

# The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on Understanding Society: The UK Household Longitudinal Study

Jonathan Burton  
ISER, University of Essex

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# Understanding Society: The UK Household Longitudinal Study



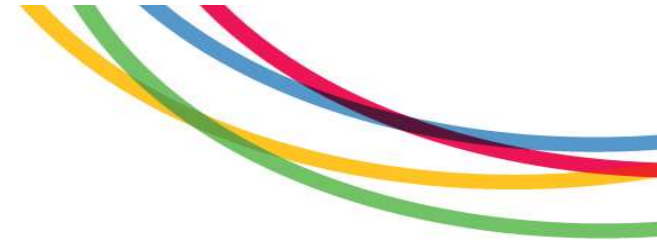
- Representative of UK population
  - Began 2009, incorporates BHPS sample (1991-)
  - Wave 10 (2018-19): approx. 20,000 responding households
- Includes ethnic minority and immigrant boost samples
- Annual interviews with the same people over time
  - All members of original households and their descendants form the core sample and are followed every year as long as they are living in the UK
  - Household questionnaire
  - Individual interviews: all aged 16+
  - Youth self-completion: 10-15 years
  - Information collected about 0-9 years from parent/guardian

# Impact of COVID-19

- Suspension of face-to-face interviewing mid-March 2020
- 3 waves in the field
- One advantage – already used mixed-mode data collection

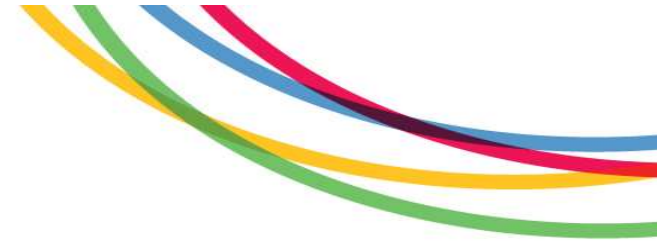
	2019	2020		2021
Wave 9	■			
Wave 10	■	■	■	
Wave 11	■	■	■	■
Wave 12		■	■	■
Wave 13				■

# Mid-March 2020 changes



- For Waves in the field, we already had a **CAPI**, a **Web**, and a **CATI** version of the script
- Letters sent to all ‘active’ sample members allocated to interviewers
  - Notify that the interviewer won’t be visiting (and why)
  - Link and password to online interview
- Interviewers switch to CATI script and follow-up web non-responders

# Mid-March 2020 changes

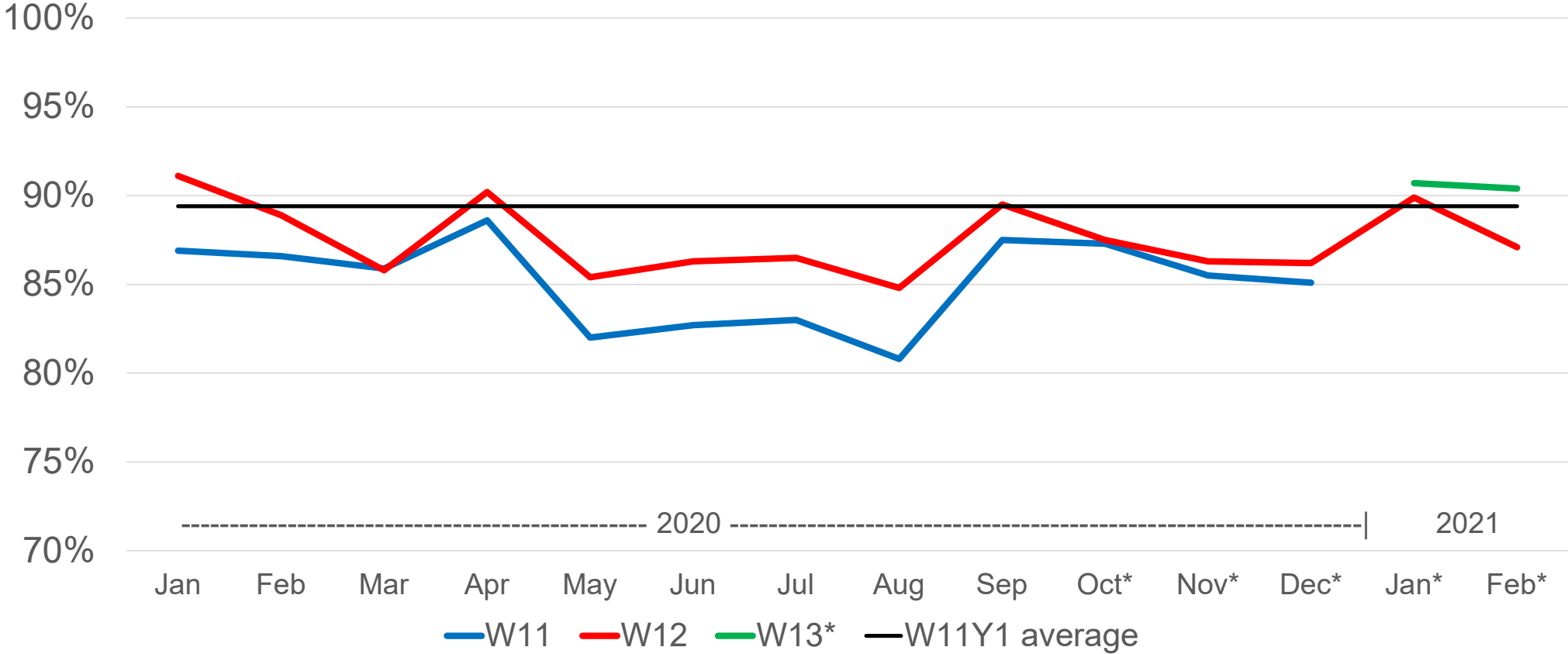
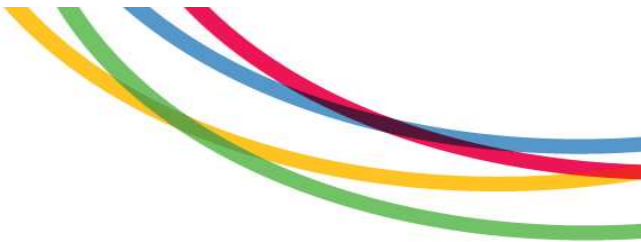


