



Ministry
of Justice

Offender Management Community Cohort Study: Waves 2 and 3 Technical Report

**Martin Wood and David Hussey
NatCen Social Research**

Ministry of Justice Analytical Series
2014

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First published 2014

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ISBN 978-1-84099-632-6

Acknowledgements

Tanja Sejersen, Suneeta Johal and Yvette Prestage were central to the development and running of the OMCCS surveys at NatCen. Supporting the project at the Ministry of Justice over the period were Richard Boorman, Veronica Hollis and Chantelle Fields. Many thanks also to Anna Upson and James Riley for their guidance in the development of this report.

The OMCCS surveys could not have been delivered without the assistance, over a long period, of staff in the 70 probation offices involved in the study. We are very grateful for their support in the context of the highly challenging work that they carry out.

Finally, many thanks to those offenders on Community Orders who gave up their time to talk to us, often at difficult times in their lives.

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1. Background to the OMCCS survey

The Offender Management Community Cohort Study (OMCCS) is a longitudinal study that brought together a wide range of data to describe the cohort of offenders, aged 18 and over, who started Community Orders between October 2009 and December 2010. The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) commissioned NatCen Social Research and Get the Data (GtD) to carry out the OMCCS. The broad aims of the study were:

- to assess the effectiveness of interventions in reducing offending behaviour;
- to evaluate aspects of offender management.

In its initial conception, the OMCCS comprised three main stages:

- baseline survey (Wave 1) – to describe the commencement of Community Orders and the offenders' position at an early stage in their sentence;
- mid-order (Wave 2) – to describe the implementation of Community Orders, including what was delivered and to whom;
- end of Order (Wave 3) – a final stage to explore the outcomes for the cohort, particularly in relation to breach of the Community Orders and reoffending.

This technical report covers Waves 2 and 3 of the survey within the OMCCS. It builds on the technical report that covered the baseline stage of the study (Wood *et al*, 2013).¹

1.1 Research design

Although there were changes to the design as the study progressed, this remained, as detailed in the report, the basic approach.

The OMCCS used a dataset based on three data sources.

- A longitudinal survey of a representative sample of 2,919 offenders, drawn from 10 Probation Trusts.² This provides information on their perceptions and experiences of Community Orders, their backgrounds, attitudes and needs, and how these change over time. The first survey (the Wave 1, or baseline, survey)

¹ Wood, M., Hussey, D. and Cattell, J. (2013) *Offender Management Community Cohort Study (OMCCS) Baseline Technical Report*. London: Ministry of Justice.

² This report refers to selecting 10 Probation Trusts, however at the time of the OMCCS fieldwork the process of forming trusts was still underway, and the selection was actually based on probation areas. There are 42 probation areas in England and Wales (covering the police force areas), which are served by 35 probation trusts. The trusts were set up following the Offender Management Act 2007, when some of the probation areas joined to form trusts.

was carried out around three months after the start of the offender's Community Order, with subsequent surveys carried out seven months, on average, into the sentence (Wave 2) and following its expected end point (Wave 3).

- Central administrative records for all those offenders starting a Community Order during the period (144,407 offenders) describing the sentence received, offences and the risks and needs of offenders as assessed by practitioners. This included FORM 20 data detailing Community Order commencements and terminations; Offender Assessment System (OASys) data, containing details of the needs and risks that offenders present with; and Interim Accredited Programmes System (IAPS) data on offenders' attendance at accredited programmes.
- Local administrative records from the same 10 Probation Trusts selected for the survey (covering 48,943 offenders) which describe how offender management operates and how offenders complete or breach their sentences.

The survey and administrative data sources were combined to form a 'universal dataset'.

1.2 Structure of the report

As noted above, this technical report covers the second and third waves of the survey.

Following this introductory chapter:

- Chapter 2 discusses the sample design and the plan for the timing of selection of cases for fieldwork;
- Chapter 3 describes the questionnaire development for the second and third waves;
- Chapter 4 describes the fieldwork for the face-to-face survey of offenders;
- Chapter 5 sets out the response to the survey and the challenges faced;
- Chapter 6 covers the coding and editing approach taken;
- Chapter 7 describes the weights that were developed for the survey to deal with differences in selection probabilities and to correct for non-response bias;
- Chapter 8 details some considerations for analysis.

The report does not contain results from the study; a report which describes the characteristics of the whole cohort of offenders on Community Orders, their sentences,

assessments of their needs and their sentence plans, and a further report looking at punitive aspects of Community Orders are available on GOV.UK.³

³ Cattell, J., Mackie, A., Prestage, Y. and Wood, M. (2013) *Results from the Offender Management Community Cohort Study (OMCCS): Assessment and sentence planning*. London: Ministry of Justice.
Cattell, J., Kenny, T., Lord, C. and Wood, M. (2013) *Results from the Offender Management Community Cohort Study (OMCCS): Punitive aspects of Community Orders*. London: Ministry of Justice.

