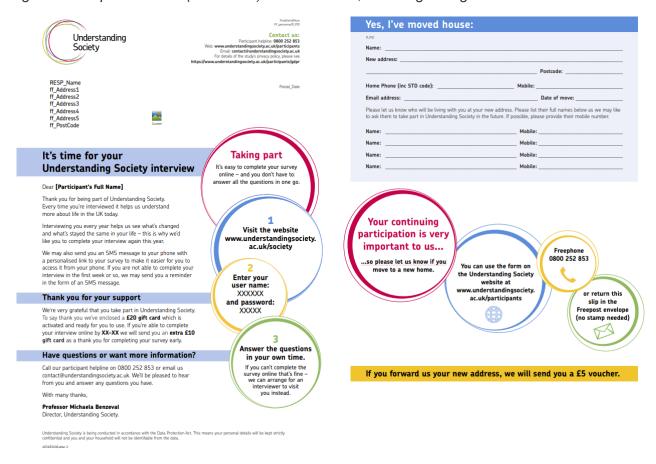
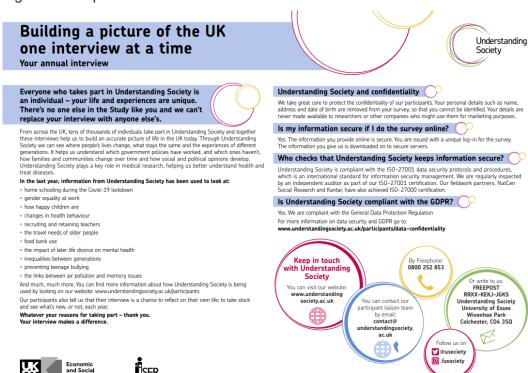


Fig 2.2: Example Wave 13 information leaflet



## 2.2 Incentives

The standard incentive amount at Wave 13 was £20 for all adult sample members. The majority of sample members (those that took part at the previous wave, and 'rising 16s' in households that were productive at the previous wave) were sent an unconditional incentive in their advance letter. Adults who had not taken part at the previous wave, rising 16s in households which had not responded at the previous wave, and adults who were new entrants to the study were all given a conditional incentive if they took 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.

All incentives were 'Love2Shop' gift cards, that could be used at a variety of shops. Conditional incentives were posted to sample members after their interview, irrespective of mode of participation<sup>5</sup>.

#### 2.2.1 Youth incentives

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

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<sup>6</sup>.

## 2.3 Between wave mailings

A mailing was sent to each household once every six months. This included:

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

The purpose of these mailings was to thank respondents for their participation with the aim of encouraging future participation, and to encourage them to keep ISER informed of any changes of address.

In addition to this, 'likely mover' mailings were sent once a quarter to any adult that had been interviewed in the previous three months and said they expected to move in the next year. These included a letter, a change of address card and a return envelope. The letter asked the sample member to return the change of address card in the event they did move.

## 2.4 First contact with sample members

Interviewers were instructed to attempt contact with all households within two weeks of the start of fieldwork to minimise the time between sample members receiving their advance letters (or final web reminder letters) and receiving a visit/call from their interviewer.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> In previous waves, interviewers had handed out incentives for face-to-face interviews. Covid related health and safety protocols at Wave 13 minimised passing documents and other items between interviewers and respondents, and so interviewers did not hand out incentives at Wave 13.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> In previous waves interviewers had handed out youth self completion questionnaires when they were interviewing other household members face-to-face, but this was not done at Wave 13 due to Covid related health and safety protocols which required us to minimise the passing of documents and other items between interviewers and respondents.

## Samples issued in January 2021 to March 2022

For the first 15 monthly batches of sample, all contact attempts by interviewers were made by telephone, and all interviewing was conducted by telephone with a few exceptions.

For a few weeks in the final quarter of 2021 interviewers were told they could make face-to-face visits either:

- If it was the respondent's preference to complete an interview in person, or
- If they had been unable to make contact with the household by telephone.

This has been planned as the start of a return to face-to-face interviewing on Understanding Society but "Plan B" Covid measures introduced by the UK Government in December 2021 meant face-to-face interviewing on the study was stopped again.

Then, from April 2022, interviewers were able to attempt face-to-face contact with any remaining 'live' sample issued in Q1 of 2022, if these had been issued to a local interviewer.

## Samples issued in April 2022 to December 2022

Face-to-face interviewing was re-started for the April 2022 sample (and a minority of cases were issued CAPI first). 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 approach was considered to be both more efficient for interviewers and more convenient for sample members.

