LFS & APS User Update

Martina Helme
Office for National Statistics, UK

UKDS Annual LFS/APS User Conference
19-06-2025

Office for National Statistics

What I will cover…

- Brief recap on events since the last user conference
- Recovery and sustainability measures
- Recent survey performance
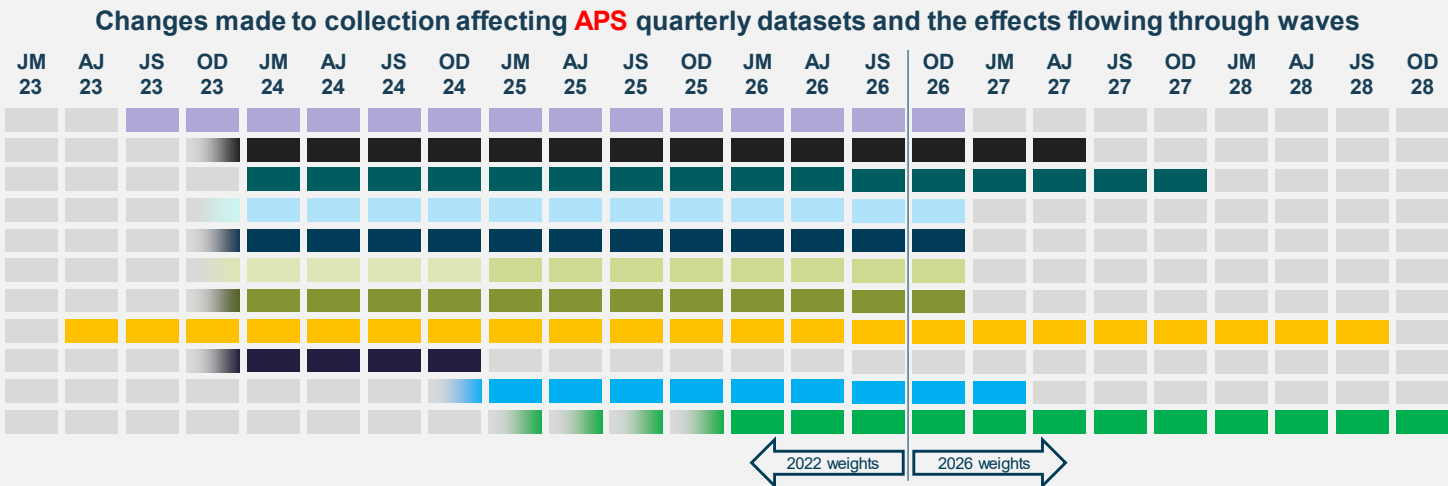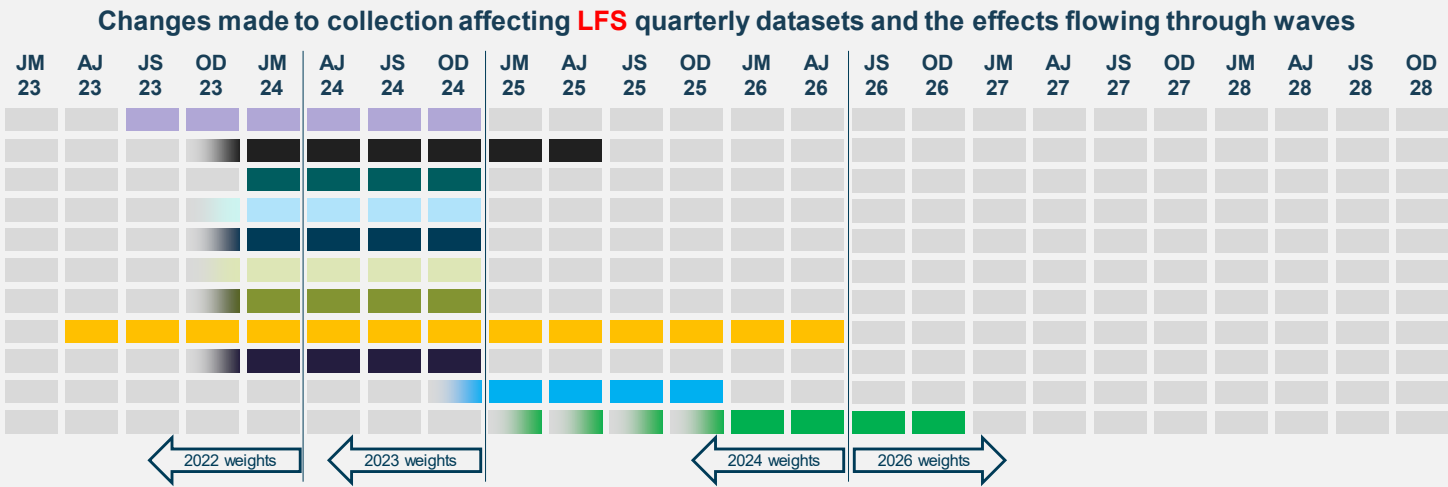- Ongoing Quality Assessment

