

Interventions aimed at improving LFS response rates

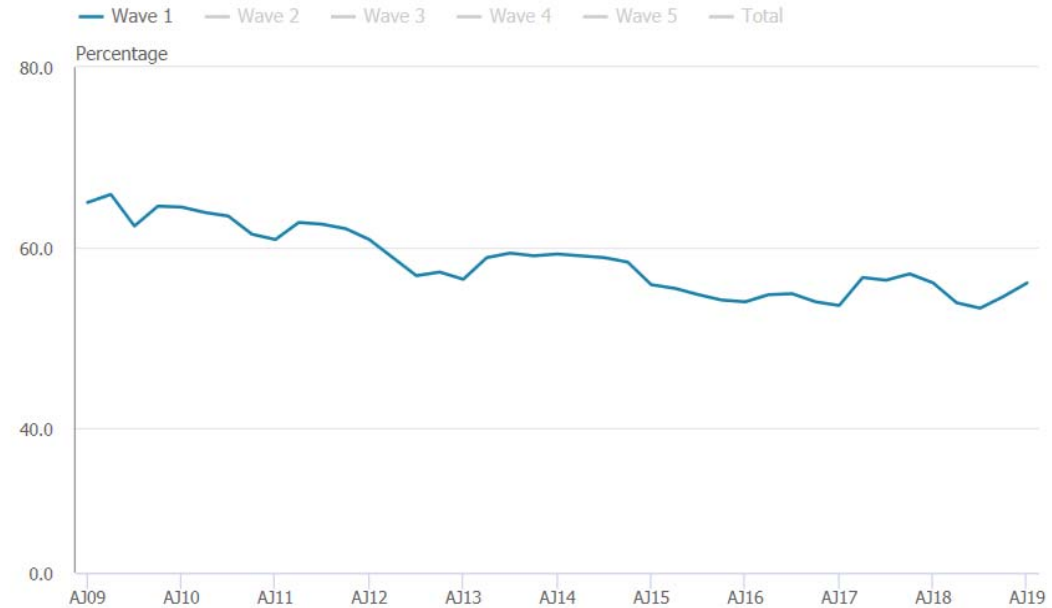
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Why response rate matters?

LFS wave 1 response rates

- Latest annual LFS wave 1 response rate is around 56%
- Response rates have been falling gradually since 1990
- Research suggests that internationally LFS response is falling by 1.46 percentage points every 2 years (De Leeuw & Luiten 2018)
- Non-contacts are increasing at a steeper rate than refusals due, this is thought to be attributed to various response initiatives
- Wave 1 response is one of the measures used to access survey data quality
- Greater pool of respondents at wave 1 means that more households can be followed up longitudinally
- Achieving response at wave 1 ensures that data for the sampled household is captured, even if this household refuses to follow up interviews.

LFS response trends - last 10 years



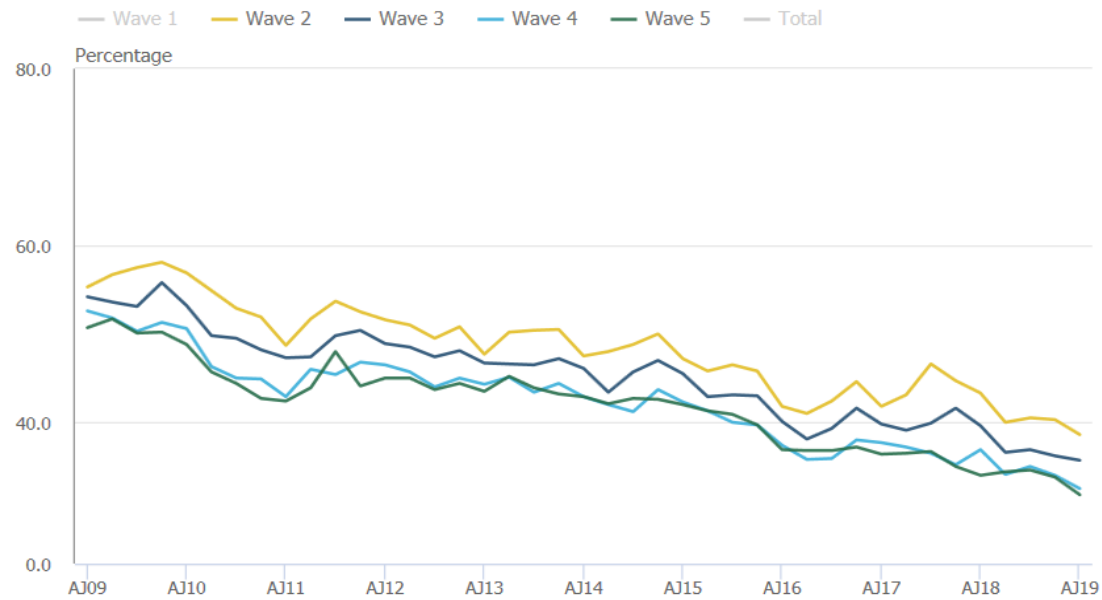
Source: Office for National Statistics – Labour Force Survey