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.

## 2.5 Sample information sheets

The majority of information about households and sample members was held electronically on interviewers' encrypted CAPI laptops. However, a sample information sheet was also produced for each household so that interviewers would have some basic information easily to hand. The front page of the sample information sheet included household level information such as: mode allocation (CAPI first or web first); outcome last wave; and the day and time the household questionnaire was completed at the last wave. The back page had individual level information including: first names, ages and genders; outcome at the previous wave; incentive type; and language interviewed in at the last wave.

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

#### 2.6 Doorstep documents

Interviewers were provided with a number of materials that they could use on the doorstep to help with contacting sample members and persuading them to take part. All materials 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 Kantar Public 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 as this was Wave 13 of Understanding Society, and the study branding had remained the same throughout, interviewers found that holding a

document with the Understanding Society logo visible when they first attempted contact was useful as sample members would recognise the logo and immediately know why the interviewer was there. This laminated copy of the advance letter was a useful document for interviewers to hold in this situation, it could also be shown to respondents who might not have received their advance letter. Interviewers also had non-laminated copies that they could leave with respondents.

- 'Information for participants' leaflet these leaflets included some information about Understanding Society, they were primarily aimed at new entrants to the study but interviewers could also give them to continuing sample members who wanted a bit more information.
- Case study leaflets 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.

These documents were only used in the later part of fieldwork when face-to-face interviewing had re-started.

## 3. Movers and tracing

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

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

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

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

## 3.1 Tracing procedures

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

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

- A **tracing letter** this was for use in situations where the interviewer made contact with someone who did have contact details for a sample member, but was not comfortable giving these to the interviewer. The tracing letter was addressed to the sample member and left with the contact to pass or post to them. This letter asked the sample member to get in touch with ISER with their new contact details.
- A **stable contact letter** this was for use if interviewers were unable to contact stable contacts by phone or in person, the letter was posted to them. The letter asked stable contacts to get in touch with ISER and provide new contact details for the sample member.

In-field tracing efforts were limited to some extent for samples issued in January 2021 to March 2022 because interviewer fieldwork was all conducted by telephone. This meant interviewers could only use telephone numbers when attempting tracing, or posting a letter to a stable contact.

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

interviewer. Whilst working by telephone only, for much of Wave 13 fieldwork, this geographical consideration was dropped, and interviewers could attempt contact by telephone whether the new address was local or not.

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

## 3.2 Split off households

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

#### 3.3 Institutions

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

#### 4. Translations

At Wave 13 the questionnaire was translated into nine different languages to help the survey be inclusive of people that would otherwise be unable to take part, in particular those in ethnic minority groups. For other languages, interviewers could still attempt to interview people, but would use someone else in the household to translate.

For the first time at Wave 13, the web version of the questionnaire was also translated, so translated interviews could be conducted in any mode<sup>7</sup>.

#### 4.1 Formal translations

For the nine translated languages, core survey materials and the questionnaire script were translated into these languages. 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. When interviewing by telephone, as for much of Wave 13 fieldwork, using an interpreter was not a viable option, so translated interviews were conducted by an accredited interviewer.

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	5
Gujarati	2
Polish	11
Portuguese	2
Punjabi Gurmukhi	3
Punjabi Urdu	0
Turkish	1
Urdu	13
Welsh	7

## 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

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> The CATI version of the questionnaire was not translated, but interviewers were able to do a translated interview over the telephone using the CAPI questionnaire with some small adaptations (e.g. reading out response lists rather than using a showcard).

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

The main component of the Wave 13 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 were completed by web (87%). Most of the remainder (10%) were conducted by telephone, with just 3% of interviews conducted face-to-face. The CAPI questionnaire also included a self-completion (CASI) section. For CATI the majority of the questions from the CASI section were asked by the interviewer, with just the most sensitive ones left out for telephone interviews. Other elements of the Wave 13 interview were:

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

A full list of the topics covered by the Wave 13 questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.

## 5.1 Questionnaire length

The questionnaires were heavily routed depending on an individual's circumstances so the length of interviews varied. Interview lengths were generally longer for people who were employed, had children, or were being interviewed for the first time.

Table 5.1 shows the median interview lengths for different sample types for CAWI interviews only. Table 5.2 gives median interview lengths by sample type for CAPI and CATI interviews. We have included these together since relatively few CAPI interviews were completed at Wave 13. Overall, the median individual interview length was notably longer for CAPI than for CATI (51 minutes 21 seconds for CAPI and 40 minutes 57 seconds for CATI).