Brief recap...

What happened since May 2024

- Decision to [continue the dual run of LFS and TLFS](#) to accommodate time for testing, and then implementing, a shorter TLFS questionnaire

- Establish and [implement a sustainability work strand](#) to ensure the ongoing recovery and continued running of the LFS until transition to TLFS

Office for National Statistics

Recovery and Sustainability Measures

Impact of changes implemented into LFS+APS

Changes have implemented into the LFS in the past 18 months; given the wave structure of survey, each change takes time to affect all respondents until it normalises

Changes made to collection affecting LFS quarterly datasets and the effects flowing through waves

2022 weights | 2023 weights | 2024 weights | 2026 weights

Changes made to collection affecting APS quarterly datasets and the effects flowing through waves

2022 weights | 2026 weights

	Change to LFS	Dates
	Change to survey priority order for LFS w2-5	from 04/23
	Reduced w1 sample from 25,600 to 16,600	07/23 to 01/24
	Re-introduced F2F interviewing	10/23 ongoing
	Re-issuing of unproductive cases	11/23 to 12/23
	Change to coding-out of non-contact cases	first: 10/23 revert: 07/24
	Increased fieldwork hours and overtime	10/23 ongoing
	Increased incentive from £10 to £50	11/23 ongoing
	Marking HHs with 16-24 for TO follow-up	10/23 ongoing
	Re-increased w1 sample from 16,600 to 25,600	01/24 ongoing
	Implemented 2023-based interim reweighting	published 02/24
	Necessary updates to Blaise and CASPA	started 09/24
	Methodological analysis of biases in LFS data	delivered 04/25
	Increase of ~50 to LFS w2+ interviewer capacity	11/24 to 02/25
	Implemented 2024-based interim reweighting	published 12/24
	Increase of ~200 LFS w2+ interviewer capacity	05/25 to 12/25
	Full 2026-based historic reweighting	expected 2026

Sustainability actions currently underway

- Updates and stabilisation of tech systems, inc. Questionnaire and data processing platforms

- Reviewing and updating of documentation including performance metrics

- Ensuring continued UK-wide production with NISRA through LMS transition

- Exploring options for full re-weighting next year

- Improvements underway to LFS/APS interviewer capacity:

    o 50 additional interviewers between Nov 24 and Feb 25

    o ~200 additional interviewers between May 25 and Dec 25 (focus on W2+)

RTD model for increasing interviewer capacity

Recruit

- **Advertising** – Targeted recruitment locations based on sample/resource gaps

- **Interviewer selection** – to meet agreed criteria

- **Vetting** – checks (and evidence provided to ONS) to meet BPSS vetting standard