2. Sample design and fieldwork plan

The sample for the OMCCS survey was designed to be representative of offenders on Community Orders on Tiers 2 to 4 for the cohort commencing their sentences between October 2009 and December 2010.⁴ The sample design for the study is set out in the baseline technical report for the study (Wood *et al*, 2013).⁵ In summary:

- a set of Probation Trusts was selected at random (10 Probation Trusts were selected);
- local offices (eight or nine in each area) were selected within these Probation Trusts (all offices were included in smaller Probation Trusts);
- individual offenders starting Community Orders between October 2009 and December 2010 were selected;
- female offenders and those from an ethnic minority background were over-sampled to provide enough of these offenders in the final survey sample for analysis.

This chapter describes the selection of cases for Waves 2 and 3 of the survey and the planned design of the timing of fieldwork. The third wave of fieldwork was stopped part way through (see Chapter 4) so the planned design was not completely implemented.

2.1 Eligible sample for Waves 2 and 3

All offenders who were interviewed in the Wave 1 survey were eligible for the Wave 2 and 3 surveys. However, those who did not give permission to be contacted again at the end of the Wave 1 interview were not contacted for these later survey waves (see Chapter 5).

2.2 Fieldwork design

The original design for the Wave 2 and 3 survey interviews suggested that they should happen at the mid point of the Community Order and the end of the Community Order, based on the original sentence handed down by the court. However, analysis of data from 2006 suggested that fewer than half of all Community Orders would expire at the anticipated end of the sentence, indicating that rigid timing for the interview, based on the original sentence

⁴ The National Offender Management Model has a tiering framework for matching resources and offender management styles to different types of offenders; a tier is allocated to an offender based on a number of factors, including their risk of reoffending. There are four tiers; Tier 1 is the lowest tier. The higher the tier the greater the risks posed by the offender, and the more complex the sentence imposed. The OMCCS survey excludes Tier 1 offenders as they have minimal levels of interventions in their sentence.

length, would result in a minority of the final interviews actually taking place near the end of the Community Order.

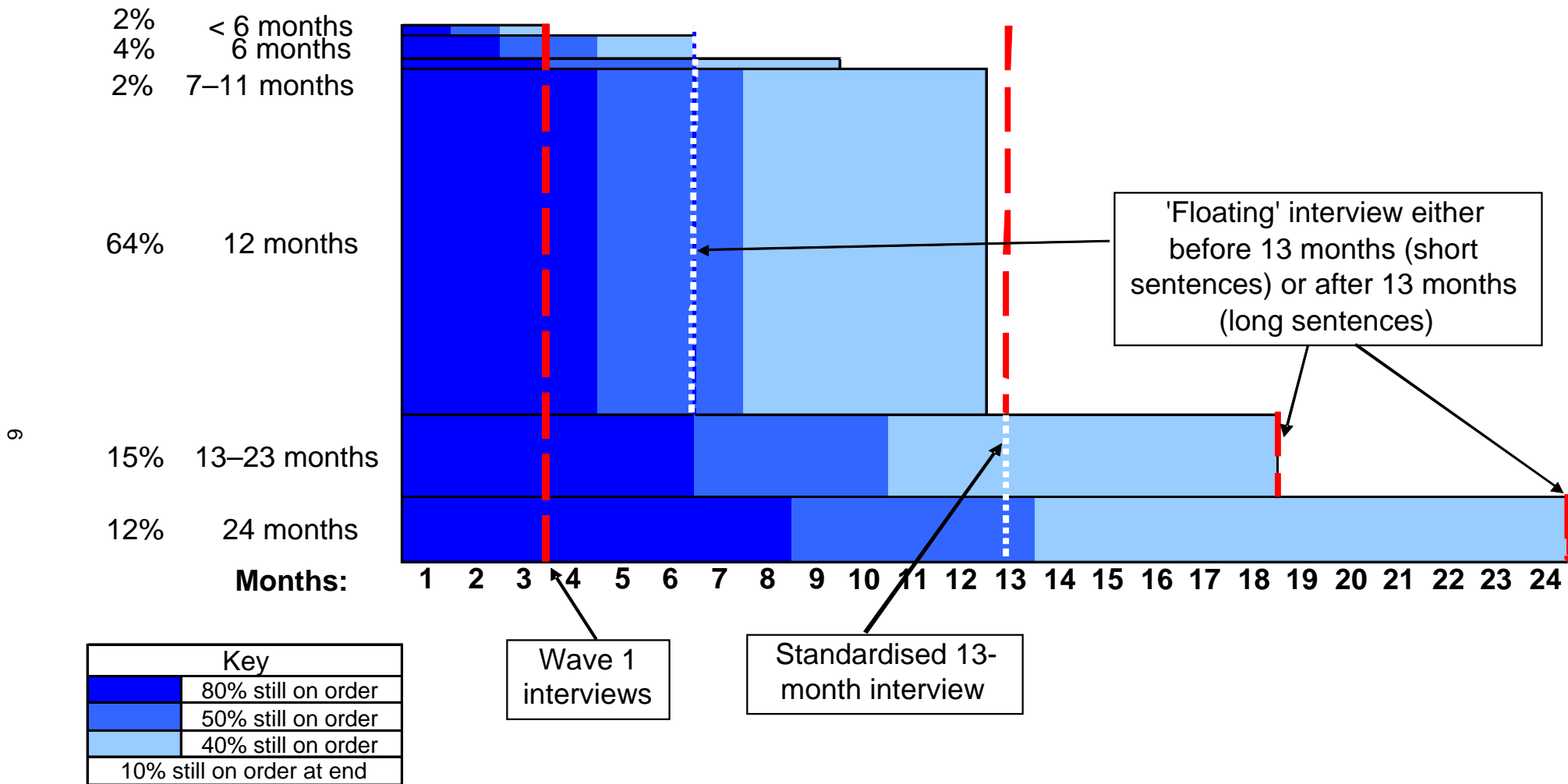
Instead, following the Wave 1 interview (at around three months after commencement of the Community Order) one of the two remaining interviews was planned to be at a standardised point around 13 months after the commencement of the Community Order. This was to allow more direct comparisons to be made between cases. The other interview was then planned to take place either after the end of the Community Order (in the case of longer sentences), or at the half way point (in the case of shorter sentences).⁶ Although a proportion of offenders had been given sentences of up to 36 months, the maximum time between commencement and the third interview was planned to be 24 months; this was to shorten the length of the study so that findings could be obtained within a reasonable time.

