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The Feasibility of Conducting a Universal Credit Panel Survey

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Executive Summary and Main Recommendations

This report reviews the feasibility of a panel survey to assess the introduction of Universal Credit and address a number of research questions which the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is interested in being able to address. It considers a number of options for the design of such a survey and identifies a preferred design with a number of variants.

In reviewing the DWP's research questions (Section 2), we conclude that while some might be addressed through ad hoc cross-sectional surveys some require the longitudinal data which a panel survey would provide. We also identify issues in defining an appropriate comparison sample for claimants on Universal Credit as well as issues in the use of administrative data, the importance of collecting information from multiple members of benefit units and the frequency of waves, in particular whether these could be carried out every six months.

The review of proposed options outlined in the Research Specification (Section 3) concludes that the preferred option should be a new fixed panel (Option 3), though possibly supplemented by refreshment samples of new claimants of Universal Credit. Budget permitting this could be supplemented by additional cross sectional surveys (e.g. of other members of households containing benefit units claiming Universal Credit) and by commissioning additional questions in other longitudinal surveys, for example to provide comparison with the non-claimant population.

Proposals for drawing the sample are set out in section 4. These take into account the staged Universal Credit roll-out as outlined by DWP. Here we discuss in more detail the issue of comparison samples. We conclude that there are two alternative approaches, one of which takes a subset of claimants of legacy benefits most similar to Universal Credit in terms of start date of claim. A second more ambitious approach takes a sample representing all claimants of legacy benefits. We also conclude that with the current UC roll-out it would make it relatively expensive to achieve full GB representativeness. There will certainly need to be a substantial over-sample in the North West region, since it contains the great majority of areas where Universal Credit is initially being rolled-out. Achieving sample size sufficient for analysis of other individual regions would imply a very large comparison sample on legacy benefits.

We consider options for mode of interview in Section 5. We recommend the use of face-to-face interviewing in wave 1 of the study to maximise response rates at that stage and the use of mixed-mode interviewing involving web, followed by face-to-face and possibly telephone at subsequent waves. We suggest that web-only interviewing at subsequent waves, while significantly cheaper, could lead to very high attrition.

In Section 6 we make a range of proposals for fieldwork implementation, which could be incorporated in an invitation to tender for a sub-contractor for the project.

Section 7 sets out a number of options for commissioning the project and in section 8 we outline the recommended timetable for the project. We suggest that the time from the completion of the process of commissioning a sub-contractor for the project to the start of fieldwork for the first wave should not be less than nine to twelve months.

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1 Introduction

DWP is considering introducing a longitudinal panel survey to provide detailed data on the introduction of Universal Credit (UC) as it is rolled-out across the UK. It has been agreed, in principle, that a Universal Credit Panel Study will be developed as a central component of the UC evaluation programme, to provide detailed data about the behaviours, views and attitudes of UC claimants and to develop an understanding of the transitions between benefits and work that claimants make over time.

The Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER) at the University of Essex has been commissioned to conduct this feasibility study and to make recommendations on the design and implementation of the Universal Credit Panel Study. ISER is recognised as a world-leader in the design and conduct of longitudinal panel studies and survey methodology https://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/ Its prestigious team of researchers have a wide range of expertise in social science disciplines, including economics, sociology, demography, epidemiology and statistics.

ISER is home to the UK Longitudinal Studies Centre which was established by the Economic and Social Research Council in 1999 and is the national resource centre for promoting longitudinal research and for the design, management and support of longitudinal surveys. Its goal is to ensure the collection of longitudinal data of the highest quality to meet UK social research needs and to promote its widest and most effective use. The centre makes a major contribution to the UK's unique portfolio of longitudinal studies and to the advances they help us make in advancing the social sciences and in understanding society.

ISER has a substantial track record in providing advice in the development of new longitudinal studies both in the UK and other countries including for example work on the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England, a potential longitudinal study of immigrants for the Home Office and a number of international studies. The British Household Panel Survey, run by the team at ISER since 1991, is one of the most widely used data sets in the world and its successor, *Understanding Society*, is the largest study of its kind, interviewing people annually across the UK https://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/ ISER's team of experts also supports researchers and other users of the data through the provision of advice, information and training in longitudinal analysis and the provision of resources to make data easier to use.

The aim of the panel survey of UC claimants as set out in the Research Specification for this project is to provide an evaluation and monitoring tool that enables DWP to understand a number of factors around the introduction of UC and whether it is meeting its overall objectives. In summary these include:

- claimant behaviour and attitudes
- rates of movements into employment and sustainability of employment
- individual behavioural responses to UC conditionality
- the effect of UC payment system on household finances and employment attitudes and decisions
- claimants' views and understanding of the UC system.

Section 2 discusses the research questions in more detail and identifies the design and content requirements which follow from the need to address these questions.

This feasibility study considers the potential design options set out in the DWP Research Specification as well as suggesting other options or design variants which may be considered viable alternatives. DWP requires a survey design that is both methodologically robust and provides value for money. In evaluating design options we consider six key elements:

i. meeting the analytic requirements set out in the Research Specification
ii. availability of a robust and viable sampling strategy and sampling frame in the light of the current plans for the roll-out of Universal Credit
iii. fieldwork implementation to achieve acceptable response rates
iv. mode of data collection and implications for data quality
v. timeliness of data delivery
vi. indicative cost and value for money

As a first step in Section 3 we consider the benefits and limitations of potential design options and we identify our optimal or preferred design options, based on the assessment of the first two of these criteria. We identify one which we would recommend in the light of these, though with potential variants and potentially supplemented by separate data collection based around the other options.

In Section 4 we consider the approach to sampling for the panel and some of the variants which might be introduced. In assessing options we consider the implications of the roll-out of UC over the next three years to October 2017 based on information as provided by DWP at the time this research was undertaken (Summer 2014). Our recommendations allow flexibility in the event the roll-out schedule changes. There are two particular areas where the UC roll-out has significant implications for the design (i) in relation to the potential for regional representativeness within the UK and (ii) in relation to the design of the study so as to include appropriate comparison groups. We consider how both legacy claimants and new claimants can be included in the sample to provide a representative sample of claimants over time.

In the following sections we consider other key elements of the design outlined above for the preferred options. In Section 5 we discuss options for mode of data collection and recommend that the first wave should be conducted face to face, but that subsequent waves involve mixed-mode collection. In Section 6 we discuss aspects of fieldwork implementation, to ensure that the sample can be recruited and maintained throughout the life of the panel to maximise response rates at each wave and minimise attrition across waves. In later sections we discuss contracting strategies and timetables.

Developing a new panel study is complex and ensuring that it can deliver high quality data in a timely manner as well as providing good value for money involves getting many aspects of the design right. We raise many of the issues involved in this report, but inevitably we cannot provide a full specification of everything. Moreover the issues involved in evaluating the introduction of Universal Credit raise issues of design which go beyond the choice of a main option. DWP will need to make decisions around some of the other sampling and design issues raised in this report. We hope that we have provided sufficient information for the Department to at least start consideration of these issues.

2 Research Objectives and Implications for Design

2.1. Overall Research Objectives

In considering the most appropriate design for the Universal Credit Panel Survey the first critical step is to fully understand the research objectives and the data that will be needed to answer the key research questions. The DWP specification identifies the following research questions:

1) Claimant behaviour and evolving attitudes towards work, benefits, money management, income maximisation and financial independence. What do people think about welfare, how do they think about work, what are their views about financial self-sufficiency. Are these attitudes and behaviours changing over time? Can changes in benefit culture be identified?

2) Whether policies to smooth the transition to work are having the required effect. Are people moving into employment, is this sustained and what types of employment and hours of work are being sought and obtained? Are people attempting to increase hours and income? Are they choosing to take more than one job?

3) Individuals' understanding of the benefit system and what strategies they devise to cope with a new conditionality regime. Are people complying with the conditions of the system, are those with a requirement to search for work or increase their employment earnings doing so? Does this prove successful for all groups?

4) What effect will the UC payment regime have on family dynamics. How is benefit income distributed across the family unit and how is this received by all family members? Does a collective budget increase the pressure of family members to increase earned income? How does UC affect attitudes and aspirations about work?

5) Understanding claimant reaction to UC as a programme of activity. Issues of fairness, comprehension, compliance and conditionality.

6) Whether UC has affected levels of household income and reduced the incidence of poverty through movement into work and pay progression in employment. Has individual income increased over time? What patterns have emerged in terms of UC supported income and self-sustained income?

The design needs to be driven by these research questions. There are two key issues here (i) how they impact on survey design i.e. whether a longitudinal survey is required and what sort of sample and following rules it should have, and (ii) how they impact on questionnaire content. We take each of these in turn.

2.2 Survey Design

Descriptive work on some of the research questions outlined above could be addressed with a single cross-sectional survey, but many of them require a longitudinal design. Thus for example understanding the transition to work (question

2) and how it is affected by UC requires multiple measures of claimants to understand both the duration of the process of moving into work and how it is affected by changing aspects of behaviour and attitudes. Similarly it is valuable to understand change in behaviour and attitudes with time on UC (question 2). A similar argument can be made for most of the other questions which require, or are enormously enriched by having, multiple measures of the same individual which only a longitudinal study can provide. A longitudinal survey of UC recipients could track how attitudes and behaviours change over time while people are receiving UC.