- **Onboarding** – ensuring candidate completes ONS onboarding activities in agreed timescales. Meeting agreed cohort volumes per week to support SSC headcount targets.
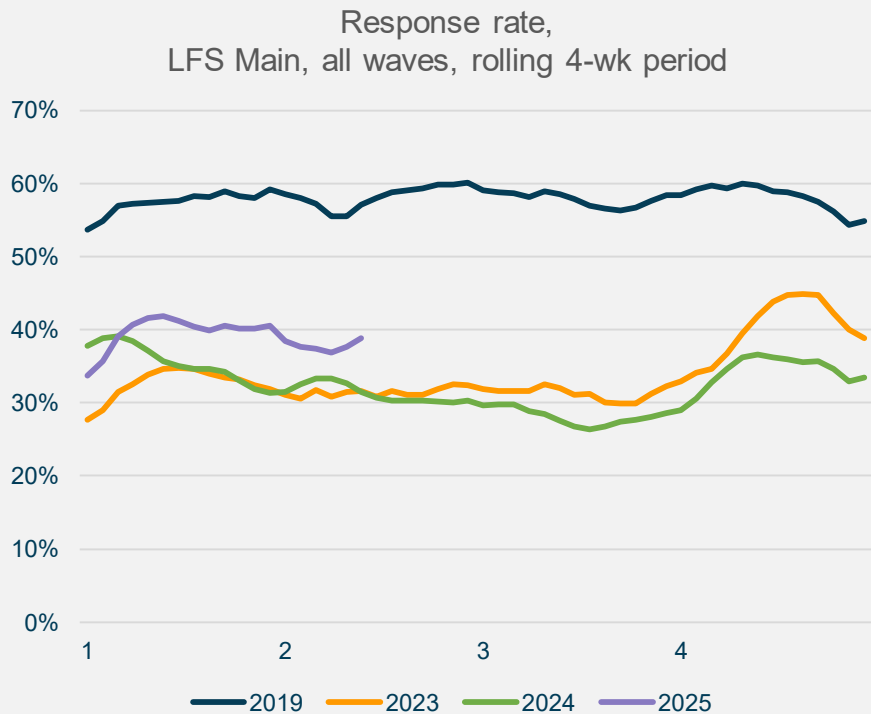
Train

- **Deliver training** – 3 day-Interviewer Fundamentals training and 1-day TLFS briefing

- **Compliance** – responsibility to ensure completion of ONS mandatory eLearning, and attendance at ONS-delivered LFS briefing and Coding workshop. Working with ONS to ensure interviewer attends field shadowing and ONS Corporate Induction arranged by ONS

Deploy

- **Validation** – preparing candidate for validation interview, conducted by field management

- **Performance management** – working with field management to ensure calling patterns are followed, performance KPIs are met, and behaviours meet the required Civil Service and ONS standards

- **Contract Management** – weekly progress reviews with AMS to assess ongoing requirements and measure against quality criteria. Pause & review in April

Recent survey performance

Current LFS performance

**Response rate,
LFS Main, all waves, rolling 4-wk period**

— 2019 — 2023 — 2024 — 2025

**Number of achieved household interviews,
LFS Main, all waves, rolling 4-wk period**

— 2019 — 2023 — 2024 — 2025

- The charts show the time series of response rates and total achieved interviews for four years
- The tables show the equivalent numbers for the same time period (21 Apr – 18 May) in previous years