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

Questionnaire element	GP	ВНРЅ	ЕМВ	IEMB	Total
Household questionnaire (including enumeration)	16:28	16:09	18:58	17:08	16:33
Individual adult questionnaire – total	40:29	39:42	37:35	40:25	40:05

Table 5.2: Median interview lengths (minutes) by sample type – CAPI/CATI interviews

Questionnaire element	GP	BHPS	ЕМВ	IEMB	Total
Household questionnaire (including enumeration)	14:47	12:52	16:00	16:08	14:34
Individual adult questionnaire – total	45:34	37:00	46:34	45:39	43:04
CAI proxy questionnaire	5:08	3:03	3:42	6:04	4:35

## 5.2 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 CAPI, CAWI and CATI, with some minor modifications to allow for mode type. Two scripts were created, the first was at household level and included the household enumeration grid, the household questionnaire and administrative content such as call records. The second was the individual level script which included the adult interview, proxy interview and administration of the youth self-completion questionnaire.

## 5.3 Youth self-completion questionnaire

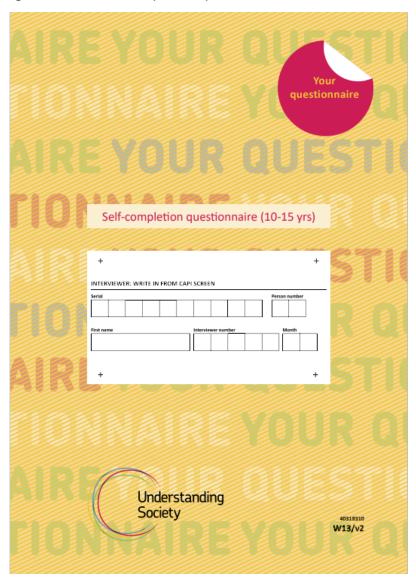
Youth questionnaires for sample members aged 10 to 15 were completed on paper. Irrespective of the mode in which other household members completed the survey, questionnaires were posted to a parent (who had completed the survey already) with a request to ask their child to complete and return the paper questionnaire<sup>8</sup>.

Where a questionnaire was not returned, a reminder was sent later in fieldwork. This reminder included another copy of the questionnaire.

<sup>8</sup> In previous waves, interviewers were able to hand out youth questionnaires when in the household, and collect completed questionnaires. This was not done even when face-to-face fieldwork restarted on Wave 13 as Covid related health safety protocols sought to minimise the number of documents and other items passed between interviewers and sample members.

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Fig 5.1: Youth self-completion questionnaire – front cover



## 6. Briefings and interviewer materials

## 6.1 Briefings

All interviewers had experience of Understanding Society from Wave 12 therefore the only type of briefings necessary for Wave 13 were refresher briefings.

These briefings were conducted online via Teams and were usually with groups of around 10 interviewers. Researchers from Kantar Public and NatCen<sup>9</sup> ran the briefings and in many cases a researcher from ISER also attended and presented part of the briefing.

All briefings were conducted in January and February 2021. The switch to web and telephone fieldwork remained in place for the start of Wave 13, and throughout the first 15 months of fieldwork. This meant that fewer interviewers were required than on previous waves (since interviewers were not required to be local to the households they were contacting) and so no further refresher briefings were required after this. Additional briefings were conducted in October 2021 to prepare for a possible return to face-to-face fieldwork.

## 6.1.1 Refresher briefings

Refresher briefings were around 3 hours and were designed to help motivate interviewers as well as build up their knowledge of the study and of certain fieldwork procedures that were not always correctly followed. The refresher briefings were therefore much less formal and involved discussions with interviewers about their experiences so far on the study.

- Introduction and motivation for the temporary shift to web and telephone interviewing
- Improvements made based on interviewer feedback
- How the work of the interviewer impacts research and policy
- Engaging respondents
- Core content for Wave 13 including changes from Wave 12
- Common telephone issues and solutions
- Field administration

## 6.1.2 Briefings in preparation to return to face-to-face interviewing

A second round of briefings were hosted in October 2021. These focused on providing the interviewers with the information needed to return to face-to-face interviewing.

