

# Millennium Cohort Study Eighth Sweep (MCS8)

**Technical Report  
December 2025**

Prepared for the Centre for  
Longitudinal Studies



## Contents

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>1 Introduction.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1.1 Background to the study .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1.2 Key features .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>1.3 Previous sweeps .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>1.4 Covid-19 surveys .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>1.5 The eighth sweep .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>2 Sample.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>2.1 The original sample (from the first sweep) .....</b>	<b>16</b>
Figure 2.1: Productive sample size, by sweep .....	17
<b>2.2 The issued sample (at MCS8) .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>2.3 Allocation of the issued sample at MCS8.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>2.4 The sample files .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>2.5 Sample updates.....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>3 Development, Pilot and Soft Launch .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>3.1 Pre-testing qualitative research.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>3.2 The autumn 2021 web survey .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>3.3 Pilot.....</b>	<b>27</b>
3.3.1 Limitations of the pilot .....	28
3.3.2 Key findings and post-pilot changes .....	29
<b>3.4 Soft launch .....</b>	<b>30</b>
3.4.1 Briefings .....	32
3.4.2 Contact strategy and reminders – web-first cases .....	32
3.4.3 Contact strategy and reminders – face-to-face.....	33
3.4.4 Differences between web and face-to-face protocols .....	34
3.4.5 Key findings - mode.....	34
Figure 3.1: Overall response rates .....	34
3.4.6 Key findings - other .....	35
<b>4 Questionnaire .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>4.1 Main questionnaire .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>4.2 The Core interview .....</b>	<b>38</b>
Table 4.1: Topics included in the household interview .....	38
Table 4.2: Coverage of topics per module of the core interview.....	40
4.2.2 Additional protocols for face-to-face interviews.....	42
4.2.3 Additional protocols for online interviews.....	42

<b>4.3</b>	<b>Data linkage</b> .....	<b>43</b>
<b>4.4</b>	<b>Cognitive assessments</b> .....	<b>45</b>
<b>4.5</b>	<b>Proxy interviews</b> .....	<b>46</b>
<b>4.6</b>	<b>Resident partner elements</b> .....	<b>47</b>
<b>4.7</b>	<b>Element timings</b> .....	<b>48</b>
	Table 4.3 Interview timings .....	48
	Table 4.4 Module timings by the main data collection modes .....	49
<b>5</b>	<b>Ethics</b> .....	<b>50</b>
<b>5.1</b>	<b>Ethical approval</b> .....	<b>50</b>
<b>5.2</b>	<b>Confidentiality issues</b> .....	<b>50</b>
<b>5.3</b>	<b>Respondent well-being</b> .....	<b>51</b>
<b>5.4</b>	<b>Informed consent</b> .....	<b>52</b>
<b>5.5</b>	<b>Administering the consent process</b> .....	<b>52</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Preparation and quality control</b> .....	<b>54</b>
<b>6.1</b>	<b>Briefings</b> .....	<b>54</b>
<b>6.2</b>	<b>Briefing structure</b> .....	<b>54</b>
<b>6.3</b>	<b>Briefing content</b> .....	<b>54</b>
	Table 6.1: Briefing topics .....	54
<b>6.4</b>	<b>Briefing materials</b> .....	<b>55</b>
<b>6.5</b>	<b>Homework tasks</b> .....	<b>55</b>
<b>6.6</b>	<b>Validation</b> .....	<b>56</b>
<b>6.7</b>	<b>Exception reporting, fieldwork process, script issues and data quality reports</b> .....	<b>56</b>
	6.7.1 Exception reporting.....	56
	6.7.2 Fieldwork processes report .....	57
<b>6.8</b>	<b>Fieldwork complaints and respondent queries</b> .....	<b>57</b>
	6.8.1 Respondent queries .....	57
	Table 6.2: Respondent communications .....	58
<b>6.9</b>	<b>Fieldwork complaints</b> .....	<b>59</b>
	Table 6.3: Complaints and causes of concerns .....	60
<b>6.10</b>	<b>Consent withdrawals</b> .....	<b>61</b>
	6.10.1 Data linkage consent withdrawals.....	61
<b>7</b>	<b>Fieldwork</b> .....	<b>62</b>
<b>7.1</b>	<b>Design of fieldwork and timings</b> .....	<b>62</b>
	Table 7.1: Fieldwork dates.....	62
	Table 7.2: Interviews achieved, by month.....	62
<b>7.2</b>	<b>Issuing online sample</b> .....	<b>63</b>
	7.2.1 Issuing sample to interviewers .....	63

<b>7.3</b>	<b>The Electronic Contact Sheet (ECS)</b> .....	<b>64</b>
7.3.1	Appointments .....	64
7.3.2	Contact attempt outcomes.....	64
7.3.3	Progress .....	65
7.3.4	Contact information .....	65
7.3.5	Interviews .....	65
7.3.6	Final outcomes.....	66
7.3.7	Ipsos office messages .....	66
<b>7.4</b>	<b>Tracing actions</b> .....	<b>66</b>
7.4.1	Future addresses and change of details.....	67
<b>7.5</b>	<b>Productive interviews per interviewer</b> .....	<b>67</b>
<b>7.6</b>	<b>Reissues</b> .....	<b>68</b>
<b>7.7</b>	<b>Return of work</b> .....	<b>69</b>
7.7.1	Electronic data.....	69
<b>7.8</b>	<b>Sample management during fieldwork</b> .....	<b>69</b>
7.8.1	Changes to the sample .....	69
	Table 7.3: Movers and updates passed between Ipsos and CLS, by month .....	69
<b>7.9</b>	<b>Transferring mover cases to CLS</b> .....	<b>70</b>
<b>7.10</b>	<b>Sample updates from CLS</b> .....	<b>70</b>
7.10.1	Actioning updates to the sample.....	70
<b>7.11</b>	<b>Progress reporting</b> .....	<b>71</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Respondent communication and engagement</b> .....	<b>73</b>
<b>8.1</b>	<b>Advance mailing</b> .....	<b>73</b>
8.1.1	Face-to-face cases (soft launch) .....	73
8.1.2	Web-first cases (soft launch and main stage).....	73
8.1.3	The advance booklet .....	74
<b>8.2</b>	<b>Web reminders</b> .....	<b>75</b>
	Table 8.1: Web reminders.....	75
<b>8.3</b>	<b>Face-to-face contact and tracing</b> .....	<b>75</b>
8.3.1	Tracing letter .....	76
8.3.2	Legitimising letter .....	76
8.3.3	Occupier letter .....	77
8.3.4	Parent postcard .....	77
<b>8.4</b>	<b>Making appointments</b> .....	<b>77</b>
<b>8.5</b>	<b>The household visit</b> .....	<b>78</b>
	Table 8.2: Table of materials.....	79
<b>8.6</b>	<b>Post interview reminders to partners</b> .....	<b>81</b>

<b>8.7 Thank you gifts and mailing .....</b>	<b>81</b>
Table 8.3: MCS8 thank you mailing .....	82
<b>9 Online mop-up survey .....</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>9.1 Rationale for the online mop-up .....</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>9.2 Eligibility .....</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>9.3 Methodology .....</b>	<b>85</b>
9.3.1 Incentivisation .....	86
9.3.2 Materials and reminders .....	86
9.3.3 Welsh translation of materials .....	86
<b>9.4 Fieldwork timings.....</b>	<b>86</b>
Table 9.1: Fieldwork timings of the online mop-up.....	86
<b>9.5 Online questionnaire content and design .....</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>9.6 Response to online mop-up .....</b>	<b>87</b>
Table 9.2: Survey outcomes for the online mop up .....	87
<b>9.7 Online mop-up data .....</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>10 Survey response .....</b>	<b>89</b>
<b>10.1 Cohort member response.....</b>	<b>89</b>
Table 10.1.1: Summary of contact and response.....	90
Table 10.1.2: Mode of completion by wave .....	91
<b>10.2 Refusals .....</b>	<b>91</b>
Table 10.2.1 Reasons for refusal .....	92
<b>10.3 Cohort member response by their response at prior sweeps .....</b>	<b>92</b>
Table 10.3.1: Summary of response by cohort member’s prior response history .....	93
Table 10.3.2 Summary of response by cohort member’s prior response history .....	94
<b>10.4 Cohort member response by MCS7 outcome .....</b>	<b>94</b>
10.4.1 Summary of response by MCS7 outcome .....	95
<b>10.5 Cohort member response by stratum .....</b>	<b>97</b>
<b>10.6 Household response by priority status within wave .....</b>	<b>100</b>
Table 10.6.1 Summary of response by priority cases by wave .....	101
<b>10.7 Cohort member response by country of issue .....</b>	<b>103</b>
Table 10.7.1 Summary of response by country of issue .....	103
<b>10.8 Mode of contact attempts .....</b>	<b>104</b>
Table 10.8.1 Summary of contact attempts by phase .....	105
<b>10.9 Interviewer visits to productive households .....</b>	<b>107</b>
Table 10.9.1: Number of personal visits across all productive cohort members at MCS8 .....	107
Table 10.9.2: Number of personal visits per productive cohort members issued to field at MCS8.....	108
<b>10.10 Reissues.....</b>	<b>108</b>

<b>Table 10.10.1 Summary of final issue outcomes of reissued households</b> .....	110
<b>10.11 Movers and tracing</b> .....	<b>111</b>
Table 10.11.1: Proportion of sample that no longer lived at issued address .....	111
Table 10.11.2: Tracing outcomes for movers .....	111
Table 10.11.3 Summary of response by country of issue for traced movers .....	113
<b>10.12 Response to individual survey elements</b> .....	<b>115</b>
<b>10.12.1 Cohort member Physical measurements element (soft launch CAPI-only cases)</b> .....	<b>115</b>
Table 10.12.1 Response – cohort member Physical measurements element.....	115
<b>10.12.2 Placement and completion of partner online questionnaire</b> .....	<b>116</b>
Table 10.12.2 Response – placement and completion of partner online questionnaire by country of issue.....	116
Table 10.12.3 Response – placement and completion of partner online questionnaire by the main data collection modes .....	117
<b>10.12.3 Cohort member data linkage consent rates</b> .....	<b>117</b>
Table 10.12.3 Response – cohort member data linkage consent rates by country of issue .....	117
Table 10.12.3.1 Response – cohort member data linkage consent rates by the main data collection modes .....	118
<b>10.12.4 Cohort member child data linkage consent rates</b> .....	<b>119</b>
Table 10.12.4 Response – cohort member child data linkage consent rates by country of issue	119
Table 10.12.4.1 Response – cohort member child data linkage consent rates by the main data collection modes .....	119
<b>10.12.5 Self-completion completion rates</b> .....	<b>119</b>
Table 10.12.5 Response – self-completion completion rates by country of issue and mode of completion .....	120
<b>10.12.6 Cognitive assessment completion rates</b> .....	<b>120</b>
Table 10.12.6 Response – cognitive assessment completion rates by country of issue .....	121
Table 10.12.6.1 Response – cognitive assessment completion rates by the main data collection modes .....	122
<b>11 Coding, editing and data preparation</b> .....	<b>123</b>
<b>11.1 Instrument quality</b> .....	<b>123</b>
<b>11.2 Script releases</b> .....	<b>123</b>
<b>11.3 Coding</b> .....	<b>123</b>
11.3.1 Coding open-ended and ‘other-specify’ questions .....	123
11.3.2 The codebook.....	124
11.3.3 Quality control .....	124
11.3.4 SIC coding, SOC Coding .....	124
<b>11.4 Editing data</b> .....	<b>124</b>
<b>11.5 Remapping the data</b> .....	<b>125</b>

<b>11.6</b>	<b>Data outputs .....</b>	<b>125</b>
<b>11.7</b>	<b>Sample Contact Information .....</b>	<b>126</b>
<b>11.8</b>	<b>Paradata .....</b>	<b>126</b>

## **A tribute to Kate Smith (CLS Survey Manager)**

CLS and Ipsos would like to pay tribute to Kate Smith who sadly passed away on 2 September 2023 while working on the eighth sweep of the Millennium Cohort Study. Kate was the Centre's longest serving member of staff and devoted her highly successful career to the development of longitudinal cohort studies, and in particular to MCS. Kate was pivotal in ensuring the success of the study from the very first sweep. Renowned for her intellect, kindness, and collaborative spirit, Kate is deeply missed by all who had the pleasure of working with her.

# 01

# Introduction



# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background to the study

The Millennium Cohort Study or MCS (also known as Child of the New Century (CNC) to participants), is one of Britain's world famous national longitudinal birth cohorts. The Centre for Longitudinal Studies (CLS) at the UCL Social Research Institute runs MCS.

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

- National Child Development Study (cohort born in 1958)
- 1970 British Cohort Study (cohort born in 1970)
- Next Steps (cohort born in 1989/90<sup>1</sup>)
- Millennium Cohort Study (cohort born in 2000/01)

In addition, another department within UCL runs the National Survey of Health and Development, which follows a cohort born in 1946.

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 some government departments including the Department of Health and Social Care, Department for Education, Department for Work and Pensions, Home Office, Welsh Government and the Northern Ireland Executive.

Following a competitive tendering process, the Centre for Longitudinal Studies commissioned Ipsos to carry out the instrument development, data collection and initial data preparation for the eighth sweep of MCS. Ipsos were also responsible for delivering the fifth, sixth and seventh sweeps of the study (MCS5, MCS6, MCS7). 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

---

<sup>1</sup> This cohort was recruited at age 13/14, rather than at birth.

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 people born in the UK between September 2000 and January 2002<sup>2</sup>. It differs from the earlier birth cohort studies in several ways:

- It covers births over a full year rather than those that took place in a particular week, so how month of birth matters for children's outcomes can be measured.
- It follows cohort members across all four countries of the UK. It oversampled from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, so all four countries can be compared with each other as well as the UK as a whole.
- It oversampled cohort members from areas with higher concentrations of minority ethnic families and from disadvantaged backgrounds. There is evidence that these differences affect life chances.

## 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 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. In addition, parental permission was sought to take, a saliva sample from the children to measure exposure to common childhood infections. The saliva was

---

<sup>2</sup> 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.

not used for DNA or genetic testing. The project was led by the Institute of Child Health (ICH) at UCL

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 the second sweep, 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 cohort member 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. In addition, 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, to test them for exposure to lead in the environment. The latter two projects were led by the Institute of Child Health (ICH) at UCL

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.

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.

The **seventh sweep took place during 2017-2019** when the majority of cohort members were aged 17<sup>3</sup>. This marked a key point in young people's lives, where their educational and occupational paths were diverging through different aspirations and choices. 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.

Non-responders to the main survey were invited to complete a short follow-up online questionnaire containing some key questions after the main fieldwork had finished. This served to boost response on the most important questions and to maintain engagement with more reluctant participants.

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>

## 1.4 Covid-19 surveys

All MCS cohort members and their parents (along with members of the other four cohort studies UCL runs) were invited to take part in three online surveys during the Covid-19 pandemic, between May 2020 and March 2021. These online surveys covered experiences of the pandemic, including whether they had had Covid-19, other aspects of their health, family life and, particularly in the case of MCS cohort members, their experiences of studying and university during this life-changing period. In March 2021, study participants who had taken part in any of these three COVID-19 surveys were asked to provide a blood sample to be analysed for COVID-19 antibodies<sup>4</sup>.

---

<sup>3</sup>Although 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.

<sup>4</sup> Data from all three waves can be accessed from the UK Data Service at <https://beta.ukdataservice.ac.uk/datacatalogue/studies/study?id=8658>

## 1.5 The eighth sweep

The **eighth sweep took place from 10th October 2023 to 23rd February 2025.**

The eighth sweep of MCS was scheduled to take place when the majority of cohort members were aged 23. Age 23 was an important age to capture for several reasons.

This age is an important milestone as the cohort are now young adults. This period of life is characterised by important transitions in employment, education, partnerships, fertility and residence. The COVID-19 pandemic had struck at a time when the cohort were navigating critical transitions in education and the labour market. The pandemic and other world-changing events had presented unique challenges for their generation. It was also the first time cohort members were visited as adults.

Development of the survey began in summer 2021, as the UK was emerging from the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic had severely limited face-to-face interviewing on social research studies, and it was unknown whether there would be further outbreaks necessitating restrictions on face-to-face interactions. With this in mind, the eighth sweep of the study was designed from the outset as a dual-mode survey, with the option for face-to-face (CAPI<sup>5</sup>) or online (CAWI<sup>6</sup>) administration.

As the UK entered the post-pandemic phase, it became clear that face-to-face survey administration would be possible at the eighth sweep. However, CLS decided to precede the launch of the main stage of survey fieldwork for MCS8 with a soft launch, involving a mode experiment to assess whether a web-first mixed-mode approach could achieve a higher response rate than the originally planned CAPI-only approach (see Chapter 3: Development, Pilot and Soft Launch).

The survey burden was lower for cohort members for the age 23 survey, comprising fewer elements overall and taking less time in the household than had been the case for previous sweeps. It was also the first time that cohort members were offered a substantial incentive for taking part (£30 e-voucher for completion of the core interview).

The survey could be completed CAPI or CAWI. The core interview took on average 47 minutes to complete online and 60 minutes to complete face-to-face. The core interview included two cognitive assessments and a request to link survey answers to certain administrative records (if consent had not been previously obtained). If a cohort member had a resident partner, the interview included some questions about the partner. In addition, with the cohort member's

---

<sup>5</sup> Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing.

<sup>6</sup> Computer Assisted Web Interviewing.

permission, resident partners were invited to complete a separate partner web survey, for which they received a £10 e-voucher.

**Sensitive questions** – Towards the end of the core interview, there was section of questions which covered the most sensitive topics, including questions about children and being a parent (if applicable) and two cognitive assessments; if the interview was conducted face-to-face, cohort members were invited to complete this section on the interviewer’s tablet to provide additional privacy.

**Physical measurements** – Physical measurements were collected at the soft launch stage for the eighth sweep but dropped for the main stage. In the soft launch, those cohort members who were selected to complete the survey face-to-face only had their height, weight and body fat<sup>7</sup> measurements taken by the interviewer whereas those who were selected to do the survey as mixed-mode (CAWI first), were invited to provide a self-reported measure of their height and weight. For the main stage, cohort members self-reported their height and weight in the self-completion section.

At the end of the main stage fieldwork, cohort members (including those from the soft launch) who had not taken the survey were assessed for eligibility to do a short, 20 minute follow-up online questionnaire containing some key questions (this is often referred to as the ‘mop-up survey’). This was designed to boost response for the most important questions, to maintain engagement with more reluctant participants and to allow the continued involvement of cohort members who had moved outside the UK. Cohort members were eligible if they had given a ‘soft’ refusal (i.e. had not permanently withdrawn from the study) or if the interviewer had not managed to speak to them directly during the fieldwork period.

This report contains details of the design and conduct of the eighth sweep of the Millennium Cohort Study (MCS8).

---

<sup>7</sup> The body fat measurement also included a measurement of water percentage.

## 2 Sample

### 2.1 The original sample (from the first sweep)

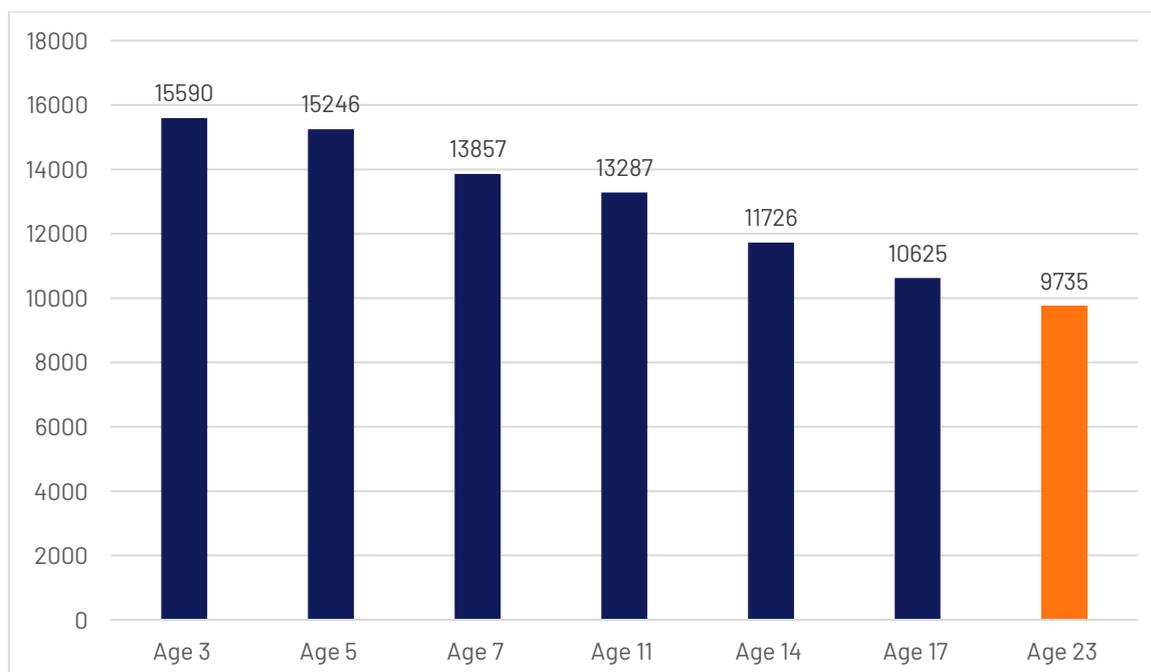
The original sample was drawn in two stages: the first stage was the selection of electoral wards and the second stage was the selection of all eligible families within those wards. All the electoral wards in the UK were allocated into one of three types described at the time as:

- **“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. It is important to note that the sample from the ‘ethnic’ wards was not exclusively from an ethnic minority background.
- **“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 were 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’.

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 were not 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 sweeps at ages 3, 5, 7, 11, 14, and 17 are shown in Figure 2.1 (with the achieved sample size for the age 17 survey shown in orange for comparison purposes). Retention rates in the study are generally good. There was a larger drop-off at the second sweep 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 fell steadily to around 10,625 at MCS7 (age 17).

**Figure 2.1: Productive sample size, by sweep**

At MCS8 a total of 9,735 cohort members took part. Of these, 86% of cohort members or their family had taken part at the previous sweep. Over the course of the study, approximately 6,000 cohort members have dropped out or become ineligible and not re-joined. The achieved sample size for sweep 8 is discussed more fully in Chapter 10: Survey response.

## 2.2 The issued sample (at MCS8)

The issued sample for MCS8 included all cohort members: except those that were ineligible (where a cohort member had died or they 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 MCS8 was 13,713 cohort members.

## 2.3 Allocation of the issued sample at MCS8

Recent sweeps of MCS have typically used two pilot stages – an initial pilot phase and a second dress rehearsal phase. The initial pilot phase was used to test the data collection instruments, fieldwork materials, consent procedures and interviewer training. The dress rehearsal phase was designed to test the entire survey process by replicating what would happen in the main stage as much as possible including contacting procedures, sample management, use of feed-forward data, tracing and data provision.

For MCS8, in line with recent sweeps of other CLS cohorts the approach for MCS8 was to conduct a single pilot study, not involving cohort members, followed by a soft launch of the main fieldwork.