- April sample:
  - All adults issued web-first
  - Invitation letter/email with log-in details
  - Former CAPI-first sample, letter also includes note that interviewer can telephone them
- Seamless transition in data collection – multiple modes available and responsive and agile fieldwork agencies

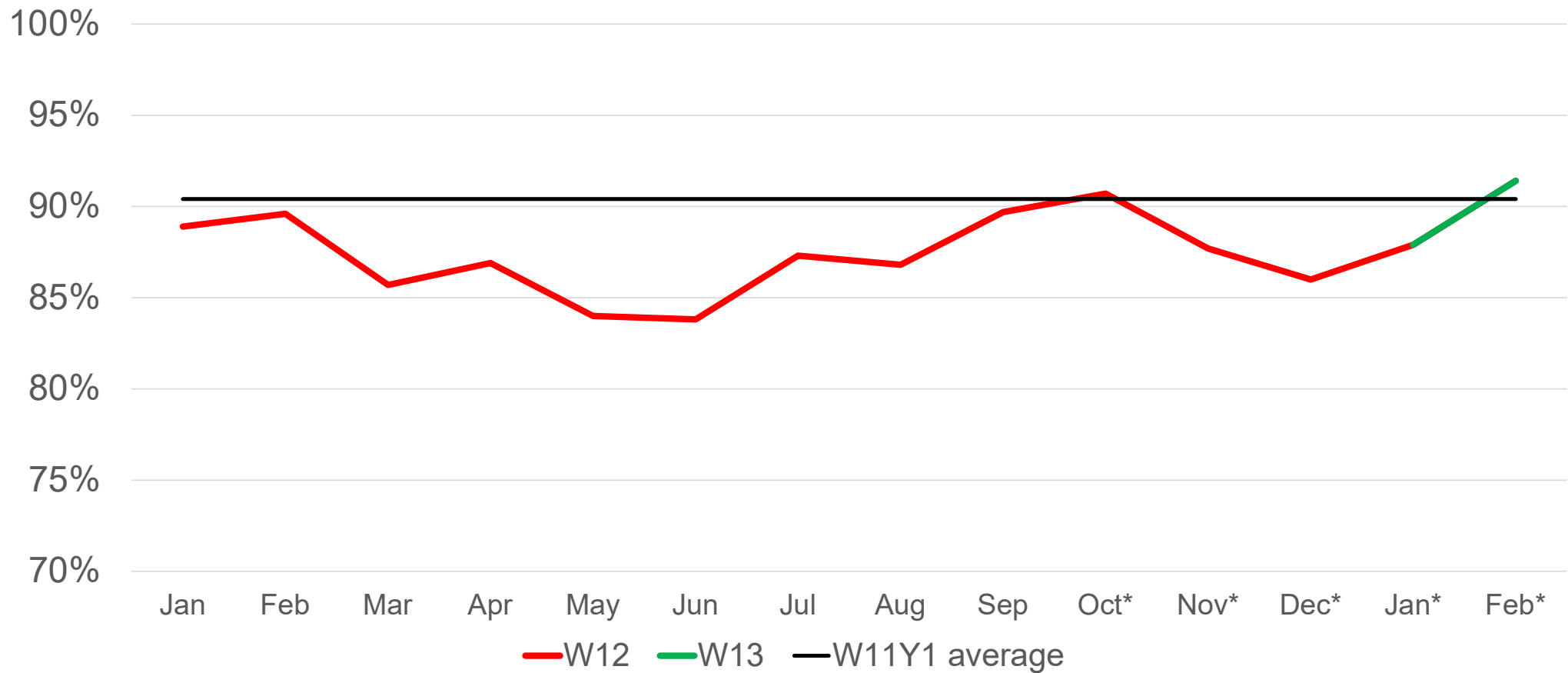
# Effect on response rates

- Slight decline of response with the replacement of face-to-face with telephone
- 30% of sample being invited to complete online for the first time ever
  - Including the 10% of the sample with lowest propensity to complete online
- Relatively long interview for telephone surveys (40-45 minutes+)
- Despite annual collection, some individuals did not have a (working) telephone number on record