There is scope for far richer comparisons if people are tracked before they become UC recipients or if we have a comparison group on legacy benefits. As we suggest below the first of these may be difficult to follow for a representative sample, given the staged UC roll-out, so our main focus here will be on a comparison group. With a comparable legacy group sample, a comparison of levels or changes for UC recipients with those on legacy benefits then becomes possible to see; for example, how job search strategies differ between legacy and UC claimants.

In considering the longitudinal rationale for the study it is important to be aware of the significance of duration of claim. We would assume significant interest in how attitudes and behaviours change as people have been claiming for longer periods. We suggest that the initial UC claimant sample should be drawn from people who have started their claim relatively recently, so that we can observe most of the claim period. Without this restriction we will be observing people for whom we are missing information about the earlier periods of their current claim.

Reviewing the research questions posed in the DWP brief we identify three overarching issues which will influence the design. These need to be balanced against the feasibility and cost of implementing particular designs and sampling strategies. We consider these issues in the discussion that follows.

2.2.1 Survey frequency

DWP has expressed a preference for conducting surveys as frequently as possible, and if possible to include surveys every six months. There is a clear motivation for this given the rapid changes there may be in people's circumstances and the desirability of having measures of change and response to that change as close as possible to each other. We have developed the remainder of this report on the basis of six monthly interviews. We would however caution that these present considerable implementation challenges given the very tight timetable for preparing each wave and reissuing sample from one wave to the next and this is a design that implies higher overall costs. We return to this issue below.

2.2.2 Household context

Some of the core research questions focus on investigating family dynamics to understand how other people within a benefit unit or household where the benefit unit resides may alter their behaviour in response to UC being received by someone they live with. The strictest interpretation of this requirement is that all members of the benefit unit will need to be interviewed and possibly other adult members of the household who are not in the sampled benefit unit. Understanding the wider effect of UC receipt on the household is likely to be an important research issue. Given the funding envelope for the study and the significantly higher cost of interviewing all

household members, we would recommend an approach which interviews the benefit unit member in receipt of UC, collecting proxy information from them about their spouse/partner and other adult household members (e.g. current employment status and labour market activity). However, it is clearly very important to collect some information from both couple members in couple benefit units, particularly attitudinal measures which cannot be collected by proxy. The payment of UC will be via one claimant in the couple benefit unit and could be paid into a sole or a joint bank account depending on the choice of the couple. In practice this might result in the majority of surveyed claimants being the male partner and it will be important to understand the effects on their female partner or spouse. We recommend that a short module of perhaps 5 – 10 minutes is also asked of the partner/spouse who is not the sampled claimant to understand the effects on household budgeting and employment search behaviour. If necessary, this module could be asked every other wave to minimise the additional costs.

A second, possibly less critical issue is understanding how the receipt of UC affects the behaviour of other household members beyond the benefit unit. If budgets allow, an intermittent cross-sectional survey of all household members outside the benefit unit could be carried out, in particular to collect attitudinal information that could not be collected by proxy. In our view, collecting information on household members outside the benefit unit is desirable but less important than having data from both members of couple benefit units.

2.2.3 Longer-term outcomes

To assess the sustainability of employment the survey will need to follow people once they move off UC or other legacy benefits. Participants certainly need to be followed in the short-term so that any movements into employment and back onto UC are observed. Following survey participants who move off UC for 2 years seems a reasonable time frame for understanding short-term effects. If longer-term outcomes are required one option would be to carry out less frequent follow-up surveys once participants have moved off UC for a defined period of time. Once a participant is included in the sample, they would in any case be picked up as a study participant if they apply for UC at any point in the future. We recommend that all participants sampled are flagged on the DWP administrative data to ensure they can be identified easily at any future date and through any Job Centre. If there is a rationale for following leavers from UC, then there is an equivalent rationale for following leavers from the legacy benefits, since one of the areas of interest will be in the time to making a new claim.

2.3 Survey content and analytical issues

In this section we outline core measures that will be needed in a UC panel survey to enable longitudinal analysis to address the DWP's key research questions. The DWP Research Specification lists a number of analytical benefits of a UC panel survey. These include more detailed information on claimants' trajectories both in and out of work, a better picture of the UC client base (to complement administrative data), causal estimates of policy interventions and a better picture of people's changing attitudes over time. Thus, as discussed above, the survey aims to answer a combination of descriptive and causal questions. From the detailed set of research questions in Section 2.1 four overarching areas of interest emerge:

- The transitions Universal Credit claimants make over time.
- Whether receiving Universal Credit affects attitudes and behaviours in respect of work and engagement with the welfare benefit system.
- What effects Universal Credit has on family/household dynamics.
- What effect Universal Credit has on individual and household income and budget planning.

2.3.1 Survey content

Based on the research questions, we can identify some broad content that will need to be included. Because a key aim of the study is to track change over time, in both attitudes and behaviour, almost all of the core measures will need to be collected at every wave of data collection to provide repeated measures that are comparable over time. For any longitudinal survey, maintaining consistency of question wording and structure is important for longitudinal comparability. Inevitably some changes in content will be needed in response to external changes or analysis requirements but our recommendation would be to maintain consistency of questionnaire content as far as possible to avoid problems in interpreting changes which may be observed in the data. Fielding a questionnaire more than once a year also allows little time for adjustment to content and the efficiency of implementation would be improved by maintaining a largely fixed set of questionnaire modules. Minimising changes to the questionnaire will also help with the downstream processing of data in a timely and consistent manner, one of the requirements set out in the specification.

Given the likely constraints on questionnaire length we would also recommend an approach which identifies a set of core measures that are asked at each wave of data collection with modules on specific topics being included on a pre-determined rotation pattern. This will enable a wider range of information to be collected without over-burdening survey participants. In Sections 5 and 6 where mode of data collection and fieldwork implementation are discussed, one option may be to have varying length questionnaires at every other wave e.g. a longer annual face-to-face survey with a short six month web/mobile survey to collect key measures of short-term change such as employment and non-employment spells. An alternative approach for the six month interview cycle may be to have similar length surveys every six months, with the same core coverage at each wave with rotating modules that are fixed to odd or even waves. This would have the advantage of maintaining continuity of measurement at each wave for the core measures.

2.3.2 Use of administrative data as part of the survey content

Collecting detailed information on all components of income is time consuming and difficult and can be prone to recall error and missing data problems. As much of the information on benefit receipt and income from employment will be contained in administrative records held by DWP we strongly recommend investigating what measures are available on the administrative data and, with participant consent, using those data as part of the survey data rather than collecting income data separately in the survey. In our experience separate collection adds significantly to respondent burden and questionnaire length and leads to inconsistencies that are difficult to resolve post-fieldwork. The reliability of the data would be significantly

improved by using the administrative record data and it would be a cost-effective use of resources through keeping down questionnaire length and freeing time for questions on other areas of interest.

Three key questions arise from this approach. First, what data are available within the administrative records and how much could be made available in a timely manner for inclusion in the study? This would require scoping as part of the questionnaire development work. Second, what participant consents would be needed in order to carry out the linkage and what level of consent could be expected? Thirdly, how should the study take forward participants who are willing to be interviewed, but not to give consent for data linkage? Our recommendation is to ask for these consents at wave 1 and any participant who refuses consent should not be followed up at subsequent waves. The wave 1 data would allow for any consent bias to be assessed and if necessary weighted and the efficiency for future data collection would be significantly improved. Given the survey is being conducted by DWP and the administrative data are already held by DWP consent may not be a major issue for many participants, especially if it is phrased as a benefit to them through reducing the amount of time they will need to spend answering detailed questions. This would clearly need piloting and we discuss this further in Sections 5 and 6.

2.3.3 Core measures

In discussing core measures below we try to indicate a) whether they need asking every six months or every year, given our six monthly design and b) how far they are acceptable to ask by proxy for partners in couple benefit units, or whether they require separate interviews.

Work activity and transitions

Given the policy aims of UC, a major focus of the study is on work behaviour and how it is affected by UC receipt. We assume we will have administrative data on the income components below, at least for the benefit unit receiving the benefit. Other measures (and perhaps income to other benefit units in the household) will need to be collected using survey questions. Core items with a suggested frequency of collection i.e. every wave of collection at six month intervals or at annual collection waves, and whether the item can be asked by proxy in couple benefit units are detailed in the table below. This list of items is not exhaustive and may need to be extended during the questionnaire design phase as the research questions are refined.

Item	Frequency	Collect by proxy
Current activity status	All waves	Yes
Employee versus self-employed	All waves	Yes
Hours of work (actual)	All waves	Yes
Hours of work (desired)	All waves	No
Earnings (if not available on administrative records)	All waves	Yes
Other income sources	All waves	Yes
Second/casual job holding (including hours and earnings)	All waves	Yes
Measures of unstable work: permanent or temporary; zero hours contract	All waves	Yes
Job search behaviour and aspirations	All waves	No
Job history since previous interview	All waves	Yes
Previous employment status	All waves	Yes
Previous benefit status	All waves	Yes

There will be a need to collect a work history between survey waves to capture rapid movements in and out of employment or between jobs supplementing the information available on administrative records (for instance, collecting details of type of employment contract). A scoping exercise to determine what data will be available on the administrative records will be required and if full job histories can be constructed from the administrative data this may remove the need to include it in the questionnaire. A complete job history will be especially important if the waves are only annual rather than biannual even though we support the DWP preference for biannual waves to capture short-term transitions as they happen. A simple question asking if participants have changed their employment status or job since the date of the last interview would provide a trigger for questions about that employment or non-employment spell. We would identify these job spell questions as being part of the critical core to be asked at every data collection point to ensure employment movements are accurately captured. With a six month interval between surveys, the reliability of the job history will be significantly improved as recall error will be minimised. If mobile/web is used for data collection (see Section 5 and 6), adopting a calendar design approach for the questions may be most efficient. These methods and designs have now been tested for mobile and web surveys in other contexts with some success.