The soft launch that was part of the main data collection stage also allowed for testing and fine-tuning of data collection methods to maximise their effectiveness, as well as providing an opportunity to test response rate assumptions by randomly selecting the soft launch sample so it was representative of the full cohort. Additionally, at MCS8 it was used to conduct an experiment to assess the impact of two different approaches to data collection (web-first mixed-mode vs face-to-face only).

For the main stage, in line with other cohort studies, it was decided to issue as early as possible as many cases assessed likely to be harder-to-contact and likely refusers, while still issuing the sample in a geographically efficient manner. Work on previous sweeps of MCS8 had shown using prior wave outcomes to identify “priority” cases was more effective than complex approaches based on response propensity models.

The allocation of the sample for MCS8 was as follows:

- A soft launch sample of 3,000 cohort members was randomly selected. Prior to selection the sample was stratified by participation history (last took part in MCS7 or earlier), nation/region, sex at birth and postcode.
- An additional 73 cases were issued to the soft launch. These cases were siblings (usually twins or triplets, but occasionally siblings born within 12 months – all of whom were part of the study) of cohort members selected for the soft launch. It was decided it would make fieldwork more efficient to issue these cases with the soft launch cases as it would be likely to improve contact and tracing outcomes.
- The remaining 10,640 cases were split into two further waves (“Wave 1” and “Wave 2”). To maximise response and take advantage of as much fieldwork capacity as possible, the waves were allocated approximately 60:40.

The Ipsos sampling department allocated sample between waves, mindful of the need to maximise the number of priority cases in Wave 1. CLS defined priority cases as those where any of the following applied:

- Those with a Status of “Gone-away from issued address” or “Unconfirmed address – good tracing evidence, but no definite confirmation”
- Those with a Status of “Confirmed eligibility, participation and address”, where the status had last been updated prior to 9 April 2019 and where the MCS7 outcome was “Not issued at MCS7”, or “No further contact (some contact made, no appt made and minimum contact made)” or “No contact with anyone at address (after required visits made)” or where the cohort member had completed none of the four web surveys carried out since the previous sweep

- Cohort members for whom no email address or mobile telephone number was available.

## 2.4 The sample files

CLS was responsible for providing sample information for study families to Ipsos 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 was in two files. One sample file contained identifying information about cohort members and their families:

- Serial numbers
- Cohort member details
  - Title
  - Full name
  - Last known address
  - Contact details
  - Address at previous sweep
  - Data linkage consents given at previous sweep
  - Social media (Twitter, Facebook and Instagram) handles
  - Name known as
  - Whether data linkage consents were required at this sweep
  - Status of case and date current status set
  - Date cohort member last confirmed at address
  - Useful and delicate memos for interviewers
- Stable contact details
  - Title
  - First name
  - Surname

- Relationship to cohort member
- Telephone number
- Survey parent contact details
  - Person number (within cohort member family)
  - Title
  - First name
  - Surname
  - Relationship to cohort member
  - Contact details
- Alternative parent contact details
  - Person number (within cohort member family)
  - Title
  - First name
  - Surname
  - Contact details

The address status was determined by CLS and related to whether or not the cohort member 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 3% of the issued cases, CLS would know that the cohort member was no longer resident at the address provided for them but had been unable to find a new address.

The other sample file contained data about the cohort member and their family collected or recorded at previous sweeps:

- Serial numbers
- Date of birth
- Date of last interview
- Whether the cohort member lived with parents previously

- Age at last interview
- Sex
- Whether reported any qualifications (GCSEs, iGCSEs, National 4s and National 5s) at previous sweep
- Whether started periods at previous sweep or before
- Date of last interview with cohort member
- Reported gender
- Whether cohort member may be blind or deaf
- Last main sweep cohort member participated in
- Last main sweep family participated in
- Number of COVID web surveys participated in
- Whether participated in COVID web survey
- Whether participated in engagement web survey
- Family outcome at previous sweep
- Month and year last participated in a web survey
- Reason for refusal at previous sweep (if applicable)
- List of household members who had lived with cohort member from the fourth sweep onwards
  - Status at last interview
  - Name
  - Date of birth
  - Person number
  - Sweep last enumerated at
  - Sex
  - Relationship to cohort member

- Whether or not they were the survey parent
- List of qualifications cohort member had at previous sweep:
  - Qualification number
  - Qualification (only GCSEs, iGCSEs, National 4s and National 5s were provided)
  - Subject
  - Subject code
  - Grade

## 2.5 Sample updates

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

The weekly sample updates typically included new information from tracing or from participants who were responding to 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 because 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.

## 3 Development, Pilot and Soft Launch

MCS8 marked a transition in the study where cohort members engaged in the research fully independently from their parents for the first time. It was therefore important to ensure that the messaging used to engage cohort members was appropriate and that efforts were made to maximise response rates. To this end, a programme of development work was carried out before the soft launch, as discussed below.

### 3.1 Pre-testing qualitative research

Two stages of qualitative research were carried out with cohort members prior to the age 23 survey to support the development of engagement protocols, including survey design.

The key aims of the research were to speak to cohort members to support the design of engagement approaches to help maximise participation in the age 23 survey. Specific objectives were:

- To understand experiences of being a CNC member.
- To identify drivers to study engagement that can be leveraged in any engagement materials or approaches.
- To identify barriers to study engagement that should be addressed in any engagement materials or approaches.
- To explore views on ways to take part in the study including face-to-face and online modes, survey length and interview location.
- To explore preferences for the study's contact channels.
- To gather views towards co-habiting partner involvement.

Stage 1 took place between April and May 2022 and comprised:

- **A mobile diary** with five cohort members to understand the daily lives of cohort members, how they felt about being a CNC member, and typical use of communication channels. To complete the 7-day diary, participants used the proprietary Ipsos app 'AppLife' downloaded to their mobile phones. They were set tasks or questions and asked to upload their responses as text, video or image. Each participant had an introductory call with an Ipsos researcher to introduce them to the research and the app. Findings from the diary were used to inform development of a discussion guide for an online workshop with members and a topic guide for use in individual depth interviews.

- **An online workshop** bringing together 23 cohort members (including the five members who had taken part in the mobile diary) to discuss views on reasons and motivations for taking part in sweeps and surveys, ways to take part, preferences for study contact and views on potential 21st anniversary gifts. The workshop was carried out via Zoom and lasted 90 minutes. Break-out groups of 5-6 cohort members, each led by an Ipsos researcher, were used to enable participants to discuss and share their views.
- **Individual depth interviews** to gather views from two groups of cohort members: those with a co-habiting partner (to explore views regarding the inclusion of co-habiting partner data collection at sweep 8) and cohort members who did not participate at the last sweep (to understand reasons for this and engagement going forwards). Twelve depth interviews were carried out via telephone or Zoom depending on participant preferences. Each lasted 45 minutes.

Stage 2 of the research took place in July 2022 and involved **follow-up individual depth interviews** with eight cohort members who had taken part in stage 1 of the research. Each depth interview lasted 45 minutes and took place via telephone (participants were given the choice of taking part via telephone or Zoom). The aim was to support further development of engagement approaches building on the findings from stage 1. The interviews involved reviewing specific sections of the advance leaflet; views on asking questions about working status and financial situation of cohabiting partners (if relevant); views on interview location and survey length; views on the best means of making contact to organise the interview; and reactions to the idea of a study e-newsletter.

As a gesture of appreciation for participating in the research, cohort members were offered a financial incentive as a cash transfer or e-voucher. This comprised £100 for those taking part in the mobile diary and online workshop, £40 for those taking part in the online workshop and £30 for those taking part in an individual depth interview.

A summary of the key findings is provided below:

- **Being a CNC member.** Views on being a member of CNC varied among participants. Some referred to a personal interest in the opportunity to reflect on changes in their own life and for their generation. Others mentioned being part of a useful study that is beneficial to society. Some participants mentioned a feeling of nostalgia and pride in being a member. For other participants, there was a sense of ambivalence - it was simply something they had always done. Barriers to participation amongst those who had not taken part in the most recent sweep were diverse and included personal circumstances (e.g. health), not having time to participate and a general sense of apathy.
- **Engagement with the study.** Stage 1 participants felt their engagement in the study was encouraged by receiving examples of ways in which the study helped researchers, the

government and others develop services and policies that improve people's lives. They also felt that the survey provided an opportunity to reflect on views and experiences for their unique generation. Study topics that were of personal interest to participants included mental health and wellbeing, physical health, finances, savings and debt, life transitions, the impact of the pandemic, relationships, technology, and current affairs.

- In terms of **'thank you' gifts/items** and how these might motivate participation in the next sweep, participants' views were mixed. Some thought a voucher would be a key motivator while others felt it was a 'nice to have'. Receiving a non-monetary gift was also met with mixed views depending on the personal appeal of keeping CNC 'memorabilia'.
- **Engagement with the advance leaflet.** In stage 2, there was positive reaction towards sections of the draft advance leaflet which: detailed examples for how CNC had benefitted society; provided an overview of the topics that would be covered in the survey; explained why it was important to take part now (referencing the move to adulthood and wider contextual factors such as the pandemic); and provided reassurances that all individual's stories mattered.
- **Collecting cohabiting partner data.** Participants with a co-habiting partner were generally open to their partner taking part in the next sweep but noted that ultimately it would depend on whether their partner was happy to do so. Overall, there was discomfort in the idea of talking about partners' circumstances without their consent, with a preference for any questions to be asked directly to partners. Questions related to partner shared finances and debt were considered particularly sensitive.
- **Ways to take part.** When asked for views regarding study mode, participants were often keen to maintain face-to-face involvement in CNC, citing benefits of the member experience and good data quality. However, where lack of time was anticipated to be a major barrier to participation, an online mode was identified as a preference. Prompted to consider taking part in a 60–75-minute online survey, participants felt this length could be disengaging and suggested 60 minutes as a more appealing length. There were suggestions for ensuring the survey design was engaging using different types of question formats, images, and cognitive function tasks to break up the content.
- When prompted to consider taking part in a 90-minute face-to-face interview, participants noted that a shorter interview would be more appealing and would be easier to fit around education or employment commitments. It was also noted that flexibility over appointment times and advance notice would help participation. Views on the location for a face-to-face interview were mixed depending on individual living situations.
- **Study contact.** Preferences were driven by three factors: personal use of the channel, trust in the channel and environmental concerns (e.g., for paper communications). While

participants felt that the CNC website and social media were good ways for the CNC study team to share study findings and examples of the impacts of CNC data, not all were aware of these or felt that they would personally visit or follow these. There were also mixed views towards the idea of a study e-newsletter.

- There were positive views towards the idea of the advance leaflet being shared in a video format, but that this would need to be short and engaging. There were concerns that a video-only approach could limit the ability to refer back to information or be mistaken for a scam if shared as an attachment to an email.
- There were mixed views towards the idea of receiving advance warning of a telephone call to organise a CNC interview. Advance warning via email or text was appealing to those who noted they were unlikely to answer a call from an unknown number (e.g., an interviewer number).

Overall, the research identified two broad themes that would be important in influencing engagement in CNC:

- **Rationale for participating.** It was important to clarify rationale for taking part by providing examples of the impact of CNC, details of the study topics for exploration and any thank you for taking part.
- **Participation experience.** It was important to consider the study communication channels that would resonate most positively with participants. Providing flexibility over participation times and locations would support participants in taking part in the survey. Sensitivity around study elements such as collection of co-habiting partner data would help build continued engagement with the study.

A detailed report on the findings from the qualitative research can be found on the study website (<https://cls.ucl.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/MCS8-Qualitative-Report.pdf>).

### 3.2 The autumn 2021 web survey

The primary aims of the autumn 2021 web survey were to explore cohort members' views of CNC and to better understand how to maintain their interest and engagement with the study at this point of transition into their lives as independent adults, with fewer parental influences. It also marked a time when their lives would consist of many more competing demands: work/study, social life, relationships, housing and finances, all combined with the impacts of the pandemic.

The main areas covered by the web survey, which took under 15 minutes to complete, were:

- Contact details of cohort member (name, telephone number(s), email address, postal address).

- Cohort members' understanding of the nature and impact of the study.
- Awareness of the study/accessing information about the study.
- Importance of CNC to members and what they value about the study.
- Future engagement and which topics are of greatest importance to them.
- Acceptability of shorter, between-sweep surveys.
- Attitudes to risk taking (measured using a game).
- Stable contact details (parent and one non-parent: name, address, telephone number(s) and email address).

All cohort members who completed the survey were issued with a £10 Love2Shop e-voucher.

The findings from this were used to help refine the survey contents and materials.

### 3.3 Pilot

Ipsos designed a small-scale pilot to test whether the survey instruments and Electronic Contact Sheet were fit for purpose before the soft launch; provide indicative timings; and review the interviewer training protocols. The specific objectives of the pilot were to:

- Provide indicative information on interview length and highlight any major routing errors in the programmed survey.
- Evaluate the training and protocols given to interviewers.

It should be noted that the pilot sample was not designed to be representative of UK adults, unlike the MCS cohort, and thus conclusions arising from the pilot are made with caution.

The following study elements were tested:

- Core interview (CAPI/CASI<sup>8</sup> or CAWI) – the Household relationships module formed the first part of the main interview and the CASI section included two cognitive assessments.
- Physical measurements (CAPI only)
- Partner web survey placement

---

<sup>8</sup> Computer Assisted Self-Interviewing.

- Final element (CAPI only)
- Partner web survey

Participants were recruited via an email circular issued to Ipsos staff. Volunteers of the appropriate age (20 to 25) who were friends or relatives of Ipsos staff, or Ipsos staff who did not work in the Ipsos Thomas More Square office, were asked to complete the pilot online. Volunteers who were Ipsos staff who worked in the Ipsos Thomas More Square office were asked to complete the pilot face-to-face. As a thank you for participating in the pilot survey, respondents were given a £50 Love2Shp voucher. Resident partners were offered a £20 Love2Shop voucher for completing the partner web survey.

A face-to-face briefing of six Ipsos interviewers took place on 12th July 2023 at the Ipsos office at Thomas More Square in London. The pilot took place between 11th and 30th July 2023. In total, 46 interviews were achieved, as follows:

- 22 CAPI administered surveys, conducted at Thomas More Square office
- 24 CAWI interviews

In addition, one partner web survey was completed.

At the end of the CAPI interview and the CAWI survey, pilot participants were asked a small number of questions about their experience of the survey to provide additional insight. CAWI participants were also asked questions regarding whether there was anyone else in the room when they answered the survey and whether they encountered any technical issues. The interviewing team were asked to complete a feedback form and attend a Teams debrief on 31st July 2023.

### 3.3.1 Limitations of the pilot

The pilot study yielded valuable insights, particularly concerning procedural aspects and the overall questionnaire content. However, limitations were noted due to the sample size and recruitment methods. These limitations include the following:

- The pilot did not assess the sample management procedures and systems necessary for collecting data on interviewer contact and tracing attempts.
- It was unable to evaluate the sample's content quality and feedforward information.
- The response rates could not be accurately assessed, as the participants involved were likely more engaged than the broader cohort.
- Accurate measurements of interview timings were not possible, due to the sample demographic and absence of feedforward information.

### 3.3.2 Key findings and post-pilot changes

The feedback from the pilot was generally positive, although interview lengths were longer than anticipated:

- The interviewer briefing was felt to be appropriate and engaging and the pre- and post-tasks were deemed a helpful addition to consolidate learning.
- There was a large gap between the CAWI and CAPI interview lengths. It is known that survey completion is faster on CAWI (particularly when using a laptop) than CAPI and the presence of an interviewer introduces more interaction time for the CAPI mode. Interviewer presence can also lead to a social desirability effect when completing CASI sections, as participants are more likely to want to show they are considering their answers carefully and therefore take more time over this element. Any such effect may have been exacerbated because Ipsos staff may have been more anxious to be helpful than cohort members would be.
- Longer than anticipated interview lengths were recorded in CAPI and there were concerns that even this average could underestimate the final interview length for the soft launch due to: the controlled setting in which the face-to-face interviews took place; the nature of the respondents (self-selecting and generally highly educated); and the design of the feedforward sample (designed to test the routing of the script rather than to replicate a real life situation). In addition, none of the pilot participants had children so questions about child development and parenting were not covered<sup>9</sup>.

Overall, the instruments and protocols worked well enough to be retained for the soft launch survey although several changes were implemented. A separate report was provided to CLS containing findings from the pilot and recommended changes for the soft launch survey. The most significant changes are summarised below:

- Clarifications were added to some briefing slides, as requested by interviewers, and the timings of the briefing sections were adjusted to allow more time for physical measurements training and assessment.
- Minor changes were made to the participant and survey materials.
- References to the average interview length in respondent facing materials were adjusted from 75 to 90 minutes.

---

<sup>9</sup> In practice this would only have had a small impact on average interview length, as we know that only a minority of cohort member will have children.

- Reminder strategies were finalised for the CAWI and partner web survey.
- Feedback was collected from participants and interviewers regarding specific questions in the survey and more detail was provided to CLS in the pilot debrief report. Following the pilot, the key changes to the questionnaire included:
  - Explanatory and introductory text in various modules was reviewed from a repetition perspective but was generally deemed to be necessary to secure informed consent.
  - Help screens added to explain the phrases ‘legal separation’ and ‘sandwich course’.
  - Household relationships: adjustment of sense check regarding relationships at DETCORRECTRELCHK4.
  - Education: Changes to how information about double awards was collected and instructions around double and triple awards made more prominent and consistent. Updates to some subject lists. Clarifications added to questions where qualifications supplied in MCS7 were referenced.
  - Cognitive assessments: text to acknowledge the end of both activities.
  - Child: changes to how children are listed at the start of the pregnancy loop to make the question clearer.
  - Outro: reminders added for interviewer to conduct the Physical measurement and Partner placement modules (if necessary). Questions concerning why these modules were not completed were moved to the Final Element module.
  - Physical measurements: expansion of the list of electronic implanted devices to be screened for before weight measurement. Clarification around entering gender in the scales for weight /body fat measurement.
  - Partner placement: decision taken not to collect mobile telephone numbers.

### 3.4 Soft launch

Like the seven previous sweeps of MCS, it was envisaged the eighth sweep of the study would primarily use face-to-face interviewing. However, in recent years longitudinal studies have made increasing use of mixed-mode data collection, especially approaches involving the web. CLS had conducted four web surveys with the MCS cohort – three during the COVID-19 pandemic and one in the autumn of 2021 focused on engagement with the study.

CLS wanted to know if the eighth sweep was the right time to switch to a web-first mixed-mode approach. Qualitative research with cohort members showed that some expressed a strong

preference for the convenience and flexibility of web completion whilst others suggested that interaction with interviewers has been an important aspect of their participation in the study which they would not wish to lose.

Maximising engagement in this sweep was vital to ensure the long-term success of the study, because this survey was a crucial transition where cohort members were taking part as adults for the first time and where there would be no parental encouragement we could draw on. Transition points in longitudinal surveys can carry high risks – for example on Understanding Society the response rate to the former British Household Panel Survey sample dropped significantly when incorporated into the new study. There was a danger that cohort members might perceive MCS as a something from their childhood years and part of their past rather than one of their present activities.

It was recognised that the cohort members were highly mobile and likely to be living busy lives. Tracing would be a challenge. CLS were also concerned that that face-to-face data collection could be less effective than before the COVID-19 pandemic.

To inform the key decision about the optimal data collection mode for the eighth sweep it was decided to conduct an experiment in the first phase of the age 23 survey fieldwork (the “soft launch”). From an overall sample of 13,713, Ipsos selected a stratified random sub-sample of 3,000 cases for the soft launch. Stratification was based on prior participation, sex and region. Those selected for the soft launch were randomly allocated to two equally sized groups – again using stratification based on the same variables. The first group were first invited to take part via web with non-respondents followed up face-to-face (“sequential mixed-mode”), with the second group being allocated to face-to-face data collection only.

The data collection mode used for each of the experimental arms had implications for both the interview length and how physical measurements data could be collected. The two experimental arms are summarised as follows:

- Face-to-face data collection only: face-to-face interview of 75 minutes (with physical measurements), n=1,500 issued
- Sequential mixed-mode: web-first then face-to-face (with the same content as the face-to-face but with no physical measurements so in effect 65 minutes when conducted in household), n= 1,500 issued

In addition, the objectives of the soft launch were to:

- Estimate the time taken to administer the data collection instruments and the overall time on the tasks;

- Evaluate the design, content and implementation of the data collection instruments, including data linkage and a fieldwork management system called the Electronic Contact Sheet (ECS);
- 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 23-year olds as far as possible.

#### 3.4.1 Briefings

A total of 139 interviewers were briefed at the following locations:

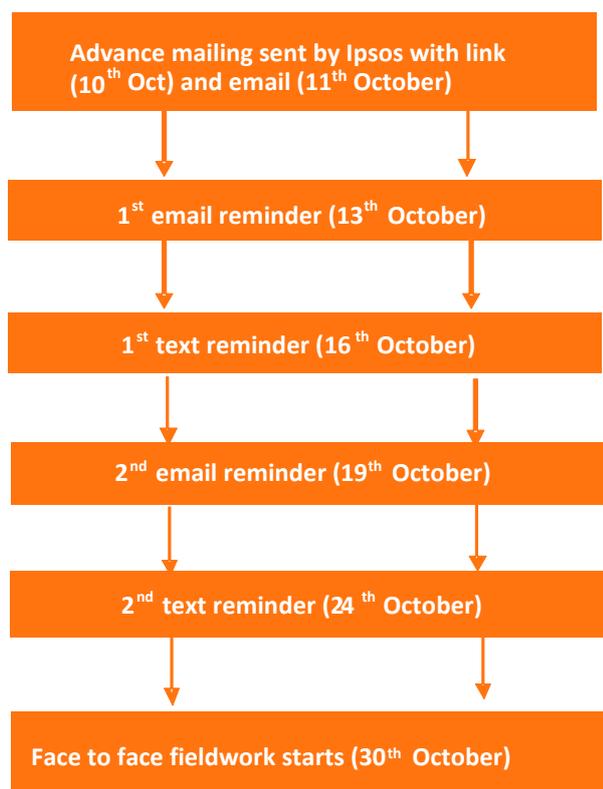
- London
- Cardiff
- Belfast
- Leicester
- Birmingham
- Edinburgh
- Cambridge
- Manchester
- Newcastle
- Leeds
- Harrow

As for the pilot, prior to attending the briefing interviewers were required to complete some pre-tasks as well as additional homework after the briefing, including a practice interview. Interviewers were accredited to take physical measurements during the briefing and provided feedback after the briefing.

#### 3.4.2 Contact strategy and reminders – web-first cases

Web-first cases were invited by post and email sent centrally by Ipsos to complete the age 23 survey online. The advance mailing included an invitation letter, a survey overview booklet and (if applicable) a data linkage booklet. Following the initial advance mailing, four reminders were sent

over a three-week period before the case was issued to the CAPI interviewing team, as illustrated in the chart below.



### 3.4.3 Contact strategy and reminders – face-to-face

The face-to-face soft launch fieldwork then took place between 30th October 2023 and 1st April 2024. This included **all the cases in the face-to-face only arm and the cases that had not taken part in the web survey in the mixed-mode arm.**

Before contacting the **face-to-face only** arm cases, interviewers were required to send an advance mailing consisting of an invitation letter and a survey overview booklet. Data linkage booklets were provided at the appointment making stage, along with an appointment card.