| Response rates	Wave 1 on rolling 4wks	Waves 2-5 on rolling 4wks	TOTAL on rolling 4wks
2025	33.8%	41.9%	38.8%
2024	35.0%	29.2%	31.5%
2023	27.7%	34.5%	31.6%
2019	56.3%	57.4%	57.0%
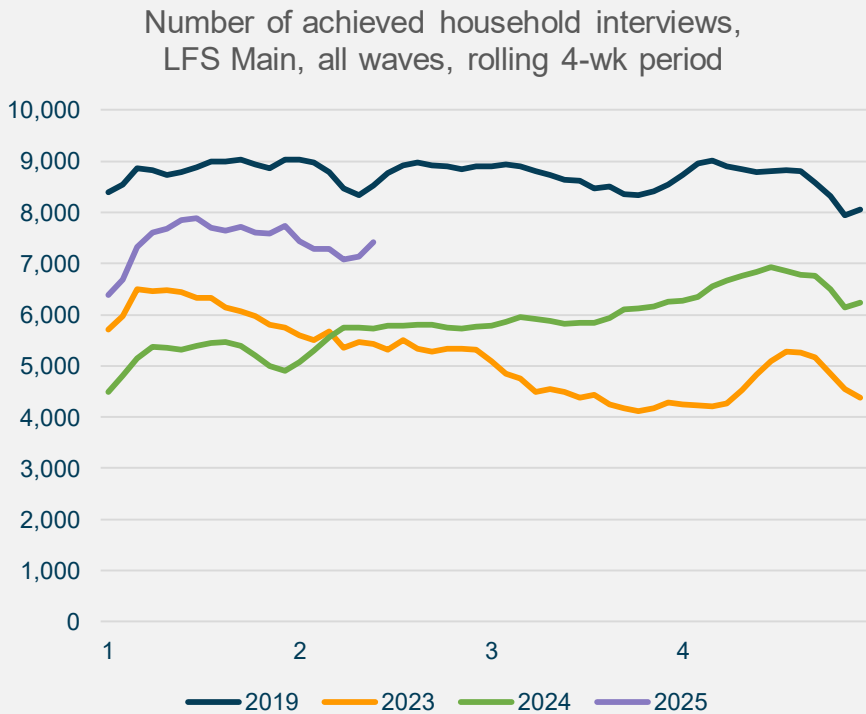
Achieved HH Interviews	Wave 1 on rolling 4wks	Waves 2-5 on rolling 4wks	TOTAL on rolling 4wks
2025	2,466	4,959	7,425
2024	2,568	3,153	5,721
2023	2,067	3,366	5,433
2019	2,622	5,900	8,522

