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Millennium Cohort Study

Seventh Sweep (MCS7)

Technical Report

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1.Introduction

1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the study

The Millennium Cohort Study or MCS (also known as Child of the New Century to participants), is one of Britain's world famous national longitudinal birth cohort studies, four of which are run by the Centre for Longitudinal Studies (CLS) at the UCL Institute of Education, University College London.

Britain has a unique and world-renowned tradition of carrying out national birth cohort studies, which follow the same group of people from birth into and through adulthood. They provide a uniquely detailed picture of the lives of particular generations, and in this way help us to understand what matters for healthy and happy lives. There are five such studies and MCS is the most recent one:

- National Survey of Health and Development (cohort born in 1946)
- National Child Development Study (cohort born in 1958)
- 1970 British Cohort Study (cohort born in 1970)
- Next Steps (cohort born in 1989/90¹)
- Millennium Cohort Study (cohort born in 2000/01).

These studies allow us to see how things have changed for different generations: understanding the differences in growing up, and the circumstances that have become more or less important and relevant to people's lives, as times have changed.

The study is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and selected government departments including for the Age 17 sweep (MCS7):

- Department for Education
- Department for the Economy NI (previously known as the Department for Employment & Learning NI)
- Department for Transport
- Department of Education NI
- Department of Health and Social Care
- Department of Work & Pensions

¹ This cohort was recruited at age 13/14, rather than at birth or the first 9 months.

- Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
- Home Office
- Ministry of Justice
- Welsh Government

Following a competitive tendering process, the Centre for Longitudinal Studies commissioned Ipsos MORI to carry out the instrument development, data collection and initial data preparation for the seventh sweep of MCS, with the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) carrying out some of the fieldwork. Ipsos MORI were also responsible for delivering the fifth and sixth sweeps of the study (MCS5 and MCS6). NatCen conducted three out of the four previous sweeps (MCS1, MCS3 and MCS4) and the first, third and fourth sweeps of fieldwork in Northern Ireland were subcontracted by NatCen to the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA). GfK NOP together with Millward Brown (in Northern Ireland) conducted the second sweep (MCS2).

1.2 Key features

MCS follows over 19,000 young people born in the UK between September 2000 and January 2002². It differs from the earlier birth cohort studies in a number of ways:

- It covers births over a full year rather than those that took place in a particular week. In this way, we can measure how month of birth matters for children's outcomes, for instance
- It follows young people across all four countries of the UK. It oversamples from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, so comparisons can be made both within and across all four countries with each other, as well as to look at the UK as a whole.
- It oversamples young people from areas with higher concentrations of minority ethnic families and from disadvantaged backgrounds. There is evidence that these differences affect life chances. By including these oversamples, the study enables a greater understanding of when and how differences emerge, and how they change over time.

1.3 Previous sweeps

The **first sweep was conducted during 2001-2002** and laid the foundations for a major new longitudinal research resource. Information was collected from the main resident parent or carer and any co-resident partner of almost 19,000 babies aged 9 months. The first survey covered the circumstances of pregnancy and

² The date of birth range varies by country; November 2000-January 2002 in Scotland and Northern Ireland and September 2000-August 2001 in England and Wales.

birth, as well as those of the all-important early months of life, and the social and economic background of the family into which the children were born. Parental consent to link to maternity hospital records was requested.

The **second sweep took place during 2003–2004 when the children were aged 3**. Interviews were conducted with the main resident parent or carer and any co-resident partner and included some additional questions about older siblings and (in England) a self-completion questionnaire for up to two siblings aged 10–15. The cohort members were also involved directly in the study for the first time. They were asked to complete two cognitive assessments and had their height and weight measured by interviewers. Interviewers were asked to record some observations about the home environment and the neighbourhood. Parental consent to link to health records and to education records (for older siblings) was sought.

The **third sweep took place in 2006 when the children were aged 5** and had started school. Interviews were conducted with the main resident parent or carer and any co-resident partner, and, as in sweep 2, there were questions about older siblings. In England, there was a self-completion questionnaire for up to two siblings aged 10–15. The cohort members completed four cognitive assessments and had their height, weight and waist measurements taken. Information about the young person was also collected from class teachers in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. This provided equivalent information to the 'Foundation Stage Profile' data collected through routine records in England. Parental consent to link to Foundation Stage Profile records was collected.

The **fourth sweep was carried out in 2008 when the children were aged 7** and in their third year of primary schooling. Interviews were conducted with the main resident parent or carer and any co-resident partner. The cohort members were asked to participate in four cognitive assessments; had their height, weight, body fat and waist measurements taken and filled in a paper self-completion questionnaire about their lives. Information about the cohort children was collected from their class teachers in each country. Parental consent to link to health (parents, cohort members and siblings), education (cohort members and siblings) and economic (parents) records was sought.

The **fifth sweep took place during 2012–2013 when the children were aged 11** and in their last year of primary school. Interviews were conducted with the main resident parent or carer and any co-resident partners. The cohort members were asked to participate in three cognitive assessments; had their height, weight and body fat measurements taken and filled in a paper self-completion questionnaire. Information about the children was collected from the cohort member's teachers in England and Wales. Consent to link to economic records (Department for Work and Pensions) was sought from parents and partners.

In addition, parental permission was sought for the cohort members to take part in three further projects led by the Institute of Child Health (ICH) at UCL. At MCS2, a saliva sample was taken from the children in order to measure exposure to common childhood infections. The saliva was not used for DNA or genetic testing. At MCS4, physical activity monitoring was carried out, in which children's levels of physical activity during the course of a week were measured using an activity monitor worn by the children. A project called "Every tooth

tells a story”, involved the postal collection of children’s shed milk teeth, starting at the time of the MCS4 mailing, in order to test them for exposure to lead in the environment.

The **sixth sweep took place during 2015-2016 when the cohort members were aged 14**, a key transitional stage between childhood and adulthood. To reflect this, cohort members were asked to provide more information than for previous sweeps. Interviews (including a short cognitive assessment) were conducted with the main resident parent or carer and any co-resident partner. Cohort members were asked to complete an extensive questionnaire on the interviewer’s tablet; to participate in two cognitive assessments, and to have their height, weight and body fat measurements taken. In addition, saliva samples were sought from resident natural (biological) parents and from the young people. Some cohort members were also asked to complete a time-use record and to wear an activity monitor for two 24-hour periods following the household visit.

1.4 Data deposits currently available

Data from the MCS surveys have been deposited with the UK Data Service. Details can be found in the appendices. Further information can be found at: <https://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/series/?sn=2000031>

1.5 The seventh sweep

The **seventh sweep took place from January 2017 to May 2019** when the majority cohort members were aged 17³, which is an important age to capture for several reasons. Firstly, it marks a key point in young people’s developmental and educational lives, where their educational and occupational paths are diverging through different aspirations and choices. It is also important in data collection terms, since it may be the last sweep at which parents are interviewed and it is an age when direct engagement with the young people themselves rather than their families, is crucial to the long-term viability of the study. To reflect this, cohort members were asked to provide more information than they have done at any of the previous sweeps. Fieldwork was conducted by National Centre for Social Research and Ipsos MORI interviewers. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with the cohort members for the first time (including asking if they would be willing to consent to data linkage), they were also asked to fill in a self-completion questionnaire on the interviewer’s tablet. Cohort members were asked to complete a cognitive assessment (number activity) and to have their height, weight and body fat measurements taken. In addition, they were asked to complete a short online questionnaire after the visit. Parental involvement at MCS7 was minimal; resident parents were asked to complete a household interview, a short online questionnaire, and one parent was asked to complete a Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire (SDQ) about the cohort member on paper.

Cohort members who were not able or not willing to take part in the main survey were asked to complete a short follow up online questionnaire containing some key questions after the main fieldwork had finished. This was designed to boost response for the most important questions and also to maintain engagement with more reluctant participants.

³Although the aim was to interview all cohort members while they were 17 some flexibility was required in order to maximise response and so, some were interviewed before their 17th birthday and some turned 18 during fieldwork

This report contains details of the design and conduct of the seventh sweep of the Millennium Cohort Study (MCS7).

2. The Sample

2. The sample

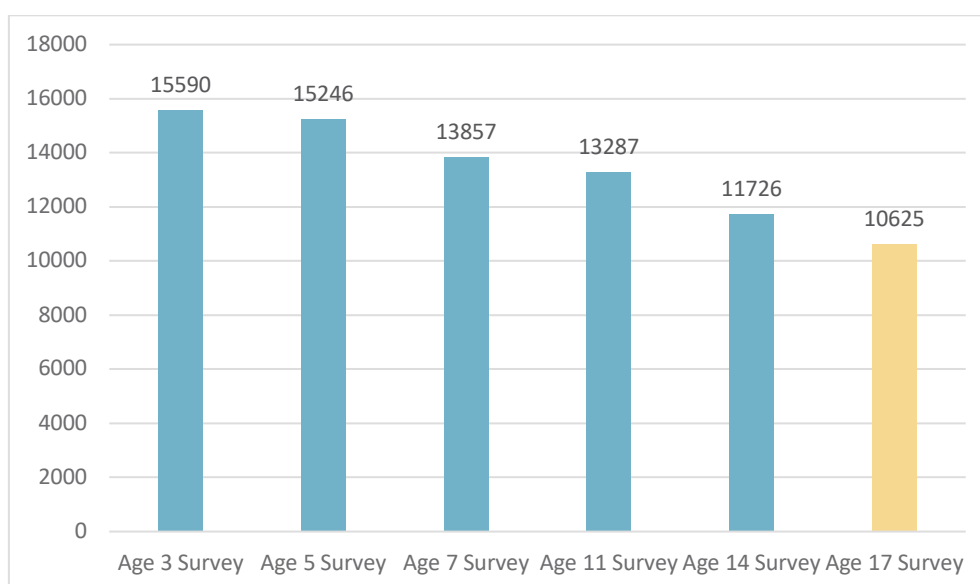
2.1 The original sample (from sweep 1)

Just over twenty-four thousand (24,180) families were issued to the field for the first sweep of MCS and 18,552 families were recruited to the cohort at the age 9-month survey. An additional 692 families – referred to as new families – were recruited at the age 3 survey. These were families that were eligible, i.e. living in the selected wards when the child was 9 months old – but weren't picked up by the child benefit system at the time. They were mainly families who had recently moved or returned to the UK. The total cohort, therefore, amounts to 19,244 families. There are 253 pairs of twins and 11 sets of triplets, which makes 19,517 young people in total. There are no higher order multiple births. There are a very small number of families who have more than one child in the study which are not multiple births i.e. two births in the period covered by the sample from separate pregnancies.

Achieved sample sizes for the follow-up surveys at ages 3, 5, 7, 11, 14 are shown in Figure 2.1 (with the achieved sample size for Age 17 shown in yellow for comparison purposes). Retention rates in the study are generally good. There was a larger drop-off at the first follow up survey at age 3, which is typical for longitudinal surveys after the baseline wave. The achieved sample size remained steady between MCS2 and MCS3 – around 15,000 – but dropped off by more than 1,000 families to just under 14,000 families at age 7 and to around 13,250 at Age 11. The achieved sample then dropped to 11,726 at Age 14.

At MCS7 a total of 10,625 families took part. Of these, around 9,130 families had taken part in all the sweeps they were eligible for and approximately 5,500 had missed one or more of the sweeps they were eligible for. Over the course of the study, approximately 5,000 families have dropped out or become ineligible and not re-joined. The achieved sample size for sweep 7 is discussed more fully in Section 9.6 (see Chapter 9: Survey response).

Figure 2.1 Productive sample size, by sweep



The original sample was drawn in two stages: the first stage was the selection of electoral wards and the second stage was the selection of all eligible families within those wards. All the electoral wards in the UK were allocated into one of three types:

- “Ethnic”: defined as wards in England in which 30% or more of the population were ‘Black’ or ‘Asian’ according to the 1991 Census of the population
- “Disadvantaged”: the poorest 25% of wards (not classified as Ethnic) as defined by the 1998 Child Poverty Index which is based on the proportion of children living in families in receipt of certain state benefits
- “Advantaged”: all other wards not classified as ‘Ethnic’ or ‘Disadvantaged’. These are not necessarily ‘well-off’ areas.

A total of 398 wards were chosen for the study with all families in those wards with a child born in the assigned time frame being eligible. Proportionally more were chosen in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and from those classified as ‘Ethnic’ and ‘Disadvantaged’.

2.2 The issued sample (at MCS7)

The issued sample for MCS7 included all families: except those that were ineligible (where a cohort member had died or the family had emigrated outside of the UK), those that had permanently withdrawn from the study, and those that had been classified as ‘permanent refusals’ or ‘permanently untraced’ by CLS (unless they opted back into the study or CLS found new address details for them).

The final issued sample for MCS7 was 14,496 households. This figure represents the total issued sample size at the end of fieldwork and includes a number of cases that CLS traced during fieldwork. These cases were mostly families returning from living abroad, and in-care cases. They were added to the originally issued sample throughout fieldwork, meaning that the number increased slightly from the original sample size that was issued in January 2018.

2.3 The sample files

CLS was responsible for providing sample information for study families to Ipsos MORI and for ensuring that this information was as accurate and up-to-date as possible. CLS undertake regular cohort maintenance in between survey years, involving sending out ‘Keeping in Touch’ mailings that ask families to confirm or correct the contact information CLS has for them.

The sample information provided to Ipsos MORI was split into two types: ‘fixed’ sample and ‘live’ sample. The fixed sample files contained details of all sample members, and contained information that was not subject to change, such as:

- Serial numbers
- Survey outcomes from previous sweeps

- Minority language for parent materials
- Information from previous sweeps
 - Date of last interview
 - Address at last interview
 - Previous sweep outcomes
 - Reason for refusal at previous sweeps (if applicable)
 - Details of parent 1 and parent 2 (if applicable) respondents from last sweep participated in
 - Secondary school the cohort member was attending at MCS6
 - Whether interviews were translated, who translated and which language
 - Ethnicity of parent 1 and parent 2 at MCS6
 - Cohort member information such as whether they have poor vision, dyslexia, SEN (Special Educational Needs), ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) or autism

CLS split the delivery of fixed sample data to Ipsos MORI into two batches. The first was for the data which fed into the CAI scripts or was needed to work out contact propensity for wave allocation purposes (e.g. previous sweep outcomes, date of last interview). The second contained contextual information which was provided to the interviewer nearer to the start of fieldwork to help them prepare for the household visit (e.g. SEN, ADHD etc.).

Live sample files were produced prior to fieldwork and were updated when necessary, and included the following information:

- Serial numbers
- Cohort member details
 - Full name
 - Sex
 - Date of birth
 - School year
 - Whether currently in the household

- Eligibility status
- Resident parent details
 - Title
 - Full name
 - Sex
 - Date of birth
 - Relationship to the cohort member
 - Contact details
- The last known address, telephone numbers and email addresses for the household
- Stable contact details, one for each parent if possible (i.e. the contact details of another family member not resident in the household - these details could be used for tracing if required)
- Whether the family responded to the last feedback mailing
- Any 'useful information' memo to the interviewer and any 'sensitive information' memo to the interviewer

Two additional fields relating to the contact details were also provided: an address status, and the date this status was assigned. The address status was determined by CLS and related to whether or not the household was confirmed as resident at the address provided, and the date at which this was confirmed. Prior to the start of fieldwork, it was estimated that in approximately 4% of the issued cases, CLS would know that the family was no longer resident at the address provided for them but had been unable to find a new address.

2.4 Sample updates

CLS continued to trace families until the start of each fieldwork wave and provided the most up to date information to Ipsos MORI before the sample was issued to interviewers. In some cases, CLS received updated information about cohort families after the sample had been issued. For these cases, CLS sent sample updates to Ipsos MORI on a weekly basis, and one-off NPD sample update.

In order to try to trace some of the families that had moved, CLS applied for and was granted access to the National Pupil Database (NPD) which holds details of every young person attending a state school in England. This access was granted only for the purposes of tracing young people for this specific study, and Ipsos MORI did not have access to any other information other than the address. As a result of this, Ipsos MORI issued 126 cases with new addresses, for Waves 1-4 (England only). Interviewers who were allocated NPD sample received a memo with full details to inform them about the origin of the sample and how to proceed.

The weekly sample updates typically included new information from tracing or from participants who were responding to the prenotification or other mailings:

- Changes in classification information: eligibility status, participation status, status of address
- Changes to contact information: change of address, telephone numbers, names, sex, dates of birth, stable contact details, etc.

Actions taken as a result of the sample updates depended on the type of sample update and the progress of the case; that is, whether the case had been issued to an interviewer and whether the interviewer had started working on the case. Table 7.15.6 later in this report provides details of how Ipsos MORI handled and actioned sample updates.

Additionally, CLS provided Ipsos MORI with a full sample record for families, which became eligible after the start of fieldwork (e.g. they had recently returned from living abroad). More details on how the sample was kept up to date throughout fieldwork can be found in section 7.15.

3. Development work

3. Development work

3.1 Scope of the development work

MCS7 involved collecting considerably more data from the young people themselves than at previous sweeps. There were also new challenges in terms of engaging young people of this age in research. Therefore, a programme of development work was carried out before the mainstage. The phases of development work are discussed below.

3.2 Pre-testing development work

3.2.1 Workshop

A workshop with 16- and 17-year olds was held to inform the final processes and procedures, communication strategies, interviewer training and strategy for reluctant respondents at MCS7. Participants were not MCS cohort members.

The workshop took place on 11 February 2017 in Watford, Hertfordshire. At the workshop, the young people were given an introduction to the study and what the workshop would consist of. Young people then rotated between five stations, spending 20 minutes at each. The 5 workstations were: contact and reminder procedures; data collection modes; cognitive assessments; data linkage; and questionnaire coverage. Each workstation had a moderator and note-taker.

There was also a gift table with examples of low-cost gifts for the young people to view. The young people were asked to vote on their favourite low-cost gift in a group interactive voting session, as well as what contact method they most preferred.

The sample profile of workshop participants was designed to match the characteristics of the MCS cohort members. All the young people were born between 01/09/1999 and 31/08/2000 and quotas were set to ensure a range of young people participated according to gender, their current activity (in full-time education: attending a sixth form college; in full-time education: attending a school sixth form; or other activity (i.e. employment with a training element, or in other training including apprenticeships); parental social grade, and ethnicity. Young people who participated in the workshop were given £50 as a thank you for their help.

A summary of the key findings and consequences for the survey design is provided below:

- Both emails and letters were popular forms of communication for young people, but letters were typically seen as more important and appropriate for a survey invitation. We therefore recommended the advance mailing be a letter, as it had been previously.

- Young people were happy for their parents to be involved in the survey from the initial contact through to appointment making and it made sense to them to involve their parents. We recommended parents were contacted in the first instance to schedule appointments.
- The respondent-facing materials should stress the importance of the survey and make clear how their involvement would benefit others. It should also be relevant to them and interesting.
- The advance mailing should provide the young person with their interviewer's name and contact details, to help gain their trust and confidence in the interviewer and survey. This would also help with engagement.
- Data security issues should be addressed, either in respondent materials, or in the online questionnaire introduction script.
- The online questionnaire reminder should be directed towards the young person.
- Mentions of the cognitive assessment in the advance materials should describe it as 'an activity to understand how you think'.
- Interviewers should introduce the cognitive assessment in a similar way, emphasising that it was not a test of the person, that their answers would not count towards any academic qualifications or achievements, and (if possible) what the aggregated data would be used for.
- If possible, the title 'Cognitive Abilities Test' on the front page of the question booklet should be avoided, as should the word 'test' that is used throughout. These descriptions could be off-putting.

Parents were likely to be key in terms of facilitating consent to data linkage. The engagement approach with parents, therefore, needed to bear in mind that many young people would welcome parental involvement. Interviewers too should be briefed to welcome input from parents.

- The data linkage consent form should largely mimic the form used in the workshop and should most certainly be captured on paper. Consideration should be given to whether cohort members should be encouraged to put their signature next to each set of records, as well as providing a signature to confirm all those they consented to. A carbon copy should be given to young people at the time to keep as a record of their consent (as opposed to, or certainly in addition to, emailing this).
- The household interview would ideally be completed by parents or another appropriate adult in the household. Whilst young people were likely to be able to answer the questions, the data provided would likely be more accurate if given by parents.
- We recommended testing the gift options further at the pilot stage but offering participants the choice of a selection. We suggested trialling the top three gifts from the workshop, or alternatively sourcing another gift.

A detailed report on findings from this work was sent to CLS.

3.2.2 Cognitive testing of questions to the young person

The MCS7 young person questionnaires and interview contained new content, with questions either adapted from the MCS6 parent questionnaire, taken from other surveys or new questions. Question testing was therefore necessary to ensure cohort members understood the questions, felt willing and able to answer them, and could provide accurate and valid responses.

The focus of the cognitive testing was to understand how young people comprehended the questions, recalled the information being sought, decide how to answer questions, and to explore how they formatted and (possibly) edited their response, in relation to the answer categories provided. Sections from the CASI self-completion and young person online questionnaires were chosen for this. The concept of data linkage and an introduction to the Age 17 Survey were also explored during this round of the testing.

Fieldwork took place between 24th February- 6th March 2017 in locations across England (Birmingham, Croydon, St Albans) and Scotland (Edinburgh). All interviews were conducted face-to-face, in the young person's choice of location (in their home or cafe) and one was conducted at Ipsos MORI's office. Young people who participated were given an incentive of £25 to thank them for their help.

The young people who took part in the cognitive testing were not cohort members. However, the sample profile was designed to match the characteristics of the MCS cohort members, so all young people were 17 at the time of the cognitive testing interview. Young people were recruited to quotas to ensure a mix by gender, current activity (in full-time education or other activity i.e. employment with a training element or in other training or apprenticeship), parent social grade and ethnicity. In total, 13 cognitive interviews were completed.

The interview was split into three sections: CASI and online question probing; data linkage and introduction to the Age 17 Survey. The CASI section focused on questions that required recall and/or were deemed sensitive, and the online questionnaire section focused on financial capabilities, university and identity questions.

As the focus of the cognitive testing was to explore terms and concepts, question acceptability/risk of social desirability bias among other things, it was conducted on paper. Participants were given a copy of the questionnaire to answer the CASI and online questions privately. The interviewer then probed how they answered particular questions while the respondent was shown the showcards. For the data linkage section, participants were given a copy of the data linkage leaflet to read privately before being asked questions about it by the interviewer. Participants were lastly asked how they thought we should remind cohort members about the last time they were interviewed, using three scenarios for them to choose from.

As a result of the cognitive testing a number of changes were made to the young person questionnaires. These included:

- Questions were simplified and in some cases were removed entirely (particularly those where young people consistently misinterpreted the question or were unable to recall the information needed to answer the question).
- Terminology was clarified where it was frequently misunderstood by young people, to ensure consistent comprehension.
- Introductions which were felt to be too long and confusing were shortened.
- A 'don't know' response was added where it was felt to be a valid response.

A detailed report on findings from this work was sent to CLS in March 2017 which included feedback on specific questions.

3.2.3 Usability testing of the young person online questionnaire

The usability testing concentrated on the functionality of the young person online questionnaire, with a focus on understanding the degree to which the questionnaire was easy to complete. To this end, a subsection of questions from the young person online questionnaire were selected for usability testing. The process of accessing the questionnaire through a specified URL link was also explored.

Fieldwork took place between 24th April - 5th May 2017, at Ipsos MORI's London office. Eleven usability testing interviews were conducted, all face-to-face. Six of these were conducted in Ipsos MORI's viewing facility, which allowed members of the MCS team to observe the usability testing and participant behaviour through a one-way mirror.

All interviews were completed with the use of 'Mr Tappy', a purpose-built HD camera for filming a participant's interactions with a mobile, tablet or laptop device, to observe how the participant accesses and navigates their way through the online questionnaire. The interviewer, and any observers, were able to view the output - both the screen and the participant's hand as they went through the questionnaire - from this camera on a laptop device in real-time. By observing user experience, interviewers could see first-hand (without being obtrusive) whether the participant had any difficulties with accessing, navigating through, or completing the survey, and where these difficulties specifically lay.

The interview was split into three sections:

- 1. Observation:** This involved allowing the participant to go through the entire questionnaire on their own whilst the interviewer, and anyone watching from the viewing facility, observed their experience.
- 2. Standard evaluation questions (probing):** These pre-agreed questions were general in nature (i.e. not about specific questions) and focussed on the accessibility and experience of the online questionnaire. The aim of these was to uncover especially difficult questions or sections, or cumbersome tasks. To this

end, the standard evolution questions were administered face-to-face to ensure full responses were captured.

- 3. Specific tasks and scenarios:** This involved the presentation of pre-agreed tasks and scenarios to the participant, with follow-up probes from the interviewer. This section was designed to focus on the interaction between the young person and the online instrument to explore how they answered novel question formats, accessed information needed to understand questions, navigated the questionnaire, and skipped questions.

Interviews were completed using either a mobile smartphone (both Apple and Android operating systems were tested), tablet (both Apple and Windows operating systems were tested), or laptop device. At the recruitment stage, participants were asked to indicate which device they would typically use to complete an online questionnaire to ensure we were testing the participant on their device of choice.

As a thank you for their time and contribution to this research, participants were given £30 in cash.

The sample profile for the usability testing was designed to match the characteristics of the MCS cohort members. Cohort members themselves were not invited to participate. Quotas were set to ensure a range of participants by gender, current activity (in full-time education, doing another activity e. g. employment with a training element, or in other training, GCSE grades achieved, parental social grade and ethnicity.

A summary of the key findings and consequences for the online survey design is provided below:

- We recommended amending the carousel question (which provided a way to present grid format questions on a small screen) so that the previous answer did not remain highlighted on the scale for mobile users.
- We recommended adding a more explicit instruction to the introduction screen to highlight how and where the 'don't know' and 'I do not wish to answer' response options appeared to reduce the risk that participants would select substantive responses because they didn't see how they could avoid this.
- We recommended that the explicit 'don't know' option should be visually different from the other options without encouraging participants to focus on that 'don't know' option without reading the substantive options above it (i.e. not red like the implicit 'don't know' option).
- Revisit the placement of the 'back' button, so that it is not the first button that the script automatically activates when the young person uses the 'enter' or 'go' function on their keypads (thus taking them back to the previous question).

A detailed report on findings from this work was sent to CLS which included feedback on specific questions.

3.2.4 Brand testing focus groups

Given the importance of all communications materials being appealing to young people of this age and engaging them in the Age 17 Survey, the brand used at the Age 17 Survey was 'refreshed' to appeal to this age group as it had been originally designed for the Age 14 Survey.

The purpose of this research was to test two concepts developed by the brand agency Threerooms, with input from CLS, to explore what branding was likely to be most relevant and appropriate for young people and to inform the design of respondent facing materials to be used at MCS7.