Response rates in the follow up waves

- Attrition is problematic in longitudinal household surveys – impacts the quality and representation of final data.
- Attrition impacts weighting of final data across the waves
- Sample become less representative of the general population due to attrition in longitudinal studies
- Respondents with certain characteristics are more likely to attrite – this increases the risk of non-response bias.

Attrition: *the proportion of original members of a sample who failed to be interviewed at each wave (excluding members who are no longer eligible due to moving out of UK or death).*

LFS response trends - last 10 years



Source: Office for National Statistics – Labour Force Survey

Barriers to achieving good response in Wave 1

Challenges to achieving response at wave 1:

- ✓ No confirmed information about the household → cannot target communications
- ✓ Household may not be aware about the ONS surveys → need to know what we do and why we do it
- ✓ Declining social capital → may be reluctant to take part in surveys

Channels for intervention:

- ✓ Respondent advance materials – letters and leaflets
- ✓ Respondent rewards/incentives

Barriers to achieving good response in Waves 2+

Challenges to achieving response in the follow up waves:

- ✓ Bad experience with the previous wave
- ✓ Interview length at Wave 1
- ✓ Lack of communication between waves
- ✓ Busy lifestyles

Channels for intervention:

- ✓ Targeted communication
- ✓ Regular and consistent communication
- ✓ *“Blind pursuit of high response rates in probability samples is unwise; informed pursuit of high response rates is wise”* Bob Groves (2006)

Interventions and Survey Error

- Low survey response rate is associated with non-response bias as default.
- Some methods for increasing response rates could increase other types of error, potentially increasing total survey error. So any attempts to increase response rates should also consider the impact that this may have on other error sources.

Strategies to increase LFS Wave 1 response

Advance Materials



'Messenger effect' - letter trial

Assessing the impact of the 'messenger effect'

- ✓ the extent to which people engage with information depends on the person who communicates it, and their perceptions of the source of information
- ✓ the 'messenger' influences the weight people give to that information

Testing both concurrently in 4 letters :

- ✓ authority of the sender
- ✓ gender of the sender





Office for
National Statistics

www.ons.gov.uk/surveys

Segensworth Road
Titchfield, Fareham
PO15 5RR

Freephone: 0800 298 5313
NGT Service: (18001) 0800 298 5313

Dear Resident(s)

Your address has been selected for an important study carried out by the **Office for National Statistics (ONS)**. Each year about half a million people take part in our surveys.

Taking part will help your household

Many of the news stories you see or hear, about the economy or the cost of living, are based on information we collect. This study is about a range of subjects including work, retirement, unemployment, training and looking after the family and home – although you may only be asked about some of these. Your contribution to this study is essential for producing statistics used to make decisions which affect you, your family and your community.

We need to interview your household

One of our interviewers is planning to visit your address to arrange a convenient time for an interview. If you'd like to arrange a time to suit you, or if you have any questions, please call us on **0800 298 5313**. Our interviewers are available during the day, in the evenings and at weekends and carry an identity card, for your reassurance. This study involves all residents in the household. If a household member is not available when we call, we may ask someone else in the household to respond on their behalf.

It is important that everyone in your household sees this letter and the enclosed leaflet.

