

Developments in FRS fieldwork during Covid



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Overview



Fieldwork pre-20/21



Move to telephone



Incentive Trial



Introducing Knock-to-Nudge



Impact on 20/21 Dataset



Looking ahead to 21/22

Fieldwork pre-20/21

Pre-COVID Fieldwork Approach



Data Collection completed in GB by ONS & NatCen, in NI by NISRA



44k addresses (annually) randomly selected from Postcode Address File



Advance letter sent advising address selected and interviewer will be visiting



Unconditional incentive and FRS purpose leaflet included with letter



Interviewer visits house, seeking respondent's participation



If respondent agrees to take part, interviewed in their house

Response to COVID



Move to Telephone

Many changes required...



Technological updates



Questionnaire changes



Respondent materials



Interviewer guidance



Obtaining contact details



Field period extensions

Questionnaire Changes

- Questions added to collect data on new COVID-driven sources of income
- Few questions dropped to reduce questionnaire length
- Full redesign for telephone mode not possible due to the short turnaround required

Interviewer Guidance

- Maintain in-person interviewing as much as possible
- Approaches for interviewing two-person benefit units
- How to manage showcard questions
- No need to answer questions dependent on visiting address
- Dealing with multi-HH addresses

Respondent materials

- For April, compliment slips included alongside standard letters
- From May, updated letters introduced
- From May, letters included Unique Access Codes to enable respondents to provide contact details via online portal
- Reminder letters introduced
- All data collection organisations' web pages also updated

Obtaining contact details

- Initially entirely reliant on respondents “opting in”:
 - Freephone
 - Portal
 - Direct to interviewer
- Telematching introduced:
 - Commercial sources
 - DWP admin sources

Incentive Trial

Purpose of the trial

- Under standard data collection conditions, unconditional incentives observed to outperform conditional incentives
- However, conditions very different under COVID!
- Hypothesis: conditional incentive could represent a more cost-effective solution under current circumstances

Split-sample approach employed:

Control group

- 50% of sample
- Offered £10 unconditional incentive
- Post Office voucher included in advance letter as standard

Test group

- 50% of sample
- Offered £15 conditional incentive
- High street gift voucher sent once interview completed

Results

		Contact details as proportion of issued	Interviews achieved as proportion of issued	Interviews achieved as proportion of numbers provided
September	Total	51%	16.74%	32.94%
	Control (unconditional)	53%	18.18%	34.15%
	Test (conditional)	48%	15.31%	31.61%
October	Total	54%	17.81%	32.93%
	Control (unconditional)	57%	20.50%	35.70%
	Test (conditional)	51%	15.12%	29.80%

Conclusions & recommendations

- Test group performed less well than control group:
 - Fewer cases with contact details
 - Fewer complete interviews
- Conditional incentive less effective than unconditional incentive
- Remains consistent with literature despite current conditions
- Decision to cease the trial after first two months and reintroduce standard £10 unconditional incentive from Nov 2020 onwards

Introducing Knock-to-Nudge

Implementation Timeline

- Small-scale trials commenced summer 2020
- Launched across GB in Nov 2020
- Impact of lockdown in Dec 2020 / Jan 2021
- Approaching full GB coverage by Mar 2021
- NI trials commenced June 2021

What is Knock-to-Nudge?



Behavioural theory - proposes positive reinforcement to influence behaviour/decision



Commonly used by government (eg: text reminder, phone call to book appointment)



Interviewer visits non-contact addresses, following relevant health & safety guidance



If no answer, leave “called today” card



If respondent answers, interaction much as when seeking FtF interview



Aim is for respondent to provide telephone number, and potentially make appointment

Impact of Knock-to-Nudge

- Delivered biggest increase in response of any initiative introduced during 20/21 fieldwork
- Also believed to have had a positive impact on how representative of the population the achieved sample is
- Clearly demonstrates the importance of the doorstep interaction in gaining response

Impact on 20/21 Dataset

Monthly response rates for 20/21

- Response substantially lower than usual throughout the year
- Varied throughout the year with marked increases in:
 - May (introduction of portal)
 - November (KtN launched)
- Clearly demonstrates the importance of the doorstep interaction in gaining response

20/21 dataset

- Total achieved cases: approx. 10k
- Delivered to DWP: June 2021
- Publication currently planned for: March 2022

Looking ahead to 21/22

Planned 21/22 Fieldwork Developments

- KtN launched in Northern Ireland
- Actively exploring options to return to in-person interviewing:
 - Small-scale trial offering respondents option of in-person interview (following a successful KtN interaction) planned for Aug 2021
- Further incentive trial currently being considered:
 - Conditional incentive offered in addition to standard unconditional incentive

Thank you for listening

Any questions?