Two focus groups were held on 9 March 2017 at the City of London Academy in Southwark, London to test two potential design concepts developed by Threerooms. The young people who participated in the focus groups were the age that the MCS cohort members would be at the time of the Age 17 Survey (i.e. aged 16/17). Cohort members themselves did not participate in the focus groups. The groups were mixed by gender and young people studying for different qualifications (A levels, and vocational qualifications).

The groups lasted approximately one hour each and contained about eight pupils each. The two groups ran in parallel and were moderated by a member of the Ipsos MORI MCS7 team. Also present was a note-taker from Ipsos MORI and representatives from CLS and Threerooms. A discussion guide was developed by Ipsos MORI and CLS to structure the groups and Threerooms provided 'mood boards' showing the two design concepts along with mocked up leaflets which were used to elicit feedback.

It is important to consider that findings were based on only two focus groups among young people attending one specific school in London whose views may vary from those in other parts of the country. That said, the groups provided a helpful insight into the views of 16/17 year olds on the two potential brand concepts, which was useful for informing the development of the brand to be used in the Age 17 Survey.

A summary of the key findings and consequences for the study brand is provided below:

- Overall, young people preferred the option with the brighter colours, which seemed more fun. This option was seen as an example of a material designed by adults to convey serious messages to young people.
- It was important the design struck the right balance: MCS7 is a serious study, but it is important to convey its relevance to young people today, and that they would probably enjoy participating.
- Images of people should be diverse, current and not too 'posed', 'cheesy' or 'clichéd'. Any pictures that aren't of people should have a purpose and relate to the content.
- It was worth considering including pictures of people that do not include faces e.g. a picture of young people sitting down showing just their legs and feet.

- Young people preferred brighter colours as they were seen as “happier” and conveyed a sense of fun and informality.
- It was important the design facilitates breaking up the text to avoid dense paragraphs. It was helpful to navigate the reader to avoid confusion about the text order.

A detailed report on findings from this work was sent to CLS.

3.3 Pilot one and Pilot two (Dress Rehearsal)

3.3.1 Pilot one

The first pilot survey was conducted in five locations across England, Wales and Scotland between 13 April and 5 May 2017.

The pilot sample was recruited afresh by two external recruitment agencies, and comprised young people aged 16/17 years. To ensure that interviews for the pilot study were well-distributed geographically, they were recruited in five locations:

- Cardiff
- Croydon
- Glasgow
- Leeds/ Bradford
- Solihull

Quotas were set on young person gender, ethnicity, social grade of parent and family composition to ensure a cross-section of families were included. In total, 52 families were interviewed who were not part of the MCS cohort.

The overall objective of the first pilot was to test all data collection elements in the field, along with fieldwork materials, consent procedures and interviewer training. The specific objectives of the pilot were to:

- Estimate the time taken to administer the data collection instruments.
- Evaluate the design, content and implementation of the data collection instruments, including data linkage.
- Evaluate the training and protocols given to interviewers.

- Evaluate the fieldwork documents and fieldwork procedures for contacting, engaging and gaining informed consent and co-operation for the home visits, in particular in relation to the 17-year old cohort member as far as possible given the sample was specifically recruited and incentivised.
- Evaluate the individual element response rates (within productive households) and data linkage consent rates (as far as possible given the nature of the pilot sample and provision of incentives), plus data quality for individual elements including item missing data and break-offs.

The following core elements were included at the first pilot:

- Household interview CAPI
- Young person CAPI interview
- Young person CASI self-completion
- Young person physical measurements
- Young person cognitive assessments
- Young person consent to data linkage
- Young person online questionnaire placement
- Young person online questionnaire
- Parent online questionnaire placement
- Parent online questionnaire
- Parent Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire SDQ
- Final element

For participating in the data collection elements that took place in the household, young people were given £40 in cash and offered a choice of study-branded gift: a colour-changing stress ball, headphones or star light. Young people were also provided with log-in details to complete an online questionnaire following the household visit. If this was completed, the young person was sent a £10 Love2Shop voucher.

Parents that lived in the same household as the young person were invited to take part in their own online questionnaire and were each given or sent a £10 Love2Shop voucher upon its completion.

A group of five interviewers were briefed to work on the pilot. They all attended a face-to-face briefing over two days on 6th and 13th April 2017. This was led by specialist members of the Ipsos MORI research team, supplemented by demonstrations, practical sessions, paired and group exercises, and training films.

Interviewers also had to complete written exercises throughout the day, designed to reinforce and consolidate learning. Between day one and two of the briefing interviewers carried out two practice sessions of the cognitive assessments and physical measurements with a 16-18-year-old. They also ran through the questionnaires and ECS⁴ themselves according to pre-determined scenarios.

A pilot debrief took place on 9th May 2017, after all pilot interviews were completed. Interviewers provided feedback by completing an 'Interviewer feedback form', recording the overall time spent in each household on the front of the consent booklet, recording outcomes in the ECS and administering a 'Respondent feedback form' with the young person at the end of each survey element. Interviewers were also able to add comments at each question in the young person CAPI interview. Young people and parents were able to add comments and complete feedback questions at the end of their relevant CASI and online questionnaires.

A total of seven appointments were accompanied by a member of the research team in order to record any observations and to gain additional feedback using a form specifically designed for this purpose. Accompaniments took place in Cardiff, Croydon and Solihull.

3.3.2 Key findings from the first pilot

Overall all of the instruments and protocols worked well enough to be retained for the Dress Rehearsal although a number of changes were implemented. These are described in detail in a separate report on the findings from the first pilot provided to CLS. The most significant changes are summarised below.

- In the Young Person CAPI interview, the education/qualifications section was re-designed as interviewers found it difficult to administer and complete.
- The young person advance letter and advance booklet were amended so the language was more concise and bullet points replaced large blocks of text.
- The Study and Data Linkage FAQs document was split into two documents: Study FAQs and the Data Linkage FAQs. This document was also made respondent-facing rather than just interviewer facing.
- In the cognitive assessments, young people were instructed to enter their answers one by one, and not wait until they had completed the whole assessment.

⁴ The Electronic Contact Sheet (ECS) was used to control the fieldwork protocols and monitor interviewer progress during fieldwork. Interviewers used the application on touch-screen tablets, to access contact information and log progress (contact attempts) during fieldwork and synchronised it with a central database every day.

3.3.3 Pilot two (Dress Rehearsal)

The Dress Rehearsal fieldwork took place between 4 August and 3 September 2017 in 13 locations across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The Dress Rehearsal contained a mix of longitudinal sample (cases who had participated in the Dress Rehearsal at previous sweeps of the study) and a 'fresh' top up sample, which was included to test survey procedures and protocols with as wide a range of households and interview scenarios as possible. The 'top up' sample was selected to mirror the characteristics of the MCS cohort.

In total, 268 addresses were issued. Of these, 149 were longitudinal sample and 119 were new top up sample families. Incentives were used for the top-up sample in Wales and Northern Ireland only.

The sample was selected from the following 13 areas:

- Preston
- Lincolnshire
- Crawley
- Bexleyheath
- Wembley
- Manchester
- Cheadle
- Rotherham
- Sunderland
- Bath
- Caerphilly
- Glasgow
- Belfast

The specific objectives of the Dress Rehearsal were to:

- Estimate the time taken to administer the data collection instruments.

- Evaluate the design, content and implementation of the data collection instruments, including data linkage.
- Evaluate the training and protocols given to interviewers.
- Evaluate the fieldwork documents and fieldwork procedures for contacting, engaging, tracing and gaining informed consent and co-operation for the home visits, in particular in relation to the 17-year olds.
- Evaluate the individual element response rates (within productive households) and data linkage consent rates, plus data quality for individual elements including item missing data and break-offs.
- Evaluate the sample management procedures and sample management systems required to collect information about interviewers' contacting and tracing attempts.
- Evaluate the content and quality of the sample and feed forward information supplied by CLS and to develop and test processes for the provision of data.
- Evaluate the content and quality of the contact information, substantive data and survey process data ('para-data') supplied to CLS and to develop and test processes for data provision and documentation.
- Evaluate and test office procedures e.g. reminders and complaints procedures.

The Dress Rehearsal included the same core elements as at the first pilot (for details see 3.3.1).

Thirteen interviewers were briefed over two days on 26 July and 3 August 2017. As for the first pilot, prior to attending the briefing interviewers were required to complete some pre-tasks as well as additional homework between day one and two including a practice interview. On day two of the briefing, after their practice interviews had been completed, interviewers were accredited to take physical measurements.

A debrief took place on 5th September 2017 after dress rehearsal fieldwork was finished, supplemented by interviewer feedback collected in the same way as at the first pilot. In addition, members of the research team accompanied eight appointments in Bexley, Cheadle, Bath and Glasgow.

3.3.4 Key findings from the Dress Rehearsal

As with the first pilot, overall all of the instruments and protocols worked well enough to be retained for the main survey although a number of changes were implemented. A separate report was provided to CLS containing detailed findings from the Dress Rehearsal and recommended changes for the main survey. The most significant changes are summarised below:

- The Number Series activity was removed from the cognitive assessment to reduce the length.

- The instructions for the cognitive assessment were improved to make them easier for interviewers to follow.
- In the education section of the young person CAPI interview, qualification subject lists were thoroughly reviewed to ensure they were comprehensive, and the routing of the questionnaire was correct (e.g. the list of permitted grades was correct for each qualification).
- For the young person and parent online questionnaires, respondents were asked to write down their own login details on the login-in sheet and their phone if it was to hand. Where applicable, respondents were encouraged to take a photograph of their login details on their phone.
- For the young person and parent online questionnaires a reminder strategy was finalised.
- The routing of the parent SDQ placement module was reviewed to ensure it could be placed irrespective of the outcome of the parent online questionnaire placement.
- The thank you letter and change of details card were reviewed to ensure they contained detailed for the study's Twitter account, Facebook page, and the study website so young people could stay connected with the study.

4. Overview of elements

4. Overview of MCS7 elements

4.1 Overview of survey elements

The content of the seventh sweep of MCS consisted of the following **cohort member** elements:

- Interviewer administered questionnaire (CAPI): 20 minutes
- Self-completion questionnaire (CASI): 15 minutes
- Online questionnaire (CAWI): 15 minutes
- Physical measurements: 10 minutes
- Cognitive assessment (one number activity): 10 minutes
- Consent to data linkage: 10 minutes

Parents were asked to complete:

- Online questionnaire (CAWI): 15 minutes
- ONE PARENT: Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire (SDQ) on paper: 5 minutes.
- The survey also included a **household interview** which established who the household members were, and which household members were eligible to do each of the other elements. This was ideally completed by parent but was sometimes completed by another adult or the young person themselves if no parent was living in the household or they were not available at the time of the interview.

4.1.1 Administration of survey elements

Interviewers were firstly required to attempt to make contact with the cohort members in the sample, and to encourage cooperation and participation in the study. If during these contact attempts it was established the cohort member had moved address, interviewers were to make extensive efforts to find them (referred to throughout the rest of this report as 'tracing'. Full details of the tracing process can be found in section 7.12: Tracing cohort members).

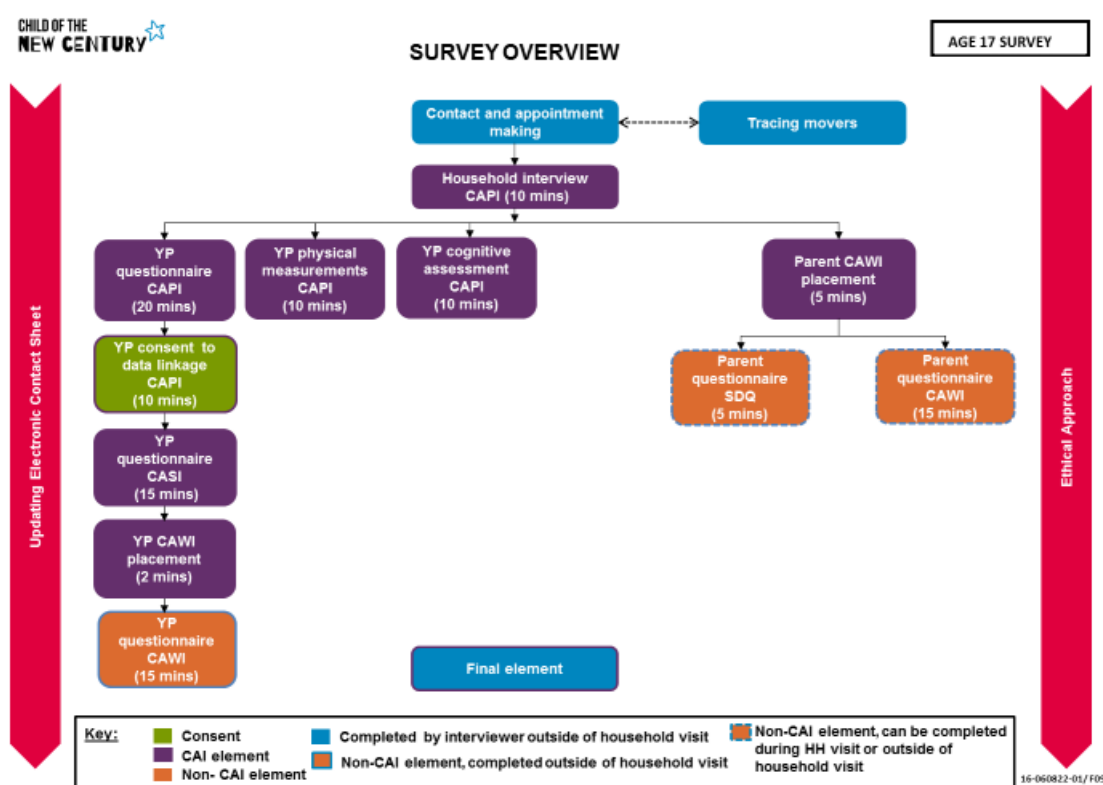
Interviewers always completed the **household interview in CAPI** first as this established who was living in the household, generated a summary of all the elements to be completed and identified the correct respondents to interview (see section 1.5). Once the household interview was complete, interviewers were free to complete the other elements in whatever order they wished.

Once the interviewer had completed all household elements, they were required to complete the '**final element**' in CAPI, where they recorded administration details about the household visit, including details of the

data linkage request (see Chapter 4). This element had to be completed before a case could be considered productive.

Figure 4.1.1 provides an overview of the survey requirements. It also indicates average timings for each element, mode of administration, which consents were required (and when), and whether the element was to be completed during or outside of the household visit. This chart was used in the interviewer briefings to help interviewers to understand how each of the different household elements fitted together and to ensure that the visit was conducted in the most efficient way possible.

Figure 4.1.1 Overview of survey elements



The rest of this section contains a brief description of each element of the survey and the protocols developed for each.

4.2 Household interview

As the household interview established eligibility, it was essential that it was completed before any of the other elements. It was completed by an adult aged 16 or over resident in the household (ideally a parent as they were best placed to answer all the questions. In cases where this was not possible, cohort members were eligible to complete this themselves).

In most cases the household interview checked information gathered at previous sweeps of the study for any changes, rather than collecting information from scratch. However, if the cohort member completed the household interview themselves, they were asked all the relationship details afresh (e.g. to avoid revealing

relationship details that the cohort member may not have been aware of). The topics included in the household interview were:

- Type of residence (institution or private residence);
- Change of address since last interview;
- Details about accommodation;
- Household composition;
- Relationships between each of the household members;
- Employment status of all adults aged 16 or over (including the cohort member);
- Selection of people eligible to complete the parent sections;
- Relationship history of parents;
- Collection of household contact information.

During fieldwork there was some confusion among interviewers when coding who completed the household interview in the CAI script (in some cases interviewers were coding that the cohort member completed it if they were present or assisting their parents with answers). A memo was sent in April 2018 asking interviewers to only code that the cohort member completed the household interview if they did so on their own. Interviewers were also reminded to try to conduct the household interview with the cohort members' parent(s) if possible as the data at the time indicated that more cohort members were completing it than anticipated.

4.3 Young person interview

Cohort members were asked to complete a face-to-face interview carried out by an interviewer (CAI) in the household. This was the first time the cohort members in the study have been asked to complete an interview directly with an interviewer.

The questionnaire covered a variety of topics relevant to the lives of cohort members, including the following:

- Their family and home life;
- Any employment and/or income;
- Their current education and any qualifications they may have achieved (including GCSE, Scottish equivalent) or were studying/training for;
- Their health and physical activity;

- Contact information (used to keep in contact with the cohort members about the study and for reminders to be sent for the online (CAWI) questionnaire).

Interviewers were briefed, where possible, to conduct the interview with just the cohort member in the room. Where this was not possible, interviewers were required to record whether anyone else was present while the cohort member answered the questions at the end of the element.

It was possible for someone else to answer the CAPI interview on behalf of the cohort member if he or she was not capable of understanding the questions or answer for themselves (given the factual content). In the rare circumstances where this happened, interviewers recorded the reasons why and who provided help in CAI. Additionally, if Welsh translation was required this too was recorded in CAI (see section 7.18).

Showcards were provided to assist cohort members when completing the interview.

4.4 Young person self-completion questionnaire

Cohort members were also asked to complete a self-completion questionnaire using the interviewer's tablet. After completing the face-to-face interview, the interviewer handed their tablet over for the cohort member to complete the questionnaire on their own. If the cohort member had refused the interviewer administered CAI interview they were still eligible to complete the self-completion questionnaire.

The self-completion questionnaire covered questions of a more personal and sensitive nature, including:

- Relationships with their family;
- Strengths and Difficulties Questions (SDQ);
- Their physical and mental health and how they feel;
- Their identity, including their sexual identity;
- Their experience of sex and relationships; and
- Things they might have experienced or done, such as smoking, drinking and illegal and anti-social activities.

If the cohort member was unable to complete the questionnaire themselves because they were unwilling or unable to due to a severe learning disability or a severe sight problem, then the interviewer was not able to administer it due to the sensitive nature of the content.

A Welsh paper version was available on request (although no cohort members requested this).

As the questionnaire contained more sensitive and personal questions, interviewers encouraged cohort members to complete it somewhere privately where they would not need to worry about other household

members seeing their responses. Parents were not allowed to see the questions being asked. At the start of the questionnaire, 'honesty' and 'sensitivity' text was added to encourage cohort members to answer honestly and reassure them that their answers remained confidential. At the end of each section of questions the answers were locked to prevent anyone seeing the answers the cohort member had given. To help keep the responses private in busy households, the questionnaire also included a 'hide' button that blanked the screen if someone happened to walk past when they were completing it.

After completion, interviewers gave cohort members a 'further information leaflet' ("I've helped – What now?") which provided further information about seeking help and advice about the topics covered in the questionnaire. A copy of this leaflet can be found in the appendices.

4.5 Young person online questionnaire

Cohort members were asked to complete an online questionnaire after the household visit on a device of their choice (including a laptop, tablet or smartphone). Cohort members were encouraged to complete the questionnaire within 10 days of the household visit. The following reminder strategy was implemented for cohort members who had not yet taken part:

- An invitation to take part was sent by text or email shortly after the household visit – this included a direct link to the online survey.
- Two reminders were sent by text or email on days four and eight following the invitation text/email. These reminders also included a direct link to the online survey.
- The final reminder was a household-level postcard. This postcard was sent in an envelope for data privacy and included a reminder of the log-in details for each household member (cohort member or their parents) who had not yet taken part.

The online questionnaire included topics on personality and attitudes, activities and risky behaviours, how cohort members identify themselves, diet and body image, education and the future, wellbeing, and risk and time preferences. Throughout the questionnaire young people had the option to select 'I do not wish to answer'.

To complete the questionnaire cohort members needed access to the internet as paper questionnaires were not available. In Wales, young people were able request to complete the online questionnaire over the phone with a Welsh-speaking interviewer (however, none requested this). If cohort members were not able to complete the self-completion questionnaire themselves (e.g. due to literacy or health problems, or difficulties completing the questionnaire on-screen), they were not asked to complete this element.

The role of the interviewer was to gain cooperation for this element of the survey and to ensure that cohort members could access the questionnaire so it could be completed after the visit by:

- Entering the CAI module for placing the online questionnaire with cohort members (either after the CAPI interview and CASI questionnaire had been completed or been allocated an unproductive outcome);
- Introducing the online questionnaire to the cohort member, explaining the purpose and obtaining initial agreement;
- Providing the cohort member with an information sheet about the online questionnaire and asking them to write in their name, username and password (as displayed in the CAI script);
- Asking the cohort member to take a photograph of their login details (e.g. with their mobile phone) so they had a copy of their username and password;
- Before the end of the visit, asking the cohort member to try logging in using their details to check they could access the questionnaire after the interviewer left the household.
- Where applicable, reasons for not being able to place the online questionnaire or reasons for cohort members not agreeing to complete the online questionnaire were recorded in ECS.

4.6 Young person physical measurements

All cohort members who provided verbal consent and who could stand unaided were eligible for the physical measurements at age 17: height, weight and body fat percentage. They could consent to all or just some of the measurements. Physical measurements have been carried out with the cohort members since the age of 3. It was necessary for a parent or other adult (aged 18 or over) to be present since the height measurement required some physical contact.

Height and weight are used to calculate the cohort members' Body Mass Index (BMI). BMI values can be compared with population reference data to identify cohort members who are overweight or obese, and therefore at risk of a number of short and long term physical and psychological consequences. Body fat percentage is a measure of fat distribution in the body, which adds further value to BMI measurements by providing an overall estimate of fat-free mass.

The following sections contain an overview of the measurement protocols. The detailed physical measurement procedures were given to the interviewers in the Data Collection Instruments section of their interviewer instructions.

4.6.1 Height measurement

The measurements were taken using a Leicester height measure stadiometer; a portable collapsible device with a sliding head plate, a base plate and four connecting rods marked with a measuring scale. All interviewers were trained to use this equipment during the briefing. Interviewers were also given a Frankfurt Plane card to assist with the measurements. Detailed instructions on how to use both the stadiometer and the Frankfurt

Plane card, along with a Physical Measurements Summary sheet for quick reference in the field were given to interviewers. Copies of these materials are included in the appendices.

Interviewers were required to set up the equipment on a firm, ideally uncarpeted, surface and to ensure that the stadiometer was resting against a wall in order that it remained rigid while the measurement was taken. The cohort member was asked to remove their shoes and socks, glasses and any hair accessories or to let down any hairstyles that could affect the accuracy of the measurement. After explaining the procedure to cohort members, interviewers carried out the measurement.

The measurement was read to the nearest completed millimetre and entered into the CAI program. Range checks were incorporated into the script to ensure accuracy. If the interviewer was not happy with the accuracy of the measurement, they could repeat it as long as the cohort member was happy for them to do so.

Interviewers were also required to record any circumstances that may have impacted on the measurement, such as the cohort member's hairstyle, the presence of a turban or top-knot, their posture or whether they wore socks or shoes.

4.6.2 Weight and body fat measurement

The measurements were taken using Tanita scales (BF-522W), which have a hand-held console with a screen to display weight to the nearest 0.1kg, and body fat percentage to the nearest 0.1%. These scales were battery powered and were calibrated prior to being issued to interviewers. At the same time as measuring weight, the scales measured body fat percentage by sending a weak electrical current around the body from one foot to the other. The electrical current is safe; however, it can cause medical devices such as pacemakers to malfunction. Any cohort member fitted with an internal electrical device such as a pacemaker or a cochlea implant was not able to have their body-fat measurements taken.

Any female cohort members who were pregnant were not able to have their body fat measured, as the scales are not advised for use with pregnant women (because the body fat measurement may be inaccurate). Interviewers were required to show all female cohort members a showcard asking them if they had an internal electrical device, were pregnant or neither applied. If either or both instances applied, the script did not ask for a body fat measurement. In these cases, weight only was taken.

As with the stadiometer, interviewers were required to place the scales on a firm uncarpeted surface. If this was not possible, interviewers had to record whether only a soft surface was available. Interviewers were provided with detailed instructions on how to use the scales, and the Physical Measurements summary sheet for quick reference (a copy of which can be found in the appendices).

The scales could also be used in 'weight only' mode in cases where the cohort member did not consent to the body fat percentage measurement, or in cases where it was not possible to take the measurement (e.g. if the cohort member had a pacemaker/was pregnant) as this mode did not involve the electrical current.

For the weight and body fat measurements, the cohort member was asked to remove their shoes and socks and remove items in their pockets. Interviewers were also asked to make sure that the cohort member was wearing light indoor clothing and removed bulky items such as watches and belts. Before taking the measurements, interviewers were required to ensure that the scales were ready for use by checking that they were in the correct mode (kg) and that they had correctly entered the cohort member's age, gender and height in centimetres as given by the CAI script, in order for the body fat percentage to be correctly calculated.

After explaining the procedure to cohort members and gaining their verbal consent interviewers carried out the measurements.

Once both measurements had been taken (or just the one if the scales were in 'weight only' mode) the cohort member was asked to step off the scales. If weight only was being measured, this would be shown on the display. If both weight and body fat percentage were being measured, the display rotated between the two measurements. In either case, the interviewer made an immediate note of the measures directly into CAI script. Range checks were incorporated into the script to ensure accuracy.

- For both weight and body fat measurements interviewers were advised to repeat the measurement if they were unhappy with the first.
- Interviewers were also required to record any circumstances that may have impacted on the measurement, such as whether the cohort member was wearing shoes, heavy clothing or a plaster cast.

4.6.3 Feeding back measurements to young people

In order to safeguard the cohort member's confidentiality, measurements were not read aloud at any point during the visit. After the readings had been taken, cohort members were offered a record of their measurements on the 'measurements postcard'. Parents were not offered a copy of this. A copy of the measurements postcard can be found in the appendices.

4.7 Cognitive assessment

Cohort members were asked to complete a cognitive assessment called the Number Analogies activity (GL Assessments⁵). The activity assesses young people's basic arithmetic knowledge and reasoning with numbers.

Interviewers were told not to administer the assessment if the cohort member:

- Had a learning disability or serious behavioural problem (e.g. severe ADHD, autism)
- Was unable to respond in the required manner for the assessment (e.g. reading).

⁵ At MCS7 10 items were used from the Cognitive Abilities Test 3, Level H, Number Analogies test (David F Lohman, Robert L Thorndike, Elizabeth P Hagen, Adapted by Pauline Smith, Cres Fernandes and Steve Strand) which assessed the young person's arithmetic knowledge and reasoning with numbers. The assessment was used and reduced from the original 20 items with permission of the owners GL Assessment. © David F Lohman, Robert L Thorndike, Elizabeth P Hagen, 2001. Reproduced by permission of GL Assessment.

Where possible the assessment was carried out in a quiet, well-lit, and properly ventilated room, away from distractions and disruptions to ensure the optimal performance of the respondent. It was also preferable to administer the assessment on a table where possible.