Cases which had not responded to the web invites on the **mixed-mode** arm were issued to interviewers on 25th October 2023. Interviewers were not required to send an advance mailing to these cases, as they would have already received the mailing sent centrally. Instead, interviewers were provided with spare copies of the letter and booklets for when they visited face-to-face in case the cohort member requested another copy.

For all face-to-face cases, irrespective of which arm of the experiment the case was in, interviewers were required to make at least six face-to-face visits over the fieldwork period to achieve contact (at least four during evenings or weekends). All visits were required to be on separate days, with a period of at least two weeks between the first and last visit. If face-to-face contact was not made after six calls and a period of two weeks, interviewers were required to

contact the cohort member by phone (if provided with a number). Each phone number was to be tried at least five times on different days of the week, at different times (morning, afternoon and evening).

#### 3.4.4 Differences between web and face-to-face protocols

There were a number of differences between the web and face-to-face protocols:

- For web-first cases, cohort members self-reported their height and weight (for the face-to-face cases interviewers took physical measurements during the home visit).
- Interviewers were not able to offer cohort members the option to complete the survey online if they had been allocated to CAPI-only. This was as not to jeopardise the findings from the experiment.
- Interviewers were paid if the cohort member completed the survey online after it had been allocated to them.
- As detailed above, those who had not taken part in the web survey in the mixed-mode arm were not sent another advance mailing by the interviewer.

#### 3.4.5 Key findings - mode

The main indicator of success was the overall response rates. Figure 3.1 shows that the mixed-mode response rate exceeded the face-to-face only response rate by 13.3 percentage points.

**Figure 3.1: Overall response rates**

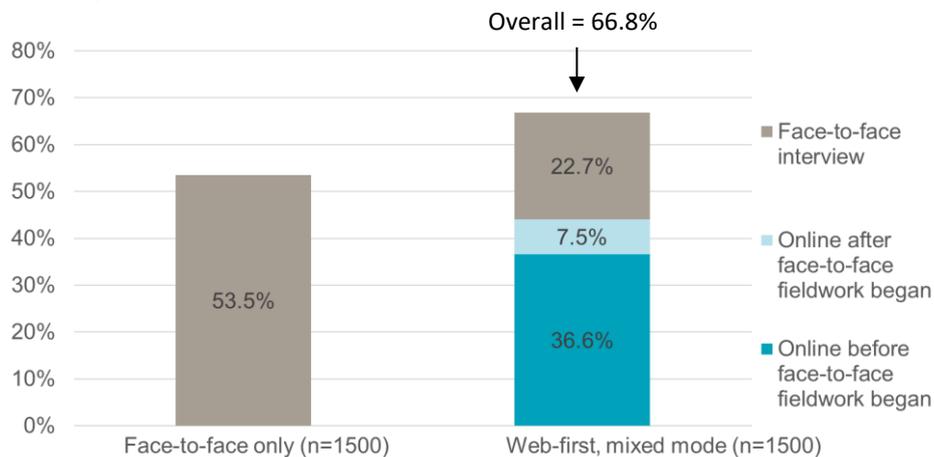


Table 1, which compares interview outcomes across the two experimental groups, reveals that refusal and non-contact rates were notably lower for the mixed-mode arm, indicating that the mixed-mode approach positively impacted both contact and co-operation rates.

**Table 1: Comparison of interview outcomes**

	<b>Face-to-face only (n=1500)</b>	<b>Mixed-mode (n=1500)</b>
<b>Productive (full and partial interviews)</b>	53.5	66.8
<b>Non-contact</b>	5.5	3.3
<b>Refusal</b>	32.4	22.2
<b>Ineligible</b>	2.5	1.7
<b>Movers / untraced</b>	6.0	6.1

More detail on the findings of the experiment will be published elsewhere by CLS. The markedly higher response rate amongst the mixed-mode arm (66.8%) compared to the face-to-face only response rate (53.5%) led to the decision to use the mixed-mode approach for the remaining waves of the age 23 survey.

#### 3.4.6 Key findings - other

The soft launch included the same core elements as at the first pilot. Overall, the instruments and protocols worked well but a number of changes were implemented for the main stage. The most significant changes are summarised below:

- Due to the change to a mixed-mode web-first approach, physical measurements were not taken for the main stage of the study (these measurements were self-reported to be comparable with those who had completed the online survey).
- The household visit time for face-to-face cases was 75 minutes. The online survey remained at 45 minutes. The change of household visit time was reflected in the revised advance materials for cohort members.
- Given the change to a web-first approach, all advance mailings were sent directly from the Ipsos office, meaning interviewers did not need to send their own.
- Two new materials were developed to be used as part of the making contact and tracing process. One of these was a letter that gave interviewers a way of passing on their contact details, as well as reminding cohort members of their web login details. The other material produced was a postcard for parents to encourage them to pass on their child's contact details, as it was found during the soft launch that parents were often preventing contact when interviewers were trying to locate cohort members.

- At the soft launch there was missing data for around 10% of the TMB cognitive assessments. As a result, more guidance was given to interviewers on ensuring that the TMB software was installed correctly before starting work.
- Physical measurements have been carried out with the cohort members since the age of 3. At the development stage, cohort members who took part in CAWI mode were asked to self-report their height and weight<sup>10</sup>. In CAPI mode, all cohort members who provided verbal consent and who could stand unaided had their height, weight and body fat percentage<sup>11</sup> measured by the interviewer. As a result of moving to a web-first approach, a decision was made to drop the physical measurements conducted by interviewers and ask the cohort member to self-report instead. The main rationale for this was inconsistency in data if have some people self-report and some get measured by an interviewer.

In addition to the above, minor changes were made to the questionnaire, electronic contact sheet and survey materials.

---

<sup>10</sup> These questions appeared after the block of questions about children/ parenting and before data linkage.

<sup>11</sup> As part of the body fat measurement, a measure of water percentage was also obtained.

## 4 Questionnaire

The eighth sweep of MCS consisted of the following:

- **Main questionnaire** (this included consent to data linkage and two cognitive assessments). It could be completed:
  - In person by an interviewer (CAPI) with some sections completed as self-completion (CASI). The face-to-face interview took around 60 minutes in total to complete.
  - Online (CAWI). The online interview took around 45 minutes to complete.
- **Physical measurements** – these were only carried out by interviewers for the face-to-face only arm of the experiment at the soft launch. For the main stage and for the mixed-mode arm of the soft launch, all cohort members were asked to self-report their height and weight in either the CASI or CAWI.
- **Partner placement** – the Partner placement module was administered in all cases where there was a resident partner. In this module, the cohort member was asked for permission to approach their resident partner, and if they agreed, they were then asked for contact details. In CAPI there was some flexibility in the placement (although, the Household relationships module (the first module in the CAPI interview) had to be completed first as this determined whether there was an eligible partner in the household).
- **Partner questionnaire** – this was completed online after the main household visit or after completion of the online survey. The partner questionnaire took around 15 minutes to complete.

### 4.1 Main questionnaire

Cohort members were able to complete the interview face-to-face or online. The questionnaire was prepared and shared by CLS. Ipsos provided input into the questionnaire, and the final version of the questionnaire was signed off by CLS before scripting commenced.

Variations between the CAPI and online scripts were relatively modest focussing on adapting the questions to be mode appropriate. Details on protocol differences between the two modes can be found later in this chapter.

Don't know or 'prefer not to say' options were available for most questions. In the online and the self-administered (CASI) section of the CAPI scripts, these options were not visible at first to discourage their use. If a cohort member decided they did not want to answer a question, they could click 'Next' without selecting an answer and then the 'Don't know' and 'prefer not to say' options would appear. In the CAPI script, 'Don't know' and 'prefer not to say' were labelled as 'DO NO

READ OUT' except for some questions that were more explicit and where interviewers were able to read them out loud.

## 4.2 The Core interview

The interview started with the Household relationships module. As well as giving a picture of who lived with cohort member, this established eligibility for other survey elements. In most cases the household interview checked information gathered at previous sweeps of the study for any changes, rather than collecting all the information from scratch (when enumerating other household members, their name and date of birth were checked<sup>12</sup>). The topics included in the household interview are depicted in Table 4.1. The table also indicates any differences between the face-to-face and online modes.

**Table 4.1: Topics included in the household interview**

Part	Content	Mode
<b>Part 1 – Cohort member details</b>	<p>Welcome/introduction to the survey; whether proxy interview.</p> <p>Date of birth check (to ensure speaking to the right person).</p> <p>Checks on name, current address; type of residence; "reserve address" details; mobile number check; home telephone number check; email address check.</p>	<p>CAPI/CAWI</p> <p>Whether proxy interview – CAPI only</p>
<b>Part 2 – Enumeration of household</b>	<p>Whether living with anyone named at last interview sweep.</p> <p>Whether currently living with anyone mentioned from the fourth sweep or later (age 7 to 14) but not at last interview sweep.</p> <p>Number of/names of new household members.</p>	CAPI/CAWI

<sup>12</sup> Information about the relationship between the cohort member and other household members was provided in earlier survey sweeps, however this was not checked at MCS8 in order to avoid the risk of revealing details about relationships which were not known to the cohort member (prior to the Age 17 Survey, such questions were answered by a parent).

<b>Part 3 – Details of household members</b>	<p>Follow-up questions on parent(s) no longer living with cohort member.</p> <p>Check on details already held for household members (name, date of birth); correction/collection of household member details (name, date of birth/age, gender, relationship to cohort member).</p> <p>Marital status of cohort members; whether lived continuously with child(ren) in household since birth/ date child moved in; ethnicity of partner/child(ren); whether partner is natural parent of child(ren) in household.</p>	CAPI/CAWI
<b>Part 4 – Details of children not living in the household</b>	<p>Whether any non-resident children/ number of children</p> <p>Details of non-resident children (name, date of birth/age, gender, relationship to cohort member, ethnicity).</p>	CAPI/CAWI

Following Household relationships, the rest of the core interview comprised questions on housing, health, activities and employment, education, income, sensitive topics, cognitive assessments, data linkage and contact information.

Topics of a more sensitive nature were covered in the central part of the core interview, as well as two cognitive assessments and questions about children and parenting (if applicable). The script was programmed with “honesty” and “sensitivity” text to encourage honest answers and to reassure cohort members that their answers remained confidential. When the interview was conducted face-to-face this central block was administered as self-completion (CASI) and at the end of the block. Responses were locked to prevent the interviewer seeing the answers the cohort member had given. Cohort members were permitted to request that the interviewer read out the self-completion section, but interviewers were instructed to only agree to this in exceptional circumstances. The main reasons recorded for cases where interviewers read out the CASI are as follows:

- Unable to read questions due to language/reading problems
- Unable to read questions due to visual impairment
- Not confident using technology

Table 4.2 provides an overview of the coverage of topics per module of the core interview. It also indicates which mode it was in and any differences between the face-to-face and online modes.

**Table 4.2: Coverage of topics per module of the core interview**

<b>Module</b>	<b>Topic coverage</b>	<b>Mode</b>
<b>Housing</b>	Current housing situation (renting/mortgage/payment of board and amounts paid), whether lived away from parents/when moved out, housing conditions, homelessness.	CAPI/CAWI
<b>Health</b>	General health, long standing conditions/impact, exercise, whether has Long Covid.	CAPI/CAWI
<b>Activity &amp; Employment</b>	Current activity: Details of job (start date, title, description, type of organisation, qualifications needed, hours worked/overtime); nature of contract; whether has 2nd job/hours worked; whether looking for job.	CAPI/CAWI
<b>Education</b>	Completed academic and vocational qualifications, academic and vocational qualifications currently being studied, uncompleted academic and vocational qualifications, educational debt.	CAPI/CAWI
<b>Income</b>	Individual and household income, including from employment, self-employment, benefits and other sources.	CAPI/CAWI
<b>Cognitive assessment (backward digit span) (see Section 4.4)</b>	Number recall activity	CASI/CAWI
<b>Identity &amp; attitudes</b>	Gender identity, sexual identity, whether speaks Welsh (if the interview is taking place in Wales), attitudinal questions on politics and the environment.	CASI/CAWI
<b>Mental health 1</b>	Depressive feelings, overall life satisfaction, wellbeing, seeking/receiving help/treatment for mental health issues, social isolation, eating disorders, resilience.	CASI/CAWI
<b>Health behaviours</b>	Activity and sleep behaviours, diet and body image, smoking, vaping, alcohol consumption, drug taking,	CASI/CAWI

	puberty, contraception, sexually transmitted infections, pregnancies and pregnancy outcomes.	
<b>Family &amp; relationships</b>	Experiences of living in care, nature of relationship with mother/father (if living), whether other maternal/paternal figures, caring responsibilities, relationships, domestic abuse.	CASI/CAWI
<b>Cognitive assessment (STROOP) (see Section 4.4)</b>	Colour naming activity.	CASI/CAWI
<b>Mental health 2</b>	Self-harm, support from family/friends, feelings over last two weeks, positive childhood conditions, body image.	CASI/CAWI
<b>Financial literacy</b>	Financial literacy	CASI/CAWI
<b>Activities &amp; Risky Behaviours</b>	Use of/attitudes towards social media, experience of violence, experience of sexual victimisation, gambling behaviour, interactions with police/judicial system, leisure activities.	CASI/CAWI
<b>Future Aspirations</b>	Aspirations by age 30, feelings about having children, help with living expenses.	CASI/CAWI
<b>Child (if had any natural children)</b>	For each resident child: birth/pregnancy experience, breastfeeding, parental activities with child, child development milestones, language/communication skills, parental bonding, parental attachment, parental reactivity. Parenting beliefs.  Non-resident child questions.  Child data linkage.	CASI/CAWI
<b>Physical measurements</b>	Self-reported height and weight.	CASI/CAWI  Small number interviewer administered (soft launch only)

<b>Data linkage (if consents required) (see Section 4.3)</b>	Consent to link to records held by government and other agencies; collection of email address (if needed) for purpose of confirming permissions.	CAPI/CAWI
<b>Contact information</b>	Collection of contact details for resident partner, contact details for survey parent, alternative parent and stable contact (if needed).	CAPI/CAWI
<b>Partner placement (if resident partner) (see Section 4.6)</b>	Placement of partner web survey.	CAPI/CASI
<b>Outro</b>	Incentive administration, thank you screen.	CAPI/CAWI

#### 4.2.2 Additional protocols for face-to-face interviews

Unlike the previous sweep, the majority of the CAPI interview was programmed in one block. There was only one “floating” CAPI module (Partner placement) which could be accessed from the ECS by interviewers after they had established that there was a resident partner.

Once the interviewer had completed all household elements, they were required to complete the Final Element module, where they recorded administration details about the household visit. Interviewers were asked to complete this element after they had left the household, and its completion meant that the case was productive.

Showcards were provided to assist cohort members when completing the interview face-to-face. 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 (in the Final Element module, completed outside the household after the visit had ended).

#### 4.2.3 Additional protocols for online interviews

Cohort members were provided with the survey website and their unique access code to log in to the online survey as part of the advance mailing. If they had not completed the survey after 3 weeks the interviewer was instructed to call them and offer them the opportunity to do the survey face-to-face. If they had forgotten their details but wanted to do the survey online, interviewers were able to provide them using the information contained in their ECS. Checks were incorporated into the script to ensure that the correct person was completing the survey. Chapter 5: Ethics describes in more detail how confidentiality was maintained in both the CAPI and CAWI surveys.

Unlike, the interviewer-administered mode which included showcards to show to cohort members, the online script included variations in question wording to assist online self-completion. Links to

survey materials, the survey website and pop-up boxes with more additional information on questions were also included throughout the script to assist cohort members when completing the online survey.

### 4.3 Data linkage

Data linkage questions were only asked of cohort members who had not previously consented to have information held about them by government departments and agencies added to their survey information as part of the age 17 survey. Permissions for linkage were sought for the following datasets:

<b>Education records</b>	<p>in England, the Department for Education</p> <p>in Wales, the Knowledge and Analytical Services within the Welsh Government</p> <p>in Scotland, the Education Analytical Services Division of the Scottish Government, the Scottish Funding Council and the Student Awards Agency Scotland</p> <p>in Northern Ireland, the Department of Education and the Department for the Economy</p> <p>in all countries, the Higher Education Statistics Agency, the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) and the Student Loans Company.</p>
<b>Health records</b>	<p>NHS England</p> <p>Digital Health and Care Wales</p> <p>Public Health Scotland and NHS National Services Scotland</p> <p>Health and Social Care (HSC) in Northern Ireland</p>
<b>Economic records</b>	<p>in England, Scotland and Wales the Department for Work and Pensions</p> <p>in Northern Ireland, the Department for Communities</p> <p>in all four UK countries His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC)</p>
<b>Police &amp; criminal justice records</b>	<p>in England and Wales, the Ministry of Justice</p> <p>in Scotland, Police Scotland, the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service</p> <p>in Northern Ireland, the Police Service and the Department of Justice.</p>

As part of the advance mailing, cohort members who were flagged as not having previously provided permission for some or all the data linkage requests were sent a booklet explaining the request in detail (“Adding other information from your administrative records”). The process of requesting consent was administered in the CAPI script and consisted of the following steps:

- Cohort members were reminded to read the data linkage booklet if they had not already done so, and this was followed by a short video outlining the process.
- A summary of the necessary information to give (or refuse) informed consent was presented (on screen in the web interview or read out by the interviewer in CAPI interviews). FAQs were also provided in the script (these were used as needed by the interviewer in CAPI interviews).
- The cohort member was asked for their consent to link each type of administrative data (as required) to their survey answers.
- A summary of whether the cohort member had or had not consented to link to each administrative data source was presented (on screen in the web interview or read out by the interviewer in the CAPI interviews). If the cohort member wished to change their answer, they could do so.

Finally, the cohort member was asked to confirm that they:

- had read and understood the information provided;
- had had the opportunity to ask questions;
- understood what personal information would be used for matching purposes;
- understood that information would be treated in accordance with Data Protection Act (2018) and GDPR;
- understood that the CNC team would add information from administrative records on an ongoing basis unless permission was withdrawn;
- understood that permissions remained valid if the names of the organisations were to change; and
- understood how they could withdraw their consent.

If the cohort member had a child/children, they were also asked for their permission to link their survey answers to information held in their child’s health and education records, as follows:

<b>Education records</b>	in England, the Department for Education
--------------------------	------------------------------------------

	<p>in Wales, the Knowledge and Analytical Services within the Welsh Government</p> <p>in Scotland, the Education Analytical Services Division of the Scottish Government</p> <p>in Northern Ireland, the Department of Education of the Northern Irish Assembly</p> <p>in all countries, the Higher Education Statistics Agency, the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) and the Student Loans Company.</p>
<b>Medical and health records</b>	<p>NHS England</p> <p>Digital Health and Care Wales</p> <p>Public Health Scotland and NHS National Services Scotland</p> <p>Health and Social Care (HSC) in Northern Ireland</p>

The questions asking permission to link information from the child's health and education records appeared at the end of the Child module. The steps to obtaining consent were similar to those used for the cohort member's own data linkage permission, as outlined above. In CAPI, interviewers were prompted to hand over a copy of the booklet "Adding information from your child's education and health records" to eligible cohort members at the start of the self-completion section for them to read at the relevant point. When the cohort member reached the part of the section that covered child data linkage, the script instructed them to read the booklet or to ask the interviewer for a copy (if it had not already been supplied). In CAWI mode, cohort members were instructed to click on a link which took them to an online version of the same booklet.

All cohort members were sent confirmation of their consent permission(s) by letter or email as part of the thank you mailing regardless of whether they consented to all, some or none of the administrative records being added to their answers. This included permissions for their own records (from this sweep and those provided at a previous sweep), as well as those provided for their child(ren) where applicable. Details about withdrawing permissions were also provided in the thank you mailing.

#### 4.4 Cognitive assessments

Cohort members were invited to complete two cognitive assessments. The first was a number sequence task (Harvard's TestMyBrain (TMB) Backwards Digit Span), referred to as the "counting game". A generic version of this can be accessed here: <https://www.testmybrain.org/research-tools/tmb-tests.html>.

This task asked the cohort member to recall sequences of digits of increasing length, in the opposite order that they are presented, in order to assess the working memory of the cohort member. The task consisted of a demonstration and practice, followed by the main task. The task terminated if the cohort member made two incorrect trials at the same sequence length, if they reach the maximum number of digits set by the task (11 digits) or if they selected the “exit task” button<sup>13</sup>.

Data were collected online (via TMB’s website) and via Ipsos’ CAPI tablets using an app which was embedded within the survey script. Unfortunately, interviewer tablets or the app occasionally faced technical difficulties when the Backward Digit Span task was accessed which resulted in some missing data.

The second cognitive task was the STROOP activity, referred to as the ‘colour naming task’. This task asked the cohort member to enter the colour of the word on the screen, rather than the meaning of the word, and was used to assess how people select which information to use and which to ignore. There was no demonstration and practice – the instructions were shown on the first screen.

In CAPI mode, interviewers were allowed to assist during the STROOP activity in the following circumstances:

- If the cohort member could not read the computer screen (because they were blind or partially sighted), the interviewer was instructed to skip this task by starting the game and immediately selecting the “exit task” button.
- If the cohort member requested help, the interviewer was instructed to share the screen with the cohort member and to ask them to read out the answer when each word appeared on screen; the interviewer would then select that answer on their behalf. Interviews were instructed not to read out the words displayed.

#### 4.5 Proxy interviews

It was possible for someone else to answer the CAPI interview on behalf of the cohort member if they were not capable of understanding the questions or answering for themselves. In the rare circumstances where this happened, interviewers recorded this in the Household relationships module, giving reasons why and who answered as the proxy respondent. They were then automatically routed to a short module of questions about the cohort member: who they were living with, details about their accommodation, their highest level of qualification, their

---

<sup>13</sup> In CAPI mode, if the cohort member could not complete the task, the interviewer was only allowed to assist by selecting the “exit task” button.

activity/employment status, their physical health and an open-ended question asking for any additional information they would like to share. In total, 42 proxy interviews were completed. The vast majority of these were conducted as the cohort member was unable to complete the survey independently due to significant physical or mental health conditions or learning difficulties.

#### 4.6 Resident partner elements

For the first time, the age 23 survey asked cohort members if they were happy for their resident partner<sup>14</sup> to be invited to complete a short web survey.

In CAPI mode, partners were recruited by the interviewer to the partner web survey through the Partner placement module, which was accessed separately from the core interview in the ECS after completion of the Household relationships questions. Interviewers were advised to complete as much of the core interview as possible with the cohort member before doing the Partner placement module, to reduce the chance of this interruption leading to the cohort member being unable or refusing to complete the remainder of their interview. However, it was important that interviewers were able to maximise the chances of being able to speak directly to the partner which is why there was some flexibility in when to access the Partner placement module.

The Partner placement module was administered to either the resident partner (if they were available at the time of the visit) or the cohort member. If the partner (or cohort member on behalf of their partner) accepted the invitation to the partner web survey, they were provided with a letter containing unique login details for the online survey and the booklet 'Age 23 Survey - Partner's guide to taking part' (a copy of which is supplied in the appendices).

In CAWI mode, cohort members were asked if they consented for their resident partner to be invited to take part in the partner web survey. If consent was given, the cohort member was asked to supply the partner's email so that the partner web survey invitation and booklet could be sent directly to the partner. If no email was supplied, the invitation mailing was sent to the cohort member's email address with a request to pass the invitation to their partner.