Attitudes to benefit receipt

An aim of the study is to find out what people think about welfare - is there evidence of a “benefit culture”, how it changes over time and whether views about benefit receipt affect work behaviour. Content here could be modelled on some of the questions in the British Social Attitudes Survey (BSAS), which ask about attitudes to the welfare state, conditionality and work. The Wealth and Assets Survey (WAS) includes various relevant questions on attitudes to saving and credit. Insofar as attitudes may change relatively slowly over time and interest focuses on longer-term, sustained changes in culture, these measures could be collected annually rather than biannually. Carrying measures which are comparable to other national studies

has advantages in that the questions have typically been through piloting and validation and they provide comparability with other sources which can be useful for analysis. The majority of these measures are ones that cannot be asked by proxy and where having data from both members of couple benefit units will be important. While the suggested frequency is annual, they are modules which could be rotated at odd and even waves on a six month survey cycle to ensure the questionnaire does not become too long and burdensome for participants. We would expect these attitudes to change relatively slowly making annual collection appropriate.

Item	Frequency	Collect by proxy
Attitudes to benefit receipt, conditionality and work versus benefits (BSAS)	Annual	No
Work commitment and job preferences (Understanding Society)	Annual	No
Financial/savings attitudes and aspirations (WAS)	Annual	No
Financial self-sufficiency (BSA/Understanding Society/WAS)	Annual	No

Knowledge of benefit system and UC conditionality

As well as people's attitudes towards benefit receipt, an important determinant of their behaviour will be their understanding of how the system operates. It might be difficult to ask people directly whether they are complying with their UC requirements, but DWP may have experience doing this in past evaluations. Designing these questions will require detailed knowledge of the UC rules but key measures are likely to include those listed below. As with the attitudinal measures these are not items that can easily be collected by proxy but could be rotated at odd and even waves to maintain a reasonable questionnaire length.

Item	Frequency	Collect by proxy
Perception of benefit conditions	Annual	No
Awareness of job search requirements	Annual	No
Awareness of work hours requirements	Annual	No
General financial literacy (possibly use WAS)	Annual	No

It is likely these questions will need careful piloting and testing if this work has not already been carried out by DWP in another context.

Family/household context and dynamics

UC will introduce major changes to the way that families and households receive their benefits. Rather than being paid fortnightly to individuals, UC will be paid once

per month to the household as a whole, into a bank account that may be in the name of a sole individual or in joint names. Ideally all adult household members would be surveyed about the potential effects on individual budgeting and consumption behaviour, but in practice our judgement is this will be too costly to do at every wave of data collection. As suggested above the alternative is to interview a benefit unit or household representative, with proxy information being collected on other household members even though subjective items are not easily asked by proxy. This theme might include questions on:

Item	Frequency	Collect by proxy
Subjective perception of household financial management (WAS)	Annual	No
Budgeting and expenditure behaviour	All waves	Yes
Use of credit/savings (WAS)	All waves	Yes
Use of pay day or other short-term credit	All waves	Yes

As suggested previously, having subjective measures from both members of couple benefit units will be important, even if only annually. If budgets allow, we would recommend intermittent cross-sectional surveys of all household members to focus on these issues explicitly and to collect subjective measures from other household members that cannot be collected by proxy e.g. subjective measures of whether UC has improved the household's quality of life and standard of living and access to money entering the household for essential expenditure.

General socio-economic and demographic characteristics

A set of background characteristics will also be needed as basic controls for multivariate analysis and to identify the DWP's sub-groups of interest. Some of these initial conditions measures will only need to be collected once as they are fixed characteristics e.g. date of birth, gender, ethnicity, place of birth. Some may be available when sampling from DWP records in which case they could be fed forward as basic sample information. Others will need to be updated at each wave of data collection or at least annually.

Initial conditions demographic measures include:

- Date of birth/age
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Whether UK born
- If not UK born, where born
- If not UK born, date of arrival in UK
- Vulnerability (at point of claim, from administrative records)
- ESOL need (at point of claim, from administrative records)
- Ex offender status (at point of claim, from administrative records)

Measures that would need regular updating include:

- Region/location

- Marital status
- Couple type
- Number and ages of children and other household members/dependents
- Education including vocational qualifications
- Disability/health status
- Claimant group (once clearly defined)

There may be a range of other measures which will be required; examples could include measures of human capital which may influence the likelihood of moving into employment (e.g. work experience before claiming, recent training undertaken). Some consultation with stakeholders in the study should certainly be undertaken to ensure nothing has been missed.

3 Overview of Possible Design Options

A number of design options together with the advantages and disadvantages of each were set out in the Research Specification. The specification also set out a number of essential and desirable requirements for the study in terms of geographic coverage and potential for sub-group analysis. Below we consider each suggested design option in turn to establish whether they meet the initial criteria of meeting the analytic requirements of the study.

Option 1 - The Exploitation of Existing Surveys

Existing longitudinal surveys could certainly be used to provide the framework for carrying a module on Universal Credit. This approach could meet DWP's analytic requirements but would require the addition of an over-sample of UC claimants to an existing study in order to achieve sufficient sample sizes of the sub-groups of interest receiving UC. Depending on the size of the UC over-sample this would imply substantial recruitment and interviewing costs, especially as most studies collect data using primarily face-to-face interviews. The advantage would be having a nationally representative sample of non-claimants and claimants to observe on-flows to UC as well as those leaving UC and to provide a population comparison group. This approach would also depend on inclusion of new items on existing studies. A major concern for existing studies is likely to be the increased burden on participants as to gain the necessary level of detail for DWP purposes there would need to be a significant increase in interview length. In our view this option is unlikely to prove feasible or to provide the level of detail needed given competition for space on existing studies.

An alternative approach would be to combine a new free-standing UC panel with the addition of questions to an existing longitudinal survey to supplement data collected from a panel sample of UC claimants and provide a population comparison group on key measures. A study such as Understanding Society (https://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/) may provide a suitable vehicle for this as it has an annual interview cycle with interviews conducted throughout the year. This would be relatively efficient in terms of cost as many of the fixed costs of setting up a survey operation would not apply and only additional development and interviewing time would need to be paid for. It is an approach that is unlikely to deliver timely data as most existing longitudinal studies operate over fairly long time-frames for data collection and data release. Nonetheless, it may be a valuable means of providing supplementary data for population comparison purposes. Many of the questions identified in Section 2 will already be present on Understanding Society, but additional measures might need to be introduced. This will need to take into account length constraints in these other surveys. **We do not recommend using the approach to collect a new sample of UC claimants but we would recommend considering this option if it could be implemented in conjunction with a UC claimant panel. The feasibility of this approach will largely depend on budget considerations.**

Option 2 - Ad hoc cross sectional surveys commissioned to address specific needs, as and when required

Conducting a series of ad hoc cross-sectional surveys as and when the need arises is a viable option to provide trend data in a relatively timely and cost-efficient manner. It will not provide longitudinal data however and the core analytic requirements focus on questions which can only be addressed with longitudinal data for the same benefit units and people. A core interest is in observing transitions and how individual and household behaviours change over time as UC is rolled-out and people experience and grow to understand the incentive structures contained within UC, cross-sectional data will not allow those changes to be observed. Nonetheless, as suggested in Section 2, conducting periodic cross-sectional surveys of all household members to collect information which cannot be collected by proxy such as subjective measures would be more cost effective than interviewing all household members at each wave. These periodic surveys would support the research questions concerned with understanding household dynamics and financial behaviour. **We do not recommend ad-hoc cross-sectional surveys as the main vehicle for the UC survey as the research questions require longitudinal data. However, building in periodic cross-sectional surveys of all household members could be considered as one part of the overall design package. This will be subject to budget constraints but may be the most cost-effective approach to collect the data needed to address questions around household dynamics.**

Option 3 - A fixed panel design, sample population is surveyed over a multiple of pre-determined occasions

A fixed panel design has the great virtue of relative simplicity for sample design and selection, fieldwork implementation and data analysis. This is our preferred design option. A fixed panel has many design and analytic advantages which in our view would meet the analytic requirements for the study, provide sufficient sample sizes for sub-group analysis and provide the comparison groups needed to observe the effect of the introduction of UC. As discussed in Sections 2 and 4, there are options as to the population included and the sampling strategies employed. With a relatively short-term panel of four years duration with possibly eight data collection waves, the burden on participants will not be too great to ensure reasonable response and retention rates with a fixed panel design. Consideration of topping up the sample at regular intervals could also be included to ensure that new populations moving onto UC e.g. in regions beyond the North West as the roll-out progresses are represented. We set this variant out as Option 7 below. This would not be the same as the rotating panel design at Option 4 below where the sample has a pre-determined rotation pattern built into the study design.