Before beginning the assessment, interviewers were asked to confirm in CAI whether they received verbal consent from the cohort member to carry out the cognitive assessment. If consent was provided, the cohort member was given a booklet containing the questions. To administer the assessment, interviewers were provided with a laminated instruction sheet containing directions to read out to the cohort member to ensure the assessment was conducted consistently and accurately. Before starting the assessment, cohort members were provided with example and practice questions to help them understand what to do. During these practice questions, interviewers could explain how to reach the answers. After explaining how to answer the practice questions, the cohort member completed the assessment on their own. The assessment consisted of ten questions which the cohort member had 6 minutes to work through. Pencils and paper were provided if cohort members wanted to write down their workings before filling in their answers. If a cohort member changed their mind about their answer, they were allowed to change it.

- The assessment included a timer. If cohort members finished early they were asked to spend any remaining time checking their answers.
- Interviewers could repeat the given explanations for the example and practice questions as often as necessary to ensure that all cohort members understood them, however, they were not able to provide assistance during the assessment. If cohort members were finding it difficult interviewers were able to use as the phrase “Try to do your best” only. Interviewers were also unable to provide feedback to cohort members on their performance as they were not able to see the answers and answers were not provided at any time afterwards.

The cognitive assessment could be completed in Welsh if requested.

Detailed cognitive assessment instructions were given to the interviewers in their interviewer instructions and as part of the interviewer briefing.

4.8 Data linkage

Cohort members were asked for their permission to add information held about them by government departments and agencies to the information collected about them in the survey. The datasets cohort members were asked about were as follows:

Education records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department for Education in England • The Knowledge and Analytical Services - Welsh Government • The Education Analytical Services - Scottish Government, the Scottish Funding Council and the Student Awards Agency Scotland • The Department of Education and the Department for the Economy in Northern Ireland • The Higher Education Statistics Agency • The Universities and Colleges Admission Service (UCAS) • The Student Loans Company (SLC)
Health records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHS Digital in England • NHS Wales Informatics Service's Information Services Division (ISD) • Information Services Division (ISD) of NHS National Services Scotland • Health and Social Care (HSC) in Northern Ireland
Economic records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) • The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)/ Northern Ireland Department for Communities, Social Security Agency (SSA)
Police and criminal justice records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry of Justice in England and Wales • Police Scotland, the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service in Scotland • The Police Service and the Department of Justice in Northern Ireland

This was the first time cohort members have been asked for their own permission to add other information about them. In previous sweeps, their parents' permission was sought to add cohort members' health and education records to the information collected as part of the study.

The majority of cohort members were eligible to provide consent to link their survey answers with administrative information; the exception was if the cohort member was unable to complete and sign the consent booklet themselves. Interviewers were instructed to encourage cohort members to discuss the request with their parents before providing permission if they wanted to but the decision rested ultimately with the cohort member.

As part of the appointment mailing cohort members were sent a leaflet explaining the 'Adding other information' request in detail (see section 5.3). The consent was administered in the CAI script (at the end of the cohort member's CAPI) but obtained in writing using a paper consent booklet during the household visit.

At the start of the consent process, interviewers were prompted by the script to scan the QR code on the front of the consent booklet so that the consent booklet could be easily linked to the cohort member's data. Cohort members were then required to watch a video about data linkage embedded in the data linkage CAI module and to have read the information booklet before providing consent. If cohort members had not read the information in advance, interviewers were required to read out key information provided in the CAI script and answer any questions the cohort member may have before handing them the consent booklet. Cohort members were then asked to write their name on the front, tick the 'yes' or 'no' box for each of the consents, then sign and date the form. If they were also willing to share their National Insurance number (if they ticked

'yes' to any linkage request for Student Loans Company (SLC), HMRC or DWP/SSA records) they were asked to complete the NI number section of the booklet. Interviewers were required to check the booklet had been completed correctly, before signing and dating the form themselves.

All cohort members were provided with a copy of the consent booklet (regardless of whether they provided consent to any of the linkages or not). If the cohort member did not consent to any linkages, the interviewer recorded reasons for refusal in CAI.

After the household visit, interviewers recorded which consents the cohort member gave and their National Insurance number (if provided) in the 'Final Element' module.

4.9 Parent elements

4.9.1 Parent online questionnaire

Up to two resident parents were asked to complete an online questionnaire, ideally during the household visit. Interviewers played an important role in encouraging parents to take part and complete the questionnaire during the visit to maximise response⁶.

To ascertain who was eligible to complete the questionnaire interviewers asked one parent to complete a parent placement module in ECS. To be eligible to take part parents needed to have access to the internet (paper questionnaires were not available). Parents also needed to be able to complete the questionnaire themselves without assistance and only adults who were resident in the same household as the cohort member and enumerated in the household interview were eligible to take part. In Wales, parents were able request to complete the online questionnaire over the phone with a Welsh-speaking interviewer (however, none requested this).

The online questionnaire asked about the respondent's family situation, their child's education, their own health, employment, and income. More sensitive questions asking about how close they feel to their child, and about their well-being, were also included. The participant had the option to select 'I do not wish to answer' throughout the survey.

- To place the online questionnaire, interviewers provided parents with an online questionnaire sheet and asked them to write on their name, username and password (as displayed in the CAI script). They also asked parents to take a photograph of their login details so they had a copy of their username and password. Interviewers also collected the parent's contact details so that text/email reminders could be

⁶ All households were eligible for a household interview and the following elements for completion by each cohort member: the young person interview and self-completion questionnaire, physical measurements and cognitive assessment, and an online questionnaire completed after the household visit. If the household questionnaire established that there was a parental figure present, that person was Parent 1, and where applicable their partner/spouse was selected as Parent 2; each were eligible for an online questionnaire. If Parent 1 or Parent 2 was present in the household, that household was eligible for a paper Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire for each cohort member, which could be completed by either Parent 1 or Parent 2.

sent in the event the questionnaire was not completed during the household visit. An information sheet was also provided for absent parent(s) containing their unique login details and further information.

- Parents were then encouraged to complete the online questionnaire on their own device during the interviewer's visit. Where applicable, reasons for not being able to place the online questionnaire or reasons for parents not agreeing to complete the online questionnaire were recorded in ECS.
- The following reminder strategy was implemented for parents who did not complete the questionnaire during the interviewer's visit:
 - An invitation to take part was sent by text or email shortly following the visit – this included a direct link to the online survey.
 - Two reminders were sent by text or email on days four and eight following the invitation text/email. These reminders also included a direct link to the online survey.
 - The final reminder was a household-level postcard. This postcard was sent in an envelope for data privacy, and included a reminder of the log-in details for each household member (cohort member or their parents) who had not yet taken part.
- The option of follow-up telephone interviews was piloted to test whether it would increase the number of parent online questionnaire completions (on a household-level). The pilot included 100 cases (with each case being a household). A case therefore may have contained contact details for a single parent or both parents of the cohort member. To be eligible for this sample, parents had to have an available telephone number, have received the full reminder strategy and had not yet completed the online questionnaire. As a result of the pilot, 20 additional parent online questionnaire completions were achieved. The option of follow-up telephone interviews was not rolled out to the full eligible sample.

4.9.2 Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire

The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) included sensitive questions about the cohort member and was answered by one parent only, on paper.

The SDQ is a brief behavioural screening questionnaire about 4-17-year-olds developed by Robert Goodman. It exists in several versions to meet the needs of researchers, clinicians and educationalists. All versions of the SDQ ask about 25 attributes, some positive and others negative.⁷ These can be categorised as emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity/inattention, peer relationship problems and prosocial behaviour, with five questions in each category.

The procedure for administering the SDQ was as follows:

⁷ Source: *What is the SDQ?*. Available: <http://www.sdqinfo.com/a0.html>. Last accessed 08/09/2016.

- Interviewers completed the CAI module for placing the online questionnaire and SDQ with a parent (so that either could complete) to identify who to place it with;
- When prompted, the interviewer scanned the QR code on the back of the SDQ;
- Interviewers wrote the cohort member's full name at the top of the SDQ questionnaire in the space provided and the family's serial number in the box provided on the back of the SDQ questionnaire;
- Interviewers explained the SDQ to the parent using a script in CAI;
- The questionnaire and a blank envelope were provided to the cohort member's parent (with a Freepost return envelope if the parent was unable to complete the questionnaire during the visit);
- Parents were encouraged to complete the questionnaire straight away (ideally in private) and asked to place it in an envelope and seal it when completed;
- Interviewers recorded which parent the SDQ was left with; and collected the completed questionnaire in its sealed envelope before leaving the household.

5. Ethics and consent

5. Ethics and consent

5.1 Ethical approval

Ethical approval for the pilot surveys and the main stage was obtained by CLS. Ethical approval for the first pilot was obtained on 7th March 2017 from the UCL IOE Research Ethics Committee (ref: REC 884). Approval for the dress rehearsal was obtained on 12th June 2017 from the UCL IOE Research Ethics Committee (ref: REC 951). Ethical approval for the main stage was obtained on 18th October 2017 from the National Research Ethics Service (NRES) Research Ethics Committee (REC) North East – York (REC ref: 17/NE/0341).

5.2 Confidentiality issues

In order to maintain respondent confidentiality, a number of procedures were implemented:

- Interviewers were instructed to avoid mentioning the name of the study to anyone but the cohort member, their parents or stable contacts;
- Interviewers were required to check their sample prior to working to ensure that none of the respondents were known to them personally. If this occurred, the address was allocated to a different interviewer;
- All respondents' answers were treated in strict confidence in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and 2018, and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The advance letters, booklets and other survey documents highlighted that the information respondents provided as part of the survey would be anonymised, so nobody except those working on the study would have access to their names, addresses and other contact details;
- Interviewers were briefed to ensure that everything that took place during the course of an interview remained confidential (including illegal activities);
- If a situation occurred whereby a respondent or other member of the household in a difficult personal situation appealed to the interviewer for help, interviewers were instructed to refer them to a friend, family member or other support network. Details of relevant support services were included on survey materials (see Respondent well-being section below).

A protocol was put in place for both Ipsos MORI and NatCen to cover instances where an interviewer believed that someone might be at risk of harm but was not in a position to act on their own behalf. Interviewers were instructed to contact their Region Manager (for Ipsos MORI) or Field Project Manager (for NatCen) if they genuinely believed there was a serious risk that a member of the family was, or was at risk of, being harmed. Interviewers were required to complete an incident report form prior to a decision being made as to how best to proceed.

5.3 Respondent well-being

A number of measures were put in place to ensure that the research conducted was carried out in a non-harmful way that avoided impacting negatively on the safety, comfort and wellbeing of respondents. Achieving fully informed consent was essential to protect wellbeing (as discussed in section 5.5).

To help to ensure cohort members and parents had ongoing support if they had been affected by any of the issues covered in the survey, the following measures were put in place:

- The advance booklet for parents ('What would we like you and your child to do?') included information about sources of professional support and a helpline number.
- The advance booklet for cohort members ('What would we like you to do?') included information on what the Age 17 Survey would consist of and why for the study was asking them to take part in each activity, while highlighting that it was their decision whether they would take part in each activity.
- The appointment booklet for cohort members ('Adding other information about you') informed them about what data linkage was, why it was important, and what records they would be asked to give permission for linkage. The booklet emphasised the voluntary nature of providing consent to data linkage and provided contact details for the Ipsos MORI research team, in case they had any questions.
- At the end of the interviewer visit, all cohort members were provided with a 'further information leaflet' ('What happens next?'). The leaflet provided details of appropriate support services, including Childline, The Mix and Talk to FRANK. Interviewers were required to specifically draw attention to the support information on the leaflet when handing this to the young person at the end of the visit.

Copies of the booklets and leaflet mentioned above can be found in the appendices.

Interviewers were instructed to temporarily suspend or terminate interviewing if it was felt that a cohort member was distressed by any aspect of the survey.

5.4 Young Person and interviewer safety protocols

Interviewers were given guidance on protecting both themselves and cohort members:

- Other than the leaflets, thank you gift, and the equipment required to carry out the survey, cohort members were not to be given anything else (sweets, food, etc.);
- Any unnecessary physical contact during the visit needed to be avoided;
- A responsible adult aged 18 or over was required to be in the house when the cohort member was completing their survey elements. This was a requirement of Ipsos MORI's Lone Worker policy;

- For the physical measurements, given the involvement of physical contact, an adult aged 18+ had to always be present in the room. Interviewers were told to explain beforehand what was required and ensure the adult, ideally a parent or guardian, could see what was happening throughout the process where contact was necessary;
- For the other cohort member elements, a minimum requirement was for an adult to be nearby (for example, in the next room – and the door should always be left open). However, if the interviewer, the parent or the cohort member felt more comfortable with an adult always being in the room, this approach was taken.

5.5 Informed consent

All cohort members had to give verbal informed consent to take part in the survey. The cohort members, given they were 16 or older at the time of the interview and considered adults, provided verbal informed consent to take part in the survey overall, and for each individual survey element. Parents did not have to provide consent for the interviewer to approach the cohort members.

Interviewers were required to ensure that consent from the cohort member was as fully informed as possible. In order to do this, cohort members needed to understand the full details of processes, the reasons they were being asked to take part in each element, and the details around storage and use of data.

5.5.1 Administering the consent process

Consents for the cohort member elements were recorded in CAI. The exception was the consent booklet for data linkage, where written consent was required (see below and Section 4.8). In households with multiple cohort members (twins, triplets), a consent booklet was provided for each cohort member.

As previously mentioned, all interviews started with the household interview, which collected information about household composition and determined eligibility for each individual for each of the survey elements. Towards the end of the household interview, the script generated details of which elements should be conducted in the household and by who, the consents required before proceeding with each element, and the relevant materials needed to gain consent.

The following table summarises consents obtained, they type of consent involved, who had to provide the consent, and the corresponding respondent communication materials to be referred to for each.

Table 5.5.2 Summary of consents

Survey element	Completed by	Type of consent	Relevant respondent communication materials
Household interview	Parent/ cohort member	CAI (verbal consent)	'What would we like you and your child to do? - Information for parents' 'What would we like you to do? - Information for study members'
Young person interview CAPI	Cohort member	CAI (verbal consent)	'What would we like you to do? - Information for study members'
Young person self-completion CASI	Cohort member	CAI (verbal consent)	'What would we like you to do? - Information for study members'
Cognitive assessment	Cohort member	CAI (verbal consent)	"What would we like you to do? - Information for study members"
Physical measurements	Cohort member	CAI (verbal consent)	"What would we like you to do? - Information for study members"
Online questionnaire placement	Cohort member	CAI (verbal consent)	"What would we like you to do? - Information for study members"
Online questionnaire	Cohort member	CAWI (implicit consent)	What would we like you to do? - Information for study members'
Online questionnaire	Parent	CAWI (implicit consent)	'What would we like you and your child to do? - Information for parents'
SDQ paper questionnaire	Parent	Implicit consent	'What would we like you and your child to do? - Information for parents'
Data linkage	Cohort member	CAI (verbal consent) + Written consent on the booklet	'What would we like you to do? - Information for study members' 'Adding other information about you – Information for study members'

To administer the cohort member elements, interviewers were instructed to read out key information word for word from CAI, for each of the survey elements and interviewers were asked to confirm that verbal consent had been obtained at the beginning of that element. It was essential for consent to be sought for each survey element.

For the data linkage module, cohort members gave verbal consent in CAI for the interviewer to proceed with more information about data linkage. Then, the interviewer provided the cohort members with a paper copy of the consent booklet for the cohort member to tick the boxes next to the administrative records outlined, and sign and date the booklet. The interviewer also dated and signed the booklet. Consent to data linkage could only be withdrawn in writing.

All consent forms that were signed by cohort members were printed in duplicate on carbon-paper. The carbon copy was removed from the consent booklet and left with the respondent. A copy of the consent booklet can be found in the appendices.

For any cohort members whose first language was English but who could not read or understand the information booklets or data linkage consent form for themselves because of literacy problems or poor vision, the information booklets and consent forms were read out to them by the interviewer.

Since the parents, did not have to be present in the household during the interviewer's visit, consent for their online questionnaire was sought as part of the questionnaire itself. At the beginning of the questionnaire, parents were reminded to read the information booklet they had been sent, given a brief overview of what the questionnaire would entail, reminded that their answers were confidential, and were given contact details for Ipsos MORI in case of queries. For the paper SDQ questionnaire, implicit consent was achieved through completion and return of the questionnaire.

Large print copies of all the booklets and consent forms used by either cohort members or their parents were available on request.

6. Preparation, accreditation and quality control

6. Preparation, accreditation and quality control

6.1 Briefings

All interviewers attended a 2-day briefing before working on the Age 17 Survey. The briefings took place between November 2017 and August 2018.

The briefings were run by researchers from Ipsos MORI and CLS, members of the Ipsos MORI internal field team and Region Managers or Region Co-ordinators from Ipsos MORI's field force. 'Train the Trainer' sessions were held before the first briefing, to ensure all trainers were equipped to deliver the survey-specific training.

In total, 311 interviewers completed all two days of the briefing – 237 Ipsos MORI interviewers and 74 NatCen interviewers. The size of the briefings varied between regions and attendance ranged from between 7 and 21 interviewers.

6.1.1 Briefing structure

There was a week-long break between days one and two of the briefing. During this break, interviewers were required to practice some of the non-standard interviewing tasks and complete some homework.

The briefings were conducted using a seminar style set-up, allowing for up to 22 interviewers to be briefed in one session. The briefings consisted of presentations, alongside more varied modes of active learning (for example, practical and workbook exercises and the use of training films). Breakout groups were used for practicing conducting the physical measurements and for accreditations.

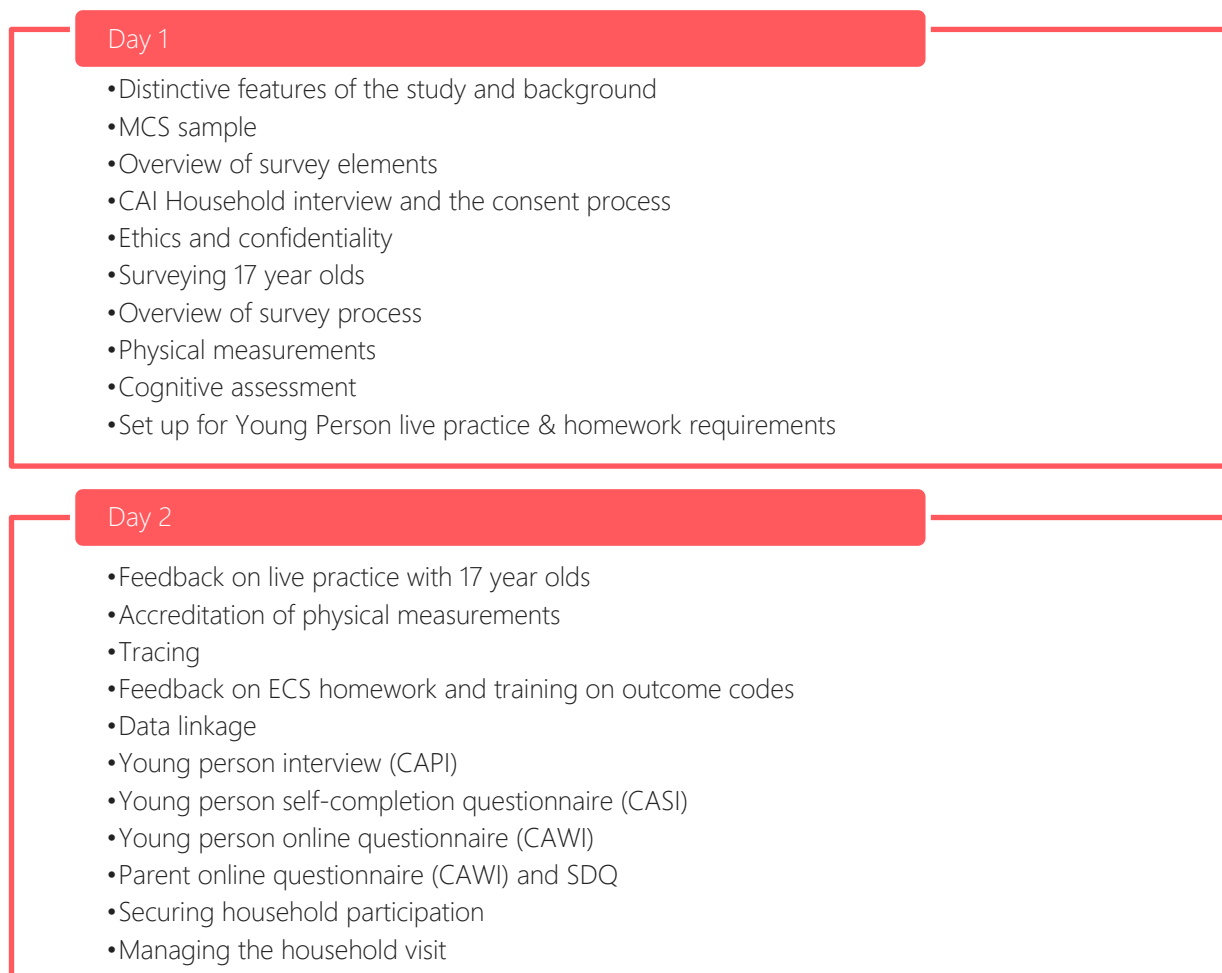
Overall, 23 briefings were carried out, totalling 46 days (23 day one and 23 day two).

6.1.2 Briefing content

Before the briefing, interviewers were asked to complete two pre-tasks:

1. Recruit two 16-17-year-olds for practice interviews
2. To familiarise themselves with some of the study materials (participant packs)

Figure 6.1.3 gives an overview of the briefing topics.

Figure 6.1.3: Briefing topics by day

6.1.4 Briefing materials

The briefing materials were given to interviewers in a lever-arch file containing all materials required for the two-day briefing, organised by document type, and clearly labelled for ease of reference.

Training films were used throughout the briefings to ensure standardised delivery of protocols and for the delivery of client presentations across the country. Films were developed for the following sessions:

- Background to the survey;
- Surveying 17-year-olds;
- Physical measurements.

The films were made available on interviewer's tablets for future reference.

During the introduction to the data linkage consent process, interviewers were shown a film⁸. The film was developed for the Next Steps study, a study also managed by the Centre for Longitudinal Studies.

Practical exercises (e.g. group exercises and practice sessions) were used extensively throughout the briefing to ensure that interviewers were confident and competent in the procedures that they would be carrying out in the field. Throughout the briefings, workbook exercises were used to consolidate learning.

6.1.5 Practice session and homework tasks

Between days one and two of the briefing, interviewers were required to complete a number of homework tasks:

1. Household interview practice: Familiarisation with the household interview.
2. Young person live practice: Conducting the physical measurements and cognitive assessment with two 16-17-year-olds,
3. Young person questionnaire practice: Familiarisation with the:
 - The young person interview (CAPI)
 - The young person self-completion questionnaire (CASI)
 - The young person online questionnaire (CAWI)
4. Parent online questionnaire (CAWI) practice: Familiarisation with the questionnaire.
5. Electronic Contact Sheet (ECS) exercise: Practice using the ECS for recording various types of household contact and tracing steps.

Interviewers were given a homework booklet containing instructions for these tasks.

6.2 Accreditation

During the second day of the briefing, all interviewers completed a competency-based assessment under test conditions on conducting the physical measurements. The purpose of the accreditation was to check that all interviewers were able to follow the protocol accurately.

Accreditation took place in groups of three or four with one accreditor and two or three interviewers per group. Interviewers carried out the physical measurement procedures on each other, whilst the accreditor observed and completed an accreditation booklet.

⁸ The data linkage film can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W6ZuK3lYW6Y>

The accreditation booklet clearly set out the marking criteria for each measurement, with major and minor errors listed for each measurement as well as a script for the accreditor to administer the accreditation. To pass each part of the accreditation interviewers needed to:

- Make no major errors
- Make no more than 3 minor errors

A copy of the accreditation booklet can be found in the appendices.

At the end of the accreditation session, accreditors provided interviewers with feedback on their individual performance and informed them whether they had passed or failed (and if they had failed, specifically what they had failed on). All interviewers had to pass the accreditation prior to starting work. Re-accreditation was arranged for those who did not pass first time.

Accreditors were given detailed written instructions and training on the accreditation process.

6.3 Accompaniments

It is standard practice for both Ipsos MORI and NatCen interviewers to be regularly appraised through supervision in the field, and for their work to be reviewed on an on-going basis. NatCen interviewers adhered to the Ipsos MORI supervision and quality check practices. For MCS7, the majority of interviewers were accompanied within their first four weeks of starting work, and all interviewers were accompanied during the fieldwork period.

In total, 264 accompaniments were carried out – 74 for NatCen and 190 for Ipsos MORI⁹.

Interviewers were prioritised for accompaniment based on their experience, as well as those identified as less confident in the briefings, to ensure that appropriate support was provided in the early stages of fieldwork. For example, interviewers who had not worked on MCS6, were prioritised for accompaniments. The NatCen accompaniments were slightly different in that none had worked on a recent MCS sweep, thus all required early accompaniments. A proportion of accompaniments fell outside the four-week window because of broken appointments or illness.

For MCS7 a tailored accompaniment form was produced to ensure that supervisors were able to pick up and feedback on issues relevant to the survey. Supervisors attended a briefing session on the accompaniment process and, where possible, were asked to include visits where the cohort member elements were attempted.

⁹ Ipsos MORI briefed a higher number of interviewers than required to work on the project to ensure that even if some interviewers dropped out, there were sufficient interviewers trained and ready to work. Additionally, several briefed interviewers were not needed because other interviewers were able to take on more sample points than initially anticipated.

On completion, each interviewer was given an overall score on a scale of 1-5 (1 being the highest/best score) and the form, signed by both parties, was passed to the Region Manager for review. The majority of interviewers scored 1 or 2; some of the few scoring 3 and all scoring 4 or 5 had a second accompaniment to provide additional supervised practice and support. Overall, three interviewers had a second accompaniment. As a result of the accompaniments, two interviewers were removed from the interviewing panel for failing to meet the required standards¹⁰.

Scores were crosschecked against interviewer performance via the validation and exception reporting processes, both of which are explained below.

6.4 Validation

In addition, standard Ipsos MORI and NatCen validation procedures were applied: 10% of cohort families interviewed were re-contacted by telephone by the dedicated Field Quality team. The validation script included a standard set of questions required by the interviewer Quality Control Scheme (IQCS) guidelines and some specific to MCS7.

The set of questions used by NatCen for validations were similar to the ones used by Ipsos MORI. The validation scores for NatCen interviewers were passed on to Ipsos MORI on a monthly basis for reporting purposes.

Below are a few examples of questions asked by both Ipsos MORI and NatCen:

- Whether the interviewer showed the respondent their ID card;
- Whether the interviewer conducted the physical measurements;
- Whether the interview was carried out on a tablet.