Office for National Statistics

LFS Main all waves – response rates
(4 weeks rolling)
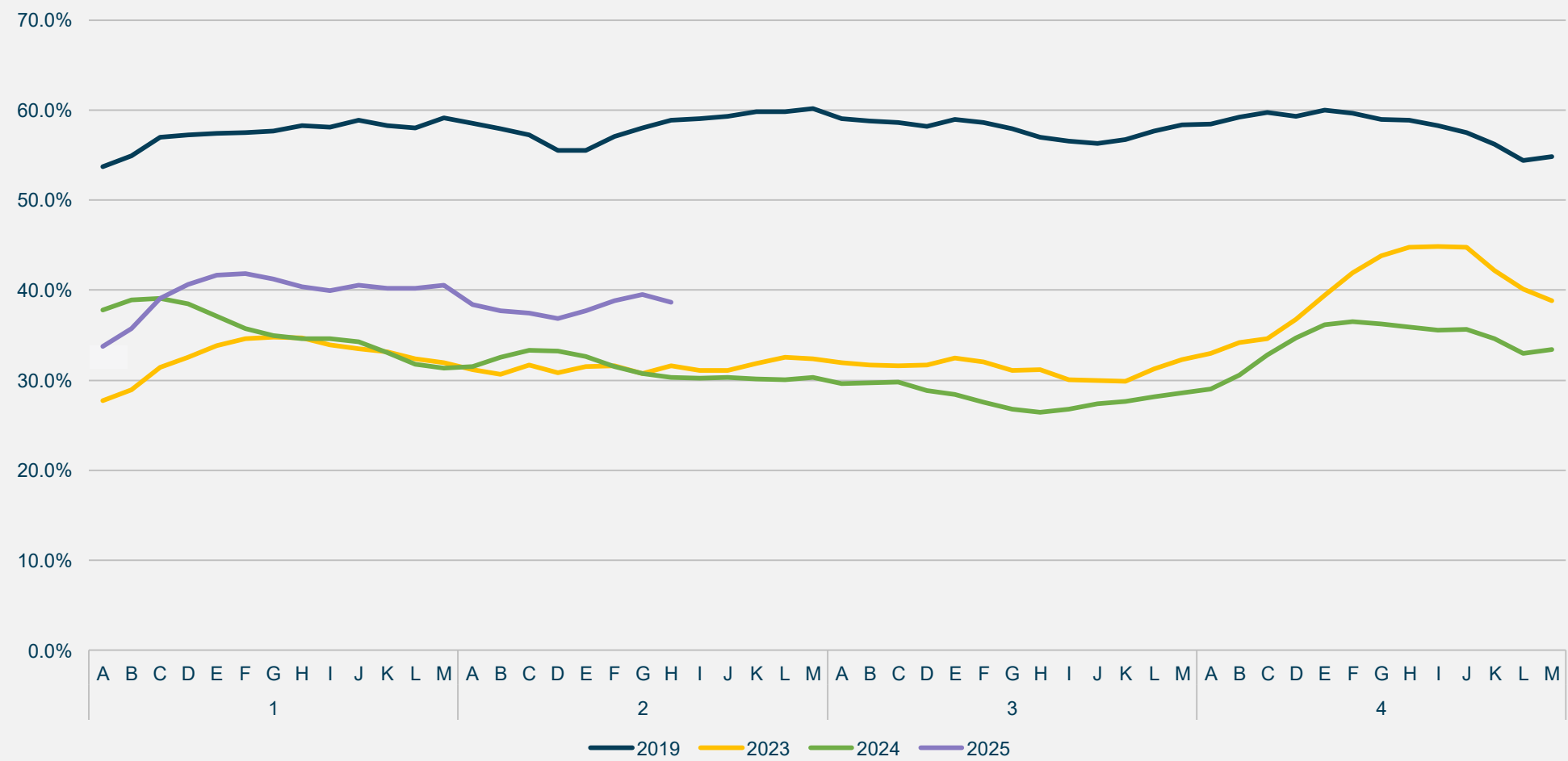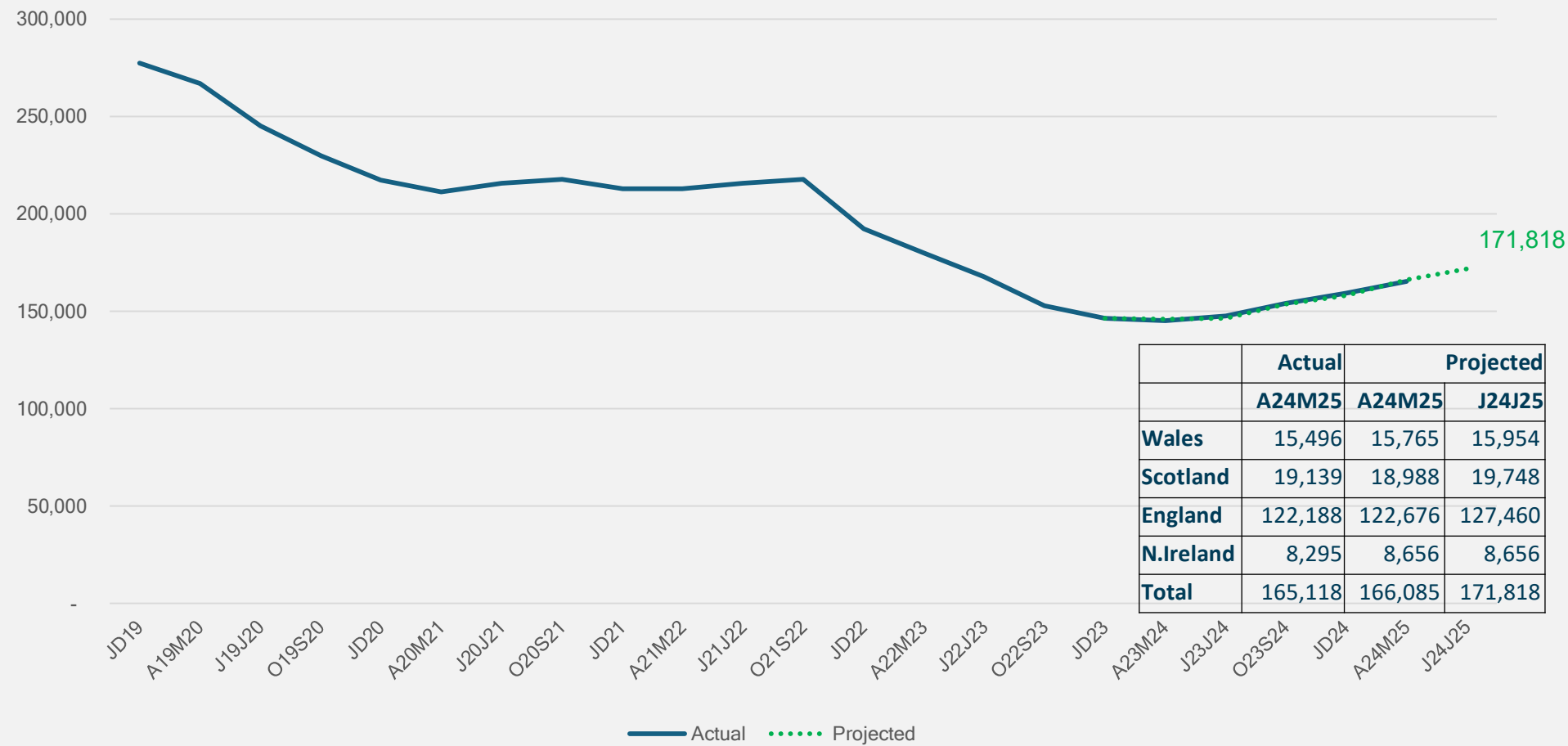
LFS Person quarterly dataset 2019-2025