# General Population Sample – individual re-interview rate

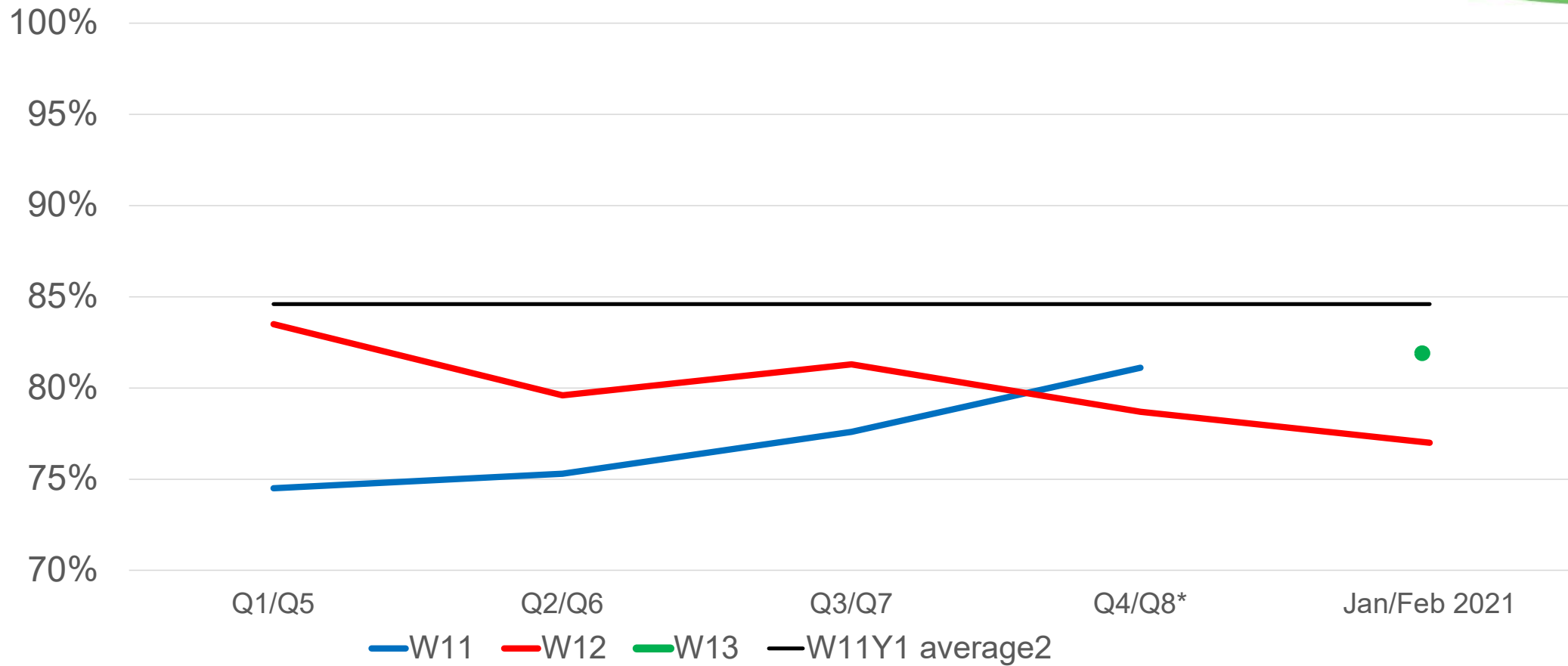


# British Household Panel Survey Sample (BHPS)

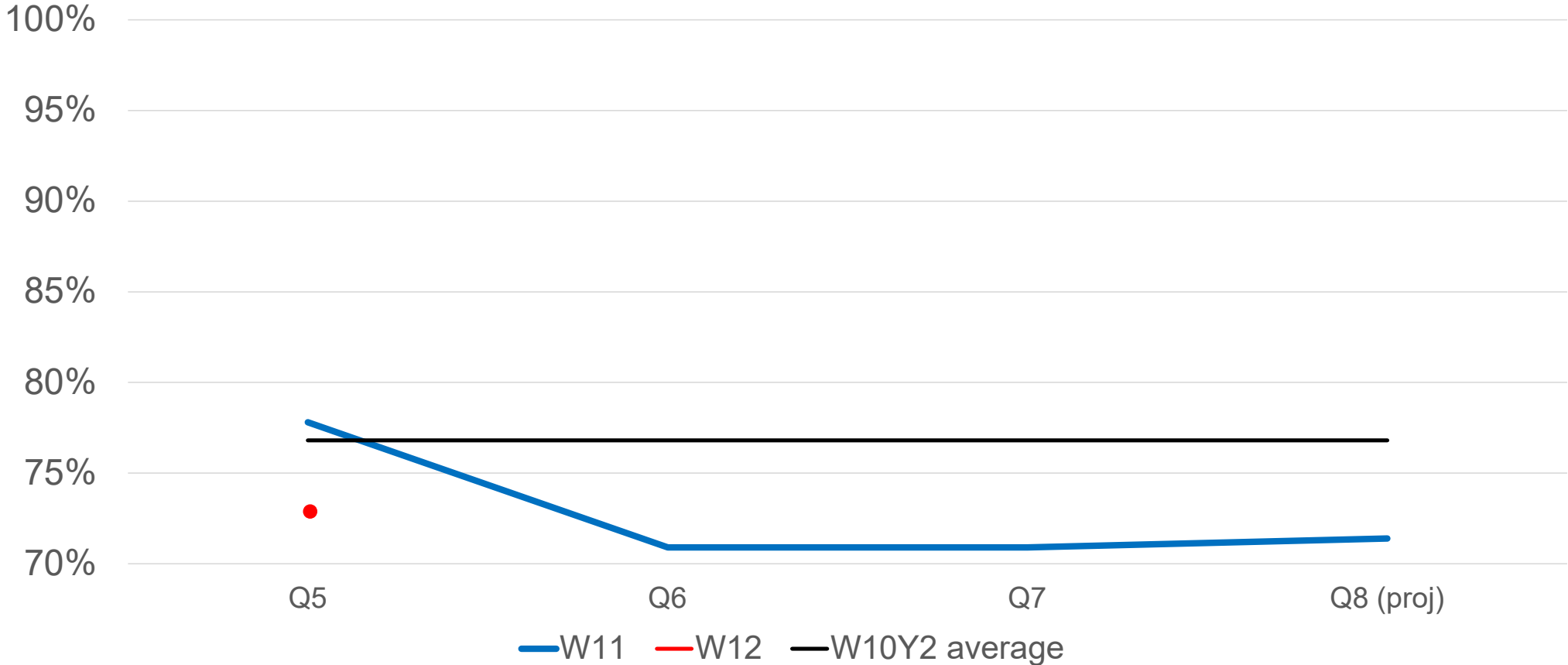