Validators were also able to trigger an automated email to the Quality team if there was a serious issue to report. In total, 1,063 validations were completed – 914 by Ipsos MORI and 149 by NatCen. This was approximately 10% of the total number of interviews completed.

As a result of the validations, it became apparent that an interviewer was carrying out proxy interviews for some cohort member survey elements, for which proxy information was not allowed, which was strictly against MCS7 protocol. Ipsos MORI carried out an investigation and found a total of 27 cases which looked to be affected. These cases were flagged in the data and the interviewer was removed from the survey.

¹⁰ One interviewer had low response on certain elements. The field team decided to remove the other interviewer due to long-term sickness.

6.5 Exception reporting, fieldwork process, CAI Issues and data quality reports

Checks were made throughout fieldwork and a number of reports were produced and these are described below.

6.5.1 Exception reporting

As a further check on the quality of completed interviewing, regular exception reporting was conducted. This involved analysing survey data and other background information recorded by CAI or ECS at the interviewer level to identify any instances where interviewers were not implementing the survey appropriately and consistently. Findings for each interviewer were compared against the average and over time, to track performance.

For MCS7, an agreed set of checks were run monthly. SPSS syntax was written to check particular questions and key issues such as overall and individual response and refusal rates for each element, number of parent online questionnaires completed in the household, average element timings and overall timings of visits, compliance for contact protocols, level of refusals and non-response on income questions, among others. Outliers and errors indicated where an individual interviewer's data needed further scrutiny.

This information was used to feed back to interviewers about performance, both individually and collectively. General feedback to interviewers was given via newsletters, memos or text messages. These served as useful reminders aimed at improving performance generally and resolving any apparent misconceptions. Feedback was also provided in a more targeted way, highlighting interviewers with issues of particular concern and seeking direct feedback. If necessary, interviewers were provided with further training. A mentoring programme was developed to provide long term support to the interviewers that were under performing. A summary of issues was reported monthly within the fieldwork processes report (see 6.5.2 for detailed information).

6.5.2 Fieldwork processes report

As part of the quality control checks, Ipsos MORI delivered a monthly report to CLS that included information on:

- The number of complaints received, the reason for the complaints and whether any actions were taken by Field as a result;
- Other data/information withdrawal requests;
- Data linkage consent withdrawal requests;
- Validations;
- Accompaniments (broken down for Ipsos MORI and NatCen);
- Exception reporting;

- Online questionnaire completion rates for cohort members and parents;
- Data linkage consent booklet errors and actions taken;
- Household interview completion rates (broken down by month and whether completed by cohort members or parent).

The first of these monthly reports was delivered in May 2018 and the final one in March 2019.

6.5.3 CAI Issues report

Ipsos MORI also delivered CAI issues reports regularly. They documented any errors that were discovered in the scripts after fieldwork had started and how they were dealt with. It included reports on any script updates that were needed, along details of edits or flags that were included in the data as a consequence of such errors. The report was updated throughout and finalised at the end of fieldwork.

For each issue listed, the report described:

- The number of cases affected;
- The potential impact on data quality in those cases;
- When and how the issue was resolved;
- Recommended edits to the final data where this will improve data quality, or flags where this is preferable.

The script for each element was released with an original version number of 101 and this number was increased sequentially each time a new script was released. The CAI Issues report detailed all versions of each script that was released, including the date they were released and the changes that were made. This is described in more detail in Section 10.1 (Issuing the CAPI script and script issues).

6.5.4 Data quality reporting

A number of measures were put in place to ensure the quality of the data collected. Two versions of a data quality report were provided to CLS, the first an interim report (dated 20 June 2018) which was provided during fieldwork to detail initial and ongoing checks on the data, and a final version of the report provided after fieldwork was complete (4 October 2019). The contents of these reports are detailed below:

A number of checks were reported in the interim report. These checks were primarily to ensure that the questions in the CAI scripts were functioning correctly and so were not updated after 20 June 2018. These included:

- Analysis of the 'hard' and 'soft' checks contained in the interview, which required the interviewers to either amend or confirm an answer that fell outside of an expected range;

- Range checks on income and outgoings to ensure that the values being given looked sensible;
- Analysis of non-response rates to check that the CAI was working properly and there were no unexpected problems with the acceptability of questions. Most non-response was found where it was expected, in questions which had already been identified as potentially sensitive, e.g. around relationships, finances, or matters of a personal nature;
- Other checks were made on the Physical Measurements data and these were provided in the interim report. These were also updated and included in the final report at the end of fieldwork as they were used to determine whether specific data edits were required. Physical measurements data were analysed for distribution and outliers, and all interviewer comments specific to this element were reviewed.
 - A small number of edits were agreed with CLS and made to the Physical Measurements data, and these edits are contained within the Data Quality Report.

6.6 Fieldwork complaints and respondent queries

6.6.1 Respondent queries

During the MCS7 fieldwork, participants were able to contact both the CLS Cohort Maintenance Team and the Ipsos MORI project team by telephone and email. Most of the calls and emails received about the survey were straight forward enquiries. However, a small number of complaints were also recorded. Details of how the complaints were handled can be found in the following section (6.6.2). The protocol to handle respondent queries varied by whether the query was received by CLS or Ipsos MORI as below.

If a respondent query was received by the CLS Cohort Maintenance Team, the query would be passed on to Ipsos MORI by phone if urgent (i.e. refusal, appointment change, or complaint), or it would be logged in the daily update log, which would be sent to Ipsos MORI securely at the end of each day to follow up on (i.e. address change etc.).

If a respondent query was received by Ipsos MORI, the query would be logged in the respondent communications spreadsheet and, if needed, passed on to the field team who would contact the interviewer for a prompt update. However, most of the respondent queries required a sample update, for example, an address update, which would be done by the Ipsos MORI project team. All queries about NatCen interviewers were received and handled either by the CLS cohort maintenance team or the Ipsos MORI project team.

In total, around 277 calls were received (to Ipsos MORI and CLS). CLS sent through details of any calls received daily using a respondent communication spreadsheet. Ipsos MORI also received around 165 emails from respondents. These calls and emails from respondents included c.55 booking/changing appointments, c.260 refusals, c.95 changing contact/household details and c.30 messages for interviewers (among others). The log also included 68 returned advance mailings, 17 new addresses and 8 refusals as a result of the tracing letters. Cohort members and their parents sent 49 SMS replies in response to the online questionnaire SMS reminder texts, and 7 replies in response to the online questionnaire email reminders to Ipsos MORI.

6.6.2 Fieldwork complaints

Complaints formed only a small proportion of all contacts received from respondents about the study, and in general, on such a large study such as MCS, a small number of complaints are normal. Ipsos MORI and NatCen interviewers are well briefed and experienced in engaging with respondents ethically and sensitively so that complaints are kept to a minimum.

At MCS7, two types of respondent queries that required written response were distinguished:

- Complaints – instances where there had been a clear breach of protocol or the participants were unhappy about certain aspects of the survey (i.e. data linkage);
- Causes for concern – included all other correspondence that required a reply that was not necessarily expressed as a complaint. In most instances, the protocol had been followed, but the respondents were unhappy with it (i.e. the call pattern was sometimes perceived as too persistent). However, it could also include cases where the respondent simply wanted more information (e.g. about physical measurements), access to data or withdrawal from the study as a whole.

Where a complaint or cause for concern occurred, the following principles applied:

- All complaints and causes for concern, whether made directly to CLS or to Ipsos MORI (including those regarding NatCen interviewers) were logged and passed to the 'allocated owner' within a day of receipt. They were then acknowledged within one working day with a standard response by email or post, explaining that the matter would be investigated fully. Once the standard follow-up response was sent to the complainant, an appropriate course of action was decided upon, if necessary, in consultation with CLS.
- Complaints or causes for concern relating to the conduct of the interviewers, whether NatCen or Ipsos MORI, were dealt with by Ipsos MORI. Those about the survey processes were dealt with by Ipsos MORI, in conjunction with CLS, where necessary. CLS took ownership of complaints about the study in general, the survey design or a previous sweep of the study. Respondents were sent a written response within two weeks of CLS/Ipsos MORI receiving the complaint, which contained an explanation and detailed any actions that had been undertaken as a result. Anonymised copies of all letters were provided to CLS on an ongoing basis
- Where a complaint against an interviewer was upheld, the interviewer was informed and given an opportunity to respond. Depending on the seriousness of the complaint, actions would range from a formal verbal or written warning, extra coaching or additional supervision, to dismissal from the survey interviewer panel.
- Some complaints and causes for concern also contained a request for data deletion, consent withdrawal or removal from the study. If this happened, each component was logged separately to ensure that every request was fully dealt with and a single reply was sent outlining all actions.

In total, 27 complaints and 36 causes for concern were received by Ipsos MORI or CLS during the MCS7 fieldwork. A significant proportion of the complaints were about interviewers. One interviewer was removed from the interviewing panel following several complaints. The tables below outline the main reasons for complaints and causes for concerns received during MCS7 fieldwork, and the action taken, if applicable.

Figure 6.6.3: Complaints

Complaints	
Total number of complaints during the Age 17 Survey	27
Main reasons for complaints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unhappy with online questionnaire x1 • Concern about Interviewer/supervisor behaviour x22 • Unhappy with data linkage request x2 • Unhappy about lack of information about findings on mental health x1 • Request to delete MCS7 survey data x1
Field actions taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisor/interviewer formal warning x3 • Allocation of new interviewer x2

Figure 6.6.4: Causes for concern

Causes for concern	
Total number of causes for concern during the age 17 survey	36
Main reasons for causes for concern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unhappy about lack of incentive x1 • Parent not received thank you letter x1 • Unhappy with online questionnaire x5 • Unhappy with household questionnaire x1 • Concern about interviewer behaviour at MCS7/interviewer behaviour at last sweep x16 • Unhappy with data linkage request x1 • Unhappy about re-contact/contact processes x5 • Cohort member misinformed about MCS7 incentive x1 • MCS7 weight request from cohort member x1 • MCS data + saliva request from cohort member x2 • Refusal and request to remove cohort member from the mailing list/contact details x2
Field actions taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviewer warning x2 • Interviewer removed from the survey x2 • Allocation of new interviewer x2 • Interviewer training x1

6.7 Consent withdrawals

6.7.1 Data linkage consent withdrawals

One new feature of the Age 17 Survey was asking for consent to link administrative records to survey data from the cohort members themselves, instead of their parents on their behalf. This approach was considered appropriate for this sweep because once the study members are 16, they are considered adults, and could provide their own consent to data linkage.

Withdrawal of data linkage consent could only be done in writing by the cohort member, directly to CLS. If a data linkage consent withdrawal request was received by CLS, the Ipsos MORI team was notified. The request would be logged in a spreadsheet, and a flag added to the data.

A total of 14 requests to withdraw data linkage consent were received during the MCS7 fieldwork. In some instances, the request to withdraw consent came alongside a complaint. In general, the complaints were made

by the parents who felt their child had not fully understood the request or felt pressured by the interviewer to consent. The parental complaints were subsequently followed by the cohort members' written request to withdraw their consent.

Most data linkage consent withdrawal requests were accompanied by a permanent refusal. The permanent refusals were logged by Ipsos MORI and the status of the respective cases was updated accordingly for future reference.

Regardless of whether it was a stand-alone consent withdrawal request, or a complaint as well, anyone who requested that their data linkage permissions were withdrawn received a written confirmation that their request had been actioned.

7. Conduct of fieldwork

7. Conduct of fieldwork

7.1 Design of fieldwork

Ipsos MORI were allocated 85% of the MCS7 issued sample (12,381 cases), and NatCen worked approximately 15% of the issued sample (2,115 cases). Both fieldwork agencies used the Ipsos MORI Electronic Contact Sheet (ECS) to work and record any case level progress. However, each fieldwork agency was responsible for allocating sample points and cases to the interviewers who were working for their agency. The Ipsos MORI and NatCen fieldwork teams worked closely prior to and throughout the fieldwork period. The NatCen fieldwork team provided a weekly progress update to the Ipsos MORI fieldwork and research teams.

7.2 Fieldwork period

Fieldwork for the main stage of the survey was conducted between 8th January 2018 and 8th April 2019.

Fieldwork was planned to take place from January to July 2018 in all countries and continued until February 2019 in Scotland and Northern Ireland only. The cohort members being in two different school in Scotland and Northern Ireland determined the extension of fieldwork in the autumn of 2018 and early 2019.

In order to manage the fieldwork effectively, it was divided into two phases. Phase 1 included all cohort members who were due to start Year 12 (England and Wales)/S6 (Scotland)/Sixth Form (Northern Ireland) in Autumn 2017, and phase 2 included those who would start in Autumn 2018. Within each phase, fieldwork was split into waves for fieldwork management purposes, as described below.

Fieldwork phases and waves are shown in the following table:

Table 7.2.1 Fieldwork phases and waves

	Wave	Planned start date	Planned end date	Countries
Phase 1	1	4th January 2018	19th March 2018	England, Wales
	2	5 th February 2018	21 st April 2018	England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland
	3	12 th March 2018	28 th May 2018	England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland
	4	16 th April 2018	2 nd July 2018	England, Wales, Northern Ireland
Phase 2	5	13 th August 2018	29 th October 2018	Scotland
	6	17 th July 2018	3 rd December 2018	Scotland, Northern Ireland
	7	22 nd October 2018	7 th January 2019	Scotland, Northern Ireland
	8	26 th November 2018	11 th February 2019	Scotland, Northern Ireland

As outlined in the table above, fieldwork was originally planned to finish in February 2019, but in reality, finished in April 2019, with 124 interviews achieved in the two-month overrun period.

The following table shows the number of interviews achieved each month.

Table 7.2.2 Interviews achieved, by month

	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland
Jan 18	441	78	0	0
Feb 18	1146	170	17	38
Mar 18	1141	126	63	50
Apr 18	1298	184	74	96
May 18	1149	195	53	68
Jun 18	700	269	31	72
Jul 18	469	147	15	38
Aug 18	335	152	43	59
Sept 18	207	60	96	57
Oct 18	105	22	152	117
Nov 18	56	6	133	130
Dec 18	34	3	148	71
Jan 19	6	1	164	84
Feb 19	0	0	72	60
Mar 19	0	0	26	36
April	36	3	18	5
Total	7,123	1,416	1,105	981

As the plan was for interviews to take place when the cohort member was in a certain academic year, any delays during fieldwork had a greater impact if the interview for an individual was pushed into the subsequent academic year than if it took place in the originally scheduled academic year.

The following table shows the number of interviews that took place when originally planned, the proportion that were delayed but still took place within the intended academic year, and the proportion delayed into the following academic year.

Table 7.2.3 Interviews delayed

	England	Wales	Scotland Phase 1&2	Northern Ireland Phase 1&2	Total
Within original timetable	5933	1036	926	736	8631
Delayed, but within intended academic year	428	130	142	116	816
Delayed, pushed into next academic year	762	228	37	151	1178

7.3 Interviewer assignments

The sample was grouped into interviewer assignments, or points. In total there were 1052 points, each containing an average of 14 addresses.

Assignments were grouped into fieldwork waves. 'Priority' addresses were identified as those with a high non-contact propensity and were allocated to an assignment in the first possible wave of fieldwork. This was done to maximise the length of time interviewers had to establish contact with 'difficult to contact' addresses. Interviewers also tried to make face-to-face contact for the first call attempt on these addresses to increase the chance of making contact.

Interviewers were allocated to assignments primarily based on their proximity and availability.

In total 264 interviewers were allocated work and carried out at least some interviewing. On average they each completed 39 interviews. Sixteen percent of interviewers conducted 10 or fewer interviews; six percent of interviewers conducted 100 or more interviews. The following table shows the number of productive interviews per interviewer.

Table 7.3.1. Productive interviews per interviewer

	N	% of interviewers
1 to 10	44	16.0
11 to 20	66	24.0
21 to 30	42	15.3
31 to 40	32	11.6
41 to 50	32	11.6
51 to 60	9	3.3
61 to 70	8	2.9
71 to 80	13	4.7
81 to 90	8	2.9
91 to 100	5	1.8
100+	16	5.8
Total	275	100%

7.4 Issuing sample to interviewers

Interviewers were issued their sample assignment at the beginning of each wave. They were able to access sample information through the fieldwork management system called the Electronic Contact Sheet (ECS). Section 7.10 provides full details on the ECS.

All interviewers were instructed to review their assignments when they received them in order to plan their work, considering the first contact method (either face-to-face first or phone first), address location and the response history of each family. Assignments contained a mixture of 'phone first' and 'face-to-face first' addresses. Interviewers were advised to make an appointment with a 'phone first' case and then to prioritise contacting the 'face-to-face first' cases whilst working in the local area.

7.5 Materials for interviewers

Interviewers were supplied with the following materials for use on the survey.

Table 7.5.1 Table of materials

	Document	Document included in appendices
Briefing and training materials	Interviewer instructions - Data Collection Instruments	Yes
	Interviewer instructions - Survey Information and Processes	Yes
	Interviewer 'top tips' for engagement	Yes
	Study FAQs	Yes
	Data linkage FAQs	Yes
	ECS generic instructions	No
	Homework booklet	No
	Briefing workbook, worksheets and practice scenarios	No
	Study elements chart	No
	Briefing agenda	No
Pre-fieldwork and live practice materials	Fieldwork preparation letter for interviewers	Yes
	Live practice - advance letter for parents	Yes
	Live practice - advance letter for young people	Yes
	Live practice - information sheet for young people	Yes
	Live practice - information sheet for parents	Yes
	Live practice - further information sheet	Yes
	Live practice quota sheet	Yes
	Live practice interviewer instructions	Yes

	Document	Document included in appendices
Advance mailing	Advance letter for parents	Yes
	Advance letter for study members	Yes
	Advance booklet for parents	Yes
	Advance booklet for study members	Yes
	Advance letter for parent – Generic	Yes
	Advance letter for study members - Generic	Yes
Appointment mailing	Appointment booklet for study members	Yes
	Appointment card	Yes
	Appointment mailing envelope	No
Materials used in household	Calling cards	Yes
	Cognitive assessment question booklet	No
	Cognitive assessment instruction laminate	No
	Data linkage consent booklet	Yes
	Frankfurt Plane card	Yes
	Further information leaflet for study members	Yes
	Information sheet for study members – online questionnaire	Yes
	Information sheet for parent – online questionnaire	Yes
	Language card	Yes
	Measurements postcard	Yes
	Physical Measurements showcard	Yes
	Physical Measurements Summary sheet	Yes
	Showcards	Yes
	Strengths and Difficulties paper questionnaire and return	No
Tracing materials	Change of details card	Yes
	Occupier letter	Yes
	School tracing letter	Yes
	Schools tracing letter for study members	Yes
	Stable contact letter	Yes
	Tracing letter	Yes
	Tracing letter envelopes and stamps	No
Reference documents and other materials	Document reference list	No
	Study member thank you gift (Keyring)	No
	Thank you letter for study members	Yes
	Thank you letter for parents	Yes
	CLS pre-notification letter and booklet for study members	Yes
	CLS pre-notification letter and booklet for parents	Yes

7.6 Welsh language materials

Respondents in Wales were provided with all main communication materials in both Welsh and English, and were also able to choose which language they participated in. This was to ensure equality was given to the English and Welsh languages.

Households in Wales were sent or given English and Welsh versions of all the following advance and appointment documents:

- Advance booklet for parents;
- Advance booklet for cohort member;
- Advance letter for parent;
- Advance letter for cohort member;
- Appointment booklet for cohort member;
- Appointment card.

All respondents could also have or use Welsh versions of the following materials if requested:

- Cohort member 'further information leaflet';
- Showcards;
- Data linkage consent booklet;
- Measurement postcard;
- Cognitive assessment question booklet;
- 'Completing a questionnaire online' information sheet for cohort members;
- 'Completing a questionnaire online' information sheet for parents;
- Paper SDQ (parent).

7.7 Other language materials

For MCS7 no other language materials were provided for cohort members. These were not required for cohort members because all cohort members were born in the UK and therefore have good spoken English.

Other language materials were provided to support participation of parents with limited English. The advance letter and booklet for parents were available in the four languages most commonly needed at previous sweeps of the study. There were only 10 requests for translated advance materials:

- Urdu (7);
- Bengali (2);
- Punjabi (Urdu script) (1);
- Gujarati (0).

The parent online questionnaire and Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire were not translated into any of the above languages.

7.8 Pre-notification for cohort families

All cohort families were sent a mailing from CLS before the start of fieldwork (known as the pre-notification mailing). The mailing was sent in three phases, one at the end of 2017 and two during 2018, prior to the sample being issued. It contained a letter for parent(s), a letter for cohort members, a leaflet outlining some survey findings for parents, and a leaflet outlining some findings for cohort members. The purpose of the mailing was to inform families that fieldwork was commencing, and to tell them to expect an interviewer to be in contact. It also provided them with findings from the last survey when the cohort members were 14 years old.

Copies of pre-notification letters and leaflets can be found in the appendices.

7.9 Informing the police

All interviewers were required to notify the police that they were working in the area before they could start work. They were asked to do this as it is reassuring for families, as well as other people the interviewer may encounter, to be told that the police are aware they are working in the area. It is also useful for the police to be aware of the study and the fact that an interviewer is in the area, so that they can reassure anyone who contacts them about it. This is standard practice for all Ipsos Mori surveys.

All interviewers were instructed to inform the police via the 101 phone number (the non-emergency police number). Calls are recorded; however, it doesn't provide an easy way for respondents to check the validity of interviewers. Therefore, if interviewers were working in an area where it was possible to register with the police in person, they were advised to do so. Whichever method was used to make contact, interviewers were required to make a note of the time and date of the call (and the name of the officer, if applicable).

7.10 The Electronic Contact Sheet (ECS)

The Electronic Contact Sheet (ECS) was used to control the fieldwork protocols and monitor interviewer progress during fieldwork. Interviewers used the application on touch-screen tablets, to access contact information and log progress (contact attempts) during fieldwork, and synchronised it with a central database every day. This meant that staff in the central office could monitor and report on progress as it happened in the field. The ECS:

- Provided interviewers with sample details;
- Allowed interviewers to manage appointments;
- Allowed interviewers to record contact attempt outcomes (including mover tracing steps);
- Allowed interviewers to review and monitor their progress and to view which interview elements had been completed and which were outstanding for each household;

- Allowed interviewers to record notes and comments, and to update contact information;
- Was used to launch Dimensions interview scripts and conduct interviews;
- Allowed interviewers to record the final outcome for each household;
- Allowed interviewers to receive messages from Head Office about their cases and assignments.

7.10.1 Sample details

The ECS included the following sample information:

- Serial number;
- Issue number and sample point;
- Status of case;
- Contact information;

The ECS contained a substantial amount of information about each household to help interviewers plan their approach to contacting the cohort families and carrying out the interview. The contact information section of the ECS included the following:

- Cohort family details for locating and contacting:
 - Address;
 - Telephone numbers;
 - The status of address (CLS sample variable which indicated when the case address details were last confirmed);
 - Whether the address provided is an institution;
 - Delicate/important notes about the family;
 - General notes on the family.
- Information providing useful context about previous sweeps of the study:
 - The address and date of last interview (including day of week);
 - Family outcomes (sweeps 1-6) and reasons for refusal (sweeps 4-6);
 - Parent 1 and parent 2 respondents at the last sweep completed;
 - Language of translated interviews and materials for parent 1 and parent 2 (if applicable).
- Cohort member's details:

- Name;
 - Mobile phone number;
 - Gender at birth;
 - Important notes (e.g. sensitive family situation);
 - Whether they have ever been registered blind or as having poor vision;
 - Whether completed self-completion questionnaire at sweep 6;
 - Reason for not doing self-completion questionnaire at sweep 6 (if applicable);
 - Consent QR code;
 - Online questionnaire username / password;
 - Online questionnaire completion status;
 - Cognitive assessments in Welsh or English sweep 6.
- Parent details:
 - Name;
 - Telephone numbers;
 - Who completed the parent 1 and parent 2 survey elements at the last sweep completed;
 - Relationship to cohort member;
 - Gender and date of birth;
 - Online questionnaire username / password;
 - Online questionnaire completion status;
 - SDQ¹¹ QR code¹².

The ECS also contained information to assist mover tracing if required. For example, stable contact details and school information (if known) and gave interviewers space to record information about other household members.

¹¹ Source: *What is the SDQ?*. Available: <http://www.sdqinfo.com/a0.html>. Last accessed 08/09/2016.

¹² The QR code is a machine-scannable image that can instantly be read. Every QR code consists of a number of black squares and dots which represent certain pieces of information. The QR code was positioned on the bottom left corner of the front page of the SDQ.

Example of contact info section in ECS (fictitious example):

Home

Options ▾

Sample List

Calendar

Summary

Contact Info

Call History

New call / outcomes

Undo Substitution

Phone first

Case # p999605011 - Job: TEST-MCS7 Main

Brooklyn Beckham / Beckingham Palace, Basildon, Essex

Status: Not Started

PRACTICE MODE

Contact Info

Contact Info

		Edited?	Edit
Cohort family			
Family participation history			
Cohort Member #1 Brooklyn Beckham	Address	Beckingham Palace, Basildon, Essex, BS1 1AA	
Parent #1 Victoria Beckham	Home Phone		
Parent #2 David Beckham	Status of address	Last confirmed address on 07-JUN-2015	
Other contact in HH	Whether address is institution	N	
Stable Contact for P1 Gordon Ramsey	Delicate/very important notes on family		
School(s) cm1✓	General notes on family		
Neighbour #1			
Neighbour #2			

Sync Overdue: No

Items to Sync: Yes

Last Sync: Yesterday 9:36am

7.10.2 Appointments

The ECS showed the time and type of contact (face to face or telephone) and mailing (invitation or appointment) mailing that the interviewer logged. It also allowed interviewers to record any notes they thought might be useful when setting up and managing their appointments. In addition, a calendar function allowed interviewers to view and manage all their appointments.

7.10.3 Contact attempt outcomes

Interviewers recorded details of all forms of contact made, including direct contact with the cohort family, and contact with others such as neighbours or stable contacts. For each contact attempt interviewers logged how, when and who they attempted to contact, and the outcome of the attempt.

7.10.4 Progress

The ECS helped interviewers manage their workload, providing a summary of progress with each case. For example, interviewers were able to keep track of the steps¹³ that they were taking to trace a family. They were only able to declare that they could not locate a family once these steps had been carried out and logged. The ECS clearly displayed their progress, showing both interviewers and Head Office which steps had been carried out and which remained.

¹³ These steps are described in detail in section 7.11, below.

In addition, the ECS showed which survey elements had been completed for each family and which were left to do.