FA25
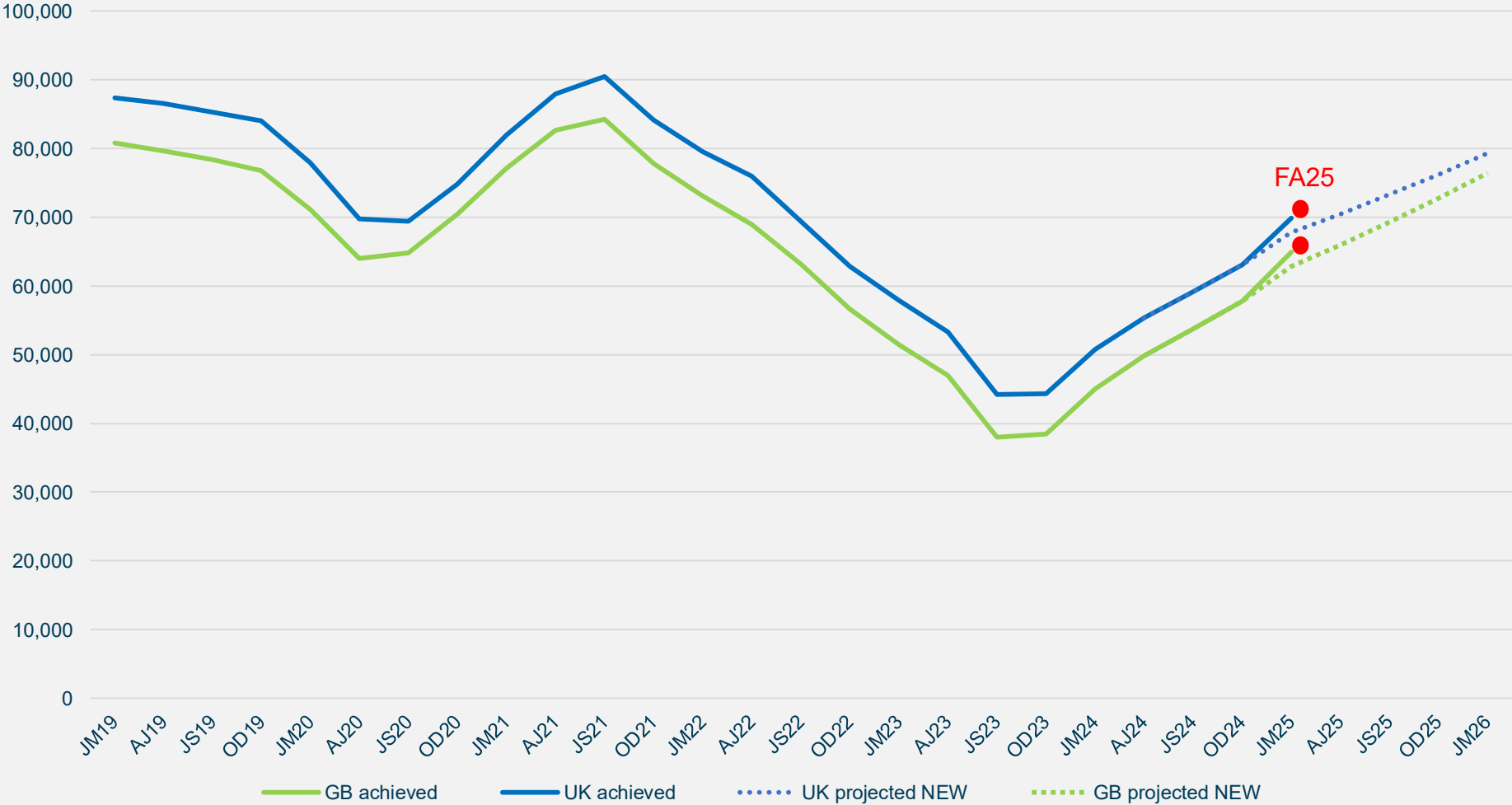
The Feb-Apr 25 LFS person dataset includes **70,505 individuals at UK level**, which increased by 658 from the previous rolling quarter (69,847 for an-Mar 25).