We value your contribution

Your answers will be treated as confidential. I have enclosed a **£10 gift card** to thank you for helping ONS with this study.

Yours faithfully,

Iain Bell
Director General

To request a copy of this letter in large print or braille please phone **0800 298 5313**.

For more information, go to our website www.ons.gov.uk/surveys

LFS_AdvLet_W1_ENG_10 08/18



The information you give us is protected by law and is treated as confidential. It will be used for statistical purposes only. The Office for National Statistics is not linked to any political parties.





High authority

Lower authority

Female

Male

Male

Female

Yours faithfully,

Heather Savory
Director General

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For more information, go to our website www.ons.gov.uk



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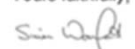
Yours faithfully,

Iain Bell
Director General


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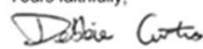
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Yours faithfully,

Simon Woodsford
Researcher


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Yours faithfully,

Debbie Curtis
Researcher

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Results

Differences between probability of achieved interview:

Not statistically significant

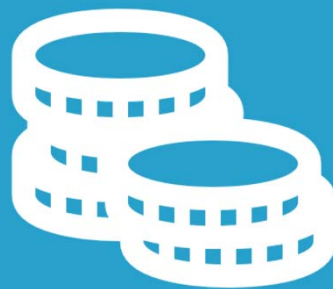
- female lower authority group and male high authority groups
- female high authority group and male high authority group

Statistically significant

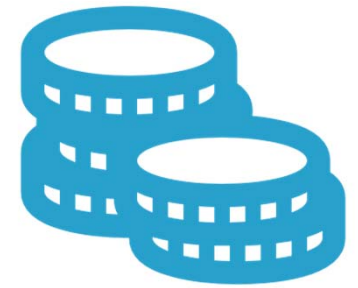
- Male lower authority signatory group was associated with lower probability of achieving a response outcome when compared to the male senior signatory group



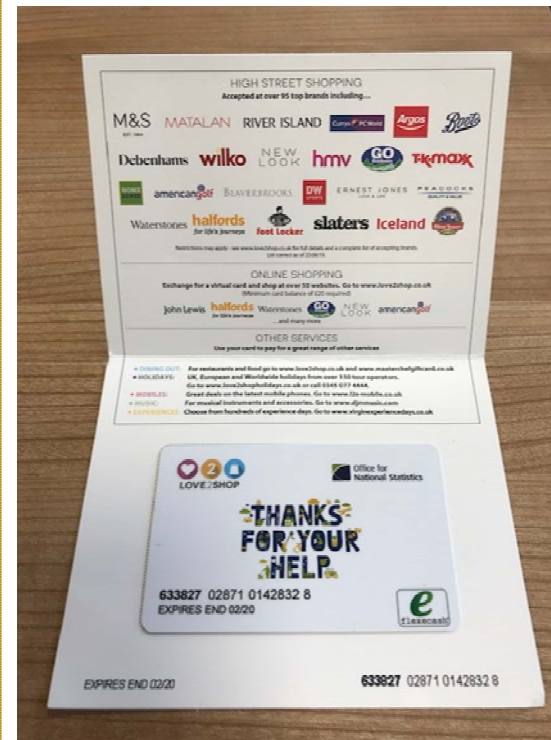
Incentives



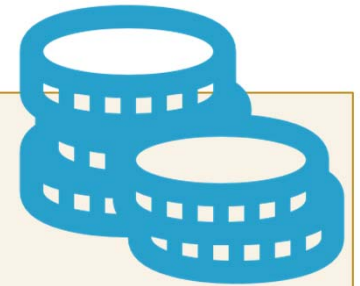
History of incentives on the LFS



Pre-autumn 2016	First class postage stamps in August and December months only
↓ October 2016	Unconditional incentives pilot
↓ June 2017	Unconditional mixed monetary incentive trial (£5 vs. £10) in 2017-2018
↓ July 2018	Gift card with a 6 month expiry from July 2018



LFS Dress Rehearsal Conditional incentives trial



What we've done...