7.10.5 Contact information

Interviewers added or edited the contact information in the ECS if they obtained new information about the family or family members. Interviewers were also able to add contact information for anyone who assisted with mover tracing (such as neighbours). This information was replicated in the CAI interviews where applicable (for example, at the end of each interview, respondent contact details were checked) and similarly changes made in the CAI interview; were reflected in the ECS. Office staff were also able to change contact information if they received new information by telephone, email or letter. The ECS provided a full history of the changes made to each item.

7.10.6 Interviews

The CAI script was launched from the ECS for all interviews. The first element to be completed was the household interview (initially only this element was available in the ECS). Once the interviewers had completed the household interview, the ECS showed a list containing every element available for that household, as well as who would need to complete it and what progress had been made on it. The interviewers could then use ECS to launch the scripts for different survey elements in the CAI. Completed elements were shown in green and were locked so that the interviewers could not access them anymore. If an element had been paused (yellow) in Dimensions, the interviewer would see in the ECS that it was not completed and could relaunch that element and be taken to the correct place in the interview. Elements that had not been started were shown in grey.

7.10.7 Final outcomes

Interviewers needed to record a final outcome for each household once they had finished working on a case. In productive households, an outcome for each survey element that the household members were eligible for was logged in ECS automatically, and once all elements were finalised a household-level outcome was automatically assigned. For unproductive households, interviewers had to select a final outcome for the household before they could transmit the case back to Head Office.

7.10.8 Head Office messages

The ECS included an integrated messaging system used by the Head Office to pass on messages to interviewers. For example, if a respondent phoned the office to refuse to take part, a message appeared the next time the interviewer synchronised their tablet. Interviewers were required to acknowledge receipt of all messages received.

7.11 Who to contact

All interviewers were required to try to make first contact with resident parents (if they lived with the cohort member) – not the cohort member (this was outlined in the ECS). Although the cohort member was the focus of the study, parents were used as ‘appointment facilitators’ as they were likely to know the best time to visit, and could help explain the survey and the purpose of the visit (if necessary) before the interviewer’s arrival. The development work carried out prior to the main stage also showed that the cohort members’ preference was to contact parents in the first instance.

Interviewers were also required to encourage parents to be present in the household for the visit, if possible. If a parent was not available, there needed to be someone aged 18 or over in the house at the time of the interviewer’s visit (a requirement of Ipsos MORI’s Lone Worker Policy, which states that interviewers must not be alone in a household with anyone aged 17 years or under).

Interviewers were provided with resident parent details (Parent 1 and Parent 2) in the ECS. If there were two parents listed on the ECS and both took part in MCS6, then interviewers were instructed to attempt to make initial contact with the person who was the main respondent in MCS6. If they were not able to contact this person, then they were to attempt to contact the person who was the partner respondent last time.

If the ECS indicated that only one parent took part in the last sweep, interviewers were instructed to first attempt contact with that parent. If the ECS indicated that neither parent took part in the last sweep, but contact details for both parents were available in ECS, interviewers could attempt to contact either parent. In cases where the cohort member’s parents were no longer living together, interviewers were briefed to try to find out who the cohort member now lived with and to interview at that address. If the cohort member lived with both parents for some of the time, interviewers were asked to try to establish where they mainly lived and to interview at that address. If residence was shared equally between the two parents, then interviews were usually conducted in the household that contained the main respondent from last time.

Given the age of the cohort members, it was possible that a small number of them would no longer be living with their parents or a parental figure. If any cohort members were no longer living with their parents but were still living in a private residence (for example, with a partner or with friends), the interviewer could carry out the interview as normal (still ensuring that an adult aged 18 or over was in the household at the time of the visit), but there were no elements for parents in these cases.

7.12 Tracing young people

Interviewers were required to trace cohort families if:

- They were no longer living at the issued address;
- It was not possible to establish whether they were living at the address, after multiple contacts;
- The address was inaccessible or couldn’t be found.

Interviewers were required to follow a number of tracing actions in the hope of finding the cohort members. If these were unsuccessful, they could then assign the outcome 'moved – unable to find follow-up address'. The tracing actions required were:

- Multiple phone calls to the cohort family – interviewers were required to try all telephone numbers provided in ECS for the cohort member, Parent 1 and Parent 2. A minimum of five phone calls to each of the telephone numbers were required. Interviewers were encouraged to make phone calls at different times of the day and on different days of the week.
- Making multiple visits to the cohort family's last known address. A minimum of eight face-to-face visits were required, with four in the evenings and at weekends.
- Speaking to current residents of the issued address or neighbours who might know the whereabouts of the cohort family.
- Contacting nominated stable contact(s). Contact details for stable contacts were provided in ECS and interviewers were instructed to make contact either by telephone or face-to-face. If a face-to-face visit was not feasible and contact was not made over the telephone, then a stable contact letter was sent.
- Contacting the school that the cohort member was attending when last interviewed (if information was available).

Interviewers were required to record all contacting and tracing attempts. They recorded the outcome of each attempt on the ECS, including any new addresses established.

If interviewers were successful in finding a new address for a family that had moved, they would follow the contact procedures at the new address. If the new address was outside of the interviewer's area, the case would be coded as 'moved out of area' and would be reallocated to another interviewer.

Interviewers were also required to attempt to establish full addresses of any cohort families no longer living in the UK for CLS to maintain contact with them in case they return to the UK in the future (and would therefore be eligible to participate in the study again).

Where interviewers were unable to trace the family to a new address the case was passed to the CLS Cohort Maintenance Team for further tracing.

7.12.1 Tracing letter

In instances where interviewers contacted someone who knew where the cohort family was living but was unwilling to provide this information to the interviewer, a tracing letter could be used. This letter was given to the contact to pass on to the cohort family, allowing the cohort family to decide for themselves whether they wanted to take part in the survey but without the contact feeling they had given away the cohort family's address.

This letter explained that MCS7 was taking place, and that an interviewer from Ipsos MORI or NatCen had tried to contact the respondent unsuccessfully. The respondent was asked to send their new address details to Ipsos MORI. Interviewers completed these letters and placed them in an envelope containing a post-paid envelope addressed to Ipsos MORI and asked the person who knew the cohort family's whereabouts to post or pass on the letter to the cohort family.

The tracing letter mentioned the study name as it was for the cohort family. Interviewers sealed the envelope before giving it to the person passing it on to protect confidentiality.

7.12.2 Stable contact letter

If interviewers were unable to make contact by telephone or face-to-face with the stable contact(s) provided in ECS then a stable contact letter could be used.

The letter explained that MCS7 was taking place and that an interviewer had been unsuccessful making contact with the cohort family. The stable contact(s) were asked if they would be willing to provide new address details for the cohort family to Ipsos MORI or pass the letter on to the family directly. Interviewers completed the letters and placed them in an envelope containing a post-paid envelope addressed to Ipsos MORI and sent them to the stable contact address.

The letter mentioned the study name as it was intended for the stable contact who would usually be aware that the family were part of the study.

7.12.3 Occupier letter

If interviewers were unable to make contact with anyone at the last known address of the cohort family and had not been able to establish their whereabouts from neighbours or the stable contact, then they were asked to leave an occupier letter at the last known address.

This letter explained that CLS was trying to contact a person who was part of a very important research project, and that this was the last known address for that person. The letter asked the recipient to contact Ipsos MORI, or to forward the letter to the addressee, if their new address was known. The interviewer completed the letter and placed it in an envelope containing a post-paid envelope addressed to Ipsos MORI and posted them through the letterbox of the last known address.

The occupier letter did not mention the study name or cohort member's name as it was intended for the current occupiers who may not know that the family was involved in the study.

7.12.4 Contacting schools

For some families, interviewers were provided with the name and address of the secondary school the cohort member was attending or intending to attend at the time of the last interview.

If the school was local to the interviewer, then they were asked to visit and enquire as to whether the cohort member was still attending the school. If so, interviewers asked if the school would be willing to forward a 'schools tracing letter for parents' to the family which, like the standard tracing letter, invited the family to contact Ipsos MORI to provide new contact details.

If making a visit to the school was not practical, interviewers were provided with a 'schools tracing letter' that could be sent to the head teacher explaining that a young person who attended their school is a member of the study and that the interviewer was attempting to contact their family. Interviewers enclosed a 'schools tracing letter for parents' and asked the head teacher if they would be willing to forward it on to the young person's family.

These letters mentioned the young person's name and the study name for the school to help with tracing.

Copies of all tracing letters can be found in the appendices.

7.12.5 Future addresses and change of details

To help keep track of movers in the future, a change of details card was left at the end of every household visit (a copy can be found in the appendices). The purpose of the card was for cohort members to inform CLS should they change their address or contact details in the future.

In addition to this, the CAI script prompted interviewers to ask the cohort member whether they were planning to move and if so, for details of where to (if known).

7.13 Making appointments

When making appointments interviewers were encouraged to speak to a parent to arrange appointments. If the cohort member no longer lived with a parent, then the interviewer contacted the young person directly. When making appointments interviewers were required to explain that an adult over the age of 18 was required to be there for the whole duration of the visit. In addition, interviewers checked or highlighted the following when setting up appointments:

- That the address in ECS matched the address provided by the parent;
- That parents and cohort members should read the advance mailing before the visit;
- Whether other language materials were required for the parent;
- Highlighted some of the physical measurement and cognitive assessment protocols (e.g. having a quiet space and a table if possible).

If interviewers were successful in making an appointment, they were then required to give the cohort family an appointment mailing. The mailing confirmed the appointment in writing and provided cohort members with

detailed information on data linkage, as well as a checklist of things families should do to prepare for the visit. Interviewers encouraged families to read the information in advance of the visit.

If interviewers contacted a respondent and made the appointment by telephone, then they were required to post the appointment mailing. If there was not enough time to post the booklet to the respondent before the appointment, interviewers were asked to explain the content to the respondent, and to allow extra time during the interview for the respondent to read the data linkage booklet fully.

The appointment mailing contained the following:

- Appointment card (addressed to both the cohort member and their parent(s)) – used as a record of the appointment time arranged, containing interviewer contact details should the respondent need to cancel or rearrange the appointment and a checklist of things to do before the visit
- Cohort member appointment booklet ('Adding other information about you – Information for study members) – containing full information on the data linkage element

Copies of the appointment mailing materials can be found in the appendices.

7.14 Return of work

7.14.1 Electronic data

Interviewers were asked to keep their ECS up to date and to transmit this data alongside their Dimensions (CAI questionnaire) data back to the office at the end of each working day.

7.14.2 Data Linkage consent forms

Interviewers returned paper data linkage consent forms to the office by post regularly throughout their assignments. They sent multiple consent forms together, but never included parent Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires in the same envelope so that no survey answers could be associated with identifiable details about the cohort families. On receipt these were booked in to an electronic database. The data linkage consent booklet QR code was scanned and the following checks were carried out:

- The case number written (by hand) on the front page corresponded with the case number connected to that form in the electronic data;
- The cohort member name matched the electronic data;
- Error checks (such as missing signatures, carbon copy of consent booklet not removed).

All errors were logged on an error spreadsheet and monitored and dealt with on a weekly basis. Consent forms were then sent to Ipsos MORI's scanning department and scanned to create electronic image files.

7.14.3 Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)

Interviewers also returned completed parent paper SDQs to the office by post at least every two weeks. Again, they sent multiple SDQs together, but never included consent forms in the same envelope. On receipt, these were booked in by scanning the SDQ barcode and checking that the cohort member name on the form corresponded with the respondent connected to that form in the electronic data. Forms were then sent to Ipsos MORI's scanning department to create electronic image files and for data capture.

7.15 Sample management during fieldwork

7.15.1 Changes to the sample

Ipsos MORI received the initial sample file in December 2017, at which point CLS ceased active tracing of cohort members. However, for a number of different reasons, changes had to be made to the sample throughout fieldwork:

- Respondents sometimes contacted CLS directly and any time-sensitive information received was passed to Ipsos MORI on a daily basis (e.g. refusals and cancelled appointments). All other sample updates, like changes to contact details, were included into a weekly sample update (see section 7.15.3);
- Respondents sometimes contacted Ipsos MORI's Head Office with updated contact information (e.g. returned tracing letters). All information was logged and passed on to interviewers (see section 7.15.4);
- Interviewers updated the contact information that they gathered in the field in the Electronic Contact Sheet. This was transmitted back to the office regularly so that if a case had to be reissued to a different interviewer, the most up to date sample information was available;
- Movers: Interviewers sometimes discovered that cases had moved from their issued address but were not able to find a new address. These cases were passed to CLS for further tracing once a week (see section 7.15.2). If CLS found new contact details, then these would be passed back to Ipsos MORI as part of the weekly sample update;
- National Pupil Database (NPD) updates: CLS attempted to trace cohort members in England via the National Pupil Database if they were marked as 'gone away from issued address' or had been flagged as 'movers'. This one-off tracing attempt was carried out in September 2018 and any updated details were then passed to Ipsos MORI as part of a larger weekly update;
- In-care cases (see section 7.20 for details): CLS continued to attempt to trace a number of in-care cases for example, those who were thought to be living in a children's home etc.) throughout fieldwork. If no address was found or contact with social services could not be established, CLS would provide Ipsos MORI with detailed case notes as part of the weekly sample update. Interviewers would use this information to contact social services or suspected foster families;

- Sensitive cases: CLS attempted to trace cohort members that had sensitive family circumstances throughout fieldwork (for example, those who had previously been in care or foster accommodation). If no address was found, or contact with social services could not be established, CLS would provide Ipsos MORI with detailed case notes as part of the weekly sample update. Interviewers would use this information to contact social services or suspected foster families;
- Additional cases: In some cases, CLS received correspondence during fieldwork from families who had emigrated (and therefore were not included in the original sample issued at the start of the Age 17 Survey) informing them of their return to the UK and of their wish to continue to participate in the study. These additional cases were given to Ipsos MORI throughout fieldwork in the same format as the weekly sample updates. Ipsos MORI allocated these to interviewers as soon as possible;
- Cases were moved between waves to manage interviewers' workloads. This meant that some cases moved from phase 1 to phase 2 or vice versa (numbers provided as 'wave reallocations' in Table 7.2.1.).

Table 7.15.1 Overview of changes to sample

Date	Description	Phase 1 (Wave 1-4)	Phase 2 (Wave 5-8)	Change (+/-)	Total sample
05/10/2017	Live sample				14,425
30/10/2017	Wave allocations	12,547	1,878		14,425
14/12/2017	Wave-reallocations	12,547	1,878		14,425
02/01/2018	Issued sample	12,547	1,878		14,425
19/02/2018	Wave-reallocations	12,548	1,878	+1	14,426
25/02/2018	In-care & sensitive cases	12,567	1,878	+19	14,445
29/04/2018	In-care & sensitive cases	12,604	1,878	+37	14,482
02/09/2018	In-care & sensitive cases	12,604	1,892	+14	14,496
	Final sample	12,604	1,892		14,496

The following table provides an overview of the number of cases that were sent to CLS as movers, and the number of mover cases sent to Ipsos MORI in the weekly sample update file. The first mover file was sent to CLS on the 28th February 2018 and the last one was sent on the 28th February 2019. The first sample update was received on the 22nd December 2017 and the last one was received on the 12th March 2019.

Table 7.15.2 Movers and updates passed between Ipsos MORI and CLS, by month

	Untraced movers sent to CLS	Sample updates received from CLS
Jan 2018		179
Feb 2018	43	1026 ¹⁴
Mar 2018	88	47
Apr 2018	84	44
May 2018	155	47
Jun 2018	104	20
Jul 2018	55	14
Aug 2018	101	26
Sept 2018	32	35
Oct 2018	60	223 ¹⁵
Nov 2018	72	6
Dec 2018	35	3
Jan 2019	24	11
Feb 2019	11	4
March 2019		1
Total	860¹⁶	1,686

7.15.2 Transferring mover cases to CLS

All cases that were assigned the 'untraced mover' outcome were reviewed at Ipsos MORI to check that interviewers had completed all required tracing steps (see section 7.12: Tracing young people). The case was returned to the interviewer to complete tracing in full if they had not done so.

If an interviewer had not located a family after completing the required in-field tracing steps, the case was transferred to the CLS Cohort Maintenance Team for further in-house tracing. A number of cases were sent to CLS for in-house tracing more than once due to the interviewers being unable to locate the family at the previously identified addresses. The untraced movers were collated in a file (known as the 'mover file') and sent to CLS on a weekly basis. The mover file contained the ECS call log for each case, which detailed all contact attempts, tracing steps completed, interviewer notes, and messages sent from the office to interviewers (e.g. respondent communications).

7.15.3 Sample updates from CLS

CLS ceased active tracing of cohort members once the sample file was sent to Ipsos MORI. However, CLS sometimes received updated information directly from cohort families once the sample had been sent to Ipsos

¹⁴ Early fieldwork major sample update from CLS

¹⁵ Includes NPD address updates

¹⁶ Please note that a total of 151 cases were sent to CLS for tracing more than once because interviewers were unable to locate the cohort family at the issued address.

MORI or while tracing movers. This information was passed to Ipsos MORI through a weekly sample update file at least two weeks before the case was due to be issued.

In addition, a respondent communication log was set up between CLS and Ipsos MORI so that any time-sensitive updates received by CLS could be sent to Ipsos MORI on a daily basis if needed. This would include refusals and appointment cancellations.

7.15.4 Actioning updates to the sample

The weekly sample updates from CLS were actioned depending on the type of information received (i.e. whether it was a change of eligibility, change of participation status or a change to contact information) and the status of the case (i.e. whether the case had been issued to an interviewer and whether it had been worked). The actions taken are summarised in Table 7.15.6.

Respondent communications directly received by Ipsos MORI's Head Office as well as any daily updates from CLS were processed in the same way as the sample updates from CLS.

Interviewers received updates to the sample each time they synchronised their Electronic Contact Sheet (which they were advised to do daily). They would receive an on-screen message and the sample information would be updated. Additionally, Ipsos MORI phoned or sent texts to interviewers in order to pass on urgent messages (such as complaints, refusals or broken appointments).

Table 7.15.6 Summary of actions taken as a result of sample update

Type of update	Status of case			
	Not issued to interviewer	Issued to interviewer and in progress	Issued to interviewer and finalised the case with a productive outcome	Issued to interviewer and finalised the case with an unproductive outcome
Change of eligibility status (i.e. cohort member died or emigrated)	Ipsos MORI updated the ECS sample, assigned the appropriate outcome code and the case was not issued to an interviewer.	Ipsos MORI notified the interviewer of the change, updated the ECS sample and assigned the appropriate outcome code via the ECS.	No action was taken.	Ipsos MORI updated the ECS sample and assigned the appropriate outcome code.
Change of participation status	As above	As above	As above	Ipsos MORI updated the ECS sample and ensured the case was not reissued.
Change of address status (e.g. cohort family no longer resident at address, but new address unknown)	Ipsos MORI updated the ECS sample and issued the case to an interviewer for tracing.	Ipsos MORI notified the interviewer of the change and updated the ECS sample.	As above	Ipsos MORI updated the ECS sample and took no further action.
Change to contact information	Ipsos MORI updated the ECS sample and issued the case to an interviewer.	As above	As above	Ipsos MORI updated the ECS sample and assessed if the case could be reissued.

7.16 Response maximisation during fieldwork

In order to maximise the response rate during fieldwork, additional measures were taken. In England only, CLS were given permission to access the National Pupil Database (NPD) to attempt to find new addresses for mover cases, where both interviewers and CLS had previously been unable to locate a family. Where a new address was obtained via NPD, the interviewers were sent a memorandum about how the address had been obtained, and instructions on how to proceed. Additionally, advance letters were sent to NPD addresses, mentioning how the address had been obtained.

To maximise the response rate of sensitive cases (such as those where the cohort member was thought to be living in care), interviewers allocated these types of cases were briefed individually about the circumstances. This meant the interviewers could tailor their approach for each case.

Given the number of likely movers, it was essential to develop an efficient way of managing passing mover cases to CLS for office-based tracing once the interviewers had exhausted all tracing steps.

In another attempt to maximise response, all cohort members in unproductive households at the main stage (excluding ineligible cases and permanent withdrawals), as well as emigrants were then invited to take part in a short follow up online questionnaire (lasting up to 20 minutes) on a device of their choice after main stage fieldwork had finished. Full details can be found in Section 8.

7.17 Progress reporting

Fieldwork progress reports were sent to CLS weekly and more substantial progress reports were sent monthly.

The weekly report showed response at the household level by country and wave. It also showed within-household response for the cohort member's online questionnaire, parent 1 online questionnaire and parent 2 online questionnaire. Response was broadly split into categories of productive, non-productive, ineligible, and uncertain eligibility (i.e. movers and outstanding cases). Two charts were also included; overall interviews and overall coverage. The first weekly report was provided on 24th April 2018 (although progress was provided by email weekly from the start of fieldwork) and were sent throughout fieldwork until April 2019.

A number of monthly reports were provided to CLS during fieldwork, containing the following:

- Household response by country, by country (first issue), by country (reissues only), wave, phase within country, last sweep of participation within country, MCS6 outcome;
- Re-issue household response by phase;
- Movers by wave;
- Cohort member, parent 1 and parent 2 online questionnaire placement;
- Parent paper SDQ placement;
- Parent individual element response (online questionnaire and SDQ (completion));
- Cohort member individual element response (online questionnaire, face to face CAPI including data linkage and contact information, data linkage consent rate, self-completion questionnaire, cognitive assessment and physical measurements).

Monthly reports were provided from May 2018 to April 2019.

7.18 Thank you mailing

All cohort members and parents in productive households were sent a thank you mailing after the visit to thank them for their participation.

There were two separate thank you mailing envelopes for each family. One for the parent (addressed to both parents, if applicable) and one for the cohort member. Each contained a thank you letter (see appendices).

Parents who took part were sent a thank you mailing, even if the young person did not take part themselves, and vice versa.

Letters were sent on a fortnightly basis, roughly 16 days after the interview. The letters also contained a reminder to complete the online questionnaire for those cohort members and parents who had not yet not done so.

For sample in Wales, the cohort member and parent thank you letters were translated into Welsh (with Welsh text on one side and English text on the other). The thank you mailing was not sent in any other languages.

The following table shows the number of thank you mailings dispatched over the fieldwork period, the date they were sent out and the number of households within each mailing.

Table 7.18.1 MCS7 thank you mailing

Mailing	Date of dispatch	Quantity (Cohort member)	Quantity (Parent)
1	12/02/2018	500	498
2	22/02/2018	305	298
3	01/03/2018	712	709
4	21/03/2018	511	501
5	03/04/2018	672	661
6	11/04/2018	570	564
7	02/05/2018	758	750
8	14/05/2018	763	744
9	28/05/2018	784	768
10	07/06/2018	543	530
11	26/06/2018	735	720
12	09/07/2018	338	331
13	24/07/2018	453	444
14	20/08/2018	327	320
15	14/08/2018	251	243
16	03/09/2018	291	284
17	11/09/2018	221	216
18	28/10/2018	284	277
19	12/10/2018	178	176
20	30/10/2018	176	174
21	06/11/2018	163	157

Mailing	Date of dispatch	Quantity (Cohort member)	Quantity (Parent)
22	23/11/2018	207	200
23	12/12/2018	143	139
24	19/12/2018	137	135
25	08/01/2019	182	177
26	17/01/2019	50	49
27	31/01/2019	116	113
28	14/02/2019	98	97
29	28/02/2019	79	79
30	19/03/2019	69	64
31	27/03/2019	32	31
32	16/04/2019	67	64
33	07/05/2019 ¹⁷	40	37
Total		10755 ¹⁸	10550

7.19 Translations

7.19.1 Welsh households

At the appointment making stage, families were asked if they would like any of the elements to be administered in Welsh. If the family requested the interview to be conducted in Welsh, the address was reallocated to a Welsh speaking interviewer. The following elements were available in Welsh:

- The young person interview (CAPI). The young person self-completion questionnaire (CASI) could not be verbally translated into Welsh. If requested, a paper self-completion questionnaire in Welsh was available on request. No requests were made for this. None of the young person interviews completed in Wales used the Welsh language.
- Cognitive assessment and physical measurement instruction sheets, as well as the SDQ and online (CAWI) questionnaire placements.
- The parent and young person online questionnaire scripts if requested by the respondent. If a request was made, a telephone interview could be arranged with a Welsh-speaking interviewer. No parents or young people requested this.

¹⁷ This mailing included a small number of cases who had not been sent a mailing but should have been at an earlier point in fieldwork.

¹⁸ This includes multiple households. A thank you letter was sent to each cohort member.

- Parent SDQ could be completed in Welsh. On 6 occasions, a Welsh version of the SDQ was requested.
- The data linkage consent booklet was available in Welsh. On 5 occasions, a Welsh version of the consent booklet was requested by the cohort member.

7.19.2 Addressing other language support needs

If parent(s) required language support, a household interpreter could be used to translate some of the elements. To meet the criteria a 'household interpreter' had to be another household member, or neighbour/friend/family member who the family felt comfortable with being present (and who was fluent in both English and the other language) and be aged 16 or over.

In addition, children were not able to interpret for their parents given the personal nature of some of the questions. A household interpreter could be used to translate the following:

- Parent SDQ paper questionnaire;
- Parent online questionnaire.

If a household interpreter was not available, the address was re-allocated to a bi-lingual interviewer to conduct the interview.

The number of parent interviews conducted in languages other than English or Welsh as recorded in Final Element is shown in Table 7.19.2.

Table 7.19.2 Number of parent interviews conducted in languages other than English

Language	SDQ (Parent)	Online (parent)
	N	N
Total productive sample	9392	12367
Not translated	9252	12182
Translated	140	185
Urdu	40	40
Punjabi	15	44
Gujarati	5	8
Bengali	18	36
Sylheti	4	7
Somali	7	6
Tamil	5	9
Arabic	6	15
Other	40	18
	%	%
Not translated	98.5	98.5
Translated	1.5	1.5

7.20 Young people in sensitive family situations

A proportion of cohort members were under local authority care or living in an institution. Every effort was made to facilitate the participation of these cohort members, including attempting to trace these cases throughout fieldwork (see section 7.15.1 Changes to the sample).

7.20.1 Previous intervention by social care services in the family life of a young person

Some cohort members were shown as having a 'sensitive family situation' in the ECS to indicate to interviewers that the study had been made aware that the cohort member had been 'in-care' and that social care services had intervened in their daily family life.

Interviewers were told to trace them as normal but aware that there was likely to be considerable sensitivities around the family situation and to tread carefully. These cases were likely to need more tracing attempts and if not found in field were sent to the CLS Cohort Maintenance Team for further tracing.

Interviewers were provided with guidance on how best to approach these households if contact was made, for example, providing foster parents with more information if they were not aware of the cohort member's previous involvement in the study.

7.20.2 Young people in institutions

At the age of 17, cohort members could be living in a variety of other types of residences, for example, a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), a prison or young offenders institution, a nurses' hall of residence, barracks or other residence provided by an employer, a hostel for the homeless or a hotel or boarding house. If this was known interviewers were made aware in ECS.