At **GB level**, the Feb-Apr 25 dataset contains **65,709**, up by 769 individuals from the last period (64,940 for Jan-Mar 25)

Legend: —— GB achieved —— UK achieved ⋯⋯ UK projected NEW ⋯⋯ GB projected NEW

Office for National Statistics

APS Person annual dataset 2019-2025
(inc. main & boost)

The A24M25 APS person dataset includes **165,118 individuals at UK level** which increased by 5,909 from the previous calendar quarter.

Projections based on achievement in January.

	Actual	Projected	
	A24M25	**A24M25**	**J24J25**
Wales	15,496	15,765	15,954
Scotland	19,139	18,988	19,748
England	122,188	122,676	127,460
N.Ireland	8,295	8,656	8,656
Total	165,118	166,085	171,818

Office for National Statistics

Ongoing Quality Assessment

Recent releases on LFS quality

- [Reconciliation of estimates of jobs, UK](#) (15 Apr)

  Update of reconciliation of LFS and Workforce Jobs figures

- [Labour Force Survey quality update](#) (13 May)

  Commentary on the current quality of LFS-based outputs

- [Labour Force Survey performance and quality monitoring report: January to March 2025](#) (13 May)

  Refreshed style and content of LFS performance metrics

Assessment of APS data

Held workshops with users, reviewed requirements of LFS+TLFS, conducted detailed analysis of datasets to investigate various breakdowns including:

- o **Target population:** all people, 16+, in employment, benefit recipients

- o **Geography:** country, region (residence or workplace), LA

- o **Demographic characteristics:** age, sex, ethnicity, country of birth, marital status, disability status

- o **Labour Market related variables:** employment status, reason for inactivity, NEET, SIC, SOC, qualifications, travel to work

- o **Other key variables:** eg tenure, well-being, health conditions

Number of individual cases by UALA within GB

| J23J24	England	Scotland	Wales	Total	Percent
<250	10	0	0	10	5%
250-499	31	14	1	46	23%
500-749	39	12	12	63	32%
750-999	47	4	9	60	30%
>=1000	21	0	0	21	11%
J18J19					
<250	0	0	0	0	0%
250-499	1	0	0	1	1%
500-749	25	0	0	25	13%
750-999	7	1	1	9	5%
>=1000	115	29	21	165	83%
J13J14					
<250	0	0	0	0	0%
250-499	1	1	0	2	1%
500-749	3	0	0	3	2%
750-999	20	0	0	20	10%
>=1000	124	29	22	175	88%

- Out of the 200 upper-tier LAs across GB, 88% had 1000 or more cases in the APSP file for the period of J13J14.

- This compares to 83% in J18J19 (before the pandemic), and 11% in J23J24

- In J23J24, all LAs in Scotland and Wales have counts of fewer than 1000 individuals; in fact 26 out of 30 Scottish LAs and 13 out of 22 Welsh LAs had fewer than 750 individuals.