- In research unconditional incentives are often found to be more effective than conditional
- Conditional incentives are more cost effective ⇒ can therefore potentially increase monetary value
- We mentioned that respondents will be offered £10 voucher after survey completion in advance letters
- We asked interviewers to collect respondents email after an interview was completed
- We emailed the vouchers to respondents within 24 hours of responding

Findings...

- ✓ Interviewers found it a useful tool to persuade reluctant respondents
- ✓ Respondents received the incentives promptly after the interview
- ✓ Good way to finish an interview = more likely to agree to take part in the follow up wave
- ✓ Reduced number of complaints about not receiving incentives

Strategies to help maintaining response in the follow up waves

Responsive Design

“An adaptive data-collection approach that uses information available, both before and during data collection, to adjust the collection strategy for the remaining cases”.



Responsive Design Methodology



Aim: ✓ To achieve the same response rate more efficiently

In developing a model which predicts how likely a household is to respond, we had to consider:

- Statistical modelling methods
- Operational concerns (e.g. which variables can be rotated into next wave)



1. Tenure
2. Age group of HRP
3. Parental status of HRP
4. Gender of HRP
5. Work status of HRP
6. Ethnicity of HRP
7. Number of days tried
8. Total calls this wave
9. Number of times slots tried

Responsive Design Methodology



Aim: ✓ whilst ensuring representativeness is not negatively affected

Allocating sample units to pre-defined domains

- Based on response rates of different groups
- Fixed groups based on household characteristics
- Smallest variance within groups and different means across groups
- Representativeness at wave 1 and after attrition