The partner web survey comprised a selection of questions that mirrored those asked in the cohort member's survey. The average interview length was 15 minutes and partners received a £10 payment on completion of the survey. In summary, the topics covered were ethnicity, education and qualifications, activity and employment, income, physical health, risky behaviours (alcohol consumption, drug taking, gambling), mental health/wellbeing, family background.

---

<sup>14</sup> Resident partners were identified as sharing the same permanent address as the cohort member in the Household relationships module of the interview. There were no restrictions on how long a partner had been living with the cohort member.

Partners who did not complete the survey were sent reminders from the Ipsos central office. These contained a link to the survey and a reminder of the log in details.

#### 4.7 Element timings<sup>15</sup>

The following table sets out the timings for each element of MCS8. The main interview length was significantly shorter when completed online (mean of 47 minutes, compared to a mean of 61 minutes face-to-face).

**Table 4.3 Interview timings**

Interview element	Mean time (decimal minutes)	Median time (decimal minutes)
<b>Main interview</b>	<b>50.11</b>	<b>46.92</b>
Online	47.01	42.60
Face-to-face	60.58	58.56
Telephone <sup>16</sup>	88.55	88.55
<b>Physical measurements element</b>	<b>6.71</b>	<b>6.05</b>
<b>Placement of partner online questionnaire</b>	<b>2.01</b>	<b>1.34</b>
<b>Final element</b>	<b>1.04</b>	<b>0.61</b>
<b>Partner online questionnaire</b>	<b>12.08</b>	<b>9.38</b>
<b>Online mop-up</b>	<b>19.84</b>	<b>16.61</b>

<sup>15</sup> Outliers of greater than 120 minutes have been excluded from the calculations.

<sup>16</sup> Note only two cohort members were interviewed by telephone.

The following table sets out the timings for each module of the main interview of MCS8 by online and face-to-face data collection modes.

**Table 4.4 Module timings by the main data collection modes**

Interview element	Face-to-face		Online	
	Mean time (decimal minutes)	Median time (decimal minutes)	Mean time (decimal minutes)	Median time (decimal minutes)
<b>Total</b>	<b>60.58</b>	<b>58.56</b>	<b>47.01</b>	<b>42.60</b>
Household relationships	6.71	5.88	5.97	4.83
Proxy	7.32	6.60	N/A	N/A
Housing	1.74	1.43	1.62	1.25
Health	1.28	0.93	0.89	0.63
Activity & Employment	3.85	3.90	4.24	3.47
Education	7.76	7.25	6.72	5.63
Income	2.94	2.55	3.44	2.62
Self-completion introduction	0.74	0.53	0.12	0.07
Cognitive assessment (Backward Digit Span)	4.30	3.88	4.00	3.38
Identity & attitudes	1.41	1.18	1.60	1.18
Mental health 1	4.16	3.72	3.33	2.82
Health behaviours	5.49	4.92	4.25	3.65
Family & relationships	2.33	2.10	2.10	1.73
Cognitive assessment (STROOP)	2.89	2.87	2.50	2.22
Mental health 2	3.83	3.45	3.79	3.20
Activities & Risky Behaviours	1.73	1.55	1.55	1.27
Future Aspirations	1.38	1.23	1.24	1.00
Child (if child)	8.12	5.80	6.89	6.19
Self-completion end	1.23	0.92	0.77	0.50
Data linkage (if consents required)	6.33	5.70	2.03	1.52
Contact information	4.03	3.07	1.99	1.35
Partner placement (if resident partner)	1.94	1.43	0.80	0.43
Outro	1.02	0.72	0.39	0.30

# 5 Ethics

## 5.1 Ethical approval

Ethical approval for the pilot survey and the main stage was obtained by CLS. Ethical approval for the pilot was obtained on 30th December 2022 from UCL IOE research ethics committee (ref: Z6364106/2022/11/101). Ethical approval for the soft launch and main stage of data collection was obtained on 4th August 2023 from North West – Haydock Research Ethics Committee (ref: 23/NW/0213).

## 5.2 Confidentiality issues

All respondents' answers were treated in strict confidence in accordance with the Data Protection Act 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 de-identified, so nobody except those working on the study would have access to their names, addresses and other contact details.

To maintain respondent confidentiality, a number of procedures were implemented.

### For the face-to-face interviews:

- 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;
- Interviewers were briefed to ensure that everything that took place during an interview remained confidential (including illegal activities);
- Interviewers were instructed how to deal with cohort members or other family members appealing for help. If such an event were to occur, interviewers were instructed to refer the person 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).
- Interviewers were instructed to follow a disclosure of harm protocol in 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. This involved contacting their Region Coordinator (RC) and completing an incident report prior to a decision being made as to how best to proceed.

- After the cohort member had completed the CASI section, the answers were locked so that interviewers were unable to go back and see the answers given to the most sensitive and personal questions.

#### **For the online survey:**

- To ensure other people did not log in to the survey, cohort members were given a unique log in code. This was checked against their date of birth at the start of the survey. If these did not tally after one attempt, then the cohort member was asked to call Ipsos directly.
- Periodic removal of the back button was included in the survey so that if someone else accessed the survey they would not be able to see all answers given previously.

### **5.3 Respondent well-being**

Several measures were put in place to ensure that the research 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 5.4).

To help to ensure cohort members 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 ('Age 23 Survey: Your guide to taking part' – a copy is supplied in the Appendices) provided information on the contents of the age 23 survey and why the study was asking cohort members to take part in each element, and how to get in touch with Ipsos and CLS.
- The data linkage booklets ('Adding other information from your administrative records' and 'Adding information from your child's education and health records' – copies provided in the Appendices) informed cohort members about what data linkage was, why it was important, and what records they would be asked to give linkage permission for. The booklets emphasised the voluntary nature of providing consent to data linkage and provided contact details for the Ipsos research team in the event of queries about the process.
- At the end of the interviewer visit, all cohort members were provided with a 'Further Information' leaflet (a copy is supplied in the Appendices). This provided details of appropriate support services, namely the Samaritans, GamCare, Family Lives, Talk to Frank, Brook and Citizens Advice. Interviewers were required to specifically draw attention to the support information on the back of the two-sided leaflet when handing this to the cohort member at the end of the visit.
- Following particularly sensitive questions, cohort members were signposted to support organisations as follows:

- After questions about self-harm and suicide: Mind and the Samaritans.
- After revealing the death of a parent: Cruse, the bereavement charity.
- After questions exploring domestic violence: Respect and Refuge.
- After questions about pregnancies: Fertility Network UK, Brooks, Sands, the Lullaby Trust and Maternity Action.

The well-being of resident partners was also factored into the design of the partner web survey and associated materials, as follows:

- The booklet 'Age 23 Survey – Partner's guide to taking part' (a copy is supplied in the Appendices) provided information on what the partner web survey would consist of, why partners were being asked to take part in the study, and how to get in touch with Ipsos and CLS.
- At the end of the web survey, partners were signposted to the following support organisations: Citizens Advice, Family Lives, Mind, the Samaritans, Refuge, Respect, Talk to Frank and GamCare.

#### 5.4 Informed consent

All cohort members were required to give verbal informed consent to take part in the survey overall, and for individual survey elements.

Interviewers were required to ensure that consent from the cohort member was as fully informed as possible. 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 Administering the consent process

Consents for the cohort member elements were recorded in in the script (there were no written consents). Consent to proceed with the study elements was secured from cohort members at the following points of the interview:

- Household relationships module – at variable WELC.
- Child – at variables CHINTRO, CONHSTATE, CONEDU, CMCONFIRM<sup>17</sup>.

---

<sup>17</sup> A record of the cohort member's consents/non-consents was provided in a follow-up mailing.

- Data linkage – at variables CONHSTATE2, CONEDU2, CONUCAS, CONSLC, CONEHMRC, CONEDWP, CONMOJ, CMCONFIRM2<sup>18</sup>.
- Physical measurements – at variables HTWILL and WTBFWIL or WTWIL.
- Partner placement at variable PRLWILL.

In the case of the partner web survey, the resident partner's informed consent to take part was achieved via a series of questions in the Partner placement module (if this was CAPI mode and the partner was available to answer the interviewer's questions) and/or via the materials issued to the resident partner which explained the survey.

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. MCS8 materials were not translated into any other languages because all cohort members were born in the UK and therefore had good spoken English.

For any respondents who could not read or understand the information booklets for themselves (e.g., due to literacy problems or poor vision) the information booklets could be read out to them by the interviewer.

Large print copies of all the booklets used by either cohort members or resident partners were available on request. None were requested.

---

<sup>18</sup>A record of the cohort member's consents/non-consents was provided in a follow-up mailing.

## 6 Preparation and quality control

### 6.1 Briefings

All interviewers attended a day-long briefing before working on the age 23 survey. The soft launch briefings took place between 3rd October 2023 and 1st November 2023 and the main stage between 10th April 2024 and 7th August 2024. Overall, 23 briefings were carried out (11 soft launch, 12 main stage).

The briefings were run by researchers from Ipsos and members of the Ipsos internal field team.

In total, 179 interviewers completed the briefings (136 soft launch, 43 main stage). The size of the briefings varied between regions and attendance ranged from 1 to 22 interviewers.

### 6.2 Briefing structure

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 (e.g., practical exercises and the use of training films). Break-out groups were used for practicing conducting the physical measurements and for accreditations at the soft launch, although these were not required for the main stage.

### 6.3 Briefing content

The table below gives an overview of the briefing topics covered.

**Table 6.1: Briefing topics**

Topics
Introduction and welcome
About Child of the New Century
Overview of elements
Survey overview and process
Securing participation and respondent engagement
Ethics
Core interview
Self-completion (inc cognitive assessments)
Child
Data linkage (cohort member and child)
Tracing
Physical measurements training (soft launch only)

Partner placement
Proxy
Physical measurement accreditation (soft launch only)
Sample management
Field admin
Wrap up and questions

## 6.4 Briefing materials

The briefing materials were given to interviewers at the start of each session. Each interviewer received a briefing pack, a physical measurement worksheet (soft launch briefings only) and an agenda.

Training films were used at various points throughout the briefings to ensure standardised delivery of protocols. Films were developed for the background to the survey and the physical measurements (used at soft launch briefings only). 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 film<sup>19</sup>. 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. A workbook exercise and questions and answers were used to consolidate learning.

## 6.5 Homework tasks

All interviewers were required to complete some homework tasks before and after the briefing.

Before:

- **Data linkage:** To read the two data linkage booklets (cohort member and child).
- **Cognitive assessment:** To complete the STROOP and Backward Digit Span cognitive assessments online, using their own device.

---

<sup>19</sup> The data linkage film can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W6ZuK3IYW6Y>

- **Partner web survey:** To go through the partner web survey, using their own device.

After:

- **Cohort member core interview practice:** To complete three dummy homework interviews (including CASI). This included both the STROOP and Backward Digit Span cognitive assessments.
- **Physical measurements:** To practice taking the measurements on at least one adult (soft launch briefings only)
- **Materials:** To familiarise themselves with all survey materials.

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

## 6.6 Validation

Standard Ipsos validation procedures were applied: 10% of cohort members interviewed were re-contacted by the Ipsos Field Validation/Quality team. The validation script included a standard set of questions, required by the Market Research 20252 ISO standards, and the guidelines laid down by the Interviewer Quality Control Scheme (IQCS). Additional questions specific to MCS8 were also asked during the validation process.

Below are some examples of questions asked by Ipsos as part of the validation process:

- Whether the interviewer explained clearly, what would be required during the visit.
- Whether the cohort member was asked to complete a series of questions themselves, using the interviewer's tablet.

Validators were also able to trigger an automated email to the Quality team if there was a serious issue to report. In total, 156 validations were completed against the face-to-face interviews which amounts to 16.8% (3.9% of the total sample).

## 6.7 Exception reporting, fieldwork process, script issues and data quality reports

Checks were made throughout fieldwork, and several reports were produced (described below).

### 6.7.1 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 in the script 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 MCS8, an agreed set of checks were run monthly. SPSS syntax was written to check particular questions and key issues such as: response rates, refusal rates, adherence to correct call pattern, number of proxy interviews conducted, length of core interview (too short) and timing of interviews (before 9am/after 9pm).

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 by 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 summary of issues was reported monthly within the fieldwork processes report (detailed below).

### 6.7.2 Fieldwork processes report

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

- The number of complaints/causes of concern received, reason and actions taken by the Ipsos field team as a result;
- Data linkage consent withdrawal requests;
- Other data/information withdrawal requests;
- Validations;
- Number of cases of missing TMB data;
- Exception reporting;
- Interviewer initial contact protocol adherence;
- Total number of queries received by Ipsos helpline (see 6.6).

The first of these monthly reports was delivered in May 2024 and the final one in December 2024.

## 6.8 Fieldwork complaints and respondent queries

### 6.8.1 Respondent queries

During the MCS8 fieldwork, participants were able to contact both the CLS Cohort Maintenance Team and the Ipsos project team by telephone and email. Most of the calls and emails received about the survey were straightforward enquiries. However, a small number of complaints were also recorded. Details of how the complaints were handled can be found in the following section.

The protocol to handle respondent queries varied by whether the query was received by CLS or Ipsos as below.

If a respondent query was received by the CLS Cohort Maintenance Team, the query would be passed on to Ipsos 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 securely at the end of each day to follow up on (i.e., address change, etc).

If a respondent query was received by Ipsos, 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.

In total, 1,282<sup>20</sup> communications were received (by Ipsos and CLS). The table below shows a breakdown of these:

**Table 6.2: Respondent communications**

<b>Total number of queries received by Ipsos</b>	<b>1,282</b>					
	E-mail	808	Phone	58	Post	416

<b>Reason for engagement</b>	<b>Count</b>
Incentive query	447
Return to sender (advance mailing)	413
Survey query/issue	214
Change of contact details/status change	46
Refusal (Ipsos Helpline)	43
Permanent withdrawal	21
Appointment rescheduled	15
Complaint	8
Data linkage withdrawal	7
Data deletion request	6
Cognitive assessment query/issue	3
Partner survey query	2

<sup>20</sup> Incentive queries continued to come through to Ipsos and CLS after the end of fieldwork. These were dealt with on a case-by-case basis but are not included in the above figures.

Cohort member has died	2
Cohort member has moved abroad	2
Cohort member away/in hospital during the entire survey	1
Other	52

Incentive queries continued to come through to Ipsos and CLS after the end of fieldwork. These were dealt with on a case-by-case basis but are not included in the above figures.

## 6.9 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 interviewers are well briefed and experienced in engaging with respondents ethically and sensitively so that complaints are kept to a minimum.

At MCS8, 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 (e.g., 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 (e.g., the call pattern was sometimes perceived as too persistent). However, it could also include cases where the respondent simply wanted more information, 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 were logged and passed to an “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 were dealt with by Ipsos. Those about the survey processes were dealt with by Ipsos, 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 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 could 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, eight complaints and seven causes for concern were received by Ipsos or CLS during the MCS8 fieldwork. These included three requests for survey data or contact detail deletion.

**Table 6.3: Complaints and causes of concerns**

<b>Complaints</b>	
<b>Total number of complaints</b>	8
<b>Main reasons for complaints</b>	<i>Compliant about interviewer: 6</i>
	<i>Complaint about questionnaire: 1</i>
	<i>Data security / Information governance concern: 1</i>
<b>Field action taken</b>	Letters sent to cohort member x 8

<b>Concerns</b>	
<b>Total number of causes for concern</b>	7
<b>Main reasons for causes for concern</b>	<i>Compliant about interviewer: 1</i>
	<i>Complaint about questionnaire: 1</i>
	<i>Data security / Information governance concern: 3</i>
	<i>Other: 2</i>
<b>Field action taken</b>	Letters/emails sent to cohort member x 7

## 6.10 Consent withdrawals

### 6.10.1 Data linkage consent withdrawals

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 team was notified. The request would be logged in a spreadsheet, and a flag added to the data.

A total of seven requests to withdraw data linkage consent were received during the MCS8 fieldwork. Anyone who requested that their data linkage permissions were withdrawn received a written confirmation that their request had been actioned.

# 7 Fieldwork

## 7.1 Design of fieldwork and timings

Fieldwork for the main stage of the survey was conducted between 10th October 2023 and 6th January 2025. In order to manage the fieldwork effectively, following the soft launch, the main stage was divided into two waves. Fieldwork dates are shown in the following table:

**Table 7.1: Fieldwork dates**

	Wave/Stage	Planned start date	Planned end date
<b>Soft launch</b>	Invitations to web survey	10 October 2023	29 October 2023
	Face-to-face fieldwork	30 October 2023	1 April 2024
<b>Main stage</b>	Wave 1 Invitations to web survey	10 April 2024	21 April 2024
	Wave 1 face-to-face fieldwork	22 April 2024	6 January 2025
	Wave 2 Invitations to web survey	24 June 2024	14 July 2024
	Wave 2 face-to-face fieldwork	15 July 2024	6 January 2025

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

**Table 7.2: Interviews achieved, by month**

	Face-to-face	Web	Total
Oct-23	3	551	554
Nov-23	373	60	433
Dec-23	314	17	331
Jan-24	314	18	332
Feb-24	116	7	123
Mar-24	53	6	59
Apr-24	60	2,509	2,569
May-24	232	463	695
Jun-24	121	1,406	1,527
Jul-24	136	1,149	1,285
Aug-24	164	408	572
Sep-24	107	253	360
Oct-24	60	166	226
Nov-24	25	138	163
Dec-24	12	81	93
Jan-25	7	36	43

<b>Total</b>	<b>2,097<sup>21</sup></b>	<b>7,268</b>	<b>9,365</b>
--------------	---------------------------	--------------	--------------

## 7.2 Issuing online sample

For the soft launch web-first cases and the main stage of the survey, cohort members were initially asked to complete the survey online.

To facilitate this, an advance mailing was sent centrally, detailing the purpose of the study and inviting them to take part online (refer to Chapter 8: Respondent Communications for full details). For those who did not respond, several reminder communications were sent before the case was allocated face-to-face to an interviewer.

### 7.2.1 Issuing sample to interviewers

During the soft launch phase, certain cases were directly assigned to interviewers without being initially issued for online completion. This allocation occurred for cases that were part of the face-to-face segment of the experiment. Additionally, any web-first cases that remained unproductive, along with all cases from the main stage, were issued to interviewers after all online survey reminders had been sent. Details of the reminder strategy can be found in Chapter 8: Respondent Communications.

After the initial stage where invitations were issued to the web fieldwork, the sample was issued to interviewers. The sample was grouped into interviewer assignments, or points. In total there were 215 points with an average of 12 addresses per point issued to interviewers for the soft launch and 467 points with an average number of 17 addresses per point issued to interviewers for the main stage. Interviewers were allocated to assignments primarily based on their proximity and availability.

Interviewers were able to access the sample information through the ECS. Section 7.3 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 address location and the response history of each cohort member.

Assignments contained a mixture of 'phone first' and 'face-to-face first' addresses. In the majority of instances, interviewers were instructed to initiate first contact via telephone.

The 'phone-first' strategy was allocated to all cohort members who had participated in the preceding survey wave (MCS7), anticipating a higher likelihood of engagement from these cohort members. Conversely, for cases where the cohort member did not participate in the last wave or

<sup>21</sup> Due to interviewer error, two of these were conducted via Teams.

where a contact number was unavailable, interviewers were instructed to establish initial contact in person, as these scenarios typically necessitated increased persuasion for participation. During sample planning, interviewers were advised to schedule appointments with 'phone-first' cases initially and then to prioritise contacting 'face-to-face-first' cases whilst working in the local area.

### 7.3 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 on every day they worked. This meant that staff in the Ipsos office could monitor and report on progress using up-to-date information. The ECS:

- Provided interviewers with sample details.
- Enabled interviewers to manage appointments.
- Enabled interviewers to record contact attempt outcomes (including mover tracing steps).
- Enabled interviewers to review and monitor their progress and to view which interview elements had been completed and which were outstanding for each household.
- Enabled interviewers to record notes and comments, and to update contact information.
- Was used to launch Dimensions interview scripts and conduct interviews.
- Enabled interviewers to record the final outcome for each cohort member.
- Enabled interviewers to receive messages from the Ipsos office about their cases and assignments.
- Enabled interviewers to have access to have electronic login details so that they could remind cohort members of them if the cohort member wanted to complete the interview online.

#### 7.3.1 Appointments

The ECS showed the time and type of contact (face-to-face or telephone) and mailing (invitation or appointment) 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.

#### 7.3.2 Contact attempt outcomes

Interviewers recorded details of all forms of contact, including direct contact with the cohort member, and contact with others such as parents, neighbours or stable contacts (whether

successful or unsuccessful). For each contact attempt, interviewers logged how, when and who they attempted to contact, and the outcome of the attempt.

### 7.3.3 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 steps<sup>22</sup> that they were taking to trace a cohort member. They were only able to declare that they could not locate a cohort member once these steps had been carried out and logged. The ECS clearly displayed their progress, showing both interviewers and the Ipsos office which steps had been carried out and which remained.

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

### 7.3.4 Contact information

Interviewers added or edited the contact information in the ECS if they obtained new information about the cohort member, parents or stable contacts. Interviewers were also able to add contact information for anyone who assisted with mover tracing (such as neighbours). This information was replicated in the script where applicable (e.g., at the end of each interview, respondent contact details were checked) and similarly changes made in the script 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.

### 7.3.5 Interviews

The interviewing script was launched from the ECS for all interviews. The first element to be completed was the main interview (initially only this element was available in the ECS). Once the interviewer had completed the Household relationships module of the main interview, the ECS made the Partner placement element available (if applicable). After the main interview was complete, the ECS made the Physical measurements element available (CAPI-only soft launch cases).

The ECS made the Final element available when the main interview was fully or partially complete and a Physical measurements element outcome (if applicable) and a Partner placement element outcome (if applicable) had been recorded by the interviewer.

The interviewers could then use ECS to launch the scripts for different survey elements. Completed elements were shown in green and were locked so that the interviewers could not

---

<sup>22</sup> These steps are described in detail in section 7.11, below.

access them anymore. If an element had been paused in the script, 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.

### 7.3.6 Final outcomes

Interviewers needed to record a final outcome for each cohort member once they had finished working on a case. Once all elements were productive a cohort member outcome was automatically assigned. For unproductive cases, interviewers had to select a final outcome for the cohort member before they could transmit the case back to the Ipsos office.

### 7.3.7 Ipsos office messages

The ECS included an integrated messaging system used by the ipsos office to pass on messages to interviewers. For example, if a cohort member 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.

## 7.4 Tracing actions

Interviewers were required to trace cohort members 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 could not 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:

- Asking **parents** (if living at the issued address) if they could provide a forwarding address and current contact details.
- If neither the cohort member or their parents lived at the issued address, asking **the current occupier** if they could provide a forwarding address and current contact details for the cohort member (or for their parents).
- If no contact was made with those living at the issued address or there was a refusal to cooperate by (non-parent) current occupiers, contacting at **least two neighbours** to try to obtain contact details for the cohort member (or for their parents). Interviewers were asked not to contact neighbours if parents had refused to cooperate.

- If the cohort member’s parents did not live at the issued address, attempting to contact parents and/or **stable contacts**, first by phone then by face-to-face visit (if local).

Interviewers were provided with tracing letters to facilitate the tracing process. Section 8.3 provides full details on how these were implemented and copies of each tracing letter are also available in the appendices.

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 cohort member 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 members 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 face-to-face again).

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

#### 7.4.1 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 regardless of whether the cohort member was planning on moving (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.

