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The journey of an official statistic to online/postal measurement

Findings from the Community Life Survey

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Agenda

- 1** Community Life Survey – background
- 2** Why move online?
- 3** Introducing Address-based Online Surveying (ABOS)
- 4** Key findings and learnings from developmental work
- 5** Conclusions

Community Life Survey – Background

Commissioned by the Cabinet Office in 2012* to track the latest trends and developments in areas key to encouraging social action and empowering communities.

Provides robust, nationally representative Official Statistics



Volunteering



Charitable Giving



Neighbourhood



Social Action



Civic Engagement



Well-being

**The Office for Civil Society is now situated within the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. This includes the responsibility for the Community Life Survey*

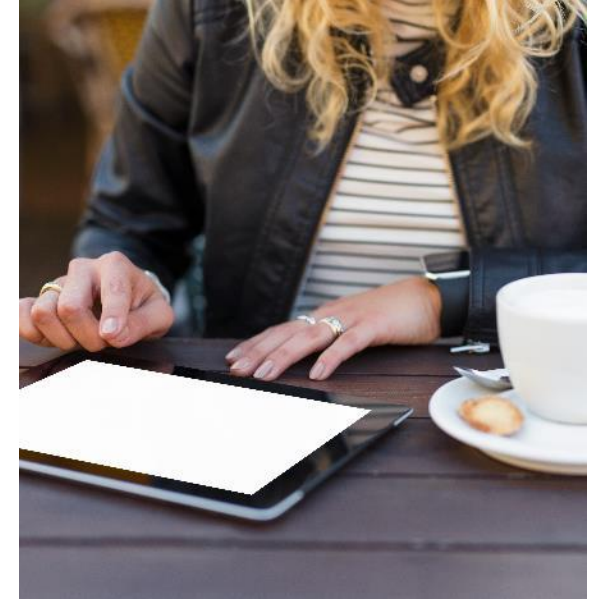
Why move from in-person to online/postal data collection?



Need for a more affordable alternative to in-person data collection for good quality general population surveying



Falling response rates and increasing costs of RDD (random digit dial) telephone surveying



Increasing use of technology and the internet, and the Government's digital agenda

What is Addressed-based Online Surveying (ABOS)?



Stratified random sample of addresses drawn from the postcode address file

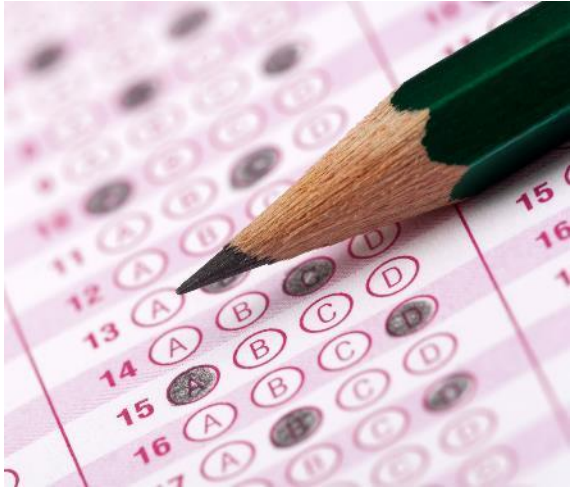
Invitation letter sent to the residents with the login details and url for survey website

Reminder mailings sent to each address

Postal questionnaire available as an alternative

£10 incentive to each person completing the survey

Programme of methodological work carried out to explore feasibility



Phase 1:
Testing + refining the
fieldwork model

Phase 2:
Large scale pilot

Phase 3:
Improving household
sampling procedures

Phase 4:
Exploring differences
between face-to-face
and online results

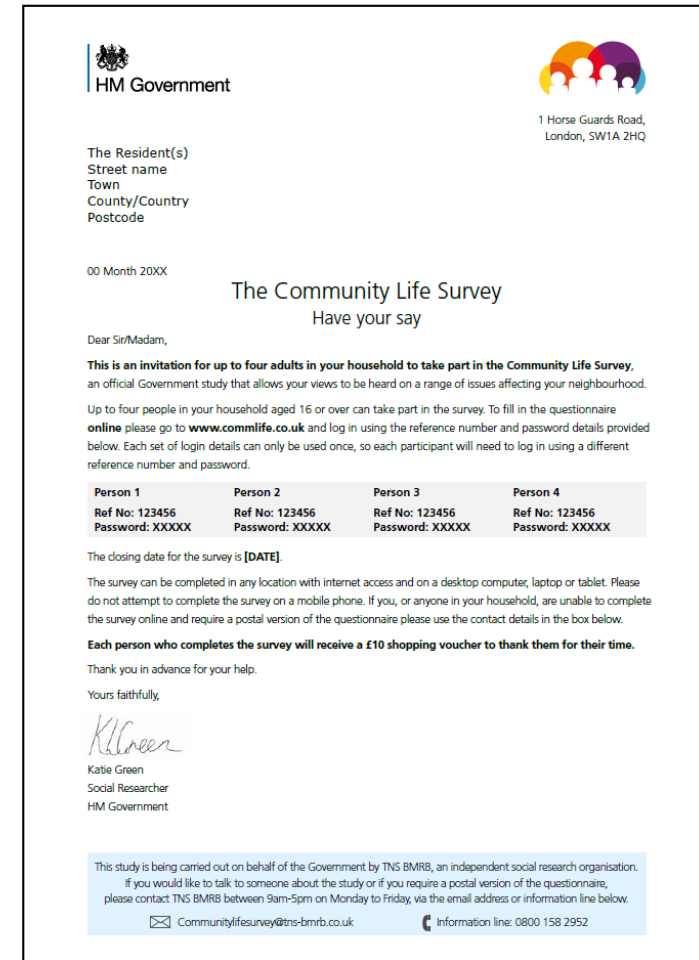
Key findings and recommendations

What is the level of compliance and what steps can be taken to reduce non-compliance?

Level of non-compliance with 'next/last birthday' selection procedure was high

Inviting all adult residents removes the problematic within household sampling however this design is not perfect

A programme of post-fieldwork verification is advisable



What response rate can be achieved and how can this be maximised?



The 'all adult' method generates a response rate of c.24%

£10 conditional voucher most cost-effective incentive

Sending a reminder can almost double the response rate

Online response is inversely correlated with Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)

Inclusion of paper questionnaires in the second reminder is effective in raising response and improving the sample profile (if targeted)

Are estimates similar to the f2f survey?

Results were significantly different even after demographic weighting

The evidence obtained suggests that the difference in mode was responsible for the majority of the differences observed

However findings might be different if sub-groups were assessed separately



Conclusions

- 1** Relatively new method for the UK, that continues to evolve
- 2** Shows promise as a low cost way to obtain a random sample
- 3** A responsive design allows for reasonably balanced samples to be obtained
- 4** Sample effects seem modest but more evidence required to generalise
- 5** Differences observed between modes mean that some of the data are not closely compatible
- 6** Face-to-face data collection remains gold standard for sample quality

Thank you

With special thanks to the Office for Civil Society
for all their support

For more information please see:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-life-survey-experimental-online-survey-findings>

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