Based on estimated numbers for the different categories of claimants receiving UC in the North West by the time the sample will be drawn, a fixed panel design is feasible in our view even though the sample will have somewhat unequal sampling fractions for each of the categories of claimants. A fixed panel design would have the advantage of providing continuous data on the same benefit units/people over four years and eight waves if biannual data collection is adopted. This would allow longitudinal analysis of both short-term and medium-term outcomes. A fixed panel design also has the advantage of being comparable with other longitudinal surveys

such as Understanding Society which may be used for general population comparisons. The main design questions relate to developing a suitable sampling strategy as discussed in Section 4. **We recommend a fixed panel design as the preferred option.**

Option 4 - A rotating panel design - a predetermined number of sample members are replaced at each wave

A rotating panel design is one where a pre-determined number of sample members replace existing sample members at regular intervals. They tend to be used on panel surveys which have a longer time-frame than four years where attrition is high. For example the Survey of Program Participation (SIPP) run by the US Census Bureau has been running since 1984 with rotating samples interviewed every four months over a 32 month period (http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/sipp/methodology/organizing-principles.html). New samples are rotated on annually so there are up to three waves of overlapping data collection in field at the same time. As a frequent, intensive survey interested in short-term dynamics the design caters for high levels of respondent burden and attrition with its main advantage being to capture period change.

For the UC Panel with a total window of four years and eight waves of data collection, a rotating design would limit the capacity for longitudinal analysis with sufficient sample sizes. As described in the specification, it is not clear that this represents a rotating panel design or is a design that simply adds additional UC cases over time as legacy claimants move off benefits altogether, flow onto UC or are simply dropped from the sample. As described the sample size with sufficient numbers for longitudinal analysis would only be achieved towards the end of the four year window so would not provide the information DWP requires to estimate the effect of UC. As with SIPP, rotating panel designs tend to be more complex to both implement and analyse and it is not clear this design would deliver the analytic requirements of the UC study. **We do not recommend this approach.**

Option 5 - A split panel design - comprising of a fixed panel study supplemented by either fixed date or ad hoc cross sectional surveys

A fixed panel design could certainly be supplemented by ad hoc cross-sectional surveys. The cross-sectional ad hoc surveys would provide additional information at particular time points. As suggested under Option 2 this is an approach that could be considered as part of the overall design package to supplement a fixed panel design. For at least one of the key research areas on household dynamics this would seem to be a potentially useful and cost-effective approach. **Our recommendation is to consider this option alongside the fixed panel design subject to budget constraints.**

Option 6 - A large scale web based polling panel for frequent and ad hoc response, including a small sub sample to be used as an in-depth longitudinal panel

The intention of this design is not entirely clear. The population of interest is not defined and it seems to conflate the method by which data are collected i.e. web

data collection with the study design. If the focus is a polling panel based on UC claimants this would not provide a web panel that was representative of the general population (if that is the intention). The longitudinal sub-sample would need to be of sufficient size to carry out analysis of UC claimants and sub-group analysis so could not be too small to allow this. There would be significant issues involved the maintenance of this longitudinal sample, which would lead in effect to running two different studies alongside each other with the associated added costs and implementation complications. This design therefore appears to be trying to do at least two things at once and as a result is unlikely to deliver the core analytic requirements of the study. It is also our view that a web only panel will not deliver the response rates required to provide high quality data even though we see a mix of face-to-face with web and mobile as a viable and cost effective means of data collection for the UC panel. The implications of the mode of data collection for data quality and response rates are discussed further in Section 5. **We do not recommend this approach even though collection by web and other modes is discussed in the sections which follow.**

Option 7 - A Fixed Panel design, sample population is surveyed over a multiple of pre-determined occasions, with the addition of frequent refreshment samples

This is broadly the same design as option 3 with the exception that there would be planned refreshment samples of new UC claimants within and outside the North West as the roll-out progresses. The goal of this is to ensure samples of claimants are measured near the start of their claim so that there is a continued capacity to undertake duration in claim based analysis. It would also have the benefit of maintaining sample sizes. **We suggest that this should be considered further subject to sufficient funding being available.**

In the remainder of this report we mainly focus on Option 3 and discuss implementation issues. However there are important further variations in how this option would deliver the goals of the study and we do consider below some alternatives, particularly around how the comparison groups are defined.

4 Sampling and Implications of Universal Credit Roll-Out for Design

This section covers the overall approach to sampling for the Universal Credit Panel and also considers how this could be affected by the Universal Credit roll-out.

Whatever specific sampling design is chosen, in this report we assume that DWP records will be used to draw the sample. Although drawing a random sample of the entire UK population would generate a comparison sample to which to compare developments in the UC population, the disadvantage is that an enormous sample is necessary to get a sufficient number of respondents who receive UC or legacy benefits.

Benefit records have the advantage that they contain up-to-date information about the eligible benefit units receiving UC or one of the legacy credits, contact information (at least an address) and information about the type and history of receipt of credits from DWP. Apart from serving as a sampling frame from which to select benefit units to become part of the study, the records can also be used to assess non-response, and potentially adjust estimates from the survey for such non-response.

4.1 Who to sample

Several of the research questions refer to estimating the effects of UC, i.e. they are explicitly causal questions rather than descriptive questions. In order to assess the effects of UC this implies that the survey will need to include a counter-factual comparison group. The main issue is identifying the appropriate counter-factual group and the practicality of sampling and interviewing that group. At various points in the DWP specification it is suggested that legacy claimants will be included in the sample and also that legacy claimants be followed after conversion to UC. Both offer the possibility of making credible comparisons between UC and legacy, but it is important to note that the two groups differ in two respects. First, legacy claimants may have been receiving benefits for some time i.e. they are not new claimants and the time they have been receiving benefits may influence their behaviour. Second, the characteristics of the legacy population will differ from those in the UC roll-out populations which initially are restricted to single person benefit units with couples and families coming on stream as the UC roll-out progresses.

As outlined below, the counter-factual sample of legacy claimants would therefore need to be sampled to reflect the characteristics of the UC claimant population through some form of screening of administrative records. As a result it would not be a random sample of legacy claimants. The table below attempts to set this out, dividing the claimant population into four groups, depending on when their claim started and whether they are on UC. This slightly oversimplifies things because roll-out happened at different times for different sub-groups of claimants in different areas. There is also a simplification involved because legacy benefits include six separate benefits and for an individual there may be different start dates if receiving multiple benefits. There would need to be a decision about how to define claim initiation for legacy benefits.

	Claiming Universal Credit	Claiming Legacy benefits and tax credits
Claim initiated before roll-out of Universal Credit began	A) null except for 'natural migration' in roll-out areas*	B) all earlier claims except 'natural migration' in roll-out areas
Claim initiated after roll-out of Universal Credit began	C) all claims in roll-out areas	D) all claims except in roll-out areas

*'Natural migration' occurs where a legacy claimant experiences a change in circumstances that leads to a new UC claim

In terms of composition and duration on benefits cells, C & D are comparable with each other; they are different insofar as there are systematic differences between roll-out areas and others. Assuming date of initial claim is available on the administrative data used for sampling, we could just sample these two groups and this would give samples for analysis which we could reasonably claim were comparable. For example the population being sampled could be defined as consisting of two groups a) people who began a claim of UC no more than 12 months ago and b) people who began a claim for one of the legacy benefits no more than 12 months ago.

However sample D is not representative of all legacy benefit claimants. It is not clear whether or not this matters. DWP may have an interest in having a sample which is representative of the whole claimant population for other purposes and if the panel lasted sufficiently long that organised migration off legacy benefits started then the sample B could be used to study it. Alternatively there may a view that duration on claim is not of particular interest for many analyses and therefore one could compare sample C with samples B+D with appropriate adjustment for composition mix. We suspect it would be very difficult to match natural migrants (sample A) to an equivalent part of sample B since they are likely to be rather particular types of cases.

Our core recommendation would be to sample C and D only since this would be the most cost effective way of evaluating the introduction of Universal Credit. However DWP may also want to consider a more expensive variant with sample B also included which would provide representation of the full claimant population.

4.1.1 Movements onto Universal Credit

Under the staged UC roll-out, as of the time of writing, any legacy claimants who move onto UC will do so through natural migration rather than being systematically transferred onto UC over a period of time. Given this position it is not possible to select a random sample of people who will, in the future, be on UC where the effect of the transition can be observed.

Given these considerations, the most cost-effective means of getting pre-UC information on (a non-random-sample) of future UC recipients is to sample legacy claimants. A sample of legacy claimants within roll-out areas would allow a comparison of experiences before and after UC receipt, while a sample from outside the roll-out areas would provide a comparison group of people who could have, but did not, move to UC. The hope would be that "enough" people in roll-out areas experience changes in circumstances that mean they move onto UC, although in practice many would not transition to UC within the four year timescale of the survey.

In summary our recommendation would be to develop a sample design which includes a counter-factual group in order to be able to estimate the effects of moving onto UC. This would sample legacy claimants within the roll-out areas to record the pre-UC experience of those moving onto UC through natural migration. This group should NOT be thought of as a sensible comparison group for the current UC recipients in the roll-out areas as they will have quite different characteristics. This comparison is covered in the discussion above.

4.1.2 Regional representation

It should be noted that the above discussion and the UC roll-out at the time of writing would make it relatively expensive to achieve full GB representativeness which is stated as a requirement in the research specification. There will certainly need to be a substantial over-sample in the North West region, since it contains the great majority of areas where Universal Credit is initially being rolled-out. Achieving sample sizes sufficient for analysis of other individual regions would imply a very large comparison sample on legacy benefits, which has only limited value for addressing questions around the introduction of Universal Credit. It may be that there are other reasons why having a large sample of claimants which would permit regional analysis would be desirable.

4.2 Implications of Universal Credit roll-out

At the time of writing the roll-out of UC is staged by client group and focused on a number of benefit office areas. It may be that by the time of initial sampling of the UC Panel and potentially for some time after that, the great majority of UC caseload will be located in the North West region. This implies that any sampling which aimed to achieve sample sizes which were viable for analysis of UC claimants would need either to have extremely unequal selection probabilities by region or to have a total sample size for GB which would be prohibitively expensive.