## 7.5 Productive interviews per interviewer

In total, 156 interviewers were allocated work and carried out at least some interviewing. On average, they completed 13 face-to-face interviews. When including cases where interviewers persuaded cohort members to complete the interview online, on average interviewers completed 37 interviews.

The following table shows the number of productive face-to-face interviews per interviewer.

Number of face-to-face interviews	Number of
No interviews	11
1 to 10	77
11 to 20	38
21 to 30	14

31 to 40	8
41 to 50	2
51 to 60	2
61 to 70	2
71 to 80	1
81 to 90	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>156</b>

## 7.6 Reissues

Soft refusals, which included circumstantial and non-permanent refusals, as well as instances of non-contact and certain other unproductive cases (depending on the nature of the unproductive outcome), were flagged for reissue.

Cases categorised as a permanent withdrawal in the ECS were exempt from reissuing. All cases considered eligible for reissue underwent a thorough review on a case-by-case basis to assess their suitability for further follow-up. Specific outcome codes were evaluated during the reissue process, as detailed below:

Code	Label	Final Category
306	Contact made but refused to give information about	Refusal
309	Broken appointment - no recontact	Other unproductive
311	Refusal by cohort member	Refusal
312	Refusal by other/unknown person	Refusal
402	Language difficulties	Other unproductive
403	Cohort member away/in hospital during entire survey	Refusal
404	Cohort member ill at home during survey period	Other unproductive
405	Other (please specify)	Other unproductive
504	No further contact (some contact made, no appt	Other unproductive
505	No contact with anyone at address (after required	No Contact

Reissue cases that were deemed eligible were to be initially contacted in person. To aid interviewers, a letter was sent to cohort members informing them that a different interviewer would be contacting them. The allocation and working of reissue cases was conducted on a rolling basis throughout the duration of the fieldwork.

In total, 1,157 addresses were reissued to a new interviewer.

## 7.7 Return of work

### 7.7.1 Electronic data

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

## 7.8 Sample management during fieldwork

### 7.8.1 Changes to the sample

Ipsos received the initial sample file in August 2023. 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 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.
- Respondents sometimes contacted the Ipsos office with updated contact information (e.g., returned tracing letters). All information was logged and passed on to interviewers.
- Interviewers updated the contact information that they gathered in the field in the Electronic Contact Sheet. This was transmitted back to the Ipsos office regularly so that if a case had to be reissued to a different interviewer, the most up to date sample information was available.
- Interviewers sometimes discovered that cohort members 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. If CLS, found new contact details, then these would be passed back to Ipsos as part of the weekly sample update.

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 in the weekly sample update file. The first mover file was sent to CLS on 21 November 2023 and the last one was sent on 13 November 2024. The first sample update was received on 8 November 2023 and the last one was received on 13 February 2025.

**Table 7.3: Movers and updates passed between Ipsos and CLS, by month**

	Untraced movers sent	Sample updates
Nov-23	28	247
Dec-23	22	9
Jan-24	87	36
Feb-24	31	79

Mar-24	34	38
Apr-24	21	42
May-24	86	62
Jun-24	151	85
Jul-24	146	86
Aug-24	72	83
Sep-24	139	106
Oct-24	139	187
Nov-24	29	52
Dec-24	0	21
Jan-25	0	13
Feb-25	0	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>985</b>	<b>1,158</b>

## 7.9 Transferring mover cases to CLS

All cases that were assigned the ‘untraced mover’ outcome were reviewed at Ipsos to check that interviewers had completed all required tracing steps that were applicable. 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 cohort member after completing the required in-field tracing steps, the case was transferred to the CLS Cohort Maintenance Team for further in-house tracing. 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).

## 7.10 Sample updates from CLS

CLS sometimes received updated information directly from cohort members or parents once the sample had been sent to Ipsos or while tracing movers. This information was passed to Ipsos through a weekly sample update file.

In addition, CLS provided Ipsos with any time-sensitive updates on a daily basis if needed. This included refusals and appointment cancellations.

### 7.10.1 Actioning updates to the sample

The weekly sample updates from CLS were actioned according by 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).

Respondent communications directly received by the Ipsos 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 ECS (which they were advised to do daily). They would receive an on-screen message, and the sample information would be updated. Additionally, Ipsos phoned or sent texts to interviewers to pass on urgent messages (such as complaints, refusals or broken appointments).

### 7.11 Progress reporting

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

The weekly report showed:

- Response by wave: summary of number of completes, number of breakoffs, number and outcomes of reissued cases and response to the partner survey.
- Comparison of the web-first response against face-to-face first (for the soft launch experiment).
- The number of responses by mode received each day.
- Progress against fieldwork targets, including coverage.
- The number of cases that had been reissued and their outcomes (by wave).
- Tracing progress: including tracing progress and length of outstanding cases (split by Ipsos and CLS).
- The latest outcome code for each case: including final outcomes and interim outcomes (e.g., tracing started, appointments made), as well as response to individual survey elements. Response was broadly split into categories of productive, non-productive, ineligible, and uncertain eligibility (i.e., movers and outstanding cases).

The first weekly report was provided on 20th October 2023 and were sent throughout fieldwork until January 2025.

A monthly report was provided to CLS during fieldwork, containing the following:

- Summary of response by country at time of sampling of the eighth sweep.
- Detailed information about the interview (e.g., data linkage obtained, cognitive data received) by mode.

- Reasons for refusal.

Monthly reports were provided from the start of the main stage fieldwork (from June 2024 to January 2025).

# 8 Respondent communication and engagement

## 8.1 Advance mailing

The aim of the advance materials was to provide cohort members with information to consider in advance of agreeing to participate. It was an ethical requirement of the study that cohort members were able to familiarise themselves with the individual elements of the survey before agreeing to participate.

All cohort members were sent an advance mailing by post sent centrally (and email if an email address was held) inviting them to complete the survey online.

### 8.1.1 Face-to-face cases (soft launch)

For the cases allocated as face-to-face at the soft launch interviewers were required to send an advance mailing 3-4 days before contacting cohort members. The mailing consisted of:

- An **advance letter** explaining what was expected of cohort members as part of the survey, the content included:
  - Background of the survey
  - What they were being asked to do and signposting the enclosed booklets
  - Details of who is carrying out the survey
  - Explanation of what would happen next, including survey length
  - Details of the “thank you” voucher
  - Data protection information, including a link to the privacy policy
  - How to find out more about the survey and who to contact
- An **advance booklet ('Age 23 Survey: Your guide to taking part')**

### 8.1.2 Web-first cases (soft launch and main stage)

The web-first mailing (used at the soft launch and for all of the main stage) consisted of:

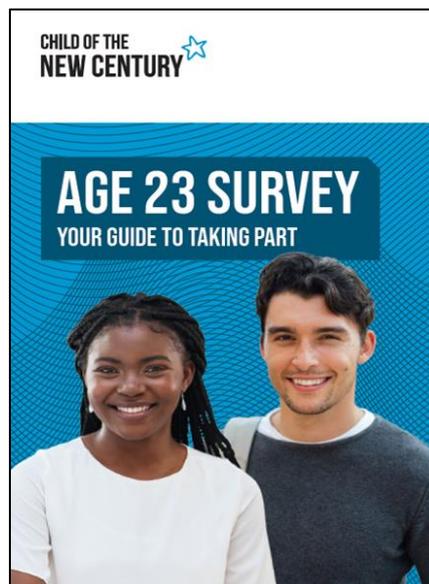
- An **advance letter** explaining what was expected of cohort members as part of the survey, the content included:
  - Background of the survey
  - What they were being asked to do and signposting the enclosed booklets
  - Details of who is carrying out the survey
  - Login details for accessing the online survey

- Explanation of what happens next (including that an interviewer will contact them and ask them to complete the survey face-to-face if they do not complete online and survey length)
  - Details of the “thank you” voucher
  - Data protection information, including a link to the privacy policy
  - How to find out more about the survey and who to contact
- An **advance booklet** (**‘Age 23 Survey: Your guide to taking part’**)
  - Where data linkage permissions were to be sought from the cohort member, a **booklet about data linkage** (**‘Adding other information from your administrative records’**) was also enclosed to ensure informed consent for data linkage where the survey was being completed online. More details on the request to data linkage can be found in Section: 4.3.

If the cohort member did not complete the survey online, interviewers were not required to send another advance mailing. They were, however, provided with spare advance mailings that could be provided if requested.

### 8.1.3 The advance booklet

The advance booklet provided essential information to cohort members, ensuring informed consent was obtained for their participation. It contained a comprehensive overview of the study, detailing various components such as the core interview conducted via CAPI and CASI, cognitive assessments, and questions about their children (where applicable). Additionally, it explained the request for the partner web survey (if applicable). The same booklet was used for both the face-to-face arm and the mixed-mode arm at the soft launch. A copy can be found in the appendices.



## 8.2 Web reminders

Several reminders were sent during fieldwork to encourage participation, as detailed in Table 8.1 below.

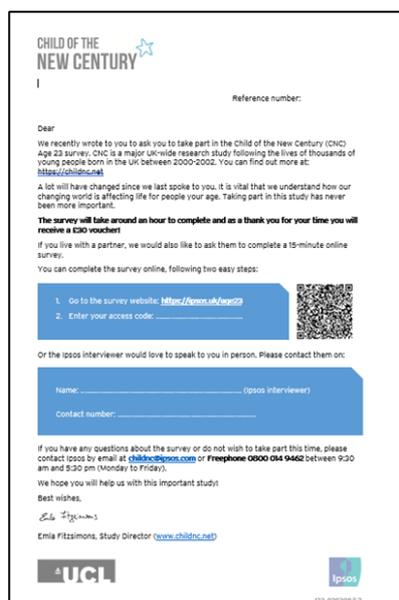
**Table 8.1: Web reminders**

	<b>Phase 1 (Soft launch)</b>	<b>Phase 2 (Wave 1)</b>	<b>Phase 2 (Wave 2)</b>	<b>Total</b>
Issued to initial stage (invitations to the web survey)	1,500	6,455	4,185	12,140
Email reminder 1	923	3,637	2,595	7,155
Letter reminder 1	235	1,199	525	1,959
SMS reminder 1	915	3,780	2,536	7,231
Email reminder 2	725	3,021	2,002	5,748
SMS reminder 2	759	3,194	2,017	5,970
<b>Total reminders sent</b>	<b>3,557</b>	<b>14,831</b>	<b>9,675</b>	<b>28,063</b>

In another attempt to maximise response, as discussed previously, 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.

## 8.3 Face-to-face contact and tracing

When making contact face-to-face interviewers were provided with a “web login/interviewer details letter” (see image below and the appendices). This letter provided the cohort member with their web login details and provided space for the interviewer to write in their contact details. This letter could be sent or given to movers in cases where cohort members did not receive the advance mailing or could be used by interviewers to “nudge” the cohort member to complete the survey online.



During initial contact attempts, interviewers may have established that a cohort member had moved address. In these situations, they were instructed to implement specific tracing protocols, as outlined in Section 7.4. Multiple tracing letters were provided to facilitate this process. These are detailed below.

### 8.3.1 Tracing letter

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

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

The tracing letter mentioned the study name as it was for the cohort member. However, interviewers sealed the envelope before giving it to the person passing it on to protect confidentiality and were also required not to tell them the name of the study.

### 8.3.2 Legitimising letter

The legitimising letter explained that CNC was taking place again and that an interviewer had been unsuccessful in contacting the cohort member. The stable contact(s) was asked if they would be willing to provide new address details for the cohort member to Ipsos or pass the letter on to them

directly. Interviewers completed the letters and placed them in an envelope containing a post-paid envelope addressed to Ipsos 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 cohort member was part of the study.

### 8.3.3 Occupier letter

If interviewers were unable to contact anyone at the last known address of the cohort member and had not been able to establish their whereabouts from neighbours, parents 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 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 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 cohort member was involved in the study.

### 8.3.4 Parent postcard

Following feedback from the soft launch that some parents were unwilling to pass on information about their child's whereabouts to interviewers, a new tracing material was introduced for the main stage. If interviewers contacted the parent(s) but they wanted reassurance about the interviewers' credentials or they did not want to pass on the cohort member's contact details there and then, interviewers could send or give a parent postcard. The postcard thanked parents for their involvement with the survey to date and encouraged them to contact the interviewer with their child's contact details.

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

## 8.4 Making appointments

Once interviewers successfully made an appointment face-to-face, they were required to check or mention the following things before visiting the address:

- Check that the cohort member's address matched the address in the ECS.

- Remind the cohort member that they should read their advance letter and advance booklet before the visit or look at the survey website<sup>23</sup>: <https://childnc.net> where copies of all the materials could be found.
- Highlighting the need for a quiet space, if possible, for the interview and other study elements to take place in (in particular, the cognitive assessments)
- When making an appointment in Wales, checking if Welsh translation was required.

If interviewers were successful in making an appointment, they were then required to provide the cohort member with an appointment mailing, consisting of:

- An appointment card – This card confirmed the appointment details in writing and provided the interviewer's contact details, allowing cohort members to cancel or reschedule the appointment if necessary.
- **For the face-to-face arm of the soft launch only:** A booklet ('Adding other information from your administrative records') to inform cohort members about the data linkage request. As mentioned previously, for the main stage, where data linkage permissions were to be sought from the cohort member, the booklet about data linkage was enclosed in the advance mailing.

Interviewers encouraged cohort members to read the information in advance of the visit.

If interviewers contacted a cohort member 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 cohort member (if required) 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 (if required) fully.

## 8.5 The household visit

Once an appointment was confirmed, interviewers were instructed to carry out the survey through a household visit. They were equipped with various materials to facilitate the visit, as outlined in the table below.

---

<sup>23</sup> CLS managed website for participants which provides news and information about the study, as well as providing copies of the mailings sent.

**Table 8.2: Table of materials**

	<b>Document</b>	<b>Document included in appendices</b>
<b>Advance mailing</b>	Advance letter	Yes
	Advance booklet	Yes
	Data linkage booklet for cohort members – <b>Web-first and main stage</b>	Yes
<b>Appointment mailing</b>	Appointment card	Yes
	Appointment envelope (C5)	No
	Data linkage booklet for cohort members – <b>Face-to-face arm at soft launch only</b>	Yes
	Web login/interviewer details letter (if needed)	Yes
<b>Household materials</b>	Further information leaflet	Yes
	Partner letter	Yes
	Partner envelope	No
	Partner booklet	Yes
	Child data linkage booklet	Yes
	Privacy notice	No
	Change of details card	Yes
	Calling card	Yes
	Showcards	Yes
	Stamps (for appointment mailing/tracing)	No
<b>Tracing materials</b>	Occupier letter	Yes
	Legitimising letter	Yes
	Tracing letter	Yes
	Parent postcard	Yes
<b>Interviewer instructions and FAQs</b>	Data linkage FAQs	Yes
	Interviewer instructions - Survey Processes	No
	Interviewer instructions - Data Collection	No

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 and letter
- Data linkage booklets (cohort member and child)
- Appointment card

If requested, all respondents were also able to have the Welsh versions of the following:

- Further information leaflet
- Showcards (WALES)
- Partner booklet and letter
- Parent postcard

At the appointment making stage, cohort members were asked if they would like any of the elements to be administered in Welsh. If the cohort member requested the interview to be conducted in Welsh, the address could be reallocated to a Welsh speaking interviewer where possible. Other members of the household were not allowed to translate into Welsh. The following elements were able to be translated by a Welsh-speaking interviewer:

- The core interview (CAPI and CASI)
- Partner placement (if applicable).

There were no Welsh interview requests.

The cohort members are native speakers of English, so the web survey was not offered in any other language. For cohort members living in the UK, it was extremely unlikely that any would have partners who did not have functional English adequate for completion of the partner web survey. For these reasons translation of the web surveys into any language other than Welsh was not offered. In the unlikely event a partner did not speak English well enough and spoke a language other than Welsh, then the partner could ask the cohort member or another friend or relative to help them translate the survey. Interviewers were advised not to offer the cohort member or partner the translation of the partner web survey into Welsh unless they asked for it. If they did,

interviewers were to inform the Ipsos office who would agree next steps. No such requests were received.

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.

## 8.6 Post interview reminders to partners

For the resident partner survey, reminders played a crucial role in ensuring participation following the initial invitation<sup>24</sup>. Reminders were sent as follows:

**Email reminders:** Two emails were sent weekly:

- 1 Reminder 1 email** – Sent to cohort members who had completed their survey. This email asked them to forward it to their partner. It included details on how the partner could participate online and mentioned the incentive of a £10 e-voucher upon completion.
- 2 Reminder 2 email** – Sent directly to partners whose email addresses were provided by the cohort members who completed the survey and agreed to partner participation. This email highlighted and emphasized the importance of their contribution, and also mentioned the £10 e-voucher.

**Postal reminder** – A final reminder was sent by post to partners at the end of each wave, urging them to complete the survey online to ensure they receive their voucher.

## 8.7 Thank you gifts and mailing

Cohort members who completed the survey were provided with a £30 Love2Shop voucher. They were given the option of receiving an online code via email or a physical card-style voucher (if the survey was completed face-to-face). The email included instructions for redeeming the voucher. This “thank you” gift was notably more substantial than what had been provided in previous sweeps, where only minor tokens were offered, making it the first sweep to offer a significant token of appreciation. Resident partners completing the web survey received a £10 Love2Shop voucher, centrally distributed via email, acknowledging their participation.

Following participation, all cohort members were sent a thank you mailing to express appreciation for their involvement. This letter confirmed their consent to data linkage at MCS7 or MCS8, specifying which consents were provided, including those for any of their children. These letters

---

<sup>24</sup> Invitation sent by email for the web cases or placed by the interviewer for the face-to-face cases.

were dispatched on a weekly basis throughout the fieldwork period. The following table shows the number of thank you mailings dispatched over the fieldwork period, and the date they were sent out.

**Table 8.3: MCS8 thank you mailing**

<b>Mailing</b>	<b>Date of dispatch</b>	<b>Quantity</b>
1	31-OCT-2023	526
2	23-NOV-2023	319
3	30-NOV-2023	104
4	06-DEC-2023	64
5	14-DEC-2023	103
6	20-DEC-2023	73
7	04-JAN-2024	127
8	10-JAN-2024	86
9	17-JAN-2024	103
10	24-JAN-2024	57
11	31-JAN-2024	51
12	07-FEB-2024	41
13	14-FEB-2024	26
14	21-FEB-2024	32
15	28-FEB-2024	18
16	06-MAR-2024	22
17	13-MAR-2024	16
18	20-MAR-2024	12
19	27-MAR-2024	6
20	03-APR-2024	16
21	17-APR-2024	1352
22	02-MAY-2024	1124
23	08-MAY-2024	183
24	15-MAY-2024	159
25	23-MAY-2024	150
26	29-MAY-2024	113
27	05-JUN-2024	129
28	12-JUN-2024	125
29	19-JUN-2024	101
30	26-JUN-2024	676
31	03-JUL-2024	785
32	10-JUL-2024	468
33	17-JUL-2024	188
34	24-JUL-2024	147

35	31-JUL-2024	103
36	08-AUG-2024	138
37	14-AUG-2024	106
38	21-AUG-2024	143
39	28-AUG-2024	91
40	04-SEP-2024	112
41	11-SEP-2024	109
42	18-SEP-2024	88
43	24-SEP-2024	50
44	02-OCT-2024	45
45	09-OCT-2024	43
46	16-OCT-2024	52
47	30-OCT-2024	98
48	04-NOV-2024	26
49	13-NOV-2024	36
50	20-NOV-2024	19
51	11-DEC-2024	93
52	18-DEC-2024	23
53	06-JAN-2025	60
54	14-JAN-2025	2
55	30-JAN-2025	73
56	03-FEB-2025	112
57	10-FEB-2025	146
58	24-FEB-2025	97
<b>Total</b>		<b>9367<sup>25</sup></b>

---

<sup>25</sup> Thank you letters were not sent to cohort members who partially completed the survey.

## 9 Online mop-up survey

### 9.1 Rationale for the online mop-up

Cohort members who did not participate in the main survey were sent an invitation to complete an abbreviated version of the questionnaire online to maximise response. This abbreviated version took around 20 minutes to complete and focused on core measures of current circumstances. It did not include the cognitive assessments, data linkage or Partner placement elements included in the main survey.

### 9.2 Eligibility

The mop-up survey was issued to partially productive cases at the soft launch and main stage and all non-responders, except for hard refusals and permanent withdrawals. It was also issued to cohort members who started the survey but had only completed a small amount (up to the start of the CASI section).

A total of 3,203 non-responding cases were eligible to take part in the online mop-up, outlined in the table below.

Final field outcome	Soft launch	Wave 1	Wave 2	Total
Partially productive - CAPI	0	1	0	1
Partially productive - CAWI before face-to-face fieldwork began	16	50	66	132
Partially productive - CAWI after face-to-face fieldwork began	8	144	70	222
Cohort member has moved abroad	42	32	25	99
Refusal by cohort member	8	3	1	12
Contact made but refused to give information about household/names	9	10	18	37
Broken appointment - no recontact	20	57	46	123
Refusal by cohort member	275	419	222	916
Refusal by other/unknown person	75	268	109	452
Cohort member away/in hospital during entire survey period	11	35	18	64
Cohort member ill at home during survey period	1	1	1	3
Other	1	61	93	155
No contact	2	0	0	2

No further contact (some contact made, no appointment made and minimum contact made)	47	270	155	472
No contact with anyone at address (after required visits made)	17	73	89	179
New address found/recorded for cohort member but outside my area (Office to reallocate)	1	3	3	7
Cohort member has moved and unable to find follow-up address	2	39	48	89
Address inaccessible	0	0	1	1
Unable to locate address/insufficient address (contacting tasks complete)	0	1	1	2
Cohort member has moved and unable to find follow-up address (send to CLS)	60	116	22	198
Cohort member untraced (returned from CLS)	34	3	0	37
<b>Total</b>	<b>629</b>	<b>1,586</b>	<b>988</b>	<b>3,203</b>

### 9.3 Methodology

All eligible cohort members were contacted directly:

- A postcard invitation to take part in the online mop-up was sent by post on 24th January 2025 to all eligible cohort members. An invitation email was also sent on 27th January 2025 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 were sent an email invitation only.

The online mop-up survey was hosted on a short URL link that was distinctly different to the URL link used for the main stage online questionnaires. The invitation postcard asked cohort members to enter the short URL link into their browser or scan the QR code provided, before entering their unique login ID (as displayed on their invitation postcard). The invitation email included a direct personalised link to the online mop-up survey, meaning cohort members 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 postcard was dispatched. It was anticipated that the invitation email would arrive in cohort members inboxes around a similar time to the invitation letter, which was sent by first-class post.

### 9.3.1 Incentivisation

Cohort members that took part in the mop-up survey were offered the same incentive as for the main survey (a £30 Love2Shop voucher).

### 9.3.2 Materials and reminders

The invitation consisted of a graphically designed postcard which was sent in an envelope for privacy (a copy can be found in the appendices). The email was designed differently to the initial advance email sent for the longer version of the survey. This was to make it stand out, whilst including familiar branding. The key messaging was that the survey was shorter and less demanding of their time for the same incentive (£30 voucher for 20 minutes). There was no tailoring of the text according to previous outcomes or any other criteria.