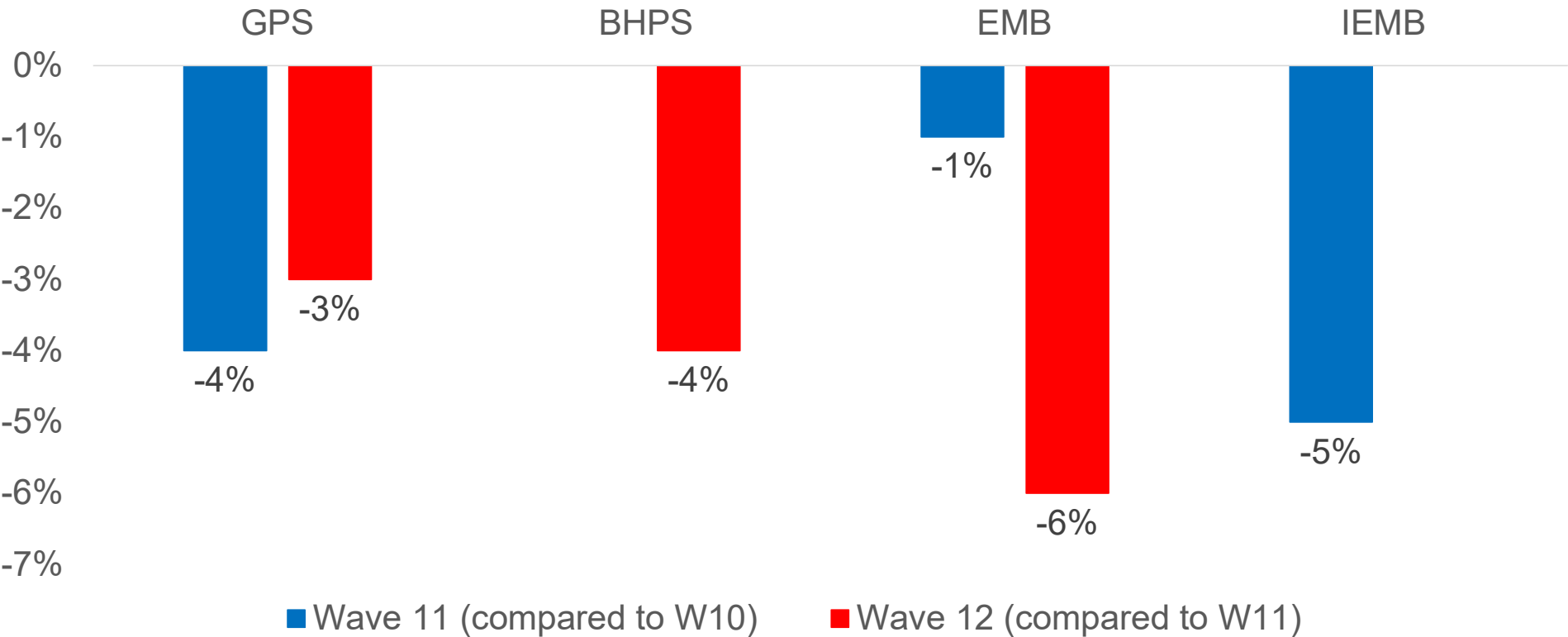
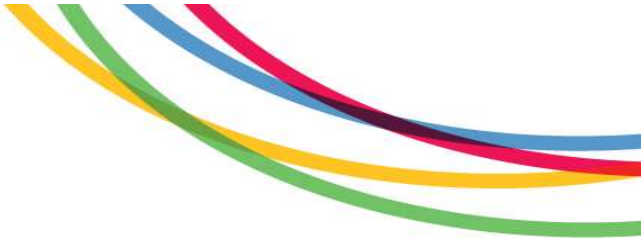
# Ethnic Minority Boost sample (EMB)



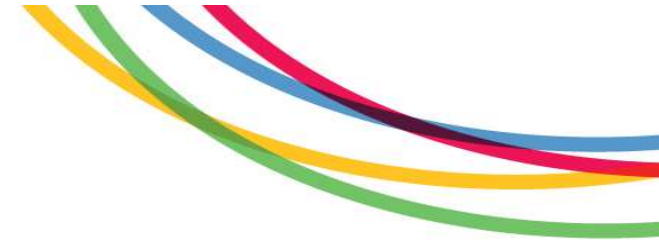
# Immigrant & Ethnic Minority Boost sample (IEMB)