- Progress of web and telephone interviewing
- When to make a face-to-face visit
- Changes in documentation
- Changes to the face-to-face approach to be Covid-secure

#### 6.2 Interviewer materials

Interviewers were provided with a range of materials to help them when returning to face-to-face fieldwork. These included a set of project instructions which detailed all the information covered in briefings as well as further details such as a full list of outcome codes. These were intended as a reference document that interviewers could use if they needed reminding of any fieldwork procedures. Most of these materials were not used when fieldwork was conducted by web and telephone but were provided in readiness for when face-to-face fieldwork was possible again.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Each agency was responsible for briefing its own interviewers due to slight differences in administration and fieldwork management structures

## Other materials included:

- Sample information sheet (one per household, these included a few details about each household and the sample members living there, most of this information was held electronically on interviewers' laptops)
- Copies of advance letters, including a laminated copy
- Interviewer cards to be used as calling cards, appointments cards and broken appointment cards (other than the Understanding Society logo and a freephone telephone number for either Kantar Public or NatCen these cards were blank for interviewers to write a message or appointment time on)
- Information leaflets for participants
- Covid information leaflets
- Case study flyers (these were eight flyers that highlighted different findings from Understanding Society and how these had been used, the purpose of the leaflets was to help interviewers demonstrate the purpose of the study to any sample members that queried this)
- Showcards
- Youth self-completion questionnaires, envelopes marked 'confidential' to seal them in, and pre-paid return envelopes
- Data linkage consent leaflets and a consent flowchart to demonstrate the information flow during the data linkage process
- Change of address cards and pre-paid return envelopes
- Thank you leaflets
- Tracing letters and stable contact letters, along with envelopes and stamps
- Translation cards to help identify the language of non-English speakers.

## 7. Response

## 7.1 Household level response

A total of 20,673 households were issued at Wave 13. Of these, 13,129 were in the General Population (GP) sample, 1,633 were in the Ethnic Minority Boost (EMB) sample, 4,510 were in the British/Northern Irish Household Panel Survey sample (BHPS/NIHPS), and 1,401 were in the Immigrant and Ethnic Minority Boost sample (IEMB).

Chart 7.1: Issued sample (households) by sample type

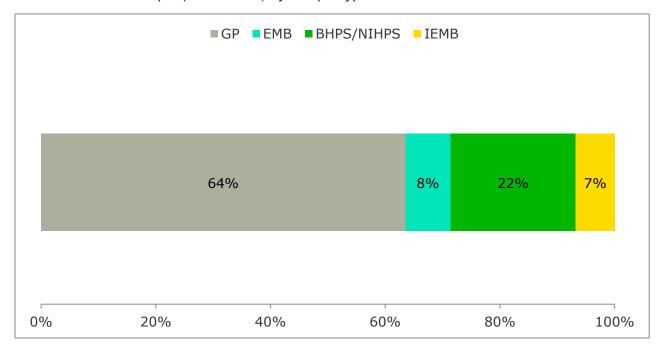


Table 7.1 details household response rates, dependent on whether the households had been productive at the previous wave. As would be expected, households that had been productive at Wave 12 were much more likely to be productive again at Wave 13 than those that had not responded.

Table 7.1: Household response rate by whether productive last wave

	Productive last wave		Unproductive las wave	
	n	%	n	%
Base: All issued sample				
Issued	17,275	95	3,398	96
Split households	951	5	140	4
Total households	18,226		3,538	
Base: Total households				
Ineligible households	461	3	171	5
Eligible households	17,765	97	3,385	95
Base: Eligible households				
Fully productive	11,583	65	570	17
Partially productive	4,053	23	434	13
No contact	413	2	688	20
Refusal	728	4	1,005	30
Other unproductive	988	6	688	20

Response rates were higher amongst the GPS and BHPS samples, than the EMB and IEMB samples.

#### 7.2 Individual level response

Individual response rates were examined separately for adults that had been interviewed at the previous wave and those that had not. The response rate is calculated as the proportion of eligible adults in each group that gave interviews at Wave 13.

For adults that had been interviewed at the previous wave, the overall response rate was 87%. This varies notably by sample type, as shown in table 7.2. Response is lower for both the ethnic boost samples.

Overall, the response rate was 24% for adults that had not been interviewed at the previous wave, and 44% for new entrants and rising 16s<sup>10</sup>. Previous wave productive adults were the particular focus for maximising response at Wave 13 and so it is this group that are detailed further below.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Rising 16s are sample members who have recently turned 16 and so are being asked to complete an adult interview for the first time at the current wave.