If after a week there was no response to the online mop-up survey, cohort members were sent one email and one text reminder (depending on details held). The email and text were sent a couple of days apart. A final follow-up email and text were sent on the same day, 10 days before the survey closed.

### 9.3.3 Welsh translation of materials

Eligible cohort members living in Wales (as recorded in the sample file) received the postcard in both Welsh and English. Reminders were sent in English only and the online script was not translated. If a cohort member required a Welsh version, it could be arranged for a Welsh speaking interviewer to conduct it with them.

## 9.4 Fieldwork timings

The sample was released into field in one batch. The following table shows the fieldwork timings for the online mop up survey.

**Table 9.1: Fieldwork timings of the online mop-up**

Fieldwork activity	Date
Postal invitation sent	24th January 2025
Email invitation sent	27th January 2025
Survey live	27th January 2025
Email reminder sent	31st January 2025
Text reminder sent	3rd February 2025
Final email and text reminder sent	13th February 2025
Survey closed	23rd February 2025

## 9.5 Online questionnaire content and design

The online mop-up largely comprised of a subset of questions asked in the age 23 survey<sup>26</sup>. The content was chosen based on scientific and policy importance.

Overall, the online mop-up was designed to have the same look, feel and functionality as the main age 23 survey interview. To reflect that the mop-up was a standalone online survey, some additional features were introduced (detailed below).

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 entered 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.

## 9.6 Response to online mop-up

Table 9.2 shows the survey outcomes for the online mop-up. A case was defined as “partially productive” in the same way as for the main survey, i.e., if the cohort member completed the Household relationships module. Note that a “fully productive” case in the mop up survey was classified as “partially productive” for MCS8, because they only completed a short version of the survey.

**Table 9.2: Survey outcomes for the online mop up**

Outcome	Total
Productive online mop-up	455 (14.2%)
<i>Fully productive online mop-up</i>	428 (13.4%)
<i>Partially productive online mop up</i>	27 (0.8%)
Unproductive online mop-up	2,748 (85.8%)
<i>Partial interview at main stage, started online mop-up</i>	3 (0.09%)
<i>Partial interview only at main stage</i>	272 (8.5%)
<i>Other unproductive</i>	2,473 (77.2%)
<b>Total issued sample</b>	<b>3,203</b>

<sup>26</sup> The collated questionnaire indicates which questions were included in the mop up survey and can be found here: with the survey documentation

## 9.7 Online mop-up data

The data collected as part of the online mop-up was merged with the full age 23 survey dataset, with a flag to say which instrument each cohort member completed. If a cohort member completed the mop-up survey, that data overrode any data provided in the main survey to avoid having duplicates in the survey dataset. CLS were provided with a final ECS outcome and the field call history i.e., including all interim field outcomes for all cases. In the survey dataset, a flag was included for data collection mode and also data collection instrument.

# 10 Survey response

## 10.1 Cohort member response

The issued sample for MCS8 comprised 13,713 cohort members.

A total of 9,735 cohort members ended the survey with a productive outcome, of which 8,900 outcomes for cohort members were classified as fully productive, and 793 were classified as partially productive. In addition, there were 42 proxy interviews. The outcome for a cohort member was classified as fully productive if all the main survey elements at the main stage had been completed. The outcome was classified as partially productive if the cohort member completed the Household relationships module of the main questionnaire or if they completed all of the mop up survey or the Household relationships module of the mop-up survey.

An initial survey response rate<sup>27</sup> of 68.8% was achieved with a co-operation rate<sup>28</sup> of 73.7% without the online mop-up. Table 10.1.1 provides a detailed breakdown of responses to the survey.

To maximise the number of cohort members taking part, a subsample of those who had not responded by the end of main-stage fieldwork were invited to complete a shortened online mop-up questionnaire which yielded a further 372 interviews from cohort members who had previously had unproductive outcomes<sup>29</sup>. This increased the survey response rate to 71.6%, and the co-operation rate to 76.6%.

Table 10.1.1 provides a detailed breakdown of the responses to the survey including the effect of the online mop-up survey. A summary of eligibility for the online mop-up and the number of interviews achieved can be found in Chapter 9.

---

<sup>27</sup> Survey response rate = productive/(productive+unproductive+uncertain eligibility)

<sup>28</sup> Co-operation rate = productive/(productive+unproductive)

<sup>29</sup> Note that some cohort members who completed the mop-up survey would have had a partial productive outcome at the main stage.

**Table 10.1.1: Summary of contact and response**

MCS8 cohort member outcomes	No.	Survey response Rate	Co-operation Rate
<b>Total sample</b>	<b>13,713</b>		
<b>Total ineligible</b>	<b>82</b>		
Died	11		
Emigrated (no email to be eligible for mop-up)	71		
Cohort member in prison	25		
<b>Total eligible sample</b>	<b>13,606</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	
<b>Uncertain eligibility</b>	<b>896</b>	<b>6.59%</b>	
Untraced movers/other unknown eligibility	885	6.50%	
Traced movers/ran out of time	11	0.08%	
<b>Total sample traced and eligible</b>	<b>12,710</b>	<b>93.41%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
<b>Productive</b>	<b>9,735</b>	<b>71.55%</b>	<b>76.59%</b>
<b>Fully productive</b>	<b>8,900</b>	<b>65.41%</b>	<b>70.02%</b>
Online before face-to-face fieldwork began	4,248	31.22%	33.42%
Online after face-to-face fieldwork began	2,606	19.15%	20.50%
Face-to-face interview	2,046	15.04%	16.10%
<b>Partially productive</b>	<b>793</b>	<b>5.83%</b>	<b>6.24%</b>
Online before face-to-face fieldwork began	117		
Online after face-to-face fieldwork began	212		
Face-to-face interview	9		
Mop-up - fully complete	428		
Mop-up - partially complete	27		
<b>Proxy interview</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>0.31%</b>	<b>0.33%</b>
<b>Refusals</b>	<b>1,963</b>	<b>14.43%</b>	<b>15.44%</b>
Refusal to office	32	0.24%	0.25%
Refusal to interviewer	1,931	14.19%	15.19%
<b>Other unproductive</b>	<b>1,037</b>	<b>7.44%</b>	<b>7.96%</b>
Non-contact	659	4.84%	5.18%
Moved abroad (no contact at mop-up)	74		
Broken appointment - no recontact	148	1.09%	1.16%
Language difficulties	0	0.00%	0.00%
Cohort member unavailable	96	0.71%	0.76%
Data lost on tablet	0	0.00%	0.00%
Other reason	35	0.26%	0.28%

Table 10.1.2 provides a breakdown of mode of completion by wave, including the effect of the online mop-up survey.

**Table 10.1.2: Mode of completion by wave**

MCS8 cohort member outcomes	Soft launch <sup>30</sup>	Wave 1	Wave 2	Total
<b>Total sample</b>	<b>3,073</b>	<b>6,455</b>	<b>4,185</b>	<b>13,713</b>
<b>Productive</b>	<b>2,148</b>	<b>4,478</b>	<b>3,109</b>	<b>9,735</b>
Online before face-to-face fieldwork began	<b>543</b>	<b>1,965</b>	<b>1857</b>	<b>4,365</b>
Online after face-to-face fieldwork began	<b>293</b>	<b>1,721</b>	<b>804</b>	<b>2,818</b>
Face-to-face interview	<b>1,199</b>	<b>569</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>2,055</b>
Proxy (face-to-face)	<b>17</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>42</b>
Mop up (online)	<b>96</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>455</b>
<b>% productive online before face-to-face fieldwork began</b>	<b>25.3%</b>	<b>43.9%</b>	<b>59.7%</b>	<b>44.8%</b>
<b>% productive online after face-to-face fieldwork began</b>	<b>13.6%</b>	<b>38.4%</b>	<b>25.9%</b>	<b>28.9%</b>
<b>% productive face-to-face interview</b>	<b>55.8%</b>	<b>12.7%</b>	<b>9.2%</b>	<b>21.1%</b>
<b>% productive face-to-face proxy</b>	<b>0.8%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>
<b>% productive online mop up</b>	<b>4.5%</b>	<b>4.7%</b>	<b>4.8%</b>	<b>4.7%</b>

## 10.2 Refusals

The most common reason coded by interviewers for refusal was “too busy” (29% of refusing cohort members). This was followed by “Respondent does not want to bother” (21% of refusing cohort members) and “other” (9% of refusing cohort members). Table 10.2.1 provides a breakdown of reasons for refusal.

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

<sup>30</sup> Note the soft launch involved an experiment in which half of the sample were allocated to face-to-face interviewing only and the other half to web/face-to-face interviewing.

**Table 10.2.1 Reasons for refusal**

Reason given for refusal	N	% of reasons for refusal	% of refusing cohort members
Too busy	616	22.8%	29.1%
Respondent does not want to bother	450	16.6%	21.3%
Family member refuses on behalf of respondent	185	6.8%	8.7%
Survey not important	112	4.1%	5.3%
Don't see the personal benefit	89	3.3%	4.2%
Survey too long	84	3.1%	4.0%
Stressful family situation	76	2.8%	3.6%
Survey is a waste of time	66	2.4%	3.1%
Nothing's changed since last time	44	1.6%	2.1%
Questions too personal	42	1.6%	2.0%
Looking after children	36	1.3%	1.7%
Don't see the public benefit	25	0.9%	1.2%
Other family member opposes participation	17	0.6%	0.8%
Unhappy about confidentiality	15	0.6%	0.7%
Looking after ill/ elderly	10	0.4%	0.5%
Dislike interviewer	4	0.1%	0.2%
Someone outside household convinces respondent to refuse	2	0.1%	0.1%
Other (specify)	195	7.2%	9.2%
No reason given	636	23.5%	30.0%
<b>Total reasons (multicode)</b>	<b>2,704</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	
<b>Total cohort members refusing</b>	<b>2,117</b>		
<b>Mean reasons per refusal</b>	<b>1.28</b>		

### 10.3 Cohort member response by their response at prior sweeps

Table 10.3.1 shows a summary of response based on cohort members' last participation status. As would be expected, co-operation rates were highest among cohort members that had taken part at the last sweep (83.8%), and lowest for those where they had not participated in the last sweep (49.3%).

**Table 10.3.1: Summary of response by cohort member's prior response history**

MCS8 cohort member outcomes	Participation at previous sweep		
	Total	Participated at MCS7	Did not participate at MCS7
Outcome			
Total sample	13,713	10,340	3,373
Total ineligible	82	24	58
Total eligible sample	13,631	10,316	3,315
Uncertain eligibility	896	298	598
Total sample traced and eligible	12,735	10,018	2,717
Productive	9,735	8,395	1,340
Fully productive	8,900	7,792	1,108
Partially productive	793	579	214
Proxy interview	42	24	18
Refusals	1,926	973	953
Other unproductive	1,037	632	405
<b>% Sample traced and eligible</b>	<b>93.4%</b>	<b>97.1%</b>	<b>82.0%</b>
<b>Survey response rate</b>	<b>71.4%</b>	<b>81.4%</b>	<b>40.4%</b>
<b>Co-operation rate</b>	<b>76.4%</b>	<b>83.8%</b>	<b>49.3%</b>

Table 10.3.2 provides a more detailed overview of responses based on the previous response history.

**Table 10.3.2 Summary of response by cohort member's prior response history**

MCS8 cohort member outcomes	Whether participated at previous sweep or not		
	Total	Participated at MCS7	Did not participate at MCS7
Outcome			
<b>Total sample</b>	<b>13,713</b>	<b>10,340</b>	<b>3,373</b>
<b>Total ineligible</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>72</b>
Died	11	5	6
Emigrated (no email to be eligible for mop-up)	71	19	52
Cohort member in prison	25	11	14
<b>Total eligible sample</b>	<b>13,606</b>	<b>10,305</b>	<b>3,301</b>
<b>Uncertain eligibility</b>	<b>896</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>598</b>
Untraced movers/other unknown eligibility	885	293	592
Traced movers/ran out of time	11	5	6
<b>Total sample traced and eligible</b>	<b>12,710</b>	<b>10,007</b>	<b>2,703</b>
<b>Productive</b>	<b>9,735</b>	<b>8,395</b>	<b>1,340</b>
<b>Fully productive</b>	<b>8,900</b>	<b>7,792</b>	<b>1,108</b>
Online before face-to-face fieldwork began	4,248	3,889	359
Online after face-to-face fieldwork began	2,606	2,113	493
Face-to-face interview	2,046	1,790	256
<b>Partially productive</b>	<b>793</b>	<b>579</b>	<b>214</b>
Online before face-to-face fieldwork began	117	76	41
Online after face-to-face fieldwork began	212	145	67
Face-to-face interview	9	7	2
Mop-up - fully complete	428	332	96
Mop-up - partially complete	27	19	8
<b>Proxy interview</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Refusals</b>	<b>1,926</b>	<b>973</b>	<b>953</b>
Refusal to office	32	21	11
Refusal to interviewer	1,894	952	942
<b>Other unproductive</b>	<b>1,012</b>	<b>621</b>	<b>391</b>
Non-contact	659	375	284
Moved abroad (no contact at mop-up)	74	62	12
Broken appointment - no recontact	148	100	48
Language difficulties	0	0	0
Cohort member unavailable	96	63	33
Data lost on tablet	0	0	0
Other reason	35	21	14
<b>% Sample traced and eligible</b>	<b>93.4%</b>	<b>97.1%</b>	<b>81.9%</b>
<b>Survey response rate</b>	<b>71.5%</b>	<b>81.5%</b>	<b>40.6%</b>
<b>Co-operation rate</b>	<b>76.6%</b>	<b>83.9%</b>	<b>49.6%</b>

#### 10.4 Cohort member response by MCS7 outcome

Table 10.4.1 shows cohort member response by outcome at MCS7. As might be expected, cohort members from families who were productive at MCS7 were most likely to participate in MCS8 (79.7%). More than two in five (42.5%) cohort members from families who had refused at MCS7 participated in MCS8.

## 10.4.1 Summary of response by MCS7 outcome

MCS8 cohort member outcomes	MCS7 outcome						
	Total	Productive	Ineligible	Non-contact	Refusal	Other unproductive	Not issued at MCS7
Outcome							
<b>Total sample</b>	<b>13,713</b>	<b>10,695</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>514</b>	<b>1,673</b>	<b>552</b>	<b>271</b>
<b>Total ineligible</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>19</b>
Died	11	8	0	1	0	2	0
Emigrated (no email to be eligible for mop-up)	71	30	0	5	14	7	15
Cohort member in prison	25	12	0	1	5	3	4
<b>Total eligible sample</b>	<b>13,606</b>	<b>10,645</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>507</b>	<b>1,654</b>	<b>540</b>	<b>252</b>
<b>Uncertain eligibility</b>	<b>896</b>	<b>337</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>77</b>
Untraced movers/other unknown eligibility	885	331	1	90	226	160	77
Traced movers/ran out of time	11	6	0	2	1	2	0
<b>Total sample traced and eligible</b>	<b>12,710</b>	<b>10,308</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>415</b>	<b>1,427</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>175</b>
<b>Productive</b>	<b>9,735</b>	<b>8,489</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>703</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>Fully productive</b>	<b>8,900</b>	<b>7,860</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>582</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>93</b>
Online before face-to-face fieldwork began	4,248	3,877	1	66	203	64	37
Online after face-to-face fieldwork began	2,606	2,174	2	78	257	58	37
Face-to-face interview	2,046	1,809	2	43	122	51	19
<b>Partially productive</b>	<b>793</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>9</b>
Online before face-to-face fieldwork began	117	75	0	8	19	14	1
Online after face-to-face fieldwork began	212	154	0	9	36	10	3
Face-to-face interview	9	7	0	0	1	0	1
Mop-up - fully complete	428	345	0	13	54	13	3
Mop-up - partially complete	27	19	0	0	5	2	1
<b>Proxy interview</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Refusals</b>	<b>1,926</b>	<b>1,130</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>522</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>37</b>
Refusal to office	32	24	0	1	5	0	2
Refusal to interviewer	1,894	1,106	0	127	517	109	35
<b>Other unproductive</b>	<b>1,012</b>	<b>637</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>47</b>

Non-contact	659	405	1	53	136	43	21
Moved abroad (no contact at mop-up)	74	30	0	5	14	7	15
Broken appointment - no recontact	148	111	1	6	24	2	4
Language difficulties	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cohort member unavailable	96	67	0	7	16	3	3
Data lost on tablet	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other reason	35	24	0	1	3	3	4
<b>% Sample traced and eligible</b>	<b>93.4%</b>	<b>96.8%</b>	<b>87.5%</b>	<b>81.9%</b>	<b>86.3%</b>	<b>70.0%</b>	<b>69.4%</b>
<b>Survey response rate</b>	<b>71.5%</b>	<b>79.7%</b>	<b>62.5%</b>	<b>43.2%</b>	<b>42.5%</b>	<b>40.0%</b>	<b>40.9%</b>
<b>Co-operation rate</b>	<b>76.6%</b>	<b>82.4%</b>	<b>71.4%</b>	<b>52.8%</b>	<b>49.3%</b>	<b>57.1%</b>	<b>58.9%</b>

## 10.5 Cohort member response by stratum

The original sample for MCS was drawn using strata based on country of residence and area characteristics, with oversampling from disadvantaged wards and, in England, from wards with relatively high prevalence of ethnic minority residents.

Table 10.5.1 presents cohort member response by these original strata, with the highest rates among those from Northern Ireland – Advantaged (80.8%) and England – Advantaged (74.8%), and the lowest among those from Scotland – Disadvantaged (64.6%).

**Table 10.5.1: Summary of response by original sampling 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
<b>Total sample</b>	<b>13,713</b>	<b>3649</b>	<b>3460</b>	<b>1904</b>	<b>605</b>	<b>1362</b>	<b>761</b>	<b>715</b>	<b>498</b>	<b>759</b>
<b>Total ineligible</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
Died	11	1	4	1	0	2	0	1	1	1
Emigrated (no email to be eligible for mop-up)	71	29	11	9	6	7	4	2	1	2
Cohort member in prison	25	2	10	8	1	3	0	1	0	0
<b>Total eligible sample</b>	<b>13,606</b>	<b>3,617</b>	<b>3,435</b>	<b>1,886</b>	<b>598</b>	<b>1,350</b>	<b>757</b>	<b>711</b>	<b>496</b>	<b>756</b>
<b>Uncertain eligibility</b>	<b>896</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>49</b>
Untraced movers/other unknown eligibility	885	165	276	128	36	79	56	74	22	49
Traced movers/ran out of time	11	2	6	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
<b>Total sample traced and eligible</b>	<b>12,710</b>	<b>3,450</b>	<b>3,153</b>	<b>1,757</b>	<b>561</b>	<b>1,270</b>	<b>701</b>	<b>637</b>	<b>474</b>	<b>707</b>
<b>Productive</b>	<b>9,735</b>	<b>2,707</b>	<b>2,371</b>	<b>1,361</b>	<b>419</b>	<b>931</b>	<b>542</b>	<b>459</b>	<b>401</b>	<b>544</b>
<b>Fully productive</b>	<b>8,900</b>	<b>2,523</b>	<b>2,147</b>	<b>1,235</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>845</b>	<b>489</b>	<b>408</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>491</b>
Online before face-to-face fieldwork began	4,248	1323	1053	508	203	382	242	188	163	186
Online after face-to-face fieldwork began	2,606	645	597	377	72	252	159	144	152	208
Face-to-face interview	2,046	555	497	350	104	211	88	76	68	97
<b>Partially productive</b>	<b>793</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>50</b>
Online before face-to-face fieldwork began	117	20	30	20	8	10	9	14	0	6
Online after face-to-face fieldwork began	212	36	54	32	14	27	11	10	6	22
Face-to-face interview	9	5	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Mop-up - fully complete	428	111	118	55	17	41	32	26	8	20
Mop-up - partially complete	27	6	8	7	1	1	0	1	1	2
<b>Proxy interview</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Refusals</b>	<b>1,926</b>	<b>475</b>	<b>481</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>128</b>
Refusal to office	32	5	7	5	2	4	3	2	1	3

Refusal to interviewer	1,894	470	474	234	90	218	105	119	59	125
<b>Other unproductive</b>	<b>1,012</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>33</b>
Non-contact	659	164	177	103	25	78	38	48	6	20
Moved abroad (no contact at mop-up)	74	22	19	12	6	5	3	1	5	1
Broken appointment – no recontact	148	40	44	22	10	18	3	4	0	7
Language difficulties	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cohort member unavailable	96	21	33	14	7	7	6	3	2	3
Data lost on tablet	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other reason	35	11	13	1	2	5	0	1	0	2
<b>% Sample traced and eligible</b>	<b>93.4%</b>	<b>95.4%</b>	<b>91.8%</b>	<b>93.2%</b>	<b>93.8%</b>	<b>94.1%</b>	<b>92.6%</b>	<b>89.6%</b>	<b>95.6%</b>	<b>93.5%</b>
<b>Survey response rate</b>	<b>71.5%</b>	<b>74.8%</b>	<b>69.0%</b>	<b>72.2%</b>	<b>70.1%</b>	<b>69.0%</b>	<b>71.6%</b>	<b>64.6%</b>	<b>80.8%</b>	<b>72.0%</b>
<b>Co-operation rate</b>	<b>76.6%</b>	<b>78.5%</b>	<b>75.2%</b>	<b>77.5%</b>	<b>74.7%</b>	<b>73.3%</b>	<b>77.3%</b>	<b>72.1%</b>	<b>84.6%</b>	<b>76.9%</b>

## 10.6 Household response by priority status within wave

Household response by priority status within wave is illustrated in Table 10.6.1. Cases given priority status were those whose addresses had not recently been confirmed, in most cases since before MCS7<sup>31</sup>. There was no priority allocation for the soft launch as it might have interfered with the experiment. After the soft launch, priority cases were allocated to the first fieldwork wave whenever possible to maximise the amount of time to work these cases. The co-operation rate for cases of priority status was significantly lower (60.4% compared to a co-operation rate of 85.2% for non-priority cases).

As outlined in section 7.2, the main stage fieldwork was split into waves for fieldwork management purposes.

---

<sup>31</sup> Those whose status was listed by CLS as "Gone away" (G) or "Unconfirmed" (W), or those whose status was listed by CLS as "Confirmed" (C) during or before MCS7 and were non-contacts/not issued at MCS7 or not productive or issued at all of the COVID/autumn 2021 web surveys.