# Summary of response – completed sample months

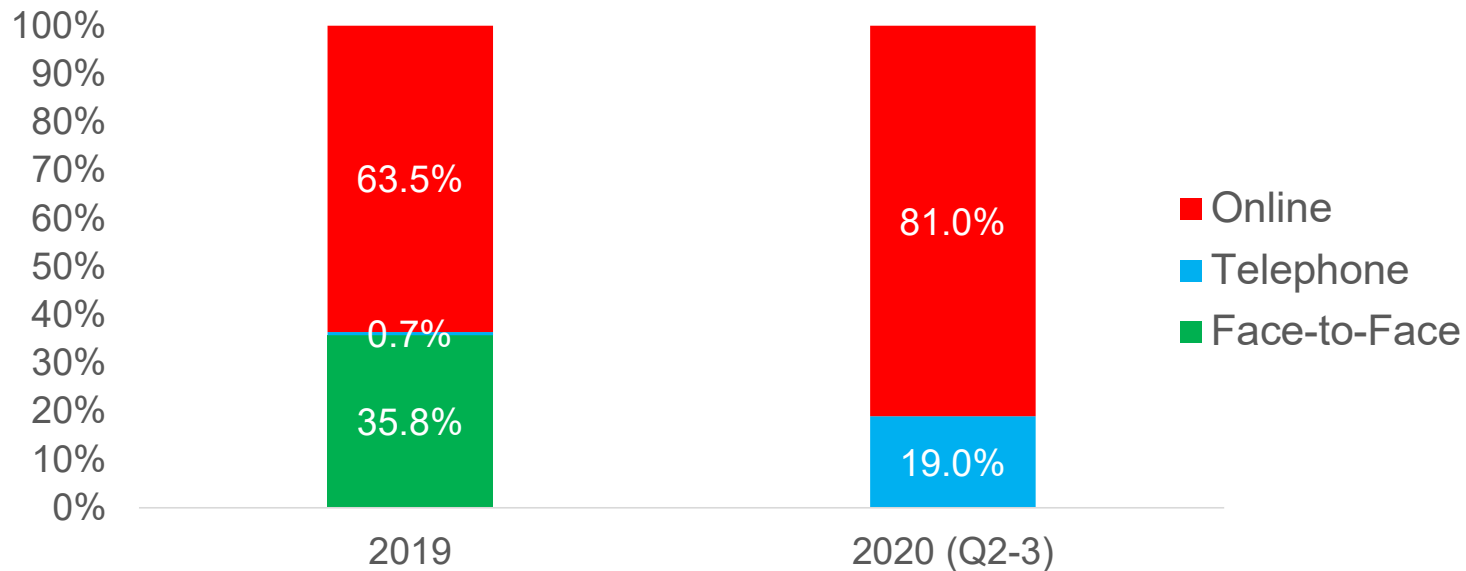


# Response



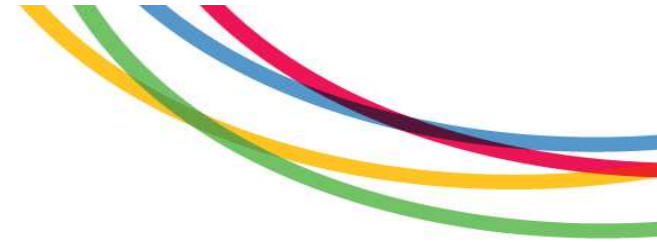
- Overall – in Wave 12 April-December 2020 samples we have 92.4% of the adult