Some further work estimating the populations expected to be receiving UC and the percentage of UC claims as a percentage of the total GB claimant population will be required for sampling and for subsequent survey weighting. It also needs to be clarified whether the administrative data contains sufficient information to allow claimant demographic groups to be identified within the data and be used as a stratification variable. If not the sample will be somewhat inefficient and will need a larger range of weights to adjust.

The staged roll-out by client group, combined with the processes by which people become new UC claimants means that there will be unequal probabilities of different client groups falling into the UC claimant population even in office areas where the UC roll-out process is complete. Thus single person claimants will have a higher probability of falling into the UC claimant population since they have been eligible for longer. Groups which move in and out of claimant eligibility will also have a higher probability of falling into the UC claimant population as will groups which are more likely to have a change in circumstances leading to a new UC claim (so-called natural migration). This will all have to be taken into account in designing the sample and may imply different selection probabilities by client group.

In the following section we have assumed that unequal selection probabilities are a requirement and have made this a criterion for further consideration. In doing this

we have assumed that DWP may have to reconsider its initial requirement for regional representativeness.

4.3 Drawing the initial sample

Before the sample can be drawn from benefit records, it is important to define the population in terms of geographic area and time. In relation to time, it is important that benefit records are 'up-to-date'. That is, one needs to take a decision on when exactly to draw the sample. In principle, one wishes the records both to include all the benefit units who are eligible at that moment, exclude those who are not eligible, and contain the right information about those units. Therefore, records which are updated during the fieldwork period should be linked directly to the fieldwork managers, so that either i) benefit units can be added or ii) removed in field, or iii) information can be updated for records which are not regularly updated (which is likely to vary across offices or regions)

Another strategy would be to use older records (i.e. 6 months old). In that case, it is probably not necessary to update records during fieldwork. However, there is a certain risk that recent transitions onto and off UC are then missing. We recommend drawing an initial sample at one moment in time but then to update records for sampled benefit units during fieldwork.

With regards to the population to be sampled, the study findings need to be applicable to the Great Britain. In order however to achieve a sample size that suffices for the analytical purposes of the study, it will be necessary to oversample people in those areas where UC has already been rolled out (as of the time of writing the North West). Moreover if roll-out is effectively restricted to one region then inferences about issues specific to Universal Credit can only effectively be extended to the whole country by making assumptions about the differences between the North West and other regions.

The actual size of the total sample depends largely on how resources are used on other aspects of the study, notably the decision to either include top-up samples, and the survey mode. Here, we focus on how the sample should be drawn, which specific groups of respondents should be oversampled, how the sample should be recruited.

4.4 Selection probabilities

We recommend sampling benefit units, as defined by the DWP records. Because a sufficient number of UC recipients, legacy claimants, and a geographically diverse population is necessary, the recommendation is to use a two-stage sample design. In the first stage, a cluster sample is drawn with the clusters defined as office area, among which some clusters include offices where UC has been rolled out, and other clusters include offices where UC has not been rolled out. There is a trade-off between the number of clusters drawn, and the size of the sample within each cluster. The choice here depends on the future roll-out schedule of UC credit. In general more clusters will reduce survey design effects and lead to more efficient estimates, but will raise survey costs, because interviewers will have smaller workloads.

Within each cluster, the claimant records should be used to draw the second stage of the sample. (On cost grounds it may also be worth considering an intermediate

clustering level involving postcode sectors or a similar geography within office areas, although this would also reduce statistical efficiency).

At the second stage, the sample should be stratified within each cluster. There are three factors which should be considered in this stratification:

- Whether receiving Universal Credit or one of the legacy benefits
- Date of start of claim
- Claimant demographic group

It should be noted for these to be used effectively they must be available straightforwardly on the administrative data. The use of these strata depends on decisions about the issues raised above about who would be included in the sample. Thus if the sample was defined to include UC and directly comparable legacy claimants, then within any office area the sample would consist only of UC or legacy claimants depending on whether it was a roll-out area.

Stratification would have the purpose of ensuring that there were adequate sample sizes for analysis in each of the groups of interest. While ideally we would prefer to sample different groups with equal probability, in practice it is likely that substantially different probabilities will be required, as we have already indicated in relation to claimant demographic groups. If sampling probabilities are different reweighting will be required for representative population estimates.

4.5 Refreshing the sample

For several reasons, DWP should consider adding top-up samples to the panel survey over the course of the panel. These refreshment samples can serve the following purposes:

- They can incorporate those making transitions onto UC credit not covered in the original sample, due to the ongoing roll-out effort and the changing characteristics and composition of benefit claimants.
- They can include particular groups of respondents who were more likely to not participate or drop out from the study.

The top-up samples should follow the same design as the original study in terms of recruitment and panel maintenance. It is suggested that they would be sampled from the same office areas as the original sample.

5 Mode of data collection

In discussing the mode of data collection, it should be noted that these cannot be considered independently of the balance between costs and quality. Surveys conducted by interviewers calling at the sample members' addresses, and interviewing face-to-face (using Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing – "CAPI"), generally get a higher response rate than other modes.[1] Interviewers are able to use their experience and training to make contact, answer questions the sample member may have and persuade them to participate. Interviewers can also motivate respondents to complete the interview, without terminating early, by giving them encouraging feedback and establish a rapport and loyalty to the study. However, because CAPI interviewers may have to make multiple calls at an address to secure an interview, this mode is the most expensive.

We recommend that CAPI interviewers are used in the first wave of the survey to maximise the wave 1 recruitment and response rates. The primary task of the interviewers would be to gain co-operation from the sample members and motivate them to participate in the panel. The secondary task would be to administer the interview, although as discussed below, we recommend that a large proportion of the first wave interview is self-completion, that is with the respondent completing the survey on the interviewer's laptop (Computer-Assisted Self-Interviewing – "CASI") to minimise the risk of future mode effects due to mixed mode data collection. At the end of the first interview, the interviewer will elicit as much contact information from the respondent as possible (see section 6 below) to make the task of contacting participants easier at wave 2.

We would also recommend the use of a cash incentive (or cash-like gift voucher) as a token of appreciation for participation. Research has shown that an incentive sent in advance ("unconditional") is more effective at persuading people to participate than a post-interview incentive ("conditional") or no incentive.[2] The level of incentive and whether unconditional or conditional will largely be driven by budget constraints.

A face-to-face, CAPI, first wave would give the panel survey the best start, with a higher proportion of responding sample members and high-quality base-line data. To continue to issue households initially to CAPI interviewers would minimise attrition at subsequent waves but will also lead to higher costs for the project. Therefore, we recommend that the second wave is carried out primarily using a second, less expensive mode, with CAPI interviewers used to follow-up those who did not respond by the first mode.

From wave 2 onwards we recommend a combination of self-administered modes and re-interviewing only those respondents who gave consent to link their survey data to DWP administrative record data in wave 1. Depending on the linkage consent rate in wave 1, and the budget, a decision can be made to use face-to-face interviewing again for those respondents who seemed happy to participate in the study, but failed to give consent for linkage.

[1] De Leeuw, "Choosing the Method of Data Collection" in de Leeuw, Hox and Dillman (eds)., International Handbook of Survey Methodology, 2008. De Vaus, Surveys in Social Research, 2002. Groves et al, Survey Methodology, 2009

[2] Singer, "The Use of Incentives to Reduce Nonresponse in Household Surveys", in Groves et al (eds.) Survey Nonresponse.

The self-administered mode recommended is web interviewing (CAWI) – which includes mobile interviewing[3] – with the CASI mode facilitated by face-to-face interviewers. The use of self-administered modes at wave 2 and subsequent waves is the main driver behind the use of CASI at wave 1 to enable a consistency of measurement over time.

Another reason for recommending CAWI is that the initial application for UC is carried out using the web, and so we can presume a certain level of internet access and familiarity in the sample of UC recipients. However it should be noted that internet access from home and regular usage of the internet are far from universal in the claimant groups (see table below).

Internet access and usage for working age claimants by claimant family type (%)

	Single person	Couple no children	Lone parent	Couple with children	All claimants
Computer in home with broadband	53.84	73.2	74.04	89.71	79.64
Uses internet:					
every day	42.78	42.71	57.82	61.76	56.04
several times a week	15.85	14.97	20.56	21.05	19.51
less frequently	10.92	11.6	11.72	9.46	10.29
never/no access	30.45	30.72	9.9	7.74	14.15

Source: Understanding Society wave 3 data

We would recommend that the first CAPI wave is used to collect baseline data, and is limited to not more than 45 minutes in interview length. Subsequent waves would update this information as well as collect other point-in-time content. We would recommend that these subsequent interviews are shorter in length (around 20-30 minutes). We recommend waves 2 and beyond should use mixed-mode interviewing involving initial issue of the sample to web, followed by face-to-face interviewing and possibly telephone reminders for those who do not respond by web. We would expect that at early waves around 40-50% of participants interviewed at the previous wave would respond by web/mobile but this will depend on the range of fieldwork strategies employed e.g. incentive levels and delivery, email reminders, telephone follow-up etc. With face-to-face follow-up of non-responders to the web we would expect to achieve re-interview response rates of up to 80% at wave 2. This is at the upper end of response rate expectations and will depend on the specific implementation of the study in field.