**Table 10.6.1 Summary of response by priority cases by wave**

Outcome	Total	Soft launch	Priority			Non-priority		
			Total	Wave 1	Wave 2	Total	Wave 1	Wave 2
<b>Total sample</b>	<b>13,713</b>	<b>3,073</b>	<b>5,137</b>	<b>3,573</b>	<b>1,564</b>	<b>8,576</b>	<b>2,882</b>	<b>2,621</b>
<b>Total ineligible</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
Died	11	3	6	5	1	5	1	1
Emigrated (no email to be eligible for mop-up)	71	18	46	25	21	25	4	3
Cohort member in prison	25	7	14	10	4	11	1	3
<b>Total eligible sample</b>	<b>13,606</b>	<b>3,045</b>	<b>5,071</b>	<b>3,533</b>	<b>1,538</b>	<b>8,535</b>	<b>2,876</b>	<b>2,614</b>
<b>Uncertain eligibility</b>	<b>896</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>661</b>	<b>463</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>36</b>
Untraced movers/other unknown eligibility	885	153	656	462	194	229	41	35
Traced movers/ran out of time	11	2	5	1	4	6	3	1
<b>Total sample traced and eligible</b>	<b>12,710</b>	<b>2,890</b>	<b>4,410</b>	<b>3,070</b>	<b>1,340</b>	<b>8,300</b>	<b>2,832</b>	<b>2,578</b>
<b>Productive Fully productive</b>	<b>9,735</b>	<b>2,148</b>	<b>2,664</b>	<b>1,890</b>	<b>774</b>	<b>7,071</b>	<b>2,588</b>	<b>2,335</b>
<b>Online before face-to-face fieldwork began</b>	<b>4,248</b>	<b>526</b>	<b>675</b>	<b>432</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>3,573</b>	<b>1,486</b>	<b>1,561</b>
<b>Online after face-to-face fieldwork began</b>	<b>2,606</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>1,152</b>	<b>857</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>1,454</b>	<b>734</b>	<b>444</b>
<b>Face-to-face interview</b>	<b>2,046</b>	<b>1,192</b>	<b>463</b>	<b>341</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>1,583</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>165</b>
<b>Partially productive</b>	<b>793</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>353</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>162</b>
<b>Online before face-to-face fieldwork began</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Online after face-to-face</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>38</b>

fieldwork began								
Face-to-face interview	9	7	1	1	0	8	1	0
Mop-up - fully complete	428	87	169	118	51	259	78	94
Mop-up - partially complete	27	9	10	6	4	17	7	1
<b>Proxy interview</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Refusals</b>	<b>1,926</b>	<b>543</b>	<b>1,100</b>	<b>787</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>826</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>129</b>
Refusal to office	32	15	12	8	4	20	3	2
Refusal to interviewer	1,894	528	1,088	779	309	806	151	127
<b>Other unproductive</b>	<b>1,012</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>617</b>	<b>369</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>113</b>
Non-contact	659	53	459	272	187	200	63	84
Moved abroad (no contact at mop-up)	74	27	24	15	9	50	12	11
Broken appointment - no recontact	148	53	71	42	29	77	9	15
Language difficulties	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cohort member unavailable	96	40	49	31	18	47	5	2
Data lost on tablet	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other reason	35	19	14	9	5	21	1	1
<b>% Sample traced and eligible</b>	<b>93.4%</b>	<b>94.9%</b>	<b>87.0%</b>	<b>86.9%</b>	<b>87.1%</b>	<b>97.2%</b>	<b>98.5%</b>	<b>98.6%</b>
<b>Survey response rate</b>	<b>71.5%</b>	<b>70.5%</b>	<b>52.5%</b>	<b>53.5%</b>	<b>50.3%</b>	<b>82.8%</b>	<b>90.0%</b>	<b>89.3%</b>
<b>Co-operation rate</b>	<b>76.6%</b>	<b>74.3%</b>	<b>60.4%</b>	<b>61.6%</b>	<b>57.8%</b>	<b>85.2%</b>	<b>91.4%</b>	<b>90.6%</b>

## 10.7 Cohort member response by country of issue

Response varied across countries as shown in Table 10.7.1. The highest co-operation rate was in Northern Ireland (80.2%), with the lowest in Wales (73.5%). Note that for the purpose of this table England includes the Isle of Man and Channel Islands.

**Table 10.7.1 Summary of response by country of issue**

Outcome	Total	England	Wales	Scotland	N Ireland
<b>Total sample</b>	<b>13,713</b>	<b>9,166</b>	<b>1,861</b>	<b>1,466</b>	<b>1,220</b>
<b>Total ineligible</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>
Died	11	6	2	1	2
Emigrated (no email to be eligible for mop-up)	71	51	11	6	3
Cohort member in prison	25	21	3	1	0
<b>Total eligible sample</b>	<b>13,606</b>	<b>9,088</b>	<b>1,845</b>	<b>1,458</b>	<b>1,215</b>
<b>Uncertain eligibility</b>	<b>896</b>	<b>604</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>61</b>
Untraced movers/other unknown eligibility	885	595	105	124	61
Traced movers/ran out of time	11	9	2	0	0
<b>Total sample traced and eligible</b>	<b>12,710</b>	<b>8,484</b>	<b>1,738</b>	<b>1,334</b>	<b>1,154</b>
<b>Productive</b>	<b>9,735</b>	<b>6,525</b>	<b>1,277</b>	<b>1,007</b>	<b>926</b>
<b>Fully productive</b>	<b>8,900</b>	<b>5,978</b>	<b>1,153</b>	<b>911</b>	<b>858</b>
Online before face-to-face fieldwork began	4,248	2,923	541	447	337
Online after face-to-face fieldwork began	2,606	1,639	309	298	360
Face-to-face interview	2,046	1,416	303	166	161
<b>Partially productive</b>	<b>793</b>	<b>519</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>62</b>
Online before face-to-face fieldwork began	117	74	17	21	5
Online after face-to-face fieldwork began	212	125	42	18	27
Face-to-face interview	9	8	1	0	0
Mop-up - fully complete	428	291	55	55	27
Mop-up - partially complete	27	21	2	1	3
<b>Proxy interview</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Refusals</b>	<b>1,926</b>	<b>1,217</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>181</b>
Refusal to office	32	17	6	5	4
Refusal to interviewer	1,894	1,200	297	220	177
<b>Other unproductive</b>	<b>1,012</b>	<b>712</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>45</b>
Non-contact	659	456	97	81	25
Moved abroad (no contact at mop-up)	74	53	11	4	6
Broken appointment - no recontact	148	108	26	7	7
Language difficulties	0	0	0	0	0
Cohort member unavailable	96	70	13	8	5
Data lost on tablet	0	0	0	0	0
Other reason	35	25	7	1	2
<b>% Sample traced and eligible</b>	<b>93.4%</b>	<b>93.4%</b>	<b>94.2%</b>	<b>91.5%</b>	<b>95.0%</b>
<b>Survey response rate</b>	<b>71.5%</b>	<b>71.8%</b>	<b>69.2%</b>	<b>69.1%</b>	<b>76.2%</b>
<b>Co-operation rate</b>	<b>76.6%</b>	<b>76.9%</b>	<b>73.5%</b>	<b>75.5%</b>	<b>80.2%</b>

## 10.8 Mode of contact attempts

At the main stage, only cases where the cohort member had not already completed the survey online by an agreed date were issued to interviewers. The same approach was taken for cases issued to one arm of the experiment in the soft launch. For the other arm, all cases were issued to the interviewers.

The assigned first mode of contact was designed to maximise response rates. If a cohort member had refused or was otherwise unproductive at MCS7, interviewers were instructed to make their initial contact attempt with them by a face-to-face visit. This instruction was given for 3,084 cohort members (30.6% of those that were issued to an interviewer). Interviewers were instructed to make first contact with the remaining 6,986 issued cases by telephone.

As might be expected, among cases issued to the field, a lower proportion completed the survey online prior to interviewer contact if a face-to-face first contact had been initially advised than for those where telephone contact first had been initially recommended (3.7% compared to 12.3%).

Overall interviewers attempted contact with 73.7% of issued cases and made visits to 78.5% of issued cases. As might be expected, interviewers were more likely to visit cases where a face-to-face first contact had been initially advised (92.3%) than where telephone contact first had been initially recommended (72.4%).

Among interviews completed following interviewer contact, 31.6% were achieved following telephone contact only, 14.3% were achieved with no telephone contact (visits only were conducted) and 54.0% were achieved following both telephone contact and visits.

**Table 10.8.1 Summary of contact attempts by phase**

	Total	Telephone advised				F2F advised			
		Total	Soft launch	Wave 1	Wave 2	Total	Soft launch	Wave 1	Wave 2
<b>Total sample</b>	<b>13,713</b>	<b>10,340</b>	<b>2,314</b>	<b>4,706</b>	<b>3,320</b>	<b>3,373</b>	<b>759</b>	<b>1749</b>	<b>865</b>
Not issued to field interviewers (unproductive)	11	8	2	4	2	3	0	0	3
Not issued to field interviewers (productive)	3,632	3,346	459	1,227	1,660	286	41	123	122
<b>Total sample eligible for contact</b>	<b>10,070</b>	<b>6,986</b>	<b>1,853</b>	<b>3,475</b>	<b>1,658</b>	<b>3,084</b>	<b>718</b>	<b>1,626</b>	<b>740</b>
<b>Online interview achieved prior to any contact attempt by interviewer</b>	<b>972</b>	<b>859</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>768</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>5</b>
% online interview achieved prior to any contact attempt by interviewer	9.7%	12.3%	2.2%	22.1%	3.1%	3.7%	0.4%	6.5%	0.7%
<b>Interviewer made no contact attempt and no interview achieved</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
% interviewer made no contact attempt and no interview achieved	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%	0.2%	0.3%	0.1%	0.1%
<b>Interviewer made contact attempt</b>	<b>8,109</b>	<b>5,256</b>	<b>1,768</b>	<b>1,932</b>	<b>1,556</b>	<b>2,853</b>	<b>710</b>	<b>1,414</b>	<b>729</b>
<b>Interviewer made contact attempt by telephone</b>	<b>7,425</b>	<b>5,553</b>	<b>1,590</b>	<b>2,479</b>	<b>1,484</b>	<b>1,872</b>	<b>458</b>	<b>930</b>	<b>484</b>
% of issued sample where contact attempt by telephone	73.7%	79.5%	85.9%	71.3%	89.5%	60.7%	63.8%	57.2%	65.4%
<b>Interviewer made visit</b>	<b>7,899</b>	<b>5,054</b>	<b>1,718</b>	<b>2,150</b>	<b>1,186</b>	<b>2,845</b>	<b>707</b>	<b>1448</b>	<b>690</b>
% of issued sample visited	78.5%	72.4%	92.8%	61.9%	71.5%	92.3%	98.5%	89.1%	93.2%
<b>Interview achieved after contact with interviewer</b>	<b>4,676</b>	<b>3,839</b>	<b>1,303</b>	<b>1,621</b>	<b>915</b>	<b>837</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>206</b>

<b>In person interview achieved after telephone only contact with interviewer</b>	<b>717</b>	<b>698</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>In person interview achieved after in person only contact with interviewer</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>In person interview achieved after in person and telephone contact with interviewer</b>	<b>1,038</b>	<b>897</b>	<b>535</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Online interview achieved after telephone only contact with interviewer</b>	<b>762</b>	<b>729</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>404</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Online interview achieved after in person only contact with interviewer</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Online interview achieved after in person and telephone contact with interviewer</b>	<b>1,489</b>	<b>1,132</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>641</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>113</b>
<b>Telephone interview</b>	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
% of interviews in person after telephone contact only with interviewer	31.6%	37.2%	34.1%	36.6%	42.7%	6.2%	2.9%	6.8%	8.3%
% of interviews in person after in person contact only with interviewer	14.3%	9.9%	12.7%	8.8%	8.0%	34.3%	32.0%	38.6%	27.7%
% of interviews in person after in person and telephone contact with interviewer	54.1%	52.9%	53.3%	54.6%	49.3%	59.5%	65.0%	54.6%	64.1%

## 10.9 Interviewer visits to productive households

Table 10.9.1 shows the total number of personal visits made by interviewers across all productive cases, including those who were never issued to an interviewer and completed during the initial online-only phase. Around six in ten productive cohort members (55.8%) required no personal visits because they completed the survey online, four in ten cohort members were interviewed after one or two visits (44.1%).

**Table 10.9.1: Number of personal visits across all productive cohort members at MCS8**

Number of personal visits	N	% of MCS7 productive families	CAPI	Web	Telephone
0	5,437	55.85%	0	5,437	0
1	1,490	15.31%	797	693	0
2	957	9.83%	501	456	0
3	643	6.61%	327	315	1
4	401	4.12%	176	224	1
5	244	2.51%	112	132	0
6	176	1.81%	70	106	0
7	139	1.43%	34	105	0
8	78	0.80%	32	46	0
9	57	0.59%	16	41	0
10 or more	113	1.16%	30	83	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,735</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>2,095</b>	<b>7,638</b>	<b>2</b>
Mean (all)	1.3		2.6	0.9	3.5
Mean (at least one personal visit)	2.9		2.6	3.2	3.5

Table 10.9.2 shows the total number of personal visits made by interviewers, when a case was issued to field, after the initial online-only phase. Of these roughly three in ten productive cohort members required no personal visits because they completed the survey online – this may have been prompted for example by a call from an interviewer. Four in ten cohort members were interviewed after one or two visits by an interviewer (40.6%). On average 2.0 personal visits were required to each productive cohort member issued to field, but 2.84 visits were required where a cohort member had to be visited.

**Table 10.9.2: Number of personal visits per productive cohort members issued to field at MCS8**

Number of personal visits	N	% of MCS7 productive families	CAPI	Web	Telephone
0	1,751	30.5%	0	1,750	0
1	1,439	25.1%	797	642	0
2	887	15.5%	501	386	0
3	600	10.5%	327	272	1
4	371	6.5%	176	194	1
5	217	3.8%	112	105	0
6	148	2.6%	70	78	0
7	113	2.0%	34	79	0
8	68	1.2%	32	36	0
9	50	0.9%	16	34	0
10 or more	90	1.6%	30	60	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,733</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>2,095</b>	<b>3,636</b>	<b>2</b>
Mean (all)	1.97		2.60	1.61	3.50
Mean (at least one personal visit)	2.84		2.60	3.10	3.50

## 10.10 Reissues

An agreed list of outcome codes was agreed as in scope for reissue, including cases where the cohort members refused to the interviewer, the interviewer was unable to contact the cohort member after eight face-to-face visits and five phone calls, or for some other reasons (e.g., the cohort member was busy or away from home). All those cases were reviewed to determine whether they could be reissued. A total of 1,157 addresses were reissued to a new interviewer (11.5% of all cases issued to interviewers). Of these, 387 resulted in a productive outcome, either during reissue fieldwork or later during the mop up (survey response rate = 33.6%). The reissue response rate was similar to MCS7 (33.4%).

The majority of these cases (873 or 75.5%) were non-contacts at the first issue. Of the remaining reissued cases, 247 were refusals to the original interviewer and 37 had an “other” outcome. The second-issue co-operation rate was highest for families with an “other” unproductive outcome at first issue (40.6%) and lowest for those who had refused at first issue (26.1%).

There was no consistent difference in co-operation rates between waves across first-issue outcomes, and the scope for inference is limited by the relatively small number of wave 2 cases reissued (because fewer cases were assigned to wave 2). Among the 43 wave 2 cases reissued following a refusal, the co-operation rate was 33.3%, compared with 23.2% for wave 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.<sup>32</sup> 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 10.10.1 provides all final issue outcomes for reissued cases, split by first-issue outcomes.

---

<sup>32</sup> Lynn et al., Recommended Standard Final Outcome Categories and Standard Definitions of Response Rate for Social Surveys, ISER Working Papers Series: 2001-23.

Table 10.10.1 Summary of final issue outcomes of reissued households

Outcome	Total	Issue 1 non-contacts				Issue 1 refusals				Issue 1 other unproductives			
		Total	Soft launch	Wave 1	Wave 2	Total	Soft launch	Wave 1	Wave 2	Total	Soft launch	Wave 1	Wave 2
<b>Total sample reissued</b>	<b>1,157</b>	<b>873</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Total ineligible</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Emigrated (no email to be eligible for mop-up)	5	4	1	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Cohort member in prison	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total eligible sample</b>	<b>1,151</b>	<b>868</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Uncertain eligibility</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>
Untraced movers/other unknown eligibility	75	58	16	23	19	12	6	5	1	5	0	5	0
Traced movers/ran out of time	8	8	2	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total sample traced and eligible</b>	<b>1,068</b>	<b>802</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>510</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Productive</b>	<b>387</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Fully productive</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>
Online before face-to-face fieldwork began	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Online after face-to-face fieldwork began	200	166	35	97	34	26	3	15	8	8	0	8	0
Face-to-face interview	80	67	19	22	26	12	7	4	1	1	0	0	1
<b>Partially productive</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>
Online before face-to-face fieldwork began	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Online after face-to-face fieldwork began	7	7	1	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Face-to-face interview	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mop-up - fully complete	83	61	13	37	11	18	8	7	3	4	0	4	0
Mop-up - partially complete	15	10	0	8	2	5	0	3	2	0	0	0	0
<b>Proxy interview</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Refusals</b>	<b>359</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>
Refusal to office	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Refusal to interviewer	358	282	39	214	29	70	16	47	7	6	0	6	0
<b>Other unproductive</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>
Non-contact	191	127	23	83	21	53	20	20	13	11	2	8	1
Moved abroad (no contact at mop-up)	4	4	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Broken appointment - no recontact	25	23	1	17	5	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0
Language difficulties	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cohort member unavailable	30	23	5	5	13	7	1	3	3	0	0	0	0
Data lost on tablet	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other reason	67	25	3	14	8	41	11	26	4	1	0	1	0
<b>Survey response rate</b>	<b>33.6%</b>	<b>36.1%</b>	<b>43.3%</b>	<b>31.8%</b>	<b>42.5%</b>	<b>24.8%</b>	<b>24.7%</b>	<b>22.3%</b>	<b>32.6%</b>	<b>35.1%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>36.4%</b>	<b>50.0%</b>
<b>Co-operation rate</b>	<b>36.2%</b>	<b>39.0%</b>	<b>48.9%</b>	<b>33.5%</b>	<b>48.1%</b>	<b>26.1%</b>	<b>26.9%</b>	<b>23.2%</b>	<b>33.3%</b>	<b>40.6%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>42.9%</b>	<b>50.0%</b>

### 10.11 Movers and tracing

Overall, 39.5% of cohort members at MCS8 were identified as movers (i.e., they no longer lived at the issued address<sup>33</sup>). The highest proportion of cohort members identified as movers was in Scotland (44.3%) and the lowest in Northern Ireland (35.3%). This is a higher proportion than at previous sweeps of MCS, as one might expect given cohort members were mostly 23 years of age and most had last been interviewed when 17 years of age.

**Table 10.11.1: Proportion of sample that no longer lived at issued address**

	Total	England	Wales	Scotland	N Ireland
<b>Total sample</b>	<b>13,713</b>	<b>9,166</b>	<b>1,861</b>	<b>1,466</b>	<b>1,220</b>
Non-movers	8,290	5,579	1,105	817	789
Movers	5,423	3,587	756	649	431
% Non-movers	39.5%	39.1%	40.6%	44.3%	35.3%
% Movers	60.5%	60.9%	59.4%	55.7%	64.7%

Just under half (43.4%) of those identified as movers were traced by interviewers, and the overwhelming majority of these cases still lived within the same interviewer area. A further 29.6% of movers were identified before face-to-face fieldwork when the cohort member completed the survey online. If interviewers were not able to trace the respondents, the case was sent to CLS for tracing. CLS successfully traced 3.1% of all movers identified by Ipsos (most of whom did not need tracing by CLS). Prior to and during fieldwork, CLS made use of administrative data sources to trace families.

Table 10.11.2 shows a breakdown of movers, and the tracing outcomes, by country of issue.

**Table 10.11.2: Tracing outcomes for movers**

	Total	England	Wales	Scotland	N Ireland
<b>Total movers</b>	<b>5,423</b>	<b>3,587</b>	<b>756</b>	<b>649</b>	<b>431</b>
<b>Movers who were traced</b>	<b>4,128</b>	<b>2,696</b>	<b>593</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>354</b>
New address provided online before face-to-face fieldwork began	1,604	1,079	199	209	117
Traced by interviewer	2,354	1,498	362	262	232

<sup>33</sup>We defined movers as cases where the cohort member had completed the survey and confirmed they had moved address, if an interviewer had changed the cohort member's postcode in the ECS, or if a mover outcome had been recorded for the cohort member at any point during fieldwork.

- Address within own area	2,039	1,270	320	234	215
- Address outside own area	166	120	20	18	8
- Address overseas/emigrated	149	108	22	10	9
Traced by CLS	170	119	32	14	5
- New address/information	167	117	32	14	4
- Emigrated	0	0	0	0	0
- Refusal/ineligible	3	2	0	0	1
<b>Untraced movers</b>	<b>1,143</b>	<b>787</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>69</b>
Outstanding movers	<b>152</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>8</b>
% New address provided online before face-to-face fieldwork began	<b>29.6%</b>	<b>30.1%</b>	<b>26.3%</b>	<b>32.2%</b>	<b>27.1%</b>
% Traced by interviewer	<b>43.4%</b>	<b>41.8%</b>	<b>47.9%</b>	<b>40.4%</b>	<b>53.8%</b>
% Traced by CLS	<b>3.1%</b>	<b>3.3%</b>	<b>4.2%</b>	<b>2.2%</b>	<b>1.2%</b>
% Untraced	<b>21.1%</b>	<b>21.9%</b>	<b>18.7%</b>	<b>22.5%</b>	<b>16.0%</b>
% Outstanding	<b>2.8%</b>	<b>2.9%</b>	<b>2.9%</b>	<b>2.8%</b>	<b>1.9%</b>

Movers traced by the interviewers were more likely to participate than movers traced by CLS.

Table 10.11.3 shows a summary of household response for all traced movers by country of issue.

Table 10.11.3 Summary of response by country of issue for traced movers

Outcome	Total	Traced by Ipsos				Traced by CLS			
		England	Wales	Scotland	N Ireland	England	Wales	Scotland	N Ireland
<b>Movers who were traced</b>	<b>4,128</b>	<b>2,568</b>	<b>560</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>349</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Ineligible traced movers</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Died	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Emigrated (no email to be eligible for mop-up)	71	51	11	6	3	0	0	0	0
Cohort member in prison	4	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	0
<b>Total eligible movers</b>	<b>4,053</b>	<b>2,517</b>	<b>548</b>	<b>465</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Uncertain eligibility</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Untraced movers/ran out of time	10	8	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Eligible traced movers</b>	<b>4,043</b>	<b>2,509</b>	<b>546</b>	<b>465</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Productive</b>	<b>3,390</b>	<b>2,134</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>385</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Fully productive</b>	<b>3,057</b>	<b>1,938</b>	<b>401</b>	<b>339</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>3</b>
Online before face-to-face fieldwork began	1,368	926	169	170	103	0	0	0	0
Online after face-to-face fieldwork began	1,023	591	130	115	130	35	14	7	1
Face-to-face interview	666	421	102	54	49	26	8	4	2
<b>Partially productive</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Online before face-to-face fieldwork began	40	21	5	12	2	0	0	0	0
Online after face-to-face fieldwork began	85	42	19	7	11	6	0	0	0
Face-to-face interview	6	5	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Mop-up - fully complete	182	111	24	26	12	9	0	0	0
Mop-up - partially complete	15	12	1	1	0	0	1	0	0
<b>Proxy interview</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Refusals</b>	<b>337</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
Refusal to office	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Refusal to interviewer	336	189	49	45	24	21	7	1	0

<b>Other unproductive</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
Non-contact	149	81	22	23	5	15	0	2	1
Moved abroad (no contact at mop-up)	74	53	11	4	6	0	0	0	0
Broken appointment - no recontact	46	26	7	2	3	7	1	0	0
Language difficulties	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cohort member unavailable	22	14	1	5	1	0	1	0	0
Data lost on tablet	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other reason	6	3	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
<b>Survey response rate</b>	<b>83.6%</b>	<b>84.8%</b>	<b>82.1%</b>	<b>82.8%</b>	<b>88.7%</b>	<b>61.6%</b>	<b>69.7%</b>	<b>78.6%</b>	<b>60.0%</b>
<b>Co-operation rate</b>	<b>83.8%</b>	<b>85.1%</b>	<b>82.4%</b>	<b>82.8%</b>	<b>88.7%</b>	<b>61.6%</b>	<b>69.7%</b>	<b>78.6%</b>	<b>60.0%</b>

## 10.12 Response to individual survey elements

MCS8 consisted of the following survey elements:

- Cohort member web or face-to-face interview (including cognitive assessments and data linkage)
- Cohort member physical measurements (soft launch CAPI-only cases)
- Placement of partner online questionnaire
- Partner online interview

The following response tables to individual survey elements are based on main data only and do not include the mop-up survey.