Interviewers were required to check whether the cohort member was still at the institution. If they were, the interviewers were asked to find out as much as possible about the circumstances and let Head Office know who provided guidance on how to proceed.

A total of 16 cohort members who were living in one of the institutions mentioned above were successfully interviewed at MCS7.

8. Online follow up

8. Online follow up

8.1 Rationale for the online follow up

All cohort members in unproductive households at the main stage of the Age 17 Survey (excluding ineligible cases and permanent withdrawals) were invited to take part in a short online questionnaire (lasting up to 20 minutes) on a device of their choice, after main stage fieldwork was completed. The purpose of this online follow up was two-fold: first, to boost the overall Age 17 Survey response, and second, to collect data from unproductive cohort members for a number of key survey questions. This data collection was designed to be a non-response follow up, rather than a separate survey. It was hoped that it would provide key information about those who were reluctant to take part in a longer survey as well as to see whether it would be a useful strategy for engaging with those who would otherwise be unwilling to participate. It also provided an opportunity to re-engage emigrants

8.2 Eligibility

Only cohort members themselves were eligible to complete the online follow up.

More specifically, cohort members with the following outcomes for the Age 17 Survey were invited to take part:

- Untraced movers with an available email address;
- Non-contact cases;
- All refusers, including office refusals (unless permanent refusal); and
- Cases where the household interview and/or parent online questionnaire were completed, but the cohort member had not completed the interview (CAPI) or self-completion questionnaire (CASI), online questionnaire, cognitive assessment or physical measurements (i.e. any of the main stage cohort member survey elements). In some cases, cohort members who did not want to take part in the household visit (e.g. due to the length of the visit; due to other commitments, such as exams, sports or relationships; or due to anxiety interacting with an interviewer) were invited to take part in the online follow up. In addition, during exception reporting it came to light that in 14 cases an interviewer had carried out a CAPI interview by proxy (see section 6.4 for further details); these cases were invited to take part in the online follow up.

Additionally, cohort members who were known to have emigrated and for whom we had either a reasonably complete address or an email address were invited to participate.

The following cases were not eligible to take part in the online follow up:

- Permanent refusals;

- Cases who were recorded as emigrants, which did not have an available postal or email address;
- Cases with an institutional address, which did not have an available personal email address; and
- Cases that were in the process of being invited to take part in a separate qualitative study, commissioned by CLS.

A **total of 2,506 cases** were eligible to take part in the online follow up. Please note that cohort members who had emigrated prior to the Age 17 Survey were not eligible to take part in the Age 17 Survey, but were eligible to take part in the online follow up. The response for this subsample is reported in Table 8.7.4.

8.3 Methodology

All eligible cohort members were contacted directly:

- An invitation to take part in the online follow up was sent by post to all eligible cohort members, except those recorded as living at an institutional address, defined as untraced movers or emigrants without a postal address recorded. An invitation email was also sent to those cases for whom we had an email address.
- Eligible cohort members who were living at an institutional address, or were defined as untraced movers, or were emigrants with only an email address available were sent an email invitation only.

The online follow up survey was hosted on a short URL link that was distinctly different to the URL link used for the mainstage online questionnaires. The invitation letter asked participants to enter the short URL link into their browser, before entering their unique login ID (as displayed on their invitation letter). The invitation mailing also included a CNC-branded badge. The invitation email included a direct personalised link to the online follow up survey, meaning participants could use this link to access the survey without the need to enter their login ID.

The invitation email was sent two days after the invitation letter was dispatched. It was anticipated that the invitation email would arrive in participants' inboxes around a similar time to the invitation letter, which was sent first-class.

Around one week after the initial invitation, a postcard reminder was sent (first-class) to participants who had received a postal invitation and had not yet taken part in the online follow up. The postcard contained the short URL link for the online survey and a reminder of the participant's unique login ID.

8.4 Materials

The materials for the online follow up included:

- An invitation letter – tailored depending on whether the cohort member was recorded in the sample as living in the UK, or at an international address;

- An invitation email (where an email address was available in the sample) – tailored depending on whether the cohort member was recorded in the sample as living in the UK or internationally, and whether the cohort member was defined as a sensitive case (i.e. where contact details were collected from a social worker or the available address was an institution) or an untraced mover; and
- An A5 postcard reminder, which was sent in an envelope for privacy.

Welsh translation of materials

Eligible cohort members living in Wales (as recorded in the sample file) received their invitation materials in both Welsh and English. This included the invitation letters (two letters, one for each language, were included in their invitation mailing), and where an email address was available, an email invitation was sent with a Welsh translation beneath the English version. The reminder postcard was sent in English only.

8.5 Fieldwork timings

The sample was released into field in two batches, on two separate dates. Batch 1 comprised of 498 cases, and excluded sensitive, emigrant, and Welsh cases. In addition, batch 1 was sampled so that 75% of selected cases were from waves 1-4 of the mainstage fieldwork and 25% were from waves 5-8; this prioritization was put in place to minimise respondent burden, as waves 5-8 would have been contacted most recently to take part in the Age 17 Survey. However, some cases from waves 5-8 were sampled to assess whether the short gap between mainstage fieldwork and the online follow up was likely to generate complaints or concerns among respondents. Overall, batch 1 was released to test the acceptability of the online follow up among unproductive cohort members. Acceptability was defined as the absence of receiving causes for concern (such as complaints from cohort members or their families); achieving some productive online completions; and a low proportion of break-offs. Following the successful launch of batch 1, the second batch was launched comprising of 2,008 cases.

Table 8.5.1 outlines the fieldwork timings for each of these batches.

Table 8.5.1 Fieldwork timings of the online follow up

Fieldwork activity	Date
Batch 1	
Postal invitation sent	8 April 2019
Email invitation sent	10 April 2019
Postcard reminder sent	16 April 2019
Deadline for assessing acceptability/sign-off for batch 2	24 April 2019
Batch 2	
Postal invitation sent	1 May 2019
Email invitation sent	3 May 2019
Postcard reminder sent	10 May 2019

8.6 Online questionnaire content and design

The online follow up largely comprised of a subset of questions asked in the Age 17 Survey CAPI, CASI and online questionnaires for cohort members. Some new questions were introduced to provide additional contextual information (such as household composition and education or work status), which was captured in more detail in the full main stage survey. The content was chosen on the basis of scientific and policy importance.

Overall, the online follow up was designed to have the same look, feel and functionality as the other Age 17 Survey interviews. To reflect that the follow up was a standalone online survey, some additional features were introduced (detailed below).

Validation

Validation was required to confirm that the person completing the online follow up was the intended participant. This included feeding in the name of the cohort member on the first introduction page to reiterate who was intended to complete the questionnaire. The cohort member's full name was not included to minimise the disclosure of personal information.

As part of the first set of demographic and contextual questions, cohort members were asked to input their date of birth. To check that the participant was the correct person, the online questionnaire was designed to validate the inputted date of birth against the date of birth held on the sample file. Where discrepancies occurred, participants were not screened out. Instead, a flag was added for review on a case-by-case basis.

Feedacross data

The only feedacross data included in the online follow up was the cohort member's first name and date of birth. These variables were both used as part of the validation process.

Lock screens

At the end of each section, there was a screen advising the cohort member that they were at the end of the section. Cohort members could either go back to edit answers or move forward to 'lock' their answers, which meant they could not return to that section. A similar function was used in the mainstage Age 17 Survey CASI interview.

If an abandoned interview was resumed, the back button was not displayed on the initial page so that the cohort member could not go back to access any answers supplied in a previous session. This was designed to protect survey answers, in case someone else used the participant's login details (provided on the postal letter/postcard) to access the survey.

Welsh translation of the online questionnaire

The online questionnaire was available in Welsh for cohort members who self-reported that they lived in Wales. At the beginning of the questionnaire, cohort members were asked to report their country of residence. For those who selected “Wales”, a follow up question asked whether they wished to complete the questionnaire in English or Welsh. The following questions then appeared in their language of choice.

8.7 Response to online follow up

Table 8.7.1 shows the survey outcomes for the online follow up. A case is defined as ‘partially productive’ if the cohort member completed the first set of demographic and contextual questions (country of residence, date of birth, sex and gender, and household composition).

Table 8.7.1 Survey outcomes for the online follow up

Outcome	UK only sample – without HH interview	UK only sample – with HH interview	Emigrant sample	All sample
Fully productive online follow up	165	33	39	237
- Non-contact at main stage	54	n/a	n/a	
- Refusal at main stage	106	n/a	n/a	
- Untraced mover at main stage	5	n/a	n/a	
- HH interview only at main stage	n/a	33	n/a	
Partially productive online follow up	12	1	3	16
- Non-contact at main stage	4	n/a	n/a	
- Refusal at main stage	8	n/a	n/a	
- Untraced mover at main stage	0	n/a	n/a	
- HH interview only at main stage	n/a	1	n/a	
Online follow up started	7	2	2	11
- Non-contact at main stage	3	n/a	n/a	
- Refusal at main stage	3	n/a	n/a	
- Untraced mover at main stage	1	n/a	n/a	
- HH interview only at main stage	n/a	2	n/a	
Unproductive online follow up (not started)	1670	483	88	2241
- Non-contact at main stage	496	n/a	n/a	
- Refusal at main stage	1134	n/a	n/a	
- Untraced mover at main stage	41	n/a	n/a	
- HH interview only at main stage	n/a	483	n/a	
Total issued sample	1854	519	132	2,505

The following tables (Table 8.7.2 and Table 8.7.3) show the month the cases were finalised at main stage for productive online follow up cases (including fully and partially productive cases) and unproductive online follow up cases (including started cases and unproductive cases). Please note that this is for the UK only; the tables exclude the 132 emigrant cases.

Table 8.7.2 Month the cases were finalised at main stage for productive online follow up cases

					Month the case was finalised at main stage													
Fully and partially productive	Jan-18	Feb-18	Mar-18	Apr-18	May-18	Jun-18	Jul-18	Aug-18	Sep-18	Oct-18	Nov-18	Dec-18	Jan-19	Feb-19	Mar-19	Apr-19	No date	Total
Non-contact	0	0	0	1	1	3	6	8	16	9	7	1	2	0	3	0	1	58
Refusal	1	4	4	3	5	5	15	13	20	9	4	8	3	4	13	2	1	114
Untraced mover	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	5
HH interview	0	1	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	2	2	0	3	0	0	0	0	34
Total	1	6	7	8	10	12	27	25	40	20	13	9	8	4	17	2	2	211

Table 8.7.3 Month the cases were finalised at main stage for unproductive online follow up cases

Month the case was finalised at main stage																		
Started and unproductive	Jan-18	Feb-18	Mar-18	Apr-18	May-18	Jun-18	Jul-18	Aug-18	Sep-18	Oct-18	Nov-18	Dec-18	Jan-19	Feb-19	Mar-19	Apr-19	No date	Total
Non-contact	0	0	1	2	5	12	43	90	124	90	36	28	12	9	31	1	15	499
Refusal	14	35	54	49	44	46	135	166	203	108	59	57	22	19	80	16	30	1137
Untraced mover	0	2	6	3	1	2	4	5	3	2	3	1	3	4	1	0	2	42
HH interview	5	8	18	21	25	48	49	100	85	45	17	24	15	13	10	1	1	485
Total	19	45	79	75	75	108	231	361	415	245	115	110	52	45	122	18	48	2163

Response rates

Table 8.7.4 shows the response rates for cohort members who were eligible to take part in the online follow up. The response rate includes fully productive and partially productive cases.

Table 8.7.4 Online follow up response rates

Online follow up	Response rate
UK only sample	8.9%
Emigrant sample	31.8%
All sample	10.1%

Table 8.7.5 shows the main stage response, with and without the online follow up completions. The survey response rate is defined as the proportion of productive cases, compared with the total sample (productive, unproductive and uncertain eligibility).

Table 8.7.5 Main stage response, including online follow up

Main stage	Response rate	Productive cases	Base
Main stage	73.4%	10,625	14,496
- With online follow up (UK only)	74.6%	10,799	14,496
- With online follow up (all)	74.1%	10,841	14,628

8.8 Online follow up data

The data collected as part of the online follow up will be merged with the full Age 17 Survey dataset.

Chapter 9

9. Survey response

9.1 Household response

The issued sample for MCS7 comprised a total of 14,496 families. Of these, 29 were not eligible because the cohort member had died or emigrated. A further 379 were of uncertain eligibility (i.e. they were unable to be located).

A total of 10,625 families ended the survey with a productive outcome, of which 8,942 households were fully productive and 1,683 were partially productive. Households were considered fully productive if all in-household elements that the family was eligible¹⁹ for were either fully or partially productive. Partially productive households required the completion of at least the household interview or the online follow-up questionnaire.

An initial survey response rate²⁰ of 73.4% was achieved with a co-operation rate²¹ of 75.4% without the online follow up. The survey response rate was lower than at MCS6 (76.3%), with a greater proportion of refusal outcomes (MCS7: 19.1%; MCS6: 15.8%). Table 9.1.1 provides a detailed breakdown of responses to the survey.

To maximise the number of cohort members taking part, a subsample of households were invited to complete an online follow up questionnaire which yielded a further 174 interviews from households which had previously returned unproductive outcomes. This increased the survey response rate to 74.6%, and the co-operation rate to 76.6%. Table 9.1.1 provides a detailed breakdown of the responses to the survey including the effect of the online boost, and Table 9.1.2 gives a further breakdown of all productive outcomes. Details about the online follow up are included in Chapter 8. It is worth noting however that this was an abridged questionnaire with a different mode to the main survey, and so the cases are excluded from tables 9.1.1 and 9.1.4 onwards.

¹⁹ All households were eligible for a household interview and the following elements for completion by each cohort member: the young person interview and self-completion questionnaire, physical measurements and cognitive assessment, and an online questionnaire completed after the household visit. If the household questionnaire established that there was a parental figure present, that person was Parent 1, and where applicable their partner/spouse was selected as Parent 2; each were eligible for an online questionnaire. If Parent 1 or Parent 2 was present in the household, that household was eligible for a paper Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire for each cohort member, which could be completed by either Parent 1 or Parent 2.

²⁰ Survey response rate = productive/(productive+unproductive+uncertain eligibility)

²¹ Co-operation rate = productive/(productive+unproductive)

Table 9.1.1 Summary of contact and response (excluding online follow up)

MCS7 family outcomes	No.	Survey Response Rate	Co-operation Rate
Total sample	14496		
Total ineligible	29		
Died	6		
Emigrated	23		
Total eligible sample	14467	100.0%	
Uncertain eligibility	379	2.6%	
Untraced movers/ Other unknown eligibility	348	2.4%	
Traced movers/ ran out of time	31	0.2%	
Total sample traced and eligible	14088	97.4%	100.0%
Productive	10625	73.4%	75.4%
Fully productive	8942	61.8%	63.5%
Partially productive in household	1683	11.6%	11.9%
Refusals	2898	20.0%	20.6%
Refusal to Office	202	1.4%	1.4%
Refusal to interviewer	2696	18.6%	19.1%
Other unproductive	565	3.9%	4.0%
Non-contact	234	1.6%	1.7%
Broken appointment - no recontact	129	0.9%	0.9%
Language difficulties	2	0.0%	0.0%
Family unavailable	51	0.4%	0.4%
Data lost on tablet	0	0.0%	
Other reason	148	1.0%	1.1%
Productive but respondent requested data deletion	1	0.0%	0.0%

Table 9.1.2 Summary of contact and response (including online follow up)

MCS7 family outcomes	No.	Survey Response Rate	Co-operation Rate
Total sample	14496		
Total ineligible	29		
Died	6		
Emigrated	23		
Total eligible sample	14467	100.0%	
Uncertain eligibility	377	2.6%	
Untraced movers/ Other unknown eligibility	346	2.4%	
Traced movers/ ran out of time	31	0.2%	
Total sample traced and eligible	14090	97.4%	100.0%
Productive	10799	74.6%	76.6%
Fully productive	8942	61.8%	63.5%
Partially productive in household	1683	11.6%	11.9%
Partially productive (online follow up only)	174	1.2%	1.2%
Refusals	2772	19.2%	19.7%
Refusal to Office	192	1.3%	1.4%
Refusal to interviewer	2580	17.8%	18.3%
Other unproductive	526	3.6%	3.7%
Non-contact	211	1.5%	1.5%
Broken appointment - no recontact	116	0.8%	0.8%
Language difficulties	2	0.0%	0.0%
Family unavailable	48	0.3%	0.3%
Data lost on tablet	0	0.0%	0.0%
Other reason	148	1.0%	1.1%
Productive but respondent requested data deletion	1	0.0%	0.0%

Table 9.1.3 Summary of productive outcomes (including online follow-up)

Outcome	No.	% of productive sample
Total productive sample ²²	10799	100.0%
Total fully productive	8942	82.8%
All elements productive	4492	41.6%
All in-household elements productive; 1+ eligible CAWI or SDQ not productive	4450	41.2%
Total partially productive	1683	15.6%
Some elements productive, including household interview and 1+ young person element	999	9.3%
Household interview and 1+ parent element productive; no young person elements productive	507	4.7%
Only household interview productive ²³	177	1.6%
Online follow up survey only	174	1.6%

A more detailed summary of eligibility for the online follow up and the number of follow up questionnaires completed can be found in Section 8. Tables in the remainder of this chapter will focus on responses to the main survey only, excluding the online follow up.

Maximising response

In order to help maximise response, in September 2018 a decision was made to include a CNC branded USB memory stick in each of the cohort member advance mailings. In addition, for waves 7 and 8 (Scotland and Northern Ireland only), some changes were made to the cohort member and parent advance mailings. Specifically:

- Signposting the inclusion of the USB memory stick
- Including a flyer with country specific findings (Scotland and Northern Ireland only)
- Highlighting in the parent letter how old the cohort member was when they last took part or if they were a non-contact or other unproductive at MCS6

²² This productive figure includes the Age 17 survey and the online follow up.

²³ Some of these cases also completed the online follow up. See Chapter 8 for a full breakdown of response to the follow up.

Table 9.1.4 gives a breakdown of survey response rates for those given a CNC-branded USB stick, a flyer, both, or neither. The highest response rate was achieved among families who were sent neither (73.9%). However, it is worth noting that USB sticks and flyers were only sent to groups that were already returning lower response rates than the rest of the sample. Flyers were only included with mailings in Scotland and Northern Ireland, and response rates for cases issued in these countries were lower than that achieved for the full sample (Table 9.6.1). Likewise, USB sticks were sent to families in Scotland and Northern Ireland, as well as to cases that were reissued in England and Wales, and again the proportion of these cases with a productive outcome was lower than that in the sample as a whole (Table 9.9.1).

Table 9.1.4 Impact of additional USB sticks and Flyers on response rates

	Overall	Sent USB		Not sent USB	
		Sent Flyer	Not sent flyer	Sent Flyer	Not sent flyer
Survey Response rate	73.4%	72.8%	64.1%	33.3%	73.9%
N	14496	1049	562	3	12882

9.2 Refusals

The refusal rate at MCS7 was higher than at the last sweep. The most common reason coded for refusal was 'Respondent does not want to bother' (32% of refusing households). This was followed by 'too busy' (19% of refusing households) and 'other' (17% of refusing households). Table 9.2.1 provides a breakdown of reasons for refusal.

Anecdotal feedback from interviewers on the higher refusal rate was that parents felt less able to influence their child's participation in the survey than when the cohort members were aged 14 and that cohort members had lost interest. At age 17 young people were leading increasingly busy lives making it harder for them to commit to an appointment.

Although only 2.8% of the reasons for refusals identify that the survey was too long, when reviewing all of the refusal cases for reissues, Field highlighted that the verbatim evidence indicated that families were more negatively affected by the length of the interview at MCS6 than this figure suggests. To a lesser extent, some anecdotal feedback suggested some individual elements at MCS6 may have put some families off further participation (e.g. saliva collection).

In addition to this, a number of families, when refusing (both to interviewers, and directly to the office) stated that they made it clear in the past that they did not want to continue to participate in the future.

Table 9.2.1 Reasons for refusal

Reason given for refusal	N	% of reasons for refusal	% of refusing households
Respondent does not want to bother	933	30.3%	32.2%
Too busy	590	19.2%	20.4%
Stressful family situation	218	7.1%	7.5%
Family member refuses on behalf of respondent	181	5.9%	6.2%
Don't see the personal benefit	134	4.4%	4.6%
Survey not important	107	3.5%	3.7%
Survey too long	85	2.8%	2.9%
Survey is a waste of time	69	2.2%	2.4%
Questions too personal	52	1.7%	1.8%
Nothing's changed since last time	50	1.6%	1.7%
Other family member opposes participation	32	1.0%	1.1%
Unhappy about confidentiality	25	0.8%	0.9%
Don't see the public benefit	23	0.7%	0.8%
Looking after ill/ elderly	18	0.6%	0.6%
Looking after children	17	0.6%	0.6%
Dislike interviewer	13	0.4%	0.4%
Someone outside household convinces respondent to refuse	3	0.1%	0.1%
Away/in hospital during entire survey period	2	0.1%	0.1%
Other (specify)	526	17.1%	18.2%
No reason given	396	12.9%	13.7%
Total reasons (multicode)	3078	100.0%	
Total households refusing	2898		
Mean reasons per refusal	1.06		

9.3 Household response by response at prior sweeps

Table 9.3.1 shows a summary of response based on households' last participation status. As would be expected, co-operation rates were highest among families that had taken part at the last sweep (84.5%), and lowest for those who had last participated in the first sweep (13.5%). Co-operation rates steadily dropped the longer ago the household last participated, except for an increase from MCS3 (23.0%) to MCS2 (27.4%).

Table 9.3.2 gives a breakdown of response to the online follow up by sweep of last participation, for cases that (a) were eligible for the main survey (i.e., issued in the seventh sweep sample and have not emigrated) and (b) did not complete a household interview. These are cases that would have returned an unproductive outcome if not invited to take part in the online follow up.

Table 9.3.1: Summary of response by sweep of last participation

	Sweep last participated at						
Outcome	Total	MCS6	MCS5	MCS4	MCS3	MCS2	MCS1
Total sample	14496	11662	1746	606	289	94	99
Total ineligible	29	18	5	4	1	0	1
Died	6	4	1	1	0	0	0
Emigrated	23	14	4	3	1	0	1
Total eligible sample	14467	11644	1741	602	288	94	98
Uncertain eligibility	379	96	101	88	49	21	24
Untraced movers/ Other unknown eligibility	348	87	91				
Traced movers/ ran out of time	31	9	10	82	45	19	24
Total sample traced and eligible	14088	11548	1640	6	4	2	0
Productive	10625	9754	643	514	239	73	74
Fully productive	8942	8394	424	81	27	9	7
Partially productive	1683	1360	219	62	28	11	3
Refusals	2898	1536	826	300	146	43	47
Refusal to Office	202	145	38	11	3	4	1
Refusal to interviewer	2696	1391	788	289	143	39	46
Other unproductive	565	258	171	71	38	10	17
Non-contact	234	89	76	32	19	7	11
Broken appointment - no recontact	129	79	32	7	8	2	1
Language difficulties	2	1	1	0	0	0	0
Family unavailable	51	32	12	4	3	0	0
Data lost on tablet	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other reason	148	56	50	28	8	1	5
Productive but respondent requested data deletion	1	1		0	0	0	0
% Sample traced and eligible	97.4%	99.2%	94.2%	85.4%	83.0%	77.7%	75.5%
Survey response rate	73.4%	83.8%	36.9%	23.8%	19.1%	21.3%	10.2%
Co-operation rate	75.4%	84.5%	39.2%	27.8%	23.0%	27.4%	13.5%

Table 9.3.2: Summary of online follow up response by sweep of participation

	Sweep last participated at						
Follow up outcome	Total	MCS6	MCS5	MCS4	MCS3	MCS2	MCS1
Follow up sample eligible for main survey but with no productive elements	1810	1008	491	166	86	23	36
Productive	174	110	43	15	3	2	1
Fully productive	162	105	40	11	3	2	1
Partially productive	12	5	3	4	0	0	0
Unproductive	1636	898	448	151	83	21	35
Response rate	9.6%	10.9%	8.8%	9.0%	3.5%	8.7%	2.8%

Table 9.3.3 provides a more detailed overview of responses based on the full previous response history. Co-operation rates were highest among those families that had taken part in all previous sweeps and decreased as previous engagement decreased: 87.4% for families that had participated in all six prior sweeps. This figure was reduced to 66.0%, 47.8%, 39.9%, 32.2%, and 14.3% for those who had respectively participated in five, four, three, two, and one prior sweeps. Table 9.3.4 gives a breakdown of response to the online follow up by prior

response history. As for table 9.3.2 it only includes those cases that would have been eligible for the main survey but had not completed any part of it (i.e. excludes the small number of emigrants and households where parents had taken part in the household survey but the cohort member had not)

Table 9.3.3: Summary of response by prior response history

Outcome	Total	Number of previous sweeps participated in					
		6	5	4	3	2	1
Total sample	14496	8853	3022	1420	763	327	111
Total ineligible	29	15	5	4	4	0	1
Died	6	3	1	1	1	0	0
Emigrated	23	12	4	3	3	0	1
Total eligible sample	14467	8838	3017	1416	759	327	110
Uncertain eligibility	379	47	81	94	74	57	26
Untraced movers/ Other unknown eligibility	348	42	72				
Traced movers/ ran out of time	31	5	9	8	5	3	1
Total sample traced and eligible	14088	8791	2936	1322	685	270	84
Productive	10625	7684	1937	632	273	87	12
Fully productive	8942	6728	1537	455	165	50	7
Partially productive	1683	956	400	177	108	37	5
Refusals	2898	973	855	547	323	149	51
Refusal to Office	202	105	58	20	12	6	1
Refusal to interviewer	2696	868	797	527	311	143	50
Other unproductive	565	134	144	143	89	34	21
Non-contact	234	43	62	64	34	17	14
Broken appointment - no recontact	129	43	36	25	18	6	1
Language difficulties	2	0	0	2	0	0	0
Family unavailable	51	19	10	11	7	4	0
Data lost on tablet	0						
Other reason	148	28	36	41	30	7	6
Productive but respondent requested data deletion	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
% Sample traced and eligible	97.4%	99.5%	97.3%	93.4%	90.3%	82.6%	76.4%
Survey response rate	73.4%	86.9%	64.2%	44.6%	36.0%	26.6%	10.9%
Co-operation rate	75.4%	87.4%	66.0%	47.8%	39.9%	32.2%	14.3%

Table 9.3.4: Summary of online follow up response by prior response history

Follow up outcome	Total	Number of previous sweeps participated in					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
Follow up sample eligible for main survey but with no productive elements	1810	39	84	204	370	533	580
Productive	174	2	6	16	35	41	74
Fully productive	162	2	5	15	32	39	69
Partially productive	12	0	1	1	3	2	5
Unproductive	1636	37	78	188	335	492	506
Response rate	9.6%	5.1%	7.1%	7.8%	9.5%	7.7%	12.8%

9.4 Household response by MCS6 outcome

Table 9.4.1 shows household response by outcome at MCS6. As might be expected, households which were productive at MCS6 were most likely to participate in MCS7 (84.5%) followed by other unproductive outcomes (47.5%) and non-contacts (33.7%). Over a quarter (29.6%) of families who had refused at MCS6 participated in MCS7. Table 9.4.2 gives a breakdown of response to the online follow up by MCS6 outcome.