Table 7.2: Individual response rate by sample origin for adults interviewed at the previous wave

	GP	ЕМВ	BHPS / NIHPS	IEMB
Productive	88%	79%	88%	79%
Proxy	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
No contact	3%	5%	3%	4%
Refusal	7%	11%	7%	12%
Other unproductive	2%	5%	2%	5%
Base: previous wave productive adults	18,300	2,363	6,763	1,502

## 7.2.1 Youth self-completion questionnaires

In households that were productive (at least one adult completed an interview), 57% of 10 to 15 year olds completed and returned a paper questionnaire. This proportion varied a little by sample type, it was 56% amongst the GP sample, 61% amongst the BHPS/NIHPS sample, 52% amongst the EMB sample and 56% amongst the IEMB sample.

Response rates for the youth questionnaire were lower at Wave 13 compared with earlier waves. This was because of the change to survey methodology necessitated by the Covid-19 pandemic. At previous waves, interviewers had a role in handing out and collecting completed questionnaires. The majority of Wave 13 (the first five out of eight quarters) was completed when interviewers we not able to visit households and so questionnaires had to be posted to households and posted back by sample members.

## 8. Data preparation

## 8.1 Combining CAPI and CAWI data

At Wave 13 there were two sources of CAI data to be merged – CAPI and CAWI (CATI interviews were also completed on the CAPI script). This meant the first stage of data processing at Wave 13 was combining the CAPI/CATI and CAWI data together.

There were measures in place within the sample management system on Wave 13 to minimise the chances of duplicate interviews being conducted on CAPI/CATI and CAWI. Data was passed between the CAPI/CATI and CAWI systems daily but the transfer of information to and from CAPI/CATI 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/CATI and CAWI and the data merging process needed to take account of these. If both interviews were fully complete then the more recent interview was usually selected.

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

While Wave 13 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/CATI and one for CAWI so the formatted data needed to draw data from both of these.

## 8.2 Data scanning and reconciliation

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

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

Scanned data needed to be reconciled against CAI data to ensure data was attributed to the correct sample member. This was done using serial number, name, date of birth and gender.

#### 8.3 SIC and SOC coding

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

#### 8.4 Data checking

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

Administrative checks on individuals and households – these were to ensure that all
households and individuals were included in the data with a final outcome, that individuals
were finally located in one household, that outcomes were consistent with the presence of
raw data, and that and joiners added to the household grid were accounted for.

- Structural checks on all files these checked the format of files, and also that the right households and individuals were included in each file.
- Routing checks these checked, for every 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.

## 8.5 Data issues at Wave 13 and script changes affecting data

There were some small errors in and/or changes to the Wave 13 script. Most of these only affected a small number of questions, and were fixed during the course of fieldwork:

- If a respondent entered more than one child still resident in the household in the newborn loop, and the first child entered was younger than the second child, they were being incorrectly routed to the TwinConf guestion. This was fixed 1 month into fieldwork.
- The feedforward value ff\_intdate was appearing in YYYY/MM/DD format. This meant that the derivation of anhFFIntdateYear was not pulling out the correct data, and any checks using this variable were not working correctly. This was fixed 4 months into fieldwork.
- In the annual event history module, the MATLVSTARTD loop had 4 categories in the loop, one for each value of MATLVCODE. If the respondent answered MATLVCODE=4 (shared parental leave) then the respondent should have been asked MATLVMORE. If MATLVMORE=1, then the respondent should have been taken through the loop again. Because there was only one iteration for shared parental leave, the script was overwriting the previous answers given. This was fixed 5 months into fieldwork.
- Rejoiners had their NPDFLAG incorrectly populated when FF\_NEWW10=0 and FF\_NPDCONSENT=1 or 4. This was fixed 11 months into fieldwork.
- The LDA/GPCompare/Emboost calculation only included individuals who were fed forward as living in the household or new joiners to households. Rejoiners were not included. This was fixed 11 months into fieldwork.
- When an Individual Survey was started in CAWI and ended in CAPI, if the split occurred between the current employment and the employees modules, the current employment responses appeared as missing in the second record and the employees section was not asked. This was fixed 12 months into fieldwork.
- An age filter from a previous question had been left active and was preventing respondents aged>64 from being asked the question FATHER in the annual event history section. This was fixed 13 months into fieldwork.
- When a respondent started a Household grid, stopped partway, then started another grid, ADDRCHCK, CORESWHO, and MORES were not populated. This was fixed 14 months into fieldwork.
- MOBUSE was not available for respondents who swapped completion mode partway through their survey (between CAWI and CAPI). This was fixed 21 months into fieldwork.