interviews we had in the same sample one year earlier
- But higher proportion of interviews are being done online

% of adult interviews in each mode

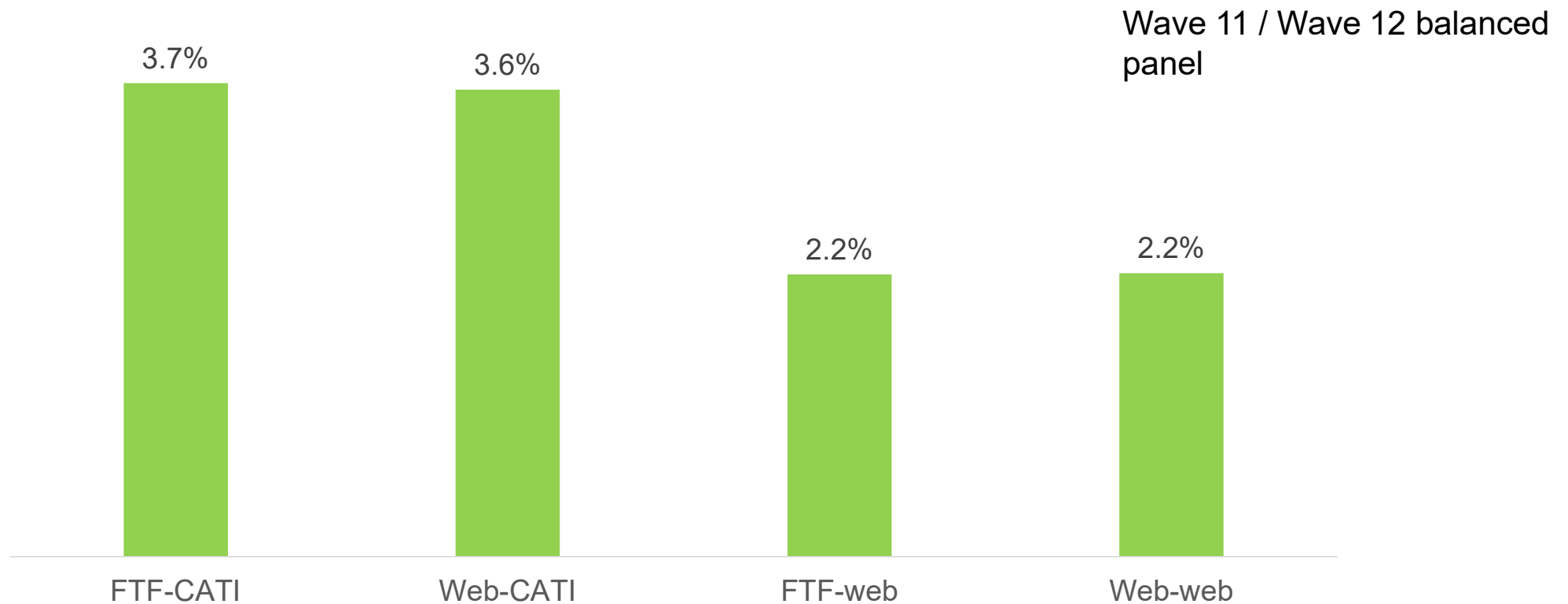
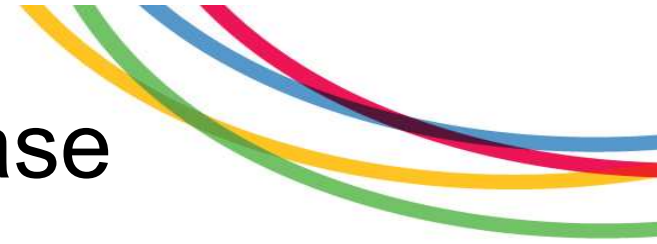