Table 9.4.1 Summary of response by MCS6 outcome

Outcome	MCS6 outcome						
	Total	Productive	Ineligible	Non-contact	Refusal	Other unproductive	Not issued at MCS6
Total sample	14496	11662	1	497	1694	634	8
Total ineligible	29	18	0	7	3	1	0
Died	6	4	0	2	0	0	0
Emigrated	23	14	0	5	3	1	0
Total eligible sample	14467	11644	1	490	1691	633	8
Uncertain eligibility	379	96	0	131	81	69	2
Untraced movers/ Other unknown eligibility	348	87	0	124	74	61	2
Traced movers/ ran out of time	31	9	0	7	7	8	0
Total sample traced and eligible	14088	11548	1	359	1610	564	6
Productive	10625	9754	1	121	477	268	4
Fully productive	8942	8394	1	85	274	185	3
Partially productive	1683	1360	0	36	203	83	1
Refusals	2898	1536	0	159	996	205	2
Refusal to Office	202	145	0	3	45	9	0
Refusal to interviewer	2696	1391	0	156	951	196	2
Other unproductive	565	258	0	79	137	91	0
Non-contact	234	89	0	41	60	44	0
Broken appointment - no recontact	129	79	0	5	26	19	0
Language difficulties	2	1	0	0	1	0	0
Family unavailable	51	32	0	3	10	6	0
Data lost on tablet	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other reason	148	56	0	30	40	22	0
Productive but respondent requested data deletion	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
% Sample traced and eligible	97.4%	99.2%	100.0%	73.3%	95.2%	89.1%	75.0%
Survey response rate	73.4%	83.8%	-	24.7%	28.2%	42.3%	50.0%
Co-operation rate	75.4%	84.5%	-	33.7%	29.6%	47.5%	66.7%

Table 9.4.2 Summary of online follow up response by MCS6 outcome

Follow up outcome	MCS6 outcome						
	Total	Productive	Ineligible	Non-contact	Refusal	Other unproductive	Not issued at MCS6
Follow up sample eligible for main survey but with no productive elements	1810	1008	0	122	499	181	0
Productive	174	110	0	8	38	18	0
Fully productive	162	105	0	5	36	16	0
Partially productive	12	5	0	3	2	2	0
Unproductive	1636	898	0	114	461	163	0
Response rate	9.6%	10.9%		6.6%	7.6%	9.9%	

9.5 Household response by stratum

Table 9.5.1: Summary of response by stratum

Outcome	Stratum within country									
	Total	England - Advantaged	England - Disadvantaged	England - Ethnic	Wales - Advantaged	Wales - Disadvantaged	Scotland - Advantaged	Scotland - Disadvantaged	Northern Ireland - Advantaged	Northern Ireland - Disadvantaged
Total sample	14495	3753	3642	1966	642	1462	819	828	528	855
Total ineligible	29	7	5	10	0	1	0	2	0	4
Died	6	2	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	0
Emigrated	23	5	4	8	0	1	0	1	0	4
Total eligible sample	14466	3746	3637	1956	642	1461	819	826	528	851
Uncertain eligibility	379	42	92	47	18	70	22	56	5	27
Untraced movers/ Other unknown eligibility	348	36	87	44	18	62	19	51	5	26
Traced movers/ ran out of time	31	6	5	3	0	8	3	5	0	1
Total sample traced and eligible	14087	3704	3545	1909	624	1391	797	770	523	824
Productive	10625	2971	2594	1503	484	983	600	512	404	574
Fully productive	8942	2584	2148	1235	415	808	522	424	357	449
Partially productive in household	1683	387	446	268	69	175	78	88	47	125
Refusals	2897	647	751	331	115	319	178	226	111	219
Refusal to Office	201	53	48	22	6	19	13	11	7	22
Refusal to interviewer	2696	594	703	309	109	300	165	215	104	197
Other unproductive	565	86	200	75	25	89	19	32	8	31
Non-contact	234	36	89	25	7	32	10	15	4	16
Broken appointment - no recontact	129	25	48	19	7	24	2	2	1	1
Language difficulties	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0

Outcome	Total	England - Advantaged	England - Disadvantaged	England - Ethnic	Wales - Advantaged	Wales - Disadvantaged	Scotland - Advantaged	Scotland - Disadvantaged	Northern Ireland - Advantaged	Northern Ireland - Disadvantaged
Family unavailable	51	5	17	11	2	3	3	3	2	5
Data lost on tablet	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other reason	148	20	46	18	8	30	4	12	1	9
Productive but respondent requested data deletion	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
% Sample traced and eligible	97.4%	98.9%	97.5%	97.6%	97.2%	95.2%	97.3%	93.2%	99.1%	96.8%
Survey response rate	73.4%	79.3%	71.3%	76.8%	75.4%	67.3%	73.3%	62.0%	76.5%	67.5%
Co-operation rate	75.4%	80.2%	73.2%	78.7%	77.6%	70.7%	75.3%	66.5%	77.2%	69.7%

9.6 Household response by priority cases within phase

Household response by priority case within phase is illustrated in Table 9.6.1. Priority cases (families with a low contact propensity – see section 7 for details on how these were defined) were allocated to an early fieldwork wave whenever possible to maximise the amount of time to work these cases. The co-operation rate for priority cases was significantly lower (48.9% compared to a co-operation rate of 77.2% for non-priority cases).

As outlined in section 7.2, fieldwork was split into waves for fieldwork management purposes. Phase 1 included all cohort members who were due to start Year 12 (England and Wales)/S6 (Scotland)/Sixth Form (Northern Ireland) in Autumn 2017, and phase 2 included those who would start in Autumn 2018.

Table 9.6.1 Summary of response by priority cases in phase

Outcome	Total	Priority			Non-priority		
		Total	Phase 1	Phase 2	Total	Phase 1	Phase 2
Total sample	14496	1040	902	138	13386	11645	1741
Total ineligible	29	8	6	2	20	17	3
Died	6	2	1	1	3	3	0
Emigrated	23	6	5	1	17	14	3
Total eligible sample	14467	1032	896	136	13366	11628	1738
Uncertain eligibility	379	185	126	59	175	151	24
Untraced movers/ Other unknown eligibility	348	177	122	55	155	135	20
Traced movers/ ran out of time	31	8	4	4	20	16	4
Total sample traced and eligible	14088	847	770	77	13191	11477	1714
Productive	10625	414	378	36	10189	8927	1262
Fully productive	8942	308	286	22	8620	7559	1061
Partially productive in household	1683	106	92	14	1569	1368	201
Refusals	2898	299	265	34	2583	2175	408
Refusal to Office	202	11	10	1	191	159	32
Refusal to interviewer	2696	288	255	33	2392	2016	376
Other unproductive	565	134	127	7	419	375	44
Non-contact	234	64	61	3	165	142	23
Broken appointment - no recontact	129	20	20	0	108	103	5
Language difficulties	2	0	0	0	2	2	0
Family unavailable	51	8	8	0	43	37	6
Data lost on tablet	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other reason	148	42	38	4	100	90	10
Productive but respondent requested data deletion	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
% Sample traced and eligible	97.4%	82.1%	85.9%	56.6%	98.7%	98.7%	98.6%
Survey response rate	73.4%	40.1%	42.2%	26.5%	76.2%	76.8%	72.6%
Co-operation rate	75.4%	48.9%	49.1%	46.8%	77.2%	77.8%	73.6%

9.7 Household response by country of issue

Response to the main survey (i.e., not including the online follow-up) varied across countries as shown in Table 9.7.1. The highest co-operation rate was in England²⁴ (77.1%), with the lowest in Scotland (71.0%). It is worth noting that in England, unlike Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, CLS were able to use the National Pupil Database to trace some families. In the three countries where the National Pupil Database was not available (Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland), the tracing rates were lower, and lowest in Scotland.

Table 9.7.1 Summary of response by country of issue

Outcome	Total	England	Wales	Scotland	N Ireland
Total sample	14496	9444	2036	1638	1378
Total ineligible	29	22	1	2	4
Died	6	5	0	1	0
Emigrated	23	17	1	1	4
Total eligible sample	14467	9422	2035	1636	1374
Uncertain eligibility	379	187	82	79	31
Untraced movers/ Other unknown eligibility	348	172	75	71	30
Traced movers/ ran out of time	31	15	7	8	1
Total sample traced and eligible	14088	9235	1953	1557	1343
Productive	10625	7124	1415	1105	981
Fully productive	8942	6012	1175	946	809
Partially productive	1683	1112	240	159	172
Refusals	2898	1745	427	402	324
Refusal to Office	202	124	26	24	28
Refusal to interviewer	2696	1621	401	378	296
Other unproductive	565	366	111	50	38
Non-contact	234	152	38	25	19
Broken appointment - no recontact	129	92	31	4	2
Language difficulties	2	2	0	0	0
Family unavailable	51	34	5	5	7
Data lost on tablet	0	0	0	0	0
Other reason	148	86	36	16	10
Productive but respondent requested data deletion	1	0	1	0	0
% Sample traced and eligible	97.4%	98.0%	96.0%	95.2%	97.7%
Survey response rate	73.4%	75.6%	69.5%	67.5%	71.4%
Co-operation rate	75.4%	77.1%	72.5%	71.0%	73.0%

9.8 Mode of contact

Interviewers were instructed to make their initial contact attempt with each family in one of two ways – either by telephone or by a face-to-face visit. A family could be considered hard to engage if they had refused or were unproductive for other reasons in one of the last three sweeps. If this was the case or if the family contact records did not contain a telephone number, then interviewers were instructed by the ECS to attempt to make

²⁴ This figure also includes the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man.

first contact with a face-to-face visit. Otherwise interviewers attempted to make first contact with families by telephone.²⁵

The assigned first mode of contact was designed to maximise response rates. For example, where families had shown reluctance to participate in previous sweeps a face-to-face visit was thought more likely to re-engage them in the study. This instruction was given for 3,976 families (27%). However, despite the instruction to visit first, in 12.2% of these cases the interviewer telephoned first. Again, this varied by phase (12.8% in phase 1 and 8.6% in phase 2).

Across all phases²⁶, 10,518 families were identified as requiring telephone first contact (73% of the total sample), and interviewers achieved this in 91.2% of cases. When split out by phase a slight drop off in completion of this requirement can be seen (91.4% in phase 1 and 90.0% in phase 2). The failure to adhere strictly to protocol in some cases was likely to be, largely, due to the fact that interviewers decided to make face-to-face contact with a telephone first household if they were already in the area.

As might be expected, the success rates for contacts made by telephone were lower if a face-to-face first contact had been initially advised than for those where telephone contact first was had been initially recommended. (65.2% contact success compared with 80.2%). Even where contact was successfully made face-to-face in these cases, it proved harder to make an appointment than it did for those who had been rightly contacted by phone (46.9% compared with 76.0%). For this reason, the mode of contact was monitored on an ongoing basis at interviewer level, and interviewers who weren't adhering to the protocols were spoken to, and the importance of the protocols was reiterated.

²⁵ Visit first was assigned if any of the following applied:

- Any of the three previous waves (MCS4, MCS5, MCS6) had an outcome of non-cooperative (refusal or other unproductive)
- The family was productive at MCS6, but any of the young person interview, young person cognitive assessment, or physical measurements were refused or other unproductive, and the partner outcome was refused or other unproductive
- No phone number available for the family
- The CLS sample status was 'known to have gone away from issued address' (in which case mover tracing from the last known address was required)

Besides the last two, which were assigned for practical reasons, these were the strongest predictors of a non-cooperation outcome, based on looking at what best predicted the MCS6 outcome.

²⁶ In order to manage the fieldwork effectively, it was divided into two phases. Phase 1 included all cohort members who were due to start Year 12 (England and Wales)/S6 (Scotland)/Sixth Form (Northern Ireland) in Autumn 2017, and phase 2 included those who would start in Autumn 2018. Within each phase, fieldwork was split into waves for fieldwork management purposes.

Table 9.8.1 Summary of telephone contact by phase

	Total	Telephone advised			F2F advised		
		Total	Phase 1	Phase 2	Total	Phase 1	Phase 2
Total sample	14494	10518	9188	1330	3976	3413	563
Unproductive before first contact attempt	163	83	67	16	80	62	18
Total sample eligible for contact	14331	10435	9121	1314	3896	3351	545
Telephone contact attempted	9992	9515	8333	1182	477	430	47
% of eligible sample	69.7%	91.2%	91.4%	90.0%	12.2%	12.8%	8.6%
Telephone contact made	8013	7702	6747	955	311	284	27
% of telephone contact attempted	80.2%	80.9%	81.0%	80.8%	65.2%	66.0%	57.4%
Appointment made by telephone	6002	5856	5118	738	146	135	11
% of telephone contact made	74.9%	76.0%	75.9%	77.3%	46.9%	47.5%	40.7%
% of eligible sample	41.9%	56.1%	56.1%	56.2%	3.7%	4.0%	2.0%

9.9 Interviewer visits to productive households

Table 9.9.1 shows the total number of personal visits made by interviewers to each productive cohort family over all issues (including any reissues). Around seven in ten productive families were interviewed after one or two visits (70.5%). On average 2.0 personal visits were required to each productive household.

Table 9.9.1: Number of personal visits per productive family at MCS7

Number of personal visits	N	% of MCS7 productive families
1	5144	48.41%
2	2344	22.06%
3	1198	11.28%
4	678	6.38%
5	409	3.85%
6	284	2.67%
7	159	1.50%
8	109	1.03%
9	94	0.88%
10 or more	206	1.94%
Total	10625	100.00%
Median	2.33	
Mean	2.00	

9.10 Reissues

Cases were reissued if families refused to the interviewer, the interviewer was unable to make contact with the family after eight face-to-face visits and five phone calls, or for some other reasons (e.g. the family were busy or away from home). Out of 2,353 addresses reissued to a new interviewer, a total of 787 resulted in a productive outcome at second issue (survey response rate = 33.4%). The reissue response rate was higher compared to MCS6 (26.7%).

The majority of these cases (1,942 or 82.5%) were reissued after the family had refused to the original interviewer. Of the remaining reissued cases, 154 were non-contacts at the first issue and 257 had an “other” outcome. The second-issue co-operation rate was highest for families with an “other” unproductive outcome²⁷ at first issue (40.5%) and lowest for those who had refused at first issue (32.1%), with first-issue non-contacts between the two (38.3%).

There was no consistent difference in co-operation rates between phases across first-issue outcomes, and the scope for inference is limited by the relatively small number of Phase 2 cases reissued (because fewer cases

²⁷ Non-contact, broken appointment with no re-contact, interview unobtainable because of language difficulties or because the cohort family was unavailable, productive interviews where all data was lost on the interviewer’s tablet or deleted at the request of the respondent, or “other” outcomes that did not fit any of the pre-defined categories.

were assigned to Phase 2). Among the 246 Phase 2 cases reissued following a refusal, the co-operation rate was 24.4%, compared with 33.6% for Phase 1 cases.

Where a case was reissued and multiple outcomes had been provided, the final household outcome was assigned by following a hierarchy devised by Lynn et al.²⁸ The possible outcomes from highest to lowest precedence were:

- productive,
- data lost or deletion requested,
- cohort member died or emigrated,
- refusal by cohort family,
- refusal by other,
- contact made but information refused,
- office refusal,
- broken appointment,
- language difficulties,
- member of family away or ill,
- other reason,
- no (further) contact,
- untraced,
- traced, and finally
- address inaccessible or can't locate.

Table 9.9.1 provides all final issue outcomes for reissued cases, split by first-issue outcomes.

²⁸ Lynn et al., Recommended Standard Final Outcome Categories and Standard Definitions of Response Rate for Social Surveys, ISER Working Papers Series: 2001-23.

Table 9.10.1 Summary of final issue outcomes of reissued households

Outcome	Total	Issue 1 non-contacts			Issue 1 refusals			Issue 1 other unproductives		
		Total	Phase 1	Phase 2	Total	Phase 1	Phase 2	Total	Phase 1	Phase 2
Total sample reissued	2353	154	138	16	1942	1696	246	257	235	22
Uncertain eligibility	31	7	4	3	20	18	2	4	4	0
Untraced movers/ Other unknown eligibility	26	5	3	2	17	16	1	4	4	0
Traced movers/ ran out of time	5	2	1	1	3	2	1	0	0	0
Total sample traced and eligible	2322	147	134	13	1922	1678	244	253	231	22
Productive	787	59	51	8	624	564	60	104	100	4
Fully productive	352	34	27	7	268	232	36	50	48	2
Partially productive in household	435	25	24	1	356	332	24	54	52	2
Refusals	966	32	31	1	867	718	149	67	57	10
Refusal to Office	40	2	2	0	37	32	5	1	1	0
Refusal to interviewer	926	30	29	1	830	686	144	66	56	10
Other unproductive	569	56	52	4	431	396	35	82	74	8
Non-contact	417	44	41	3	318	300	18	55	48	7
Broken appointment - no recontact	66	6	6	0	49	45	4	11	10	1
Language difficulties	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Family unavailable	15	2	1	1	13	12	1	0	0	0
Data lost on tablet	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other reason	71	4	4	0	51	39	12	16	16	0
Productive but respondent requested data deletion	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Survey response rate	33.4%	38.3%	37.0%	-	32.1%	33.3%	24.4%	40.5%	42.6%	-
Co-operation rate	33.9%	40.1%	38.1%	-	32.5%	33.6%	24.6%	41.1%	43.3%	-

9.11 Movers and tracing

Overall, 23.8% of cohort families at MCS7 were identified as movers (i.e. they no longer lived at the issued address). The highest proportion of families identified as movers was in Scotland (26.9%) and the lowest in Northern Ireland (20.9%). This is a higher proportion than at previous sweeps of MCS.

Table 9.11.1: Proportion of sample that no longer lived at issued address

	Total	England	Wales	Scotland	N Ireland
Total sample	14496	9444	2036	1638	1378
Non-movers	11041	7253	1500	1198	1090
Movers	3455	2191	536	440	288
% Non-movers	76.2%	76.8%	73.7%	73.1%	79.1%
% Movers	23.8%	23.2%	26.3%	26.9%	20.9%

Approximately seven in ten (70.9%) of those identified as movers were traced by interviewers, and the overwhelming majority of these cases still lived within the same interviewer area. Among traced movers who did not emigrate, only 33 families moved out of their original country of issue, as shown in Table 9.11.2.

Table 9.11.2: Movers between countries

Original country of issue	Total	Country moved to			
		England	Wales	Scotland	N Ireland
England	10	-	6	3	1
Wales	18	17	-	0	1
Scotland	3	3	0	-	0
N Ireland	2	1	0	1	-
Total	33	21	6	4	2

If interviewers were not able to trace the respondents, the case was sent to CLS for tracing. CLS successfully traced 9.6% of movers. Prior to and during fieldwork, CLS made use of administrative data sources to trace families. This included using the National Pupil Database in England. This was not available in the other countries.

Table 9.11.3 shows a breakdown of movers, and the tracing outcomes, by country of issue.

Table 9.11.3: Tracing outcomes for movers

	Total	England	Wales	Scotland	N Ireland
Total movers	3455	2191	536	440	288
Movers who were traced	2783	1831	396	330	226
Traced by interviewer	2451	1586	361	301	203
- Address within own area	2355	1521	339	296	199
- Address outside own area	74	47	22	4	1
- Address overseas/ emigrated	22	18	0	1	3
Traced by CLS	332	245	35	29	23
- New address/ information	196	161	12	13	10
- Emigrated	2	0	1	0	1
- Refusal/ ineligible	134	84	22	16	12
Untraced movers	625	332	135	99	59
Outstanding movers²⁹	47	28	5	11	3
% Traced by interviewer	70.9%	72.4%	67.4%	68.4%	70.5%
% Traced by CLS	9.6%	11.2%	6.5%	6.6%	8.0%
% Untraced	18.1%	15.2%	25.2%	22.5%	20.5%
% Outstanding	1.4%	1.3%	0.9%	2.5%	1.0%

The survey response and co-operation rates for traced movers were lower in comparison to the whole sample. Movers traced by the interviewers were much more likely to participate than movers traced by CLS.

Table 9.11.4 shows a summary of household response for all traced movers by country of issue.

²⁹ Outstanding movers are cases which were recorded as movers during fieldwork, but for which not all in-field tracing steps have been completed. As such, they may be easier to locate in the future compared with those in the "untraced movers" category.

Table 9.11.4 Summary of response by country of issue for traced movers

Outcome	Total	Traced by IM				Traced by CLS			
		England	Wales	Scotland	N Ireland	England	Wales	Scotland	N Ireland
Movers who were traced	2783	1586	361	301	203	245	35	29	23
Ineligible traced movers	25	17	0	1	3	2	1	0	1
Died	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
Emigrated	23	17	0	1	3	0	1	0	1
Uncertain eligibility	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Untraced movers/ ran out of time	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Eligible traced movers	2757	1568	361	300	200	243	34	29	22
Productive	2112	1330	287	231	164	78	6	11	5
Fully productive	1791	1149	246	201	136	44	6	8	1
Partially productive in household	321	181	41	30	28	34	0	3	4
Refusals	540	204	59	60	33	127	23	18	16
Refusal to Office	99	7	1	2	2	51	12	13	11
Refusal to interviewer	441	197	58	58	31	76	11	5	5
Other unproductive	105	34	15	9	3	38	5	0	1
Non-contact	52	10	6	2	1	30	2	0	1
Broken appointment - no recontact	24	15	5	1	1	0	2	0	0
Language difficulties	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Family unavailable	8	6	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Data lost on tablet	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other reason	19	3	4	4	1	7	0	0	0
Productive but respondent requested data deletion	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Survey response rate	76.6%	84.8%	79.5%	77.0%	82.0%	32.1%	17.6%	37.9%	22.7%
Co-operation rate	76.6%	84.8%	79.5%	77.0%	82.0%	32.1%	17.6%	37.9%	22.7%

9.12 Response to individual survey elements

MCS7 consisted of the following survey elements:

- Household interview
- Young person face-to-face interview
- Young person self-completion questionnaire
- Young person physical measurements
- Young person cognitive assessment
- Young person consent to data linkage
- Placement of young person online questionnaire
- Young person online questionnaire (completed outside of the household visit)
- Placement of parent online questionnaires and Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire
- Parent 1 online questionnaire (completed either during or outside of the household visit)
- Parent 2 online questionnaire (completed either during or outside of the household visit)
- Strength and Difficulties paper questionnaire (completed either during or outside of the household visit - 1 per cohort member)

For a household to be classified as fully productive, all in-household survey elements which the household was eligible for had to be either fully or partially complete. For a household to be classified as partially productive, some of the elements of the study were unproductive.³⁰

All productive households returned a productive household interview, which unlocked the rest of the elements. The household interview could not be partially productive – it had to be completed in its entirety to be counted as productive.

³⁰ See section 9.1 for a full definition of fully and partially productive households.

9.12.1. Young person face-to-face interview

The Age 17 Survey was the first time that cohort members were asked to complete a face-to-face interview with an interviewer. The 10,626³¹ productive households contained a total of 10,757 cohort members, including 124 sets of twins and eight sets of triplets.

Most cohort members completed the cohort member face-to-face interview, with a response rate of 93.4%. Table 9.11.2 shows the variation in response rates across the four countries of issue.

During the young person face-to-face interview, cohort members were asked to give consent to link administrative data to their survey responses. This section was treated as separate to the rest of the interview, so the respondent could agree to take part in one section but not the other. For this reason, there were two partially productive outcomes for the young person face-to-face interview – one to indicate that the data linkage section was completed, and one to indicate that the rest of the element was completed. If both were completed, the element was fully productive.

Consent to data linkage was recorded on a signed paper consent form, which was returned by interviewers to head office. Of the 10,757 cohort members in productive households, 91.7% consented to at least one type of data linkage (9,862), and 6,392 consented to all linkages (59.4%). However, it is worth noting that rates varied considerably by country with England having the highest rates.

Table 9.11.3 gives a breakdown of responses returned for each request for data linkage. The figures in Table 9.11.3 encompass all responses delivered to CLS from the scanned consent forms. A small number of these forms were returned incomplete, with 88 missing the cohort member's signature and 38 missing the interviewer's signature. These consents are included in Table 9.11.3.

In some cases, respondents requested deletion of consent after returning the consent form. These consents are not included in Table 9.11.3 (Twelve requests for all consents to data linkage to be deleted, two requests for deletion of consent to linkage of health data, and one request for deletion of the cohort member's National Insurance number).

³¹ Including one in which the cohort member completed an interview but subsequently requested that all data from the interview be deleted

Table 9.12.2 Response – young person interview

Outcome	Total	England	Wales	Scotland	N Ireland
Cohort members in productive households	10757	7208	1430	1124	995
Ineligible	0	0	0	0	0
One of the twins/triplets died	0	0	0	0	0
Eligible cohort members	10757	7208	1430	1124	995
Productive	10046	6740	1340	1048	918
Fully productive	9997	6705	1331	1046	915
Partially productive - YP interview module partially/fully complete	5	4	1	0	0
Partially productive - YP interview module not started, DL and/or Contact info started	44	31	8	2	3
Unproductive	711	468	90	76	77
Non-contact	22	22	0	0	0
No further contact (some contact made - no appt)	16	12	2	1	1
Refusal by parent	42	29	4	6	3
Refusal by cohort member	554	352	77	60	65
Broken appointment - no recontact	11	9	0	2	0
Ill at home during survey period	6	2	0	3	1
Away from home / in hospital during entire survey period	7	6	0	0	1
Physically or mentally incapable/ incompetent	18	13	1	3	1
Language difficulties	0	0	0	0	0
Data lost on tablet	3	2	1	0	0
Productive but respondent requested data deletion	1	0	1	0	0
Other (please specify)	31	21	4	1	5
% Eligible cohort members	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
% Productive within eligible	93.4%	93.5%	93.7%	93.2%	92.3%
Fully productive	92.9%	93.0%	93.1%	93.1%	92.0%
Partially productive - YP interview module partially/fully complete	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Partially productive - YP interview module not started, DL and/or Contact info started	0.4%	0.4%	0.6%	0.2%	0.3%
% Unproductive within eligible	6.6%	6.5%	6.3%	6.8%	7.7%

Table 9.12.3 Response – young person data linkage consent

Outcome	No.	%
Cohort members in productive households	10757	100.0%
Ineligible	0	0.0%
One of the twins/triplets died	0	0.0%
Eligible cohort members	10757	100.0%
Consented to at least one type of data linkage	9,862	91.7%
Consented to all linkages	6,392	59.4%
<i>Consent given for:</i>		
EDUCATION RECORDS		
Department for Education (England), Knowledge and Analytical Services (Wales), Education Analytical Services, Scottish Funding Council and Student Awards Agency (Scotland), Department of Education and Department for the Economy (Northern Ireland), Higher Education Statistics Agency	9407	87.5%
Universities and Colleges Admission Service	9293	86.4%
Student Loans Company	9009	83.8%
HEALTH RECORDS		
NHS Digital (England), NHS Wales Informatics Service's Information Services Division, Information Services Division of NHS National Service Scotland, Health and Social Care (Northern Ireland)	9214	85.7%
ECONOMIC RECORDS		
Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs	8938	83.1%
Department of Work and Pensions / Department of Social Security (DSS) in Northern Ireland, Social Security Agency	8958	83.3%
POLICE AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE RECORDS		
Ministry of Justice (in England and Wales), Police Scotland, the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (Scotland), Police Service and the Department of Justice (Northern Ireland)	8890	82.6%
Eligible to provide National Insurance number	10757	100.0%
National insurance number provided	7132	66.3%

9.13 Young person self-completion questionnaire

In total, 91.9% of eligible cohort members in productive households completed all or part of the young person self-completion questionnaire. Table 9.12.1 gives a breakdown of response rates by country of issue.