We recommend that the second and subsequent waves of the survey consist of a core set of questions asked at each wave, which should be the majority of the content, with a small section of rotating content asked every other wave. By keeping the questionnaire content stable across time, the investment of time and money

[3] Although both of these use modes are delivered using the internet, they differ in the way the sample members participate in the survey, the latter may be seen as a sub-set of the former. In CAWI interviews, the sample members would access the survey on-line using a desk-top or lap-top computer, or a regular-sized tablet. In a mobile survey, the sample member would access and complete the interview using a smart-phone connected to the internet.

spent developing, programming and testing the questionnaire, the sample management system and the data delivery system will be spread across multiple waves.

To encourage sample members to participate on-line, we suggest the use of differential incentives from wave 2 onwards; higher (£10 - £20) incentives for those who complete their interview on-line, and lower (£5 - £10) for those who require a face-to-face interviewer visit to participate. The use of an even higher incentive for web completion could also be considered if it would raise the proportion responding by web and lower costs.

Apart from the reduced costs, compared to purely CAPI, the mode effects (the fact that respondents may answer some questions differently depending on the mode being interviewed in) are minimal between web and CASI as they are both self-completion. This means that the data from these modes are more easily comparable to each other than alternative modes that are interviewer administered such as telephone interviewing (CATI) or CAPI. For example, the response quality for sensitive questions is better in self-administered questions, which suffer less from 'social desirability bias', than interviewer administered questions.

5.1 Possible alternatives

Our recommended design is one in which the first wave is CAPI and then subsequent waves use a sequential mixed-mode design where sample members are invited to participate on-line and then non-respondents followed-up by face-to-face CAPI interviewers. A six-monthly interview cycle will be challenging for many fieldwork agencies to deliver so some consideration should be given to possible alternatives. Below we set out three possible alternatives all of which have both cost and data quality implications. Some of these could potentially be explored during the tendering phase by asking for costs for two alternatives for example.

A. Alternating CAPI-CAWI waves. Under this design, each odd-numbered wave would be conducted using face-to-face personal interviewing, with each even-numbered wave being a CAWI-only wave i.e. with no face-to-face follow-up for non-responders. This would be cheaper than our recommended design. A disadvantage of this design is that the even-numbered CAWI waves are likely to have a significantly lower response rate than the CAPI waves, which may then affect the next CAPI wave. This design also risks excluding those who do not have easy access to the internet, increasing the potential for non-response bias. Moreover this approach will add significantly to issues in analysing the data, since some measures will only be available for small subsets of the sample.

B. Using CATI as a follow-up mode. Our recommended design does not use telephone as a mode of interview, although it may be used as a method of reminding sample members to complete their on-line questionnaire. An alternative would be to allow sample members to be interviewed over the telephone. An advantage of this would be that it may increase response at the margins compared to the core design at a relatively lower cost for those who are harder-to-contact. A disadvantage is that the interview would then be interviewer-administered, rather than self-completion, which may introduce

mode effects which reduce data quality.[4] Measurement effects between respondents, and within-respondents (that is, comparisons of the same person over time) may be affected if the same data is collected using a mixture of interviewer- and self-administered modes. This design would also increase costs, relative to the core design. It may be worth exploring the approach further particularly for measures which are unlikely to be affected by mode differences. The trade-off is between potential mode effects, response rates and cost for this alternative.

C. Wave 2 and all subsequent waves using CAWI only. This design would be less costly than the recommended design as there would be no CAPI follow-up of non-responders to the web interview. A disadvantage is that response rates would be lower, attrition increase and non-response bias increase. A possible way to reduce non-response bias, which would increase costs and administrative burden but be less costly than using a CAPI follow-up, would be to also send a paper questionnaire for the benefit unit to complete and return. Given the potentially high attrition rate under this design it would not be viable to produce high quality data. To maintain sample numbers regular, large-scale refreshment samples would be needed but these would reduce the capacity for longitudinal analysis and add to both the complexity of the data for analysis and costs.

D. Wave 2 and all subsequent waves using CAPI only and an annual interview. This design would achieve the highest re-interview rates and is likely to produce the highest quality data. Web could still be used as an alternative follow-up method for non-responders or for those who express a preference to complete the survey on-line. The disadvantage is the higher cost if six monthly interviews are conducted even though this timeframe is unlikely to be feasible due to the time required to complete face-to-face fieldwork. On an annual interview cycle using CAPI at all waves the estimated costs are lower than any of the mixed-mode approaches using a six monthly interview cycle. Annual interviews would require a between-wave keep-in-touch mailing but this is not a significant cost.

The table below illustrates the likely effect of these alternative designs on response over three waves. It should be noted that these are indicative estimates only and are at the upper end of expectations. Response rates will depend on the specific fieldwork strategies employed. For each design the first wave is CAPI, with alternative approaches to subsequent waves. Under Alternative A, the response rates are a proportion of the previous CAPI wave, and so the sample size increases and decreases each wave depending on the mode. For Alternative B, the response rate is the proportion of previous-wave respondents. Under Alternative C, at the Wave 3 and subsequent waves the response rate is the proportion of those benefit

[4] De Leeuw, "To Mix or Not to Mix Data Collection Modes in Surveys", in *Journal of Official Statistics*, Vol. 21(2), pp. 233-255. Hope et al, "The role of the interviewer in producing mode effects: results from a mixed modes experiment comparing face-to-face, telephone and web administration", ISER Working Paper 2014-20. https://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/publications/working-papers/iser/2014-20

units who responded on-line at the previous wave. Under alternative D the response rate is the proportion of those interviewed at the previous wave.

Indicative response rates by mode combination (upper end expectations)

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6	Wave 7	Wave 8
	11400	9120	7752	6977	6279	5651	5086	4577
Response rate	(60%)	80%	85%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%
Mode	CAPI	CAWI-CAPI	CAWI-CAPI	CAWI-CAPI	CAWI-CAPI	CAWI-CAPI	CAWI-CAPI	CAWI-CAPI
Alternative A	11400	7980	9120	5472	7752	4651	6589	3954
Response rate	(60%)	70%	80%	60%	85%	60%	85%	60%
Mode	CAPI	CAWI/Tel*	CAPI	CAWI	CAPI	CAWI	CAPI	CAWI
Alternative B	11400	9348	8132	7318	6732	6193	5697	5241
Response rate	(60%)	82%	87%	90%	92%	92%	92%	92%
Mode	CAPI	CAWI-CAPI-CATI	CAWI-CAPI-CATI	CAWI-CAPI-CATI	CAWI-CAPI-CATI	CAWI-CAPI-CATI	CAWI-CAPI-CATI	CAWI-CAPI-CATI
Alternative C	11400	4560	2736	1915	1532	1228	982	785
Response rate	(60%)	40%	60%	70%	80%	80%	80%	80%
Mode	CAPI	CAWI	CAWI	CAWI	CAWI	CAWI	CAWI	CAWI
Alternative D	11400	n/a	9690	n/a	8527	n/a	7844	n/a
Response rate	(60%)	n/a	(85%)	n/a	(88%)	n/a	(92%)	n/a
Mode	CAPI	n/a	CAPI	n/a	CAPI	n/a	CAPI	n/a

* Telephone is included at wave 2 to increase response

6 Fieldwork Implementation

This section provides an overview of the most important issues that will arise in developing the survey. It is based on substantial experience of what is required to maintain high response and data quality in longitudinal surveys. The issues raised here should be covered in the specification of work for the survey sub-contractor.

6.1 Maximising response at Wave 1

Response rates are one of the most important indicators of the survey quality and its long-term utility. Therefore response rates need to be monitored closely throughout the life of the survey. The fieldwork agency needs to be able to understand the importance of response and attrition and be prepared to implement special actions to improve response in case of below-target achievement. In order to test the survey procedures, sample issuing strategy and survey questions, it is a good practice to have a pilot/dress rehearsal.

The main response maximising procedures at wave 1 should include the elements discussed below. First of all, we propose the use of (tailored) advance letters which stress the importance of the survey and representativeness of different groups of the population in it, and confidentiality and anonymity of the survey answers. The advance letters should be written and designed in such a way so that they are brief, attractive, eye-catching and persuasive.

Secondly, we suggest the use of unconditional and/or conditional incentives per respondent. The use of financial incentives is now an established standard practice in social surveys. The detail of the level of incentives should be a matter for further consideration, but we suggest that they should at minimum be unconditional £10 at wave 1 and from wave 2 conditional £10 if completed on-line and £5 if completed with an interviewer. Research findings show that unconditional incentives yield the best results in terms of response rates as do higher incentive levels, although an unconditional approach also means higher costs as not all those that are invited to the survey will actually agree to take part.

Thirdly, in order to ensure that addresses are fully worked, a minimum number of calls to each address needs to be set in advance of fieldwork. Usually this number is 6+ calls to an address and includes calls on different days of the week and different times of the day. A close interviewer monitoring system is needed in order to ensure this rule is followed and cases are only returned as non-contacts if all possibilities of contacting the household have been exhausted.

Fourthly, only experienced interviewers should be used to recruit and interview survey members at wave 1. The fieldwork agency needs to make sure that the interviewers have had previous experience of working with probability samples and interviewing respondents on social surveys face-to-face. This is especially important for the first wave of the survey because experienced interviewers are more likely to achieve a better response rate and higher data quality. The fieldwork agency needs to provide information to DWP on what proportion of interviewers would be new along with details on recruitment and training. The fieldwork contractor needs to ensure that all the interviewers are well trained in both general recruiting and interviewing practices but also in the specific aims and procedures for the UC panel. The main focus of the training for the first wave interviewers should be on gaining co-

operation and motivating the respondents to become part of the project. This means training interviewers in the doorstep approach and effective introduction of the survey and making sure that they are well equipped to deal with respondents' queries regarding the aim of the survey and their role in it.