### 10.12.1 Cohort member Physical measurements element (soft launch CAPI-only cases)

Just under one in ten (9.1%) of cohort members were eligible for the Physical measurements element which was conducted in the soft launch for CAPI-only cases. A fully or partially productive outcome was achieved in 93.4% of cases where the cohort member was eligible.

Table 10.12.1 gives a breakdown of the Physical measurements element response.

**Table 10.12.1 Response – cohort member Physical measurements element**

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>England</b>	<b>Wales</b>	<b>Scotland</b>	<b>N Ireland</b>
<b>Fully or partially productive cohort members<sup>34</sup></b>	<b>9,323</b>	<b>6,248</b>	<b>1,222</b>	<b>959</b>	<b>894</b>
<b>Cohort members interviewed face-to-face</b>	<b>2,055</b>	<b>1,424</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>161</b>
<b>Cohort members interviewed face-to-face at soft launch</b>	<b>844</b>	<b>564</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>Productive</b>	<b>788</b>	<b>519</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>Fully productive</b>	<b>605</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Partially productive</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>18</b>
Partially productive	36	30	2	0	4
Partially productive - height and weight only	117	75	20	13	9
Partially productive - height only	26	17	3	1	5
Partially productive - weight only	4	2	0	2	0
<b>Unproductive</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Refusals</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>
Refusal to interviewer	3	2	0	0	1
<b>Other unproductive</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>

<sup>34</sup> Note these numbers relate to response at the end of the main stage, before the mop-up survey, where no physical measurements element was included. Note that some cohort members who completed the mop-up survey would have had a partial productive outcome at the main stage.

Non-contact	51	41	4	6	0
Other reason	2	2	0	0	0
<b>% Eligible cohort members</b>	<b>9.1%</b>	<b>9.0%</b>	<b>9.5%</b>	<b>8.3%</b>	<b>9.4%</b>
<b>% Productive within eligible</b>	<b>93.4%</b>	<b>92.0%</b>	<b>96.6%</b>	<b>92.5%</b>	<b>98.8%</b>
<b>% Unproductive within eligible</b>	<b>6.6%</b>	<b>8.0%</b>	<b>3.4%</b>	<b>7.5%</b>	<b>1.2%</b>

### 10.12.2 Placement and completion of partner online questionnaire

Placement of the partner online questionnaire was recorded for 64.4% of the 1,403 cohort members where a fully or partially productive main stage outcome was achieved, and a resident partner was identified. The partner online questionnaire was completed by 42.0% of partners identified during MCS8 as living with the cohort member.

Table 10.12.2 gives a breakdown of placement and completion rates by country of issue.

**Table 10.12.2 Response – placement and completion of partner online questionnaire by country of issue**

Outcome	Total	England	Wales	Scotland	N Ireland
<b>Fully or partially productive cohort members<sup>35</sup></b>	<b>9,323</b>	<b>6,248</b>	<b>1,222</b>	<b>959</b>	<b>894</b>
<b>Cohort members living with a partner</b>	<b>1,403</b>	<b>951</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>Partner interview placed</b>	<b>904</b>	<b>629</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>Productive partner interview</b>	<b>589</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>No partner interview</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>14</b>
Started but not finished	28	19	5	4	0
No response	287	205	43	25	14
<b>% Eligible cohort members</b>	<b>15.0%</b>	<b>15.2%</b>	<b>18.2%</b>	<b>15.3%</b>	<b>9.3%</b>
<b>% Placement of partner interviews</b>	<b>64.4%</b>	<b>66.1%</b>	<b>62.2%</b>	<b>57.8%</b>	<b>62.7%</b>
<b>% Productive partner interview within eligible</b>	<b>42.0%</b>	<b>42.6%</b>	<b>40.5%</b>	<b>38.1%</b>	<b>45.8%</b>
<b>% Productive partner interview within placed</b>	<b>65.2%</b>	<b>62.3%</b>	<b>61.6%</b>	<b>64.7%</b>	<b>73.1%</b>

<sup>35</sup> Note these numbers relate to response at the end of the main stage, before the mop-up survey, where no Partner placement was included. Note that some cohort members who completed the mop-up survey would have had a partial productive outcome at the main stage.

Table 10.12.3 gives a breakdown of placement and completion rates by the main data collection modes.

**Table 10.12.3 Response – placement and completion of partner online questionnaire by the main data collection modes**

Outcome	Total	Face-to-face	Online
<b>Fully or partially productive cohort members<sup>36</sup></b>	<b>9,323</b>	<b>2,053</b>	<b>7,268</b>
<b>Cohort members living with a partner</b>	<b>1,403</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>1,100</b>
<b>Partner interview placed</b>	<b>904</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>644</b>
Face-to-face with partner	150	150	0
Face-to-face with cohort member	110	110	0
Online	644	0	644
<b>Productive partner interview</b>	<b>589</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>459</b>
<b>No partner interview</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>185</b>
Started but not finished	28	9	19
No response	287	121	166
<b>% Eligible cohort members</b>	<b>15.0%</b>	<b>14.8%</b>	<b>15.1%</b>
<b>% Placement of partner interviews</b>	<b>64.4%</b>	<b>85.8%</b>	<b>58.5%</b>
<b>% Productive partner interview within eligible</b>	<b>42.0%</b>	<b>42.9%</b>	<b>41.7%</b>
<b>% Productive partner interview within placed</b>	<b>65.2%</b>	<b>50.0%</b>	<b>71.3%</b>

### 10.12.3 Cohort member data linkage consent rates

Table 10.12.3 gives a breakdown of cohort member data linkage consent rates by country of issue. Those eligible to answer the data linkage questions were very specific to each type of linkage and dependent on whether the respondent had previously given consent or not. The table below shows the base of those eligible within each type. Linkage rates varied by record type and were highest for Health and Social Care records (61.9%) and lowest for Ministry of Justice records (49.1%).

**Table 10.12.3 Response – cohort member data linkage consent rates by country of issue**

Data linkage consent rates	Total	England	Wales	Scotland	N Ireland
<b>Health and Social Care</b>	<b>61.9%</b>	<b>61.2%</b>	<b>67.8%</b>	<b>66.9%</b>	<b>53.7%</b>
Total consenting	1,150	780	183	99	88
Total asked for consent	1,857	1,275	270	148	164
<b>Education</b>	<b>59.2%</b>	<b>59.3%</b>	<b>63.2%</b>	<b>61.4%</b>	<b>50.3%</b>
Total consenting	1,009	686	160	86	77

<sup>36</sup> Note these numbers relate to response at the end of the main stage, before the mop-up survey, where no Partner placement was included. Note that some cohort members who completed the mop-up survey would have had a partial productive outcome at the main stage.

Total asked for consent	1,703	1,157	253	140	153
<b>UCAS</b>	<b>58.0%</b>	<b>57.5%</b>	<b>61.7%</b>	<b>62.7%</b>	<b>50.9%</b>
Total consenting	1,029	698	156	94	81
Total asked for consent	1,775	1,213	253	150	159
<b>Student Loans</b>	<b>49.2%</b>	<b>48.5%</b>	<b>54.7%</b>	<b>54.0%</b>	<b>42.0%</b>
Total consenting	967	657	150	87	73
Total asked for consent	1,965	1,356	274	161	174
<b>HMRC</b>	<b>48.8%</b>	<b>48.4%</b>	<b>53.9%</b>	<b>48.8%</b>	<b>43.8%</b>
Total consenting	983	676	151	78	78
Total asked for consent	2,015	1,397	280	160	178
<b>DWP</b>	<b>50.2%</b>	<b>49.1%</b>	<b>56.2%</b>	<b>53.8%</b>	<b>45.6%</b>
Total consenting	1,012	692	158	84	78
Total asked for consent	2,016	1,408	281	156	171
<b>Ministry of Justice</b>	<b>49.1%</b>	<b>48.9%</b>	<b>52.8%</b>	<b>53.5%</b>	<b>40.2%</b>
Total consenting	1,005	697	153	85	70
Total asked for consent	2,048	1,425	290	159	174
<b>Consented to at least one data linkage</b>	<b>65.2%</b>	<b>64.2%</b>	<b>70.4%</b>	<b>71.7%</b>	<b>59.6%</b>
Total	2,517	1,784	334	191	208

Table 10.12.3.1 gives a breakdown of cohort member data linkage consent rates by the main data collection modes.

**Table 10.12.3.1 Response – cohort member data linkage consent rates by the main data collection modes**

Data linkage consent rates	Total	Face-to-face	Online
<b>Health and Social Care</b>	<b>61.9%</b>	<b>76.0%</b>	<b>57.7%</b>
Total consenting	1,150	327	823
Total asked for consent	1,857	430	1,427
<b>Education</b>	<b>59.2%</b>	<b>76.4%</b>	<b>53.9%</b>
Total consenting	1,009	308	701
Total asked for consent	1,703	403	1,300
<b>UCAS</b>	<b>58.0%</b>	<b>75.8%</b>	<b>52.4%</b>
Total consenting	1,029	322	707
Total asked for consent	1,775	425	1,350
<b>Student Loans</b>	<b>49.2%</b>	<b>69.7%</b>	<b>42.8%</b>
Total consenting	967	327	640
Total asked for consent	1,965	469	1,496
<b>HMRC</b>	<b>48.8%</b>	<b>72.8%</b>	<b>41.4%</b>
Total consenting	983	346	637
Total asked for consent	2,015	475	1,540
<b>DWP</b>	<b>50.2%</b>	<b>74.2%</b>	<b>42.8%</b>
Total consenting	1,012	353	659
Total asked for consent	2,016	476	1,540
<b>Ministry of Justice</b>	<b>49.1%</b>	<b>71.2%</b>	<b>41.8%</b>
Total consenting	1,005	361	644
Total asked for consent	2,048	507	1,541

<b>Consented to more than 1</b>	<b>65.2%</b>	<b>78.4%</b>	<b>60.9%</b>
Total	2517	612	1905

#### 10.12.4 Cohort member child data linkage consent rates

Table 10.12.4 gives a breakdown of cohort member child data linkage consent rates by country of issue. Those cohort members with children were asked whether they consented to the linking of Health and Social Care and Education records about each of their children to the study data. The table below shows the base of those eligible within each type. Consent rates were marginally higher for linking to Health and Social Care records (61.1%) than Education records (58.9%).

**Table 10.12.4 Response – cohort member child data linkage consent rates by country of issue**

Data linkage consent rates	Total	England	Wales	Scotland	N Ireland
<b>Health and Social Care</b>	<b>61.1%</b>	<b>63.8%</b>	<b>51.8%</b>	<b>73.8%</b>	<b>44.7%</b>
Total consenting	334	238	44	31	21
Total asked for consent	547	373	85	42	47
<b>Education</b>	<b>58.9%</b>	<b>61.1%</b>	<b>51.8%</b>	<b>71.4%</b>	<b>42.6%</b>
Total consenting	322	228	44	30	20
Total asked for consent	547	373	85	42	47

Table 10.12.4.1 gives a breakdown of cohort member child data linkage consent rates by the main data collection modes.

**Table 10.12.4.1 Response – cohort member child data linkage consent rates by the main data collection modes**

Data linkage consent rates	Total	Face-to-face	Online
<b>Health and Social Care</b>	<b>61.1%</b>	<b>66.9%</b>	<b>58.7%</b>
Total consenting	334	107	227
Total asked for consent	547	160	387
<b>Education</b>	<b>58.9%</b>	<b>65.0%</b>	<b>56.3%</b>
Total consenting	322	104	218
Total asked for consent	547	160	387

#### 10.12.5 Self-completion completion rates

The self-completion section consisted of more sensitive questions and during in-home interviews. The cohort members were given the option to complete this themselves, via the interviewer or they may opt to refuse. Of those eligible, a total of 10 cohort members (0.1%) refused the self-completion section with the interviewer.

Table 10.12.5 gives a breakdown of self-completion completion rates by country of issue and mode of completion for fully productive interviews.

**Table 10.12.5 Response – self-completion completion rates by country of issue and mode of completion**

Self-completion – full completes	Total		England		Wales		Scotland		N Ireland	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>Online</b>	<b>6854</b>	<b>73.5%</b>	<b>4562</b>	<b>72.8%</b>	<b>850</b>	<b>70.4%</b>	<b>745</b>	<b>77.1%</b>	<b>697</b>	<b>78.8%</b>
<b>In-Home</b>	<b>2036</b>	<b>21.8%</b>	<b>1410</b>	<b>22.5%</b>	<b>301</b>	<b>24.9%</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>17.2%</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>18.0%</b>
In-Home – refused	10	0.1%	6	0.1%	2	0.2%	0	0.0%	2	0.2%
<b>Mop-Up</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>4.6%</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>4.6%</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>4.6%</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>5.7%</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>3.1%</b>
Total	9328	100%	6269	100%	1208	100%	966	100%	885	100%

### 10.12.6 Cognitive assessment completion rates

At MCS8 two cognitive assessments were presented to cohort members – the STROOP activity which involved looking at words and colours to ascertain how people process information and the Backwards Digit Span which involved recalling numeric sequences in reverse order. Of those eligible to complete the STROOP activity, 92.8% took part across all countries. Between 3 and 5% of cases were excluded either because they refused to participate or did not meet the follow-up eligibility criteria. Cohort members were asked about visual impairments (including colour blindness) prior to the start of the activity and could be excluded if these were present.

Participation in the Backwards Digit Span task of those eligible were marginally higher in Northern Ireland (94.6%) and Scotland (94.3%) compared to England (93.9%) and Wales (92%). The Backwards Digit Span task was not offered to those who completed during the mop-up stage of fieldwork.

Partial completion of the Backwards Digit Span task refers to cases where the cohort member decided to exit the task before it was finished.

Table 10.12.6 gives a breakdown of both cognitive assessment consent rates by country of issue.

**Table 10.12.6 Response – cognitive assessment completion rates by country of issue**

Cognitive Assessment	Total		England		Wales		Scotland		N Ireland	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>STROOP activity</b>										
<b>Total Eligible</b>	8,954		6,016		1,163		915		860	
Eligible however did not meet conditions or refused	304	3.4%	186	3.1%	52	4.5%	40	4.4%	26	3.0%
Eligible and not started	339	3.8%	239	4.0%	45	3.9%	30	3.3%	25	2.9%
<b>Eligible and partially completed</b>	806	9.0%	552	9.2%	94	8.1%	71	7.8%	89	10.3%
<b>Eligible and fully completed</b>	7,505	83.8%	5,039	83.8%	972	83.6%	774	84.6%	720	83.7%
<b>Backwards Digit Span task</b>										
<b>Total Eligible</b>	<b>9,280</b>		<b>6,213</b>		<b>1,220</b>		<b>951</b>		<b>896</b>	
Eligible and no data collected	162	1.7%	124	2.0%	20	1.6%	11	1.2%	7	0.8%
Refusal	34	0.4%	17	0.3%	11	0.9%	3	0.3%	3	0.3%
<b>Fully productive - Eligible and completed</b>	<b>8,704</b>	<b>93.8%</b>	<b>5,837</b>	<b>93.9%</b>	<b>1,122</b>	<b>92.0%</b>	<b>897</b>	<b>94.3%</b>	<b>848</b>	<b>94.6%</b>
Partial - completed	29	0.3%	18	0.3%	4	0.3%	3	0.3%	4	0.4%
Partial - did not complete	351	3.8%	217	3.5%	63	5.2%	37	3.9%	34	3.8%

Table 10.12.6.1 gives a breakdown of both cognitive assessment consent rates by the main data collection modes.

**Table 10.12.6.1 Response – cognitive assessment completion rates by the main data collection modes**

Cognitive Assessment	Total		Face-to-face		Online	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>STROOP activity</b>						
<b>Total Eligible</b>	<b>8,954</b>		<b>2,044</b>		<b>6,909</b>	
Eligible however not meet conditions or refused	304	3.4%	71	3.5%	233	3.4%
Eligible and did not complete	339	3.8%	216	10.6%	123	1.8%
<b>Eligible and partially completed</b>	<b>806</b>	<b>9.0%</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>3.6%</b>	<b>731</b>	<b>10.6%</b>
<b>Eligible and fully completed</b>	<b>7,505</b>	<b>83.8%</b>	<b>1,683</b>	<b>82.3%</b>	<b>5,822</b>	<b>84.3%</b>
<b>Backward Digits Span task</b>						
<b>Total Eligible</b>	<b>9,280</b>		<b>2,095</b>		<b>7,183</b>	
Eligible and no data collected <sup>37</sup>	162	1.7%	160	7.6%	0	0.0%
Refusal	34	0.4%	34	1.6%	0	0.0%
<b>Fully productive - Eligible and completed</b>	<b>8,704</b>	<b>93.8%</b>	<b>1,850</b>	<b>88.3%</b>	<b>6,854</b>	<b>95.4%</b>
Partial - completed	29	0.3%	8	0.4%	21	0.3%
Partial - did not complete	351	3.8%	43	2.1%	308	4.3%

<sup>37</sup> Due to technical problems.

# 11 Coding, editing and data preparation

## 11.1 Instrument quality

The survey instrument was programmed in IBM SPSS Data Collection (also known as Dimensions) V6.0.1 data collection software. Computer Assisted Interviewing enables a series of checks to be in-built into the questionnaire instrument, controlling the order, appearance and routing presented to the participant, including enforcing questionnaire requirements such as single or multicode options.

Routing specifications also allow for various checks to be implemented throughout the instrument to enhance the quality of the data collected. These specific checks were employed to compare the answers provided with the sample information, identify inconsistencies in recorded dates for related events and enforcing formatting rules when collecting contact information.

These rules and checks were used in conjunction with on-screen guidance and access to help screens, aiming to optimise data quality during the data collection phase and minimising the need for manual editing during the subsequent data processing and analysis stages.

In addition, the instrument was set up to enable write-backs between the script and the ECS, ensuring that sample updates were always correctly displayed or updated accordingly back to CLS.

## 11.2 Script releases

During fieldwork it was necessary to release new scripts. The main reasons for releasing new scripts were as follows:

- to update to include gift card details or passwords or additional showcards or dates such as the date of the general election;
- to add some check questions in the physical measurements section to make the question clearer; and
- to update following changes made from the soft launch to the main stage.

## 11.3 Coding

### 11.3.1 Coding open-ended and 'other-specify' questions

For MCS8, as with most interviewer-administered surveys, the majority of answers given by respondents were coded during the interview into pre-specified code frames agreed with CLS. Coding of open-ended and "other-specify" responses was completed by a team of specialised Ipsos coders who were briefed prior to the start of the coding.

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; and
- There was an “open-ended” question where no code frame was provided, and the answers were simply typed into the script.

It was possible for some of the “other specify” statements to be back coded into the existing code frames. Any newly created codes required approval from CLS.

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 left within the “other” code.

### 11.3.2 The codebook

A codebook was used to log variable names, any precodes that appeared in the script and the code frame 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 had 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 MCS7 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.

### 11.3.3 Quality control

During fieldwork, Ipsos 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.

### 11.3.4 SIC coding, SOC Coding

The UK Standard Industrial Classification of Economic Activities 2007 (UK SIC 2007) and Standard Occupational Classification (SOC2010 and SOC2020) were used for coding the cohort member’s occupation. The Standard Occupational Classification (SOC2010 and SOC2020) were also used for coding the partner’s occupation, the partner’s mother’s occupation, and the partner’s father’s occupation.

## 11.4 Editing data

The only editing undertaken on the data are those specifically programmed into the script via “soft” and “hard” checks. These checks are routinely programmed to clarify responses where they may fall outside of a specified range. “Hard” checks do not allow entries outside a given range and therefore are resolved within the interview by prompting the respondent or the interviewer at the

time of the interview, to review their answer. "Soft" checks are used to ask the respondent or the interviewer to confirm the information entered and enable them to amend or leave their answers.

### 11.5 Remapping the data

Survey data was remapped according to specifications provided by CLS. The raw unedited data was provided along with all subsets and restructured datasets that CLS requested. Verbatim responses from "other-specify" and open-ended questions were delivered as specified by CLS.

For the household interview, the information about each person in the household was provided in a stacked household-level dataset and delivered in a separate data file, with one row of data per household member. Additional stacked datasets were also delivered and are noted in the table in section 11.6 below.

### 11.6 Data outputs

The survey data included single and multi-coded questions alongside loops or grids. CLS sent a specification to Ipsos outlining how they wished to receive the survey responses back, including the provision of "flat" data in the main survey dataset and loops (e.g. education modules) restructured as stacked files.

The datasets provided to CLS based on their specifications included:

List of datasets to deliver to CLS	File structure
Raw data	
Backward Digit Span Data	
Raw Hhgrid all variables	Stacked
Raw flat file all variables	Flat
Subsets of "flat" survey data	
Survey	Flat
Proxy	Flat
Partner	Flat
Edu-Wide	Flat
Stacked education subsets	
ACC_QUALS_STACKED	Stacked
EDUA_QUALTYPES_COVID_STACKED	Stacked
EDUB_QUALTYPES_COVID_STACKED	Stacked
MCS7_QUALS_AND_CORRS_STACKED	Stacked
QNOW_QUALTYPES_CURRENT_STACKED	Stacked

VCQA_QUALTYPES_COVID_STACKED	Stacked
VCQC_CURRENT_STACKED	Stacked
VOC_CURRENT_STACKED	Stacked
VOC_QUALS_STACKED	Stacked
EDU_UNCOMPLETED_STACKED	Stacked
IBICC	Stacked
Stacked household / child / baby level subsets	
HHGRID	Stacked
Pregnancy	Stacked
Leaverbabyloop	Stacked
Babyloop	Stacked
Resbiochild	Stacked
NRChildren	Stacked
NonResbiochildren	Stacked
DLReschild	Stacked

### 11.7 Sample Contact Information

Contact information was provided separately to the survey data. The productive contact data was populated using data obtained during the interview. Unproductive contact information was obtained from the most recent contact information obtained during the tracing process.

The data delivered to CLS included the following:

- Contact history data
- Contact data based on responses to the survey
- A log of all consent data received during fieldwork

### 11.8 Paradata

A substantial amount of paradata was collected during fieldwork, from the questionnaire itself but also data collected from the interviewers during their tracing and call attempts.

The data delivered to CLS included the following type of information:

- Sample management information such as dates and times of all reminders
- Timings data

- Browser data

# For more information

3 Thomas More Square  
London  
E1W 1YW

t: +44 (0)20 3059 5000

[www.ipsos.com/en-uk](http://www.ipsos.com/en-uk)  
<http://twitter.com/ipsosUK>

## About Ipsos Public Affairs

Ipsos Public Affairs 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. Combined with our methods and communications expertise, this helps ensure that our research makes a difference for decision makers and communities.