# But... who are we missing?

- (using unweighted data)
- Older people
- Those with lower levels of education
- Those without a mobile computing device
- Those who use the internet less often



# A switch to telephone saw an increase in item non-response



# UKHLS COVID-19 Study

- 20 min survey
  - Invitations by SMS, email, post + email/SMS reminders (days 2, 3, 6)
- £2 incentive (conditional) most months (some experimentation)
- **Web** surveys (Ipsos MORI)
  - April, May, June, July, September, November 2020, January & March 2021
- **Telephone** surveys (Kantar)
  - Sample – those who did not respond to the April web survey AND live in a household with no regular web users: older, more health problems, higher proportion of ethnic minorities
  - May and November
- **Youth** surveys
  - Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) in July 2020 & March 2021 (Ipsos MORI)
  - Full self-completion booklet in November (Kantar)
- **Antibody testing** – Serology to test for COVID-19 antibodies (March 2021)

# Questionnaire - core content

- Household composition and relationships
- Coronavirus illness
  - Symptoms, tests, contact with Test & Trace, shielding, vaccinations (from Jan.)
- Long-term health conditions and access to health care
  - Able to access different NHS, community and social care services
  - Whether health treatment had been planned – and effect of COVID-19 on access
- Employment
  - Include “baseline” questions (situation Jan/Feb) & current employment/hours/WAH/earnings
- Finance, financial security
  - Include “baseline” questions (situation Jan/Feb) & current benefits (inc. UC), financial transfers, mortgage holidays, subjective financial well-being...
- Loneliness
- Mental health (GHQ)