The number of interviewer briefings will depend on the overall number of addresses issued to the field. We recommend that the briefings are not too large (around 15 interviewers) as this gives the interviewers a better chance to ask questions and engage in the briefing and therefore the study. We also propose that each interviewer briefing is attended by someone from the project team at DWP as this highlights the importance of the project to the interviewers and gives them a chance to meet and interact with the project managers. In addition, each year a new group of interviewers may need to be trained if the decision is taken to top up the sample of UC claimants from the newly rolled out areas. So one or more additional briefings will be needed each year, depending on how many and to which areas UC has been newly rolled out.

In addition to briefings, interviewers also need to be debriefed at the end of fieldwork to allow DWP and the fieldwork agency to get first-hand qualitative information on how the survey was perceived by respondents and whether there were any issues with fieldwork procedures or the questionnaire. The date of the debrief should be highlighted to the interviewers during the interviewer briefing when they also receive a copy of the interviewer feedback form which they are asked to fill in and return before the debrief.

It is also important to ensure that interviewers receive an adequate level of support and supervision throughout the fieldwork period. They need to be given enough time to work the cases issued to them and to report on progress to their supervisors on a regular basis. The regional supervisors should have a good understanding of the aims and targets of the project and, as well as being the first point of contact for the interviewers, should also review all the cases signed off by the interviewers to make sure that they have been worked fully. The appropriate levels of interviewer management at the regional level will ensure the effective communication between interviewers and the central project management team, which in turn will allow them to spot any arising issues as early as possible.

Although our suggested approach for subsequent waves includes using self-administered survey modes such as web and mobile, it does not preclude the use of telephone interviewers to follow up on non-responders in other modes or as a way of reminding participants to complete their interview online. If telephone interviewers are used at any stage of the survey, there is a need to ensure that they are also experienced and trained to carry out their task, as the skills needed for a good telephone interviewer are different to those of a successful face-to-face interviewer.

After the first wave, the main response indicator is individual re-interview rate. However considerable effort should also go into converting previous-wave non-responding individuals. Given the experience on other household surveys, it is reasonable to assume that it will be especially difficult to conduct interviews with couples if they are both benefit recipients and belong to the same benefit unit. Taking a proxy interview for a partner should be considered as an alternative approach in these circumstances as discussed in Section 2, given the cost and complexity associated with interviewing multiple members of the household. If the spouse/partner is administered as a short module of some kind, interviewers need to

be appropriately incentivised to carry out this especially difficult task as well as possible.

While keeping a close eye on re-interview rates, special attention also needs to be paid to refusal and non-contact rates. A refusal conversion programme should be agreed in advance between DWP and the fieldwork agency so that interviewers are aware of, motivated and trained in converting such households into productive interviews. This involves collecting and reviewing reasons for refusal, closely monitoring refusal and non-contact rates, and introducing special measures whenever the rates become higher than expected.

6.2 Following rules, sample maintenance and minimising attrition

After the initial recruitment wave the circumstances surrounding participation in the study can change, e.g. sample members may move to a new area where the UC has not yet been rolled out, a couple making up the same benefit unit may split, a single claimant may move in with a partner, and UC claimants may move off UC. There is therefore a need to develop clear rules about which sample members remain eligible and are therefore followed and which become ineligible and are dropped from subsequent waves. The eligibility criteria and following rules will need to take into account the practicalities of conducting fieldwork (including costs) as well as any analytical implications of the rules adopted.

The initial sample of UC recipients and those on legacy benefits may be particularly mobile given many will be single benefit units with no dependents. It is therefore of paramount importance that enough effort is put into maintaining the sample including tracing movers. We strongly recommend using DWP records for tracing purposes but it may not be possible to rely on the DWP administrative data being (i) available, or (ii) timely enough to track sample members who move during fieldwork or to trace those who cannot be found from wave to wave. It is therefore necessary to have a range of activities geared towards maintaining information on the location of the sample, and of maximising their participation in the survey.

It is advisable to contact the sample two weeks prior to interview with an advance letter. The advance mailing should include a change-of-address card printed on the back or as a tear-off slip at the bottom. This will ensure that the sample members are able to notify the fieldwork agency of their whereabouts whenever they move. In order to incentivise the panel members to update their contact details, a £5 incentive could be offered to them every time they notify the office of their changed address. It may also be useful to track the return of advance letters. If the advance letter is returned marked “not known at address”, this could be used to trigger tracing procedures before the fieldwork.

In addition to the advance mailing, and particularly if the period between interview waves is more than six months, an inter-wave mailing would be advisable. This would be designed as a ‘keep in touch’ mailing to reinforce the message of why the survey is important, why the sample member’s participation in the survey is important, and be a vehicle for updating address details for movers. It might include some other information that would be deemed significant to get across to the sample members such as, for example, a shorter interview time, a change in fieldwork dates for the following wave or introduction of new interview modes. All communication with sample members should include the details of the study Freephone, Freepost,

email and web-site as ways for the sample to communicate with the survey team. Similarly, all communication with respondents (from advance letters to between-wave mailings) needs to be consistent in terms of branding and messages to reinforce the importance of their (continuous) participation in the survey and importance of the survey itself.

It is advisable to consider creating a dedicated project website. The website should be authoritative and informative. As well as providing enough information to the sample members about who is carrying out the survey and why, it needs to be designed and maintained in such a way that it reinforces the respondents' trust in the survey and in the organisation behind it. A well designed website should also have a motivational effect on the sample members stressing their importance for the study but also the importance of the study itself to the wider community.

To minimise the possibility of sample attrition, every effort should be put into obtaining and maintaining multiple contact details for each sample member. Email addresses are especially vital in this case and so panel members should be asked to provide at least one and preferably more than one email address where possible. Email addresses are invaluable when tracing respondents who move but are also essential if the sample is invited to complete their interview online in subsequent waves. Another important way of keeping track of mobile respondents is ensuring that their mobile telephone numbers are collected and checked at every interview. Mobile phones can be used for sending text messages inviting or reminding the participants to complete their interview online or by post. As with email addresses, multiple telephone numbers should be collected including home telephone numbers.

It is also a standard practice to ask respondents to provide names and contact details of one but preferably two stable contacts, i.e. people who would know the respondent's whereabouts at all times and would therefore be called upon in cases when the survey team fails to trace them. As with respondents, multiple contact details should be collected for the stable contacts. The importance of these needs to be made especially clear to the interviewers who are then well equipped to explain to respondents why we need to collect their own and their stable contacts' details. In addition to all the above ways of keeping track of the sample members, it is also possible to ask for their permission to trace them using social networking sites of which they might be members. These include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, tumblr and others.

The use of on-line data collection and lack of face-to-face interviewers calling at all addresses from wave 2 onwards, means that the procedures put in place for tracing movers from the office are especially important since one of the most productive sources of mover information is from the interviewer talking to the current residents. The use of multiple contact details and stable contact information should be supplemented by the use of on-line databases and look-up services (e.g., CapScan, eTrace). The use of DWP administrative information should also be investigated and whether it would be possible to use it during fieldwork for ad hoc individual-level contact information enquiries, or regular updates of contact information for flagged benefit units.

We recommend that the sample is maintained by the DWP but recognize that this may not be practical. If it is maintained by the fieldwork agency, special care should be taken to ensure that the sample information is updated regularly (before every wave of fieldwork) with the latest data from the administrative records and

information provided by the panel members themselves between waves so that only correct cases are issued to field (i.e. after excluding hard refusals, deceased or mentally or physically incapable participants) and most up-to-date information is fed forward to the subsequent interview.

6.3 Ensuring high data quality and timely data delivery

A key requirement for the DWP is timely data delivered to high quality. This implies stringent quality control to ensure the reliability and validity of collected data. Given the suggested strategy of multiple interview modes, the fieldwork agency (-ies) contracted to conduct the fieldwork will need the technical capability to implement a longitudinal survey in at least two or three modes. They will need to be able to deal with the issue of switching modes between waves and switching between modes within the same wave without this having a negative effect on data quality and the data delivery timetable.

In addition, appropriate procedures should be put in place to maintain the quality of the fieldwork. These may include supervisor accompaniments of less experienced face-to-face interviewers (for the first interviews) and validation call-backs on e.g. 10% of the sample. In addition the survey management team at the fieldwork agency need to be able to access fieldwork progress reports on a regular basis, e.g. daily or weekly to be able to monitor progress and spot issues with regards to coverage and outcomes. The information in progress reports needs to include individual re-interview rates, interview outcome, refusal and non-contact rates as well as tracing rates by region. Response rates should be broken down by key demographic characteristics (age and sex) and if possible claimant status and claimant group. In addition to face-to-face fieldwork, this information also needs to be available across all modes of data collection.

After the close of fieldwork the data needs to be checked, edited, and coded according to the procedures agreed between DWP and the fieldwork agency. Editing should be carried out by the fieldwork agency prior to data delivery to DWP to ensure data are valid, complete, consistent and clean. All edits need to be documented and provided to DWP with the data delivered. We recommend a data delivery specification is agreed with the fieldwork agency in advance. The data quality control procedures should also include minimising item non-response especially in the case of ‘sensitive’ questions. A pilot or dress rehearsal would be useful here to help to determine whether some questions are less likely to receive response than others. Early data checks should therefore be included in the survey procedures in order to spot any irregularities in the data collected.