The overall approach is illustrated in Figure 2.1. The size of the horizontal bars broadly represents the distribution of different sentence lengths in the sample at the time when the plan was developed (the largest group being those on 12-month sentences). The vertical dotted lines illustrate planned points of interview. The shading indicates the proportion of offenders expected to be still on their Community Order by that point, based on analysis of 2006 data.

⁵ Wood, M., Hussey, D. and Cattell, J. (2013) Offender Management Community Cohort Study (OMCCS) Baseline Technical Report. London: Ministry of Justice.

⁶ In relation to the 'waves' of the survey, this generally means that Wave 1 is the 'baseline' interview, Wave 2 is the 'mid-order' interview and Wave 3 is the 'end of order' interview although, in a minority of instances, (six-month sentences and those where there is an early end to the Community Order) the Wave 2 interview was at the end of the Community Order and the Wave 3 interview was some months later.

Figure 2.1: Fieldwork design for three interviews of the OMCCS survey



This 'floating' interview design allowed the interviews to be moved if the Community Order was terminated early. Monthly terminations data was provided for this purpose; where it was known that an offender's Community Order had terminated, the interview was moved to the earliest possible point, subject to the requirement to have an interview at the standard 13-month point.

Those who were interviewed at the Wave 1 survey were eligible for the Wave 3 interview, whether or not an interview was achieved at Wave 2.

2.3 Offenders who moved into prison

The option of attempting to interview offenders who entered prison was ruled out for reasons of cost and practicality, as information was not quickly available and offenders often moved prison or were released after a relatively short period. Instead, the aim was to interview offenders soon after their release. Data from the Police National Computer was used to identify sentence length and sentence start date and fieldwork was arranged for a point just after half way through the sentence, on the basis that offenders are often released before the end of their sentence.

The fieldwork design that was implemented used monthly assignments. See Chapter 4 for a description of the actual timing of the fieldwork in relation to the commencement of the Community Order.

3. Questionnaire and development work

The main principles for the questionnaire design at Waves 2 and 3 were that it should:

- enable changes to be identified in key measures over time;
- capture information about the implementation of the Community Order, including what was delivered and to whom since the Wave 1 survey;
- describe the situation at the end of the sentence by exploring the outcomes for the cohort, particularly in relation to breach of the Community Orders and reoffending.

3.1 Questionnaire coverage

In line with these principles, much of the questionnaire from the Wave 1 survey was retained for the Wave 2 and 3 surveys, with some questions (such as what requirements had been started), amended to refer to the period since the last interview.

In addition, a new module of questions was developed for those whose original Community Orders had ended, which covered:

- requirements or services that were not delivered as expected and reasons for this;
- aims and goals during the sentence;
- factors which assisted positive completion of the sentence;
- triggers (such as missing appointments) and deeper reasons (such as family breakdown) for sentences ending in breach or convictions for a different offence (as reported by the offender);
- impact of Community Order requirements on compliance and offending behaviour;
- attitudes to the Community Order and the offender's situation and commitment to desistance from offending following its completion.

3.2 Cognitive testing

Cognitive testing helps ensure that survey questions are consistently understood by the target population and that they address the intended concepts. This was carried out during April and May 2010, in preparation for the second wave of the OMCCS survey, and involved several stages.

- Specialist cognitive interviewers went through a paper-based questionnaire with offenders, checking them at specified points for comprehension, language issues and the process of answering.
- Five interviewers carried out a total of 15 interviews in South Yorkshire (Sheffield), London (Romford), North Wales (Colwyn Bay), Kent (Canterbury), and West Midlands (Sandwell). Each interview lasted approximately 40 minutes.
- Sampling was carried out on a purposive basis to ensure the questionnaire was tested with a spread of offenders of different ages, men and women, and those with different sentence lengths.
- Findings were recorded using prepared feedback sheets that included specific question probes for each interview and these were analysed by researchers following a day-long debrief with interviewers. The results fed into the development of the questionnaire, which was then used in a Wave 2 pilot.

The topics covered in the cognitive testing included:

- whether and why offenders needed to wait for services such as drug treatment and sentence requirements, including any delays;
- aims and goals during the sentence – this section focused on the achievements the offender wanted to make during their Community Order and whether anyone had helped them towards accomplishing these;
- assistance and relationships – focusing on the offender’s perception of the assistance given to them by their Offender Manager;
- orders ending due to breach or reoffending – this included two open questions which aimed to draw out the reasons that another offence was committed (as reported by the offender) in more detail;
- orders reaching the planned end of the sentence or ending early for good progress, covering what was important in enabling offenders to complete their Community Order;
- compliance with the Community Order and offender-reported convictions for a different offence.
- attitudes to the Community Order and the offender’s situation after its end.

3.3 Piloting

The aim for the Wave 2 pilot was to test the key aspects of the survey process. This included the role of probation office staff, arranging interviews with respondents, and ensuring the Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) programme was working correctly.

Nine interviewers were involved in the pilot interviews, which took place in nine probation offices (Barking and Dagenham, Barnsley, Blackburn, Derby, Hartlepool, North Hertfordshire, Sandwell, Swindon, and Wrexham). A total of 22 interviews were conducted during May 2010.

3.4 Final questionnaires

The questionnaire used for the Wave 2 survey is available on GOV.UK. The Wave 3 questionnaire was very similar to the Wave 2 questionnaire, although there were some minor question-routing changes.

4. Fieldwork

This chapter sets out the approach to the fieldwork task in Waves 2 and 3. Much of the process built on the work carried out in preparation for the Wave 1 survey, and the Wave 1 fieldwork was occurring as the Wave 2 interviews began.

4.1 Ethics

NatCen has its own Research Ethics Committee from which all projects are required to gain approval. The main ethical considerations for the study were set out in the baseline technical report⁷ and related to the:

- risk to interviewers –a system of risk-management was established that included consulting Offender Managers, checking home addresses, using a ‘buddy’ system where interviewers notified NatCen centrally that they were going to attempt an interview at a particular address;
- consent to the survey interview – this involved an opt-out process for offenders selected for the survey that was operated by staff at the probation office;
- consent from offenders to linking their survey responses to administrative data;
- clear distinction between the study, probation staff and the offender’s sentence, and assessment of the potential impact on service delivery.

For Waves 2 and 3 the same issues applied, but there were some differences to procedures.

- Only those offenders who had agreed to be contacted again during the Wave 1 interview were approached for the Wave 2 and 3 interviews.
- To address the concern that the purpose of the research should not be revealed to other people in the process of tracing offenders, care was taken to ensure that advance letters referred to following-up the research interview some months earlier and made no reference to probation or the Community Order. The preference was to arrange for the letter to be handed to the offender in the probation office.
- An updated risk assessment was obtained from Offender Managers in case there had been a change in circumstances with the offender.

⁷ Wood, M., Hussey, D. and Cattell, J. (2013) Offender Management Community Cohort Study (OMCCS) Baseline Technical Report. London: Ministry of Justice.

4.2 Briefings

Interviewers for the survey were briefed face-to-face in groups of 10–15 people. These briefings provided a reminder of the key aspects of Community Orders and how they were intended to operate. Compared with those for the Wave 1 survey, these briefings included more discussion of how to engage staff in probation offices and how to trace and engage offenders. These sections of the briefings were developed following workshops with interviewers during the course of the Wave 1 fieldwork that were set up in response to the challenges faced in the field.

4.3 Making contact

Contact Information Sheets

These were provided for all offenders and contained a summary of the case at the end of Wave 1. Crucially, this included the address information from that time; current address and contact information, addresses of stable contacts and a likely future address. In addition, probation staff were asked for the latest address information on their systems before offenders were approached for Waves 2 and 3. All these sources were used by interviewers in trying to trace offenders.

Role of local probation offices

As noted above, probation staff were again involved in the fieldwork process for the Wave 2 and 3 interviews.

- As before, they were asked to provide an assessment of the safety issues for the interviewer, including the offender's accommodation as at-home interviews were expected to form a greater part of the fieldwork compared with Wave 1, when the majority of interviews were conducted in probation offices.
- Where Offender Managers were still in touch with offenders, they were asked to pass on advance letters and help arrange meetings.
- Address information was updated from probation records.

Advance letters and contact

There was no opt-out process for the Wave 2 and 3 interviews, as only those who had agreed to be contacted again following the Wave 1 interview were approached. An advance letter was provided that reminded offenders of the study and provided a point of contact should they need one. In general, this was handed to the offender via the Offender Manager, but where they were no longer in contact with the offender, the letter was posted to the offender's last known address.

Communications strategy

Throughout fieldwork, communication about the study was shared with National Offender Management Service (NOMS) via their intranet, by the Ministry of Justice. This included response information, and details of plans for reporting. This supplemented the day to day contact that interviewers and their managers had directly with staff in the participating probation offices. This was generally through a 'key contact', generally a Senior Probation Officer, who was responsible for the survey, but relationships were also built with individual Offender Managers and general office staff. Good relationships with staff, anecdotally, provided better opportunities for the successful tracing of offenders and for avoiding a refusal by offenders to take part in the survey via probation staff or directly by contacting NatGen's offices without meeting the interviewer.

4.4 Interviewing

Timing of fieldwork

The fieldwork for the Wave 2 interviews was carried out between July 2010 and December 2011. There was a monthly flow of assignments to interviewers over this period.

Wave 3 fieldwork was stopped part way through by MoJ due to concerns about the level of attrition (see Chapter 5 for information on response rates) and to reduce the costs of the study. Wave 3 ran from January to July 2011.

The mean length of time between the date the Community Order commenced and the Wave 2 interview was eight months and the median was six months. However, as Table 4.1 shows the distribution centred around two points: six months and 13 months, in line with the planned design described in Chapter 2.

The mean length of time between the date the Community Order commenced and the Wave 3 survey interview was 14 months and the median was 13 months.

Table 4.1: Proportion of interviews taking place, by number of months between the date the Community Order commenced and the date of the survey interview

	Wave 2 %	Wave 3 %
Fewer than 6 months	8	0
6 months	35	0
7 months	27	0
8 months	6	0
9 months	0	0
10 months	0	0
11 months	0	1
12 months	4	17
13 months	10	43
14 months	7	26
15 months	1	2
16 months	0	2
17 months	0	2
18 months	0	5
19 months	0	3

At Wave 1 interviewers had to approach offenders through the probation offices as they did not have contact details for the sampled offenders. Contact details were obtained in the Wave 1 interviews, so it was possible to approach offenders directly in Waves 2 and 3. Some offender's sentences had ended, or they were no longer in touch with the probation office for other reasons; making direct contact at the offender's home the only approach available to interviewers in these cases. As a result, the proportion of interviews that were conducted in offender's homes was considerably higher for Waves 2 and 3, compared with the Wave 1 survey.

- More than half of Wave 2 and 3 interviews were conducted in offender's home (52%), compared with 12% in Wave 1.
- 6% were conducted in neutral venues, such as rooms in libraries or community centres (compared with 4% in Wave1).
- 42% were conducted in the probation offices (compared with 84% in Wave 1).

Interview process

Interviews were carried out via CAPI.⁸ The mean interview length for the Wave 2 interview was 34 minutes and the median was 31 minutes. The mean interview length for the Wave 3 interview was 36 minutes and the median was 32 minutes.

⁸ Computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) is an interviewing technique in which the respondent or interviewer uses a computer to answer the questions during a face-to-face interview.

5. Response

Wave 2 and 3 data were combined for much of the analysis due to the variation in timing of fieldwork and the relatively small number of Wave 3 interviews completed (see Chapter 4 for a description of fieldwork and Chapter 8 for a discussion of the analysis approach). The combination of these two survey waves enabled information to be reported on the latter stages of each offender's Community Order due to similarity between the questionnaires. Response to the Wave 2 and 3 surveys is presented separately in this chapter to provide a full understanding of the survey process.

5.1 Overall response

The Wave 2 and 3 surveys followed up people who had been interviewed at Wave 1. The total number of cases that were in scope for survey fieldwork at the Wave 1 survey was 6,571. The response rate by Wave 2 or Wave 3, with 1,917 productive interviews, was 29%. Although this is a relatively low proportion, longitudinal studies do tend to experience lower overall response rates in their later waves due to attrition.⁹ In addition, this response rate was in line with expectations, given the highly mobile nature of this population and the sometimes difficult and chaotic circumstances in which they were living.

Survey estimates from later waves in longitudinal studies can still be robust; however, it is important that weighting is applied to account for the change in the composition of the sample (see Chapter 6).

As well as looking at the overall response rate based on all cases in scope for the Wave 1 fieldwork, it is helpful to consider response rates for each wave, based on the cases issued at that wave, to get a sense of the likely potential bias at each stage of the survey.

Of those eligible for survey fieldwork (in-scope) productive interviews were achieved with 67% of offenders at Wave 2 (Table 5.1). This fell to 57% at Wave 3 for those offenders approached for interviews, although not all offenders eligible for interview at Wave 3 were contacted, as the Wave 3 fieldwork was stopped part way through (see Chapter 4).

⁹ Lynn, P., Buck, N., Burton, J., Jäckle, A. and Laurie, H. (2005), 'A Review of Methodological Research Pertinent to Longitudinal Survey Design and Data Collection' *ISER Working Paper 2005-29*, Colchester, University of Essex.

Six per cent of Wave 2 offenders were ineligible (out of scope) for survey work, mostly as a result of being in prison when their cases were issued for fieldwork. Other reasons for this included risk to the interviewer (based on Offender Manager assessments) and no available contact information. However, these offenders were included in the administrative data collected for the Universal Dataset as part of the wider OMCCS.¹⁰

In Wave 2, non-contact and refusal rates accounted for relatively similar proportions of non-response; 14% could not be contacted in Wave 2, with the majority of these cases being untraced, and refusals were often in the form of broken appointments, with 15% of in-scope cases refusing overall.

Among the sample for Wave 3 interviewing, the rate of refusal was relatively similar to Wave 2 (14%). However, the level of untraced offenders was considerably higher at 25%, possibly due to the longer period since the Wave 1 interview and the fact that, in many cases, these offenders were no longer in touch with the probation office.

¹⁰ For further details on the universal dataset see Wood, M., Hussey, D. and Cattell, J. (2013) *Offender Management Community Cohort Study (OMCCS) Baseline Technical Report*. London: Ministry of Justice.

Table 5.1: Response to Wave 2 and Wave 3 surveys

	Wave 2			Wave 3		
	N	% of all cases	% of total in-scope for survey	N	% of all cases	% of total in-scope for survey
Issued	A	2,876		840		
Out of scope for the survey		164	6%	62	7%	
Not interviewed due to risk to interviewer		26	1%	8	1%	
Respondent in prison		105	4%	42	5%	
Other ineligible		33	1%	12	1%	
In-scope for the survey	B	2,712		778		
Non-contact		376		216		28%
Non-contact – not traced		313	12%	192		25%
Non-contact – no contact with offender		63	2%	24		3%
Refusals		420		112		14%
Refusals		148	5%	65		8%
Broken appointments, no recontact		272	10%	47		6%
Other unproductive		89		10		1%
			C / A		C / A	C / B
Productive interviews	C	1,827	64%	440	52%	57%

Table 5.2 provides a simple measure of response for the combined samples. In total, 67% of offenders who were in-scope at either Wave 1 or Wave 2 had productive interviews at either Wave 2 or Wave 3.

Table 5.2: Combined Wave 2 and Wave 3 response

		Waves 2 and 3
Total cases issued at either Wave 2 or Wave 3	A	2,880
Productive at either Wave 2 and/or 3	B	1,917
Unproductive both Waves 2 and 3	C	943
Ineligible both Waves 2 and 3	D	20
Response (% of in-scope)	B / (A–D)	67%
Response (% of all cases)	B / A	67%

5.2 Response by area

As with the Wave 1 survey, the variation in response rates by the Probation Trust was quite substantial, ranging from 56% to 75% of in-scope cases at Wave 2, and 42% to 69% of in-scope cases at Wave 3 (Table 5.3). The cause for this was the variation in both non-contact and refusal rates; non-contact, largely accounted for by untraced offenders, ranged from 9% to 23%, and refusals ranged from 10% to 21% in Wave 2.

Reports from field interviewers suggested that the variation in the time available to assist them in probation offices was part of the explanation for the variation in contact rates in particular. Other factors included variations in the profile of offenders between areas, and in interviewer approaches to the study.

Table 5.3: Response by Probation Trust

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Wave 2										
Total cases issued	394	278	337	215	409	238	171	301	325	208
Out of scope for the survey	20	18	18	18	21	8	6	16	27	12
In-scope for the survey	374	260	319	197	388	230	165	285	298	196
Non-contact	36	23	47	46	59	36	29	35	35	30
Refusals	47	38	55	35	52	23	27	48	63	32
Other unproductive	14	4	10	5	8	13	11	7	10	7
Productive interviews	277	195	207	111	269	158	98	195	190	127
Response (% of in-scope)	74%	75%	65%	56%	69%	69%	59%	68%	64%	65%
Response (% of all cases)	70%	70%	61%	52%	66%	66%	57%	65%	58%	61%
Wave 3										
Total cases issued	119	76	101	64	114	82	67	89	88	40
Out of scope for the survey	12	8	6	4	7	6	5	3	8	3
In-scope for the survey	107	68	95	60	107	76	62	86	80	37
Non-contact	23	15	29	18	33	23	26	22	21	6
Refusals	9	12	17	10	11	13	9	9	16	6
Other unproductive	1	1	1	0	2	0	1	2	0	2
Productive interviews	74	40	48	32	61	40	26	53	43	23
Response (% of in-scope)	69%	59%	51%	53%	57%	53%	42%	62%	54%	62%
Response (% of all cases)	62%	53%	48%	50%	54%	49%	39%	60%	49%	58%

5.3 Response by offender and sentence characteristics

Response rates by key variables relating to the characteristics of offenders and their sentences are provided in Tables 5.4 to 5.9.

- There was a strong relationship between response and the age of the offender, with 61% of 18–24 year olds being interviewed, compared with 82% of those aged 50 or more in Wave 2. Levels of refusal and non-contact both fell with age (Table 5.4).
- Female offenders were slightly more likely to respond than male offenders; for example 71% of female offenders responded in Wave 2 compared with 66% of male offenders (Table 5.5). However, a higher proportion of female offenders refused to take part in Wave 3 (17% compared with 12% of male offenders).
- White offenders were more likely to respond than those from minority ethnic backgrounds (Table 5.6).

- There was a lower response rate for those with a very high risk of reoffending at Wave 2;¹¹ at this wave, 70% of offenders at low risk of reoffending responded, compared with 56% of those at very high risk (Table 5.7). At Wave 2 both non-contact and refusals were higher among the very high risk of reoffending group. At Wave 3 there was a higher level of out of scope cases among those in the very high risk group, largely caused by some of these offenders being in prison.
- Response rates by sentence length showed an unclear pattern. Overall response rates at Wave 2 were similar for those on shorter (1–12 months) and longer (19–36 months) sentences, with 68% and 70% of offenders responding, while a slightly lower response rate (63%) was found for those on 13–18 month sentences. This pattern did not hold for Wave 3, when a slightly higher response rate was seen for those on 13–18 month sentences, compared with offenders on shorter and longer sentences.
- There was relatively little variation in response rates by tier (Table 5.9) or type of requirements in the Community Order (Table 5.10).

Table 5.4: Response by offender’s age

	18–24	25–29	30–39	40–49	50+
Wave 2					
Total cases issued	795	528	836	526	191
Out of scope for the survey	52	30	55	21	6
In-scope for the survey	743	498	781	505	185
Non-contact	124	86	89	61	16
Refusals	140	77	131	61	11
Other unproductive	24	12	28	19	6
Productive interviews	455	323	533	364	152
Response (% of in-scope)	61%	65%	68%	72%	82%
Response (% of all cases)	57%	61%	64%	69%	80%
Wave 3					
Total cases issued	240	150	261	145	44
Out of scope for the survey	25	9	22	4	2
In-scope for the survey	215	141	239	141	42
Non-contact	63	45	64	35	9
Refusals	41	17	33	17	4
Other unproductive	1	1	5	3	0
Productive interviews	110	78	137	86	29
Response (% of in-scope)	51%	55%	57%	61%	69%
Response (% of all cases)	46%	52%	52%	59%	66%

¹¹ As measured by the Offender Group Reconviction Scale (OGRS), which is based on static risk factors, such as offending history.

Table 5.5: Response by offender's gender

	Female	Male
Wave 2		
Total cases issued	647	2,229
Out of scope for the survey	27	137
In-scope for the survey	620	2,092
Non-contact	73	303
Refusals	83	337
Other unproductive	24	65
Productive interviews	440	1,387
Response (% of in-scope)	71%	66%
Response (% of all cases)	68%	62%
Wave 3		
Total cases issued	187	653
Out of scope for the survey	6	56
In-scope for the survey	181	597
Non-contact	41	175
Refusals	32	80
Other unproductive	0	10
Productive interviews	108	332
Response (% of in-scope)	60%	56%
Response (% of all cases)	58%	51%

Table 5.6: Response by offender's ethnicity

	White	Asian or Asian British	Black or Black British	Mixed	Chinese or other ethnic group
Wave 2					
Total cases issued	2,424	118	137	81	23
Out of scope for the survey	143	2	8	6	2
In-scope for the survey	2,281	116	129	75	21
Non-contact	309	22	26	12	0
Refusals	350	16	22	18	5
Other unproductive	64	10	4	6	1
Productive interviews	1,558	68	77	39	15
Response (% of in-scope)	68%	59%	60%	52%	71%
Response (% of all cases)	64%	58%	56%	48%	65%
Wave 3					
Total cases issued	691	45	38	31	8
Out of scope for the survey	48	5	2	5	1
In-scope for the survey	643	40	36	26	7
Non-contact	171	16	14	9	1
Refusals	95	5	4	3	2
Other unproductive	8	0	0	1	1
Productive interviews	369	19	18	13	3
Response (% of in-scope)	57%	48%	50%	50%	43%
Response (% of all cases)	53%	42%	47%	42%	38%

Table 5.7: Response by risk of reoffending

	Risk of reoffending (OGRS3)			
	Low	Medium	High	Very high
Wave 2				
Total cases issued	1,861	594	335	82
Out of scope for the survey	84	41	29	10
In-scope for the survey	1,777	553	306	72
Non-contact	237	81	42	14
Refusals	244	106	52	17
Other unproductive	56	22	10	1
Productive interviews	1,240	344	202	40
Response (% of in-scope)	70%	62%	66%	56%
Response (% of all cases)	67%	58%	60%	49%
Wave 3				
Total cases issued	509	196	94	38
Out of scope for the survey	29	14	11	8
In-scope for the survey	480	182	83	30
Non-contact	127	62	15	10
Refusals	69	23	17	3
Other unproductive	8	1	1	0
Productive interviews	276	96	50	17
Response (% of in-scope)	58%	53%	60%	57%
Response (% of all cases)	54%	49%	53%	45%

Table 5.8: Response by sentence length

	Length of sentence		
	1 to 12 months	13 to 18 months	19 to 36 months
Wave 2			
Total cases issued	2,177	345	354
Out of scope for the survey	114	26	24
In-scope for the survey	2,063	319	330
Non-contact	271	58	47
Refusals	328	49	43
Other unproductive	71	10	8
Productive interviews	1,393	202	232
Response (% of in-scope)	68%	63%	70%
Response (% of all cases)	64%	59%	66%
Wave 3			
Total cases issued	725	104	11
Out of scope for the survey	48	11	3
In-scope for the survey	677	93	8
Non-contact	187	26	3
Refusals	101	11	0
Other unproductive	9	1	0
Productive interviews	380	55	5
Response (% of in-scope)	56%	59%	63%
Response (% of all cases)	52%	53%	45%

Table 5.9: Response by tier at start of sentence

	Tier at start of sentence		
	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4
Wave 2			
Total cases issued	1,292	1,406	178
Out of scope for the survey	48	92	24
In-scope for the survey	1,244	1,314	154
Non-contact	152	204	20
Refusals	186	213	21
Other unproductive	49	36	4
Productive interviews	857	861	109
Response (% of in-scope)	69%	66%	71%
Response (% of all cases)	66%	61%	61%
Wave 3			
Total cases issued	415	380	45
Out of scope for the survey	26	27	9
In-scope for the survey	389	353	36
Non-contact	105	100	11
Refusals	64	43	5
Other unproductive	4	6	0
Productive interviews	216	204	20
Response (% of in-scope)	56%	58%	56%
Response (% of all cases)	52%	54%	44%

Table 5.10: Response by requirements

	Accredited programme	Drug treatment	Curfew	Unpaid work
Wave 2				
Total cases issued	653	375	184	815
Out of scope for the survey	41	45	11	43
In-scope for the survey	612	330	173	772
Non-contact	86	45	26	120
Refusals	99	59	26	147
Other unproductive	13	7	7	29
Productive interviews	414	219	114	476
Response (% of in-scope)	68%	66%	66%	62%
Response (% of all cases)	63%	58%	62%	58%
Wave 3				
Total cases issued	127	122	60	264
Out of scope for the survey	9	19	5	14
In-scope for the survey	118	103	55	250
Non-contact	37	26	15	63
Refusals	17	12	6	47
Other unproductive	0	1	0	3
Productive interviews	64	64	34	137
Response (% of in-scope)	54%	62%	62%	55%
Response (% of all cases)	50%	52%	57%	52%

6. Coding, editing and cleaning of data

Offenders were asked a number of open-ended questions. These were used where it was felt that an adequate list of potential answers could not be established in advance, for instance reasons for failure to attend meetings with their offender managers.

6.1 Coding open responses

For these open-ended questions, responses were examined part way through fieldwork and code frames were developed to cover common answer options. A similar process was employed for questions including an 'other specify' response option, where responses were back-coded into the original code list of answer options, where appropriate. For Waves 2 and 3, code frames were designed to be consistent with those developed in Wave 1 where questions were repeated.

A systematic coding process was carried out by a specialist coding team, following briefing by researchers. A manual was developed for the process to ensure consistency. Fact sheets that included pertinent details about each case as well as the verbatim answers were also developed to assist the coding process.

6.2 Coding SOC2010 and SIC2007

The questionnaires covered offenders' work as in the Wave 1 survey, and this was classified using the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC2010) and employers by the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC2007). Coders used a semi-automated system that suggested appropriate codes that the coder then confirmed.

6.3 