- In J23J24, 86 of 148 LAs in England have between 500 and 1000 individuals, and 41 LAs below 500 individuals.

Office for National Statistics

Official Sensitive

Reweighting

- A second interim reweighting was carried out end 2024/beginning 2025:
  - based on [2021-based Interim NPPs](#) and revised 2011-2021 estimates for Scotland
  - reweighted periods back to beginning of 2019
  - remaining limited to LFS person quarterly and LFS 2Q datasets
  - retaining the incoherence in population bases between LFS and APS-based outputs
- Resolving these challenges dependent on "full" reweighting
- UK-wide Subnational Population Projections being released through 2025
- Anticipate releasing reweighted historic series of LFS & APS files in 2026
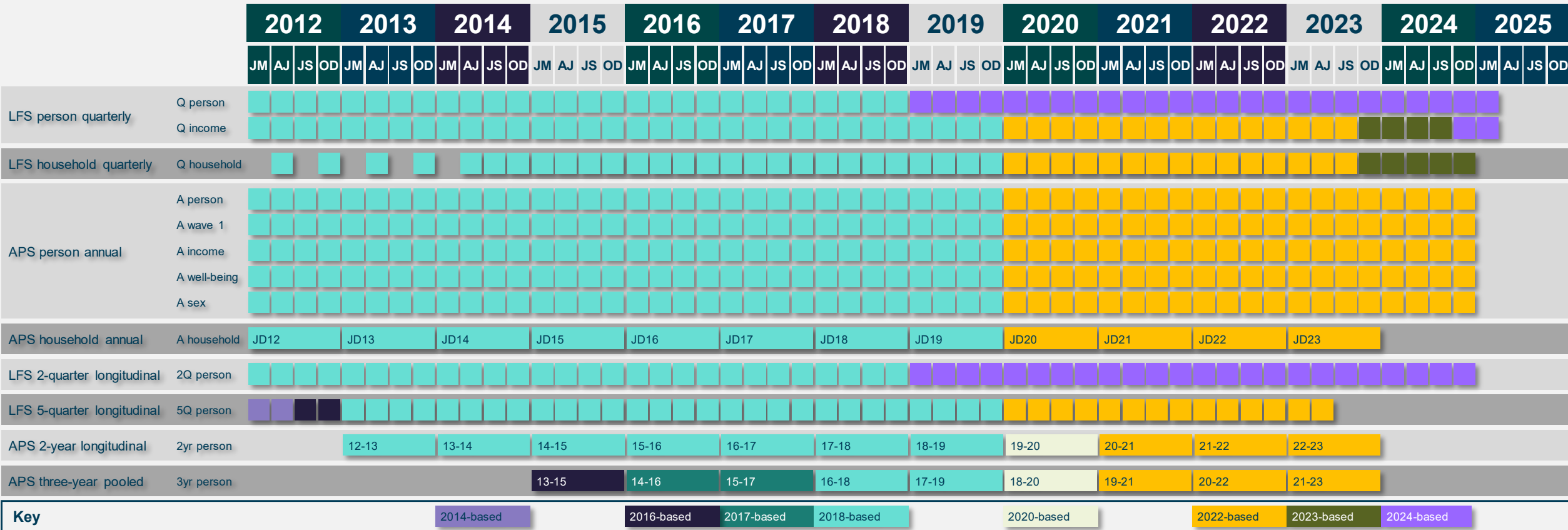
Data caveats

- APS files not yet reweighted

- No specific bias caused by the reduction of the achieved sample

- Reduction experienced across geographies and demographic characteristics

- Smaller sample means more difficulty producing detailed cross-variable analysis

- Whilst regional level analysis is possible (with higher statistical variability), analysis at more local level result is more limited

    e.g. industry, ethnicity, disability cross-tabulated by age

Strongly advise users to calculate measures of accuracy!

Questions?

ONS LFS Survey Research contact:

socialsurveys@ons.gov.uk

Office for **National Statistics**