We recommend that data is delivered within 6 months after the end of fieldwork for each interview wave to an agreed data delivery timetable. Checks need to be carried out on delivered data by DWP to ensure that the data conforms to the specified requirements. In case of discrepancies, the fieldwork agency would be responsible for re-delivering corrected data files. Again, we recommend a pilot in order to test the data delivery processes.

7 Contracting strategies

A core issue for DWP in contracting the UC Panel would be to determine which activities to sub-contract and which activities it wishes and has the capacity to undertake in-house. In particular there will be questions about how far overall design of both questionnaire and survey should be done in-house or sub-contracted and subject to DWP review and sign-off. While a range of survey organisations would have the capacity to undertake the questionnaire design on the basis of DWP's research specification, there is more limited experience of survey design for longitudinal studies. The tendering process will require the development of a quite detailed specification and one option would be to contract an organisation to manage the survey on behalf of DWP.

The design of the panel (with initial over-sample in the North West) would require a fieldwork agency which has the capacity and capability to conduct face-to-face CAPI interviews across the country. Based on the recommendation the first wave will be face-to-face and although there is an over-sample in the North West – requiring a larger number of interviewers in that area – there could be sample points across the whole of Great Britain. This design, then, would require a fieldwork agency to have a large national interviewer force, even if a relatively small proportion of the interviewers will be working on the project at any one time.

If the wave 2 and subsequent questionnaires do not differ greatly in content, producing an on-line version of the interview should be cost effective, given that the development costs of the questionnaire and the sample management software can be spread across all waves of the survey after the first. There are two possible strategies for contracting this project and the invitation to tender should allow for both options:

1. A single agency is contracted to carry out the wave 1 face-to-face survey(s) – original plus any refreshment samples as UC is rolled-out – plus the subsequent web/ mixed-mode waves.
2. A consortium of agencies is contracted to carry out the fieldwork, potentially taking advantage of different capacities to undertake fieldwork in different modes.

There are advantages and disadvantages to both strategies.

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Single-agency	• Greater control over entire project • Reduces time required to turn data around between waves	• Reduced number of potential agencies capable of conducting survey • Possible higher cost for alternative modes
Multiple agencies	• Larger pool of agencies capable of conducting web/ mixed mode waves should lead to greater competition and lower price	• Longer time required to get data from one agency and turned around to send to second agency • Higher development costs for two sample management systems, scripts etc. • More difficult and time consuming to manage two fieldwork agencies as opposed to one

We recommend that the DWP reserves the ownership of the questionnaire scripts. This will make it easier to transfer between fieldwork agencies in the event of a change in the contracting arrangements. It should be noted, however, that fieldwork agencies may use different CAPI software, so the existence of a script may not guarantee a smooth transition. There will need to be some discussion between the DWP and the fieldwork agency (-ies) about the definitions of the questionnaire and the script, as the latter may include administrative sections required for the fieldwork agency to manage and monitor the interviewers, which are specific to that fieldwork agency and may be seen as commercially-sensitive.

Based on the UKHLS experience, we recommend that a clause on Intellectual Property Rights is included in the contract so that the sample remains the property of DWP along with the questionnaire scripts, any translations of scripts, and data generated. In the event of a change of fieldwork agency this will simplify the process of transferring materials between them.

7.1 Project management

Given the size and complexity of the survey, it will require a significant level of resource at the fieldwork agency in order to manage the survey. The fieldwork management team needs to include experienced and flexible project managers (including research and field management teams). DWP needs to be notified of any changes in staffing at the fieldwork agency that may affect the successful survey delivery.

The contracted fieldwork agency must comply with the provisions of the Data Protection Acts 1984 and 1998 and any statutory modification or re-enactment thereof. The contractor also must comply with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. In addition, they should comply with and preferably be certified against relevant international standards, in particular ISO:9000:2005, IS 9001:2008, ISO 20252 and ISO 27001:2005. The contractor should also be required to comply with specific security requirements mandated by DWP to ensure the security of the

data throughout the delivery chain. Protocols governing the handling of security incidents need to be agreed between the two parties.

Close communication with the fieldwork agency is needed during all stages of the project. Regular face-to-face meetings (initially fortnightly) are recommended complemented by ongoing communication via telephone and email on the progress. This involves regular updates on the status of the fieldwork and appraisal of the progress against the survey objectives. If there are any risks to the objectives, the fieldwork agency needs to inform the DWP (or their agent organisation) immediately and further steps need to be decided in consultation between the two parties. Any design, questionnaire or implementation issues should be discussed with and decided by the DWP (or their agent). The fieldwork agency must not make any such decisions without consultation.

8 Timetable

Starting the UC Panel Survey will be a complex project. We would estimate a lead-time of at least nine months from a firm decision to go ahead to the start of the wave 1 fieldwork. This would be based on the assumptions a) that at the time of the firm decision to go ahead a clear specification was in place, for example resolving some of the outstanding issues highlighted in this report and b) that most questionnaire design was taking place in-house, and could take place in parallel with the commissioning process for the survey organisation. The specification would in any case be required for the tendering process. If questionnaire design was to be sub-contracted, then an additional two to three months would be necessary.

The nine months would be made up approximately as follows:

- Months 1-3: survey commissioning. It is possible this could be done somewhat more quickly if DWP can make use of framework agreements in this area, though the specification will be complex and it would be essential to allow sufficient time

- Months 4-6: questionnaire scripting and testing, development of other survey materials, development of sample management system

- Month 7: pilot survey

- Months 8-9: revisions after pilot, finalisation of materials, drawing sample, briefing interviewers

- Months 10 – 12: Wave 1 fieldwork starts

With six monthly intervals fieldwork would need to be completed within four months to ensure adequate time for turnaround of sample for the next wave. This will reduce the amount of time available in field for refusal conversion and is likely to reduce response rates at the margins. It will also be challenging for any fieldwork agency to meet so clear timelines will need to be in place. In addition this timetable would not permit extensive use of feed-forward information within the questionnaire from one wave to the next. The preparation for wave two would include development of web versions of the questionnaire and of a sample management system for handling the mixed mode fieldwork. This would need to take place in parallel with the preparations for wave 1.

It is of paramount importance for a longitudinal study that the survey sub-contractor has the ability to deliver to a challenging timetable. The agency should demonstrate their track record of successful delivery of longitudinal surveys using a mix of modes.

As part of their bid, the fieldwork agency should provide the DWP with a detailed plan which includes key milestones for survey implementation; such as sample design and selection, questionnaire scripting and testing, data checking, coding and editing, data delivery, issuing sample to field on time at each wave.

If there are risks to meeting any of the deadlines specified in the timetable, DWP needs to be notified immediately as any delay in any of the stages of the survey may have a considerable knock-on effect on other elements of the study.

9 Conclusion

This report has reviewed the feasibility of a panel survey to assess the introduction of Universal Credit to address a number of research questions which the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is interested. It considered a number of options for the design of such a survey and identified a preferred design with a number of variants.

There is no doubt that this will be a complex and challenging survey to carry out, particularly if the decision is made to carry out fieldwork at six month intervals as we suggest in our core design. The use of mixed mode data collection would be the only way in which this timeframe of data collection would be feasible in our view. There are significant analytic advantages in having data collected at frequent intervals but this also raises challenges for fieldwork implementation and increases overall costs. If the requirement for six-monthly data is not absolute, consideration of an annual interview should be included. Conducting an annual panel survey is in itself challenging but this option would enable face to face interviews at all waves with benefits for data quality and remaining well within budget.

In reviewing the DWP's research requirements it is clear that many of the key research questions require longitudinal measures on the same sample of benefit units and people. Our recommendations are based on the need for longitudinal data although we also conclude that some might be addressed through ad hoc cross-sectional surveys as a supplement to the main panel.

Our main conclusion is that the preferred design option should be a new fixed panel, possibly supplemented by refreshment samples of new claimants of Universal Credit. Budget permitting this could be supplemented by additional cross sectional surveys (e.g. of other members of households containing benefit units claiming Universal Credit) and by commissioning additional questions in other longitudinal surveys, for example to provide comparison with the non-claimant population.

We also identified issues in defining an appropriate comparison sample for claimants on Universal Credit as well as issues in the use of administrative data and the importance of collecting information from multiple members of benefit units.

We conclude that there are two alternative approaches for the sample design, one of which takes a subset of claimants of legacy benefits most similar to Universal Credit in terms of start date of claim. A second more ambitious approach takes a sample representing all claimants of legacy benefits. We also conclude that with the UC roll-out at the time of writing it would make it relatively expensive to achieve full GB representativeness. There will certainly need to be a substantial over-sample in the North West region, since it contains the great majority of areas where Universal Credit is initially being rolled-out. Achieving sample size sufficient for analysis of other individual regions would imply a very large comparison sample on legacy benefits.

We have recommended the use of face-to-face interviewing in wave 1 of the study to maximise response rates at that stage and the use of mixed-mode interviewing involving web, followed by face-to-face and possibly telephone at subsequent waves. We suggest that web-only interviewing at subsequent waves, while significantly cheaper, could lead to very high attrition and is unlikely to be feasible.

We have made a range of proposals for fieldwork implementation, which could be incorporated in an invitation to tender for a sub-contractor for the project and will be critical to achieve high response rates and high quality data. We have also set out a number of options for commissioning the project and an outline timetable for the project. We suggest that the time from the completion of the process of commissioning a sub-contractor for the project to the start of fieldwork for the first wave should be not less than nine to twelve months.