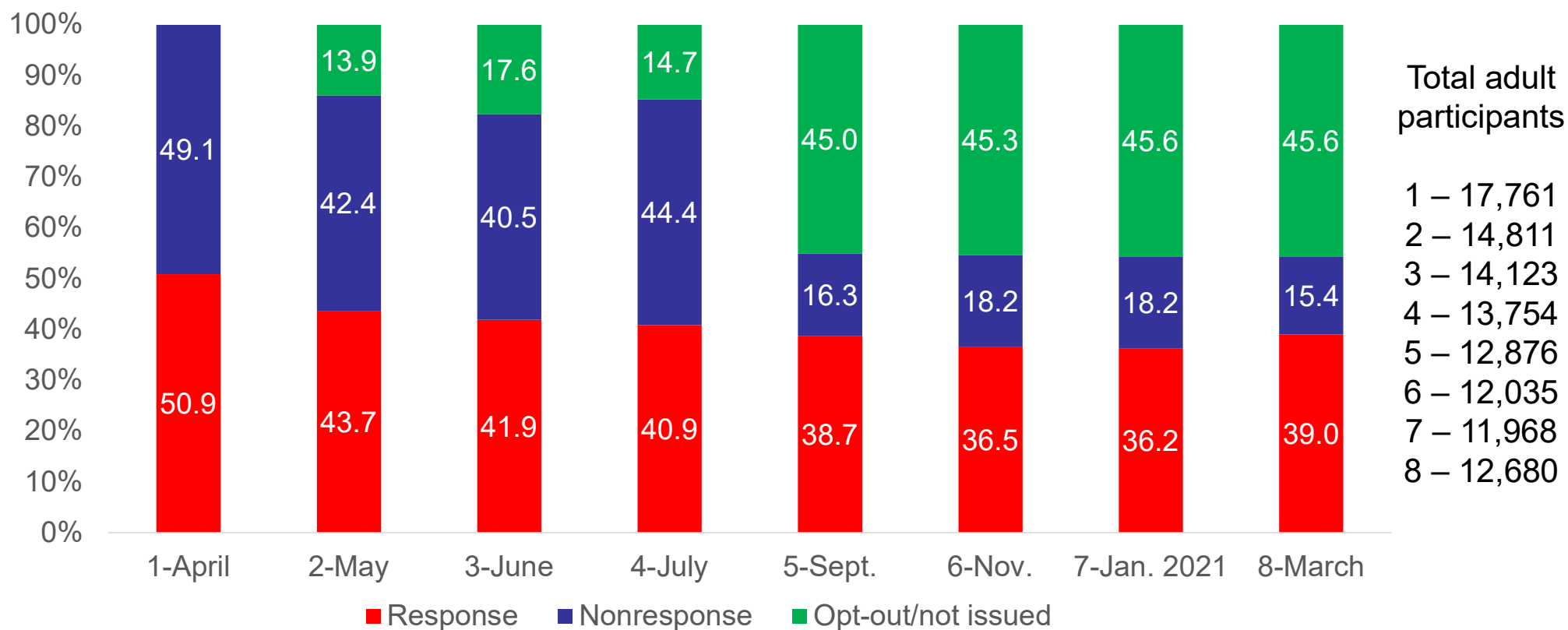


# Questionnaire - rotating & occasional modules



- Home schooling/return to school (child-level) – April, Sept., Nov., Jan.
- Diet
- Food banks and food insecurity
- Alcohol consumption
- Smoking
- Exercise
- Children's mental health (SDQ)
- Partner relations
- Parent-child relations
- Domestic division of labour
- Time use
- Caring responsibilities
- Couples living apart together
- Grand-parenting
- Contact friends & family out HH
- Young adults aspirations/ expectations
- Transport
- Working conditions\productivity
- Training
- Job search
- Neighbourhood cohesion
- Life satisfaction
- Non-resident parents & children

# COVID-19 response among Wave 9 participants



# Summary of evaluation of weighting performance

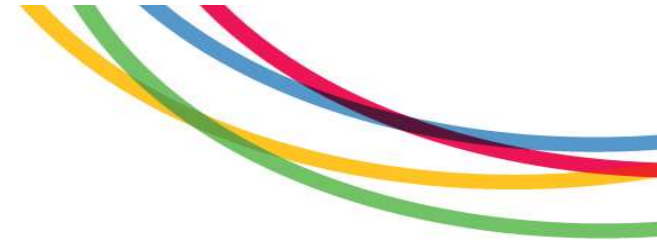


- There is selection bias into the web survey
- The use of the telephone follow-up increases dataset quality compared to web-only
  - Reduced variability of weights – improves precision and reduces bias (less trimming)
- Inviting non-regular web users to web survey does not increase quality
  - Reduces weighted estimates biases, but also reduces precision

Presentation: “Bias prevention and bias reduction in a national longitudinal Covid-19 survey”,  
Jamie Moore

Session: “Longitudinal studies in times of COVID-19”, Friday 16 July, 16:45 - 18:00

# COVID-19: Data



- End User License COVID-19 Study

<https://beta.ukdataservice.ac.uk/datacatalogue/studies/study?id=8644>

- April, May, June, July, September, November 2020, January & March 2021 web surveys
- May & November telephone survey
- July 2020 & March 2021 youth SDQ survey & November youth self-completion
- Pre-pandemic - 2019 mainstage data (Wave 10 yr 2 / Wave 11 yr 1)
- Soon to come – serology (antibody) test results for COVID-19

# Summary



- Understanding Society was fortunate in that it was already a mixed-mode study
    - Swift transition to Web-CATI
  - Some decrease in response – but signs that Wave 13 (2021) is back to 2019 levels of response for GPS/BHPS sample
  - Need extra effort when face-to-face interviewing can resume to “bring back” those missed during lockdown
  - Possible to quickly roll-out high quality web-only survey drawing on longitudinal sample
    - Can weight back to a representative sample
    - Additional telephone survey can improve weights, but at a high financial cost
    - Collection of valuable information during an important period in peoples lives that may have long-lasting effects
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