Table 9.13.1 Response – young person self-completion interview

Outcome	Total	England	Wales	Scotland	N Ireland
Cohort members in productive households	10757	7208	1430	1124	995
Ineligible	0	0	0	0	0
One of the twins/triplets died	0	0	0	0	0
Eligible cohort members	10757	7208	1430	1124	995
Productive	9889	6618	1321	1036	914
Fully productive	9887	6617	1321	1036	913
Partially productive	2	1	0	0	1
Unproductive	868	590	109	88	81
Non-contact	16	15	0	1	0
Refusal by parent	15	15	0	0	0
Refusal by cohort member	815	545	106	84	80
Broken appointment - no recontact	5	4	0	0	1
Ill at home during survey period	1	1	0	0	0
Away from home / in hospital during entire survey period	4	3	1	0	0
Physically or mentally incapable/ incompetent	6	3	0	3	0
Language difficulties	0	0	0	0	0
Data lost on tablet	4	3	1	0	0
Other (please specify)	1	1	0	0	0
Refusal after interview - data deletion requested	1	0	1	0	0
% Eligible cohort members	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
% Productive within eligible	91.9%	91.8%	92.4%	92.2%	91.9%
Fully productive	91.9%	91.8%	92.4%	92.2%	91.8%
Partially productive	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
% Unproductive within eligible	8.1%	8.2%	7.6%	7.8%	8.1%

9.14 Young person physical measurements

In total, 90.2% of eligible cohort members in productive households had their physical measurements taken. Table 9.14.1 gives a breakdown of response rates by country of issue.

Table 9.14.1 Response – young person physical measurements

Outcome	Total	England	Wales	Scotland	N Ireland
Cohort members in productive households	10757	7208	1430	1125	994
Ineligible	0	0	0	0	0
One of the twins/triplets died	0	0	0	0	0
Eligible cohort members	10757	7208	1430	1125	994
Productive	9703	6495	1310	1020	878
Fully productive	9290	6217	1258	969	846
Partially productive - Height and Weight only	154	102	18	23	11
Partially productive - Height only	255	173	34	27	21
Partially productive - Weight only	4	3	0	1	0
Unproductive	1054	713	120	105	116
Non-contact	17	16	0	1	0
Refusal by parent	16	16	0	0	0
Refusal by cohort member	1000	667	116	102	115
Broken appointment - no recontact	5	4	0	0	1
Ill at home during survey period	0	0	0	0	0
Away from home / in hospital during entire survey period	6	4	2	0	0
Physically or mentally incapable/ incompetent	5	3	0	2	0
Language difficulties	0	0	0	0	0
Data lost on tablet	3	2	1	0	0
Other (please specify)	1	1	0	0	0
Refusal after interview - data deletion requested	1	0	1	0	0
% Eligible cohort members	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
% Productive within eligible	90.2%	90.1%	91.6%	90.7%	88.3%
Fully productive	86.4%	86.3%	88.0%	86.1%	85.1%
Partially productive - Height and Weight only	1.4%	1.4%	1.3%	2.0%	1.1%
Partially productive - Height only	2.4%	2.4%	2.4%	2.4%	2.1%
Partially productive - Weight only	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%
% Unproductive within eligible	9.8%	9.9%	8.4%	9.3%	11.7%

9.15 Young person cognitive assessment

In total, 88.9% of eligible cohort members in productive households completed the cognitive assessment. Table 9.15.1 gives a breakdown of response rates by country of issue.

Table 9.15.1 Response – young person cognitive assessment

Outcome	Total	England	Wales	Scotland	N Ireland
Cohort members in productive households	10757	7208	1430	1124	995
Ineligible	0	0	0	0	0
One of the twins/triplets died	0	0	0	0	0
Eligible cohort members	10757	7208	1430	1124	995
Productive	9558	6459	1238	999	862
Fully productive	9558	6459	1238	999	862
Unproductive	1199	749	192	125	133
Non-contact	18	17	0	1	0
Refusal by parent	17	15	2	0	0
Refusal by cohort member	1138	698	187	121	132
Broken appointment - no recontact	4	3	0	0	1
Ill at home during survey period	0	0	0	0	0
Away from home / in hospital during entire survey period	4	3	1	0	0
Physically or mentally incapable/ incompetent	5	3	0	2	0
Language difficulties	0	0	0	0	0
Data lost on tablet	2	1	1	0	0
Other (please specify)	10	9	0	1	0
Refusal after interview - data deletion requested	1	0	1	0	0
% Eligible cohort members	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
% Productive within eligible	88.9%	89.6%	86.6%	88.9%	86.6%
Fully productive	88.9%	89.6%	86.6%	88.9%	86.6%
% Unproductive within eligible	11.1%	10.4%	13.4%	11.1%	13.4%

9.16 Young person online questionnaire

Placement of the young person online questionnaire was recorded for 96.1% of cohort members in productive households. A further three placements were confirmed, although the record of placement was lost on the interviewer's tablet.

Table 9.16.1 gives a breakdown of placement rates by country of issue.

Table 9.16.1 Response – placement of young person online questionnaire

Outcome	Total	England	Wales	Scotland	N Ireland
Cohort members in productive households	10757	7208	1430	1124	995
Ineligible	0	0	0	0	0
One of the twins/triplets died	0	0	0	0	0
Eligible cohort members	10757	7208	1430	1124	995
Productive	10340	6935	1384	1068	953
Young person online interview placed	10340	6935	1384	1068	953
Unproductive	417	273	46	56	42
Non-contact	0	0	0	0	0
Refusal by parent	21	18	0	2	1
Refusal by cohort member	389	250	44	54	41
Broken appointment - no recontact	0	0	0	0	0
Ill at home during survey period	0	0	0	0	0
Away from home / in hospital during entire survey period	0	0	0	0	0
Physically or mentally incapable/ incompetent	0	0	0	0	0
Language difficulties	0	0	0	0	0
Data lost on tablet	6	5	1	0	0
Other (please specify)	0	0	0	0	0
Refusal after interview - data deletion requested	1	0	1	0	0
% Eligible cohort members	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
% Productive within eligible	96.1%	96.2%	96.8%	95.0%	95.8%
Young person online interview placed	96.1%	96.2%	96.8%	95.0%	95.8%
% Unproductive within eligible	3.9%	3.8%	3.2%	5.0%	4.2%

Of the 10,344 young person online questionnaires that were placed³², a total of 6,828 were productive (a response rate of 66.0%). Table 9.16.2 gives a breakdown of response rates by country of issue.

Table 9.16.2 Response – young person online questionnaire

Outcome	Total	England	Wales	Scotland	N Ireland
Cohort members in productive households	10757	7208	1430	1124	995
Ineligible	0	0	0	0	0
Online interview not placed	413	271	44	56	42
Placed online interviews	10344	6937	1386	1068	953
Productive	6828	4534	975	734	585
Fully productive	6607	4386	937	716	568
Partially productive	221	148	38	18	17
Unproductive	3516	2403	411	334	368
Refusal by cohort member (CAWI not completed)	3515	2403	410	334	368
Refusal after interview - data deletion requested	1	0	1	0	0
% Productive within eligible	63.5%	62.9%	68.2%	65.3%	58.8%
% Placed online interviews	96.2%	96.2%	96.9%	95.0%	95.8%
% Productive within placed	66.0%	65.4%	70.3%	68.7%	61.4%
Fully productive	63.9%	63.2%	67.6%	67.0%	59.6%
Partially productive	2.1%	2.1%	2.7%	1.7%	1.8%
% Unproductive within placed	34.0%	34.6%	29.7%	31.3%	38.6%

³² Including the three placements lost on tablet and a further one online interview that was successfully placed but subsequently withdrawn when the cohort family requested deletion of all data collected at this sweep.

9.17 Parent online questionnaires

In total, 10,468 productive households contained an adult eligible for parent elements. Of those, at least one productive online parent questionnaire was obtained in 8,166 households (78.0%).

A total of 10,319 online questionnaires were placed with eligible parent 1 (a placement rate of 98.5%). Table 9.17.1 gives a breakdown of placement rates by country of issue.

Table 9.17.1 Response – placement of parent 1 online questionnaire

Outcome	Total	England	Wales	Scotland	N Ireland
Total productive households	10626	7124	1416	1105	981
Ineligible	158	130	13	12	3
No eligible parent 1	158	130	13	12	3
Eligible Parent 1 respondents	10468	6994	1403	1093	978
Productive	10319	6895	1385	1083	956
Parent 1 online interview placed	10319	6895	1385	1083	956
Unproductive	149	99	18	10	22
Non-contact	0	0	0	0	0
Refusal	146	98	16	10	22
Broken appointment - no recontact	0	0	0	0	0
Ill at home during survey period	0	0	0	0	0
Away from home / in hospital during entire survey period	0	0	0	0	0
Physically or mentally incapable/ incompetent	0	0	0	0	0
Language difficulties	0	0	0	0	0
Data lost on tablet	2	1	1	0	0
Productive but respondent requested data deletion	1	0	1	0	0
Other (please specify)	0	0	0	0	0
% Eligible parent 1 respondents	98.5%	98.2%	99.1%	98.9%	99.7%
% Productive within eligible	98.6%	98.6%	98.7%	99.1%	97.8%
% Unproductive within eligible	1.4%	1.4%	1.3%	0.9%	2.2%

In total, 74.5% of placed parent 1 online questionnaires were returned as productive. Table 9.17.2 gives a breakdown of response rates by country of issue.

Table 9.17.2 Response – parent 1 online questionnaire

Outcome	Total	England	Wales	Scotland	N Ireland
Total productive households	10626	7124	1416	1105	981
Ineligible	158	130	13	12	3
Online interview not placed	147	98	17	10	22
Placed online interviews	10321 ³³	6896	1386	1083	956
Productive	7694	5026	1100	881	687
Fully productive	7506	4895	1081	863	667
Partially productive	188	131	19	18	20
Unproductive	2627	1870	286	202	269
Refusal (CAWI not completed)	2627	1870	286	202	269
% Productive within eligible	73.5%	71.9%	78.4%	80.6%	70.2%
% Placed online interviews	97.1%	96.8%	97.9%	98.0%	97.5%
% Productive within placed	74.5%	72.9%	79.4%	81.3%	71.9%
Fully productive	72.7%	71.0%	78.0%	79.7%	69.8%
Partially productive	1.8%	1.9%	1.4%	1.7%	2.1%
% Unproductive within placed	25.5%	27.1%	20.6%	18.7%	28.1%

A total of 7,508 online questionnaires were placed with parent 2 (a placement rate of 95.5%). Table 9.17.3 gives a breakdown of placement rates by country of issue.

Table 9.17.3 Response – placement of parent 2 online questionnaire

Outcome	Total	England	Wales	Scotland	N Ireland
Total productive households	10626	7124	1416	1105	981
Ineligible	2766	1904	368	263	231
No eligible parent 2	2766	1904	368	263	231
Eligible parent 2 respondents	7860	5220	1048	842	750
Productive	7508	4973	998	811	726
Parent 2 online interview placed	7508	4973	998	811	726
Unproductive	352	247	50	31	24
Non-contact	0	0	0	0	0
Refusal	349	246	48	31	24
Broken appointment - no recontact	0	0	0	0	0
Ill at home during survey period	0	0	0	0	0
Away from home / in hospital during entire survey period	0	0	0	0	0
Physically or mentally incapable/ incompetent	0	0	0	0	0
Language difficulties	0	0	0	0	0
Data lost on tablet	2	1	1	0	0
Productive but respondent requested data deletion	1	0	1	0	0
Other (please specify)	0	0	0	0	0
% Eligible parent 2 respondents	74.0%	73.3%	74.0%	76.2%	76.5%
% Productive within eligible	95.5%	95.3%	95.2%	96.3%	96.8%
% Unproductive within eligible	4.5%	4.7%	4.8%	3.7%	3.2%

³³ Including two cases in which the record of placement was lost on the interviewer's tablet.

In total, 66.5% of placed parent 2 online questionnaires were returned as productive. Table 9.17.4 gives a breakdown of response rates by country of issue.

Table 9.17.4 Response – parent 2 online questionnaire

Outcome	Total	England	Wales	Scotland	N Ireland
Total productive households	10626	7124	1416	1105	981
Ineligible	2766	1904	368	263	231
Online interview not placed	351	246	50	31	24
Placed online interviews	7509 ³⁴	4974	998	811	726
Productive	4997	3254	684	590	469
Fully productive	4864	3157	675	573	459
Partially productive	133	97	9	17	10
Unproductive	2512	1720	314	221	257
Refusal (CAWI not completed)	2512	1720	314	221	257
% Productive within eligible	63.6%	62.3%	65.3%	70.1%	62.5%
% Placed online interviews	70.7%	69.8%	70.5%	73.4%	74.0%
% Productive within placed	66.5%	65.4%	68.5%	72.7%	64.6%
Fully productive	64.8%	63.5%	67.6%	70.7%	63.2%
Partially productive	1.8%	2.0%	0.9%	2.1%	1.4%
% Unproductive within placed	33.5%	34.6%	31.5%	27.3%	35.4%

9.18 Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire

The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) included sensitive questions about the cohort member and was answered by a parent (parent 1 or parent 2) on paper. Cohort members also completed an SDQ, as part of the CASI questionnaire.

The SDQ is a brief behavioural screening questionnaire developed by Robert Goodman³⁵. It exists in several versions to meet the needs of researchers, clinicians and educationalists. All versions of the SDQ ask about 25 attributes, some positive and others negative. These can be categorised as emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity/inattention, peer relationship problems and prosocial behaviour, with five questions in each category.

In total 10,450 paper Strengths and Difficulties questionnaires were placed, and all placements were recorded within the scripts. Of those records, two were lost on interviewers' tablets, and a further one was deleted after the interview at the request of the respondent. Excluding these three, a paper SDQ was placed for 98.6% of cohort members in households containing someone eligible to complete it. Table 9.18.1 gives a breakdown of placement rates by country of issue.

³⁴ Including one case in which the record of placement was lost on the interviewer's tablet.

³⁵ (Goodman 1997). <https://www.sdqinfo.com/a0.html>

Table 9.18.1 Response – placement of Strength and Difficulties questionnaire

Outcome	Total	England	Wales	Scotland	N Ireland
Cohort members in productive households	10757	7208	1430	1124	995
Ineligible	158	130	13	12	3
One of the twins/triplets died	0	0	0	0	0
No one eligible to complete SDQ	158	130	13	12	3
Eligible cohort members	10599	7078	1417	1112	992
Productive	10447	6988	1384	1104	971
Strengths & Difficulties questionnaire placed	10447	6988	1384	1104	971
Unproductive	152	90	33	8	21
Non-contact	0	0	0	0	0
Refusal	148	88	31	8	21
Broken appointment - no recontact	0	0	0	0	0
Ill at home during survey period	0	0	0	0	0
Away from home / in hospital during entire survey period	1	1	0	0	0
Physically or mentally incapable/ incompetent	0	0	0	0	0
Language difficulties	0	0	0	0	0
Data lost on tablet	2	1	1	0	0
Other (please specify)	0	0	0	0	0
Refusal after interview - data deletion requested	1	0	1	0	0
% Eligible cohort members	98.5%	98.2%	99.1%	98.9%	99.7%
% Productive within eligible	98.6%	98.7%	97.7%	99.3%	97.9%
Strengths & Difficulties questionnaire placed	98.6%	98.7%	97.7%	99.3%	97.9%
% Unproductive within eligible	1.4%	1.3%	2.3%	0.7%	2.1%

Of the 10,450 placed parent paper Strength and Difficulties questionnaires, 9,489 were completed during the household visit and returned by the interviewer (90.8%) and 227 were completed outside of the visit and returned by the cohort family (2.2%). Table 9.18.2 gives a breakdown of return rates by country of issue.

Table 9.18.2 Response – Strength and Difficulties questionnaire

Outcome	Total	England	Wales	Scotland	N Ireland
Cohort members in productive households	10757	7208	1430	1124	995
Ineligible	158	131	12	12	3
SDQ not placed	149	88	32	8	21
Placed SDQs	10450 ³⁶	6989	1386	1104	971
Productive	9716	6448	1298	1051	919
Returned by interviewer	9489	6290	1273	1030	896
Returned by cohort family	227	158	25	21	23
Unproductive	734	541	88	53	52
Not returned by interviewer	285	190	47	30	18
Not returned by respondent	448	351	40	23	34
Refusal after interview - data deletion requested	1	0	1	0	0
% Placed SDQs	97.1%	97.0%	96.9%	98.2%	97.6%
% Productive within placed	93.0%	92.3%	93.7%	95.2%	94.6%
Returned by interviewer	90.8%	90.0%	91.8%	93.3%	92.3%
Returned by respondent	2.2%	2.3%	1.8%	1.9%	2.4%
% Unproductive within placed	7.0%	7.7%	6.3%	4.8%	5.4%
Not returned by interviewer	2.7%	2.7%	3.4%	2.7%	1.9%
Not returned by respondent	4.3%	5.0%	2.9%	2.1%	3.5%

9.19 Module timings

Interview element	Mean time (decimal minutes)	Median time (decimal minutes)
Household interview	7.72	6.65
SDQ and parent online questionnaire placement	5.79	4.97
Young person interview	25.39	24.3
Young person self-completion interview	14.67	14.25
Young person physical measurements	5.97	5.53
Young person cognitive assessment	11.62	11.52
Young person online questionnaire placement	1.61	1.23
Young person online questionnaire	22.62	14.47
Parent online questionnaire	18.67	13.75

³⁶ Including two cases in which the record of placement was lost on the interviewer's tablet, and a further case in which the cohort family requested deletion of all MCS7 data following the interview.

10. Coding Editing Data

10. Coding, editing and data preparation

10.1 Issuing the CAI script and script issues

Version 101 of each of the CAI scripts was issued to interviewers before the start of fieldwork, and then updated and reissued whenever necessary during the fieldwork period. Most were small changes with minimal impact and these are all fully documented within the appendices.

The main reasons for releasing new scripts were as follows:

- to correct errors in the script (this happened for some particularly complex areas of code, although this did not impact many cases);
- To fix online questionnaire usernames that were not being set correctly;
- To fix hard or soft checks (either because an error had been detected or because date limits or equipment serial numbers needed updating).

Full details of changes made to scripts are outlined in the appendices. Complete details of all issues with CAI script changes can be found in section 6.5.3 (CAI Issues Report).

Some changes made to the scripts affect the data. Questions were sometimes asked when they should not have been or not when they should have been and these have been flagged within the final data sets. All such flags are shown in Figure 10.1.1 below.

Figure 10.1.1 Flags for routing errors due to new script versions

Variable (flag) name	Variable (flag) label	Response options
YP CASI data (2 respondents)		
FLAG_AbsentParents	Questions asked about absent parents by mistake	Yes/No
FLAG_BGFR	GCBGFR00 not asked by mistake	Yes/No
FLAG_SXAT	Scale inverted at GCSXAT00 by mistake	Yes/No
FLAG_PGOE	Incorrect year entered at GCPGOE0A	Yes/No
YP CAPI data (3 respondents)		
FLAG_Tenure	Questions asked about household tenure by mistake	Yes/No

10.2 Lost data

On very rare occasions Dimensions data was captured by the interviewer but either became corrupted or was deleted before it was sent back to the office. It was possible to clearly mark occurrences in the paradata as the

ECS used a separate process to transmit data. All elements where data was lost were given the outcome code of 140.

10.3 Coding

10.3.1 Coding open-ended and 'other-specify' questions

For MCS7, as with most CAI surveys, the majority of answers given by respondents were coded during the interview into pre-specified code frames. Many questions had fully closed code frames – that is the respondent's answer is always fitted into one of the existing response categories. However, on some questions, there were 'write in' answers. These could occur where:

- There was an 'other-specify' option to allow an answer that did not fit into the pre-specified options;
- There was an 'open-ended' questions where no code frame was provided and the answers were simply typed into the CAI

In most cases, answers from both these types of open questions were coded in the office.

In some cases, it was not possible for responses to be allocated an existing code or any of the additional codes. In these instances, answers were either left within the 'Other' code or coded as 'Vague irrelevant answer'. 'Other' was used for most of the responses that could not be coded using the existing/additional codes in the code frames. 'Vague irrelevant answer' was only used for responses that did not answer the question.

10.3.2 The codebook

A codebook was used to log variable names, any precodes that appeared on the CAI and the codeframe for write in answers. This was used as a guide for the coders. Coders were encouraged to back code into a pre-existing code if possible, else to try and find an appropriate code in the code book. If a question has been asked at a previous sweep, the code frame for write in answers was initially kept the same as in previous sweeps. However, if appropriate, it was revised to reflect the differing answer types at this sweep. The code frame from MCS6 was provided by CLS to help keep variable names and coding consistent with the previous sweep, if the same or a similar question had been asked at both sweeps.

10.3.3 Quality control

During fieldwork, Ipsos MORI carried out blind double-coding of 5% of all coders' work (randomly chosen) to verify the coding. This verification was carried out by a different person to the original coder. If the original code was incorrect it was corrected and the original coder informed.

10.3.4 SIC coding, SOC Coding

The UK Standard Industrial Classification of Economic Activities 2007 (UK SIC 2007) and Standard Occupational Classification (SOC2010) were used for coding the parents' occupations and SOC coding was also applied to

the career aspirations question asked of the young person. With the cohort member self-completion, many young people chose to give multiple answers, which required each aspiration to be coded individually.

10.4 Editing CAI data

Interviewers carried out most of the data editing in the field where inconsistencies were highlighted through soft and hard checks. 'Hard' checks did not allow entries outside a given range (and had to be resolved by the interviewer at the time of the interview), and 'soft' checks asked the interviewer to confirm what he or she had entered. These enabled interviewers to clarify and query data discrepancies directly with the respondent during the interview.

Interviewers recorded in the Final Element module where they believed further amendments to the data would be needed, and, in a few instances, interviewers notified Head Office where other amendments to the data were necessary. These comments were reviewed and, if required, an edit was proposed. The proposed edits were then signed off by CLS.

All cases which were edited were flagged within the final data sets using a predefined set of variables, along with any cases where data was not edited but there may be issues. Data was also edited if a request came from the family to remove any of their data. All such flags are shown in the Appendices. The flags are not part of the data provided to the users. If the flags are needed for research purposes, they be made available through a successful DAC application (<https://cls.ucl.ac.uk/data-access-training/access-cls-dac/>).

10.5 Remapping the data

Coded and edited data was remapped according to specifications provided by CLS. If the module contained verbatim responses from 'other-specify' and open ended questions these were delivered in a separate file.

For the household interview, the information about each person in the household was re-mapped so that each person corresponded to a row of data. Household-level information was delivered in a separate data file, with one row of data per family.

For the online questionnaires, data was transformed so that questions pertaining to the young person were in one file with one row of data for each young person and questions pertaining to each parent or family as a whole in another file. Household-level information was delivered in a separate data file, with one row of data per family.

Cohort member interview data, data linkage, physical measurement data and on-line follow-up data was transformed so that questions pertaining to each young person were on one row in the dataset.

The cognitive assessment data was transformed so that tasks completed by the cohort member were delivered in one file with one row for each young person.

10.6 Reconciling data linkage

Interviewers returned the consent booklet forms to the Ipsos MORI Field team. The forms were booked in by scanning using the QR code available on the cover of each consent booklet form. The team used other information on the form to reconcile the cases with missing QR codes or where the name written on the form did not match the name of the cohort member assigned to the QR code.

Once successfully booked in, the Data Capture team scanned the forms and specialist software recorded the responses, the date, and interviewer and participants' signature. The questions about giving permission to different administrative records required a single answer, while the National Insurance question required the participants to input their National Insurance number. Any cases where more than one answer was recorded were treated as though the respondent had not given their consent.

The research team checked the scanned data against the placement data, and in the cases in which there was a mismatch, the scanned image of the consent booklet was checked. If the data required editing, a flag was added in the data to the relevant cases to record the nature of the change.

The data (with matched respondent serial numbers), original paper consent forms and their scans were provided to CLS.

10.7 Inputting the SDQ data

Interviewers returned the paper Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) to the Ipsos MORI Field team. The forms were booked in by scanning the QR code available on the back of the SDQ form. The team used other information on the form to reconcile forms with missing barcodes or where the name written on the form did not match the name of the cohort member assigned to the QR code.

Once successfully booked in, the Data Capture team scanned the forms and specialist software recorded the responses. All questions on the SDQ required a single answer. However, there were cases where more than one answer was recorded. The research team applied a cross-check to identify where this had happened, and the Data Capture team then inspected the original SDQ to establish whether the respondent had deliberately given more than one answer or whether one of the answers was, for example, crossed out or just a smudge. In cases where there were multiple intentional answers to a question the data was edited out as 'not answered'.

The data (with matched respondent serial numbers), original paper SDQs and their scans were provided to CLS.

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About Ipsos MORI's Social Research Institute

The Social Research Institute works closely with national governments, local public services and the not-for-profit sector. Its c.200 research staff focus on public service and policy issues. Each has expertise in a particular part of the public sector, ensuring we have a detailed understanding of specific sectors and policy challenges. This, combined with our methods and communications expertise, helps ensure that our research makes a difference for decision makers and communities.