# **Appendix A – Wave 13 interview content**

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

Table A1: Content of Wave 13 household questionnaire

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

Table A2: Content of Wave 13 adult questionnaire

Theme	Module name
Individual interview modules (repeated a	nnually)
Basic Demographics	Demographics
Caring	Caring
Change in Characteristics	Annual event history
Childcare	Childcare
Employment	Current employment
Employment	Employees
Employment	Self-employment
Employment	Job satisfaction
Employment	Non-employment

Employment	Other work
Employment Jo	ob search
Employment Er	mployer/workplace address
Expectations Ed	ducational aspirations
Family relationships	lo co-resident relationships (self- ompletion)
Financial behaviour and attitudes Ho	lousehold finances
Financial behaviour and attitudes St	student loans
Health and social care utilisation He	lealth service use
Health status SI	F-12 (self-completion)
Health status Di	Disability
Coronavirus illness Co	COVID-19
Income and earnings U	Inearned income and state benefits
Mental health and wellbeing G	GHQ (self-completion)
Satisfaction Life	ife satisfaction (self-completion)
Technology	Device use and online activity
Individual interview modules conditional on a	age (repeated annually)
Expectations Re	Retirement planning
Family relationships CI	Child development (self-completion)
Family relationships Pa	arenting styles (self-completion)
Financial behaviour Pe	ension drawdown
Young adults Young adults	oung adults
Individual interview modules (rotating)	
Family relationships Fa	amily networks
Family relationships Pa	arents and children

Family relationships	Partner relationships (self-completion)	
Financial attitudes and behaviour	Child maintenance	
Financial attitudes and behaviour	Personal pensions	
Financial attitudes and behaviour	Savings	
Health behaviour	Nutrition	
Health behaviour	Physical activity/exercise	
Health behaviour	Smoking	
Health behaviour	Alcohol consumption (self-completion)	
Risky behaviours	Gambling (self-completion)	
Mental health and wellbeing	Sleep quality	
Mental health and wellbeing	Mental wellbeing (self-completion)	
Mental health and wellbeing	Loneliness (self-completion)	
Political voting behaviour	Devolved election - Scotland (self-completion)	
Political voting behaviour	Devolved election - Wales (self-completion)	
Political voting behaviour	Devolved election – Northern Ireland (self-completion)	
Wealth and debts	Wealth and debt (individual level)	
Financial behaviour and attitude	Remittances	
Modules asked only once (included for new entrants)		
Chronic health conditions	Health conditions	
Chronic health conditions	Mental health conditions	
Stable characteristics	Ethnicity and national identity	
Stable characteristics	Family background	
Stable characteristics	Fertility history	
Stable characteristics	Initial conditions	
	Timular corrainone	

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Stable characteristics	Partnership history	
Stable characteristics	Religion	
Administrative data linkage (asked at multiple waves where eligible)		
Education	National Pupil Database, England	
Education	Early Years Census, England	
Education	Individualised Learner Records	
Education	National Pupil Database, Wales	
Education	Northern Ireland Education data	
Education	Scottish Education data	
Economic	DWP	
Economic	Financial Conduct Authority (FCA)	
Young adults (aged 16-21) sub-section of adult questionnaire		
Young adults self-completion	Identity	
Young adults self-completion	Social Networks	
Young adults self-completion	Family / Meals	
Young adults self-completion	Behaviour / bullying at home	
Young adults self-completion	Family / talking quarrelling	
Young adults self-completion	Education / Aspirations	
Young adults self-completion	Education / Parental involvement	
Young adults self-completion	Career Advice	
Young adults self-completion	Behaviour / bullying at school / bullying online	
Young adults self-completion	Risky Behaviour/Drugs	
Young adults self-completion	Sexual orientation	
Young adults interviewer administered	Future Intentions: Leave home	
Young adults interviewer administered	Future Intentions: Job	

Young adults interviewer administered

Future Intentions: Other events

Table A3: Content of Wave 13 youth self-completion questionnaire

Theme	Module name
Demographic	
Leisure	TV
Leisure	Online social networks
Family	Meals
Family	Support
Family	Supervision
Family	Other
Family	Talking / quarrelling
Step-parent relationship	
Behaviour	Bullying at home
Friends	Friendship Networks
Behaviour	SDQ (Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire)
Happiness	
Education	Homework
Education	Aspirations
Education	Truancy
Education	Misbehaviour
Behaviour	Bullying at school
Savings behaviour	
Pocket money	
Earnings	
Caring	

Health	Disability
Health	Nutrition
Health	Obesity
Health	Exercise
Health	Smoking
Health	Alcohol
Sleep quality	
Environmental behaviour	Attitudes