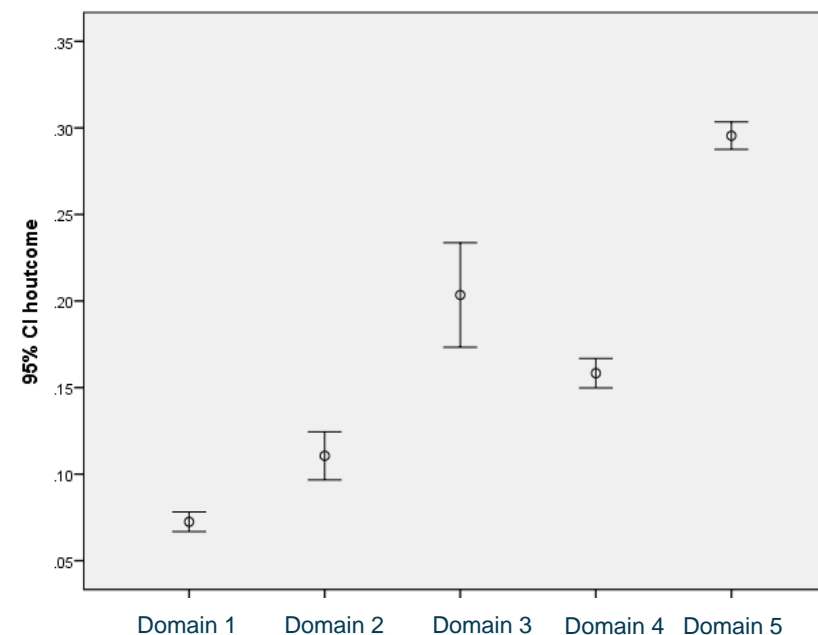


Responsive Design Methodology

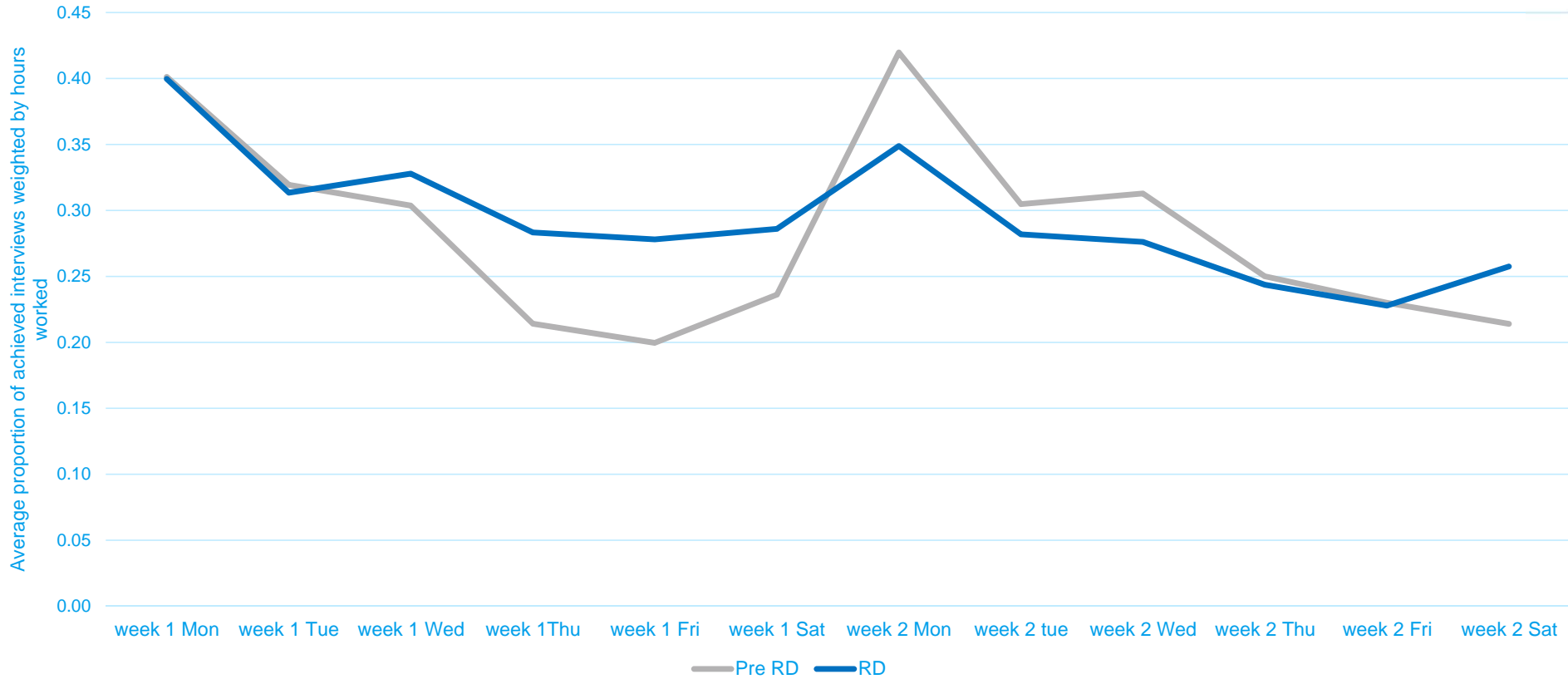
Aim: ✓ whilst ensuring representativeness is not negatively affected

Allocating sample units to pre-defined domains

	HRP's ethnicity	Household type	Tenure
Domain 1	Ethnic minority + missing	All	All
Domain 2	White	Lone parent	Renting
Domain 3	White	Lone parent	Not renting
Domain 4	White	Not lone parent	Renting
Domain 5	White	Not lone parent	Not renting



Results



Reminder texts trial



- In Waves 2+ respondents are mainly interviewed via telephone
- Majority of respondents provide us with their mobile number
- We tested two behaviourally informed text messages against no message with the aim of increasing participation in LFS W2+

Text message trial groups



No message (control group)



Helping message (test group)



Commitment message (test group)



Results



Primary outcomes

- ✓ Receiving commitment text message produced a statistically significant increase in the odds of full or partial cooperation compared to control group where no text message was received.
- ✓ In practice this resulted in just over 2 percentage points increase in response for this group when compared to control group.
- ✓ Receiving helping message did not have statistically significant effects on response.

Secondary outcomes

- ✓ Receiving either of the text messages significantly decreased the odds of refusal compared to receiving no text message. In practice refusal rate in commitment group was 15.1% and in helping group 15.7%, compared to 18.1% in control.
- ✓ Helping text message treatment was most effective for reducing the odds of refusal for older respondents.
- ✓ Contact and the number of attempts required to achieve first contact with households was not significantly affected by either of the treatment text messages.

Questions?

Email lina.lloyd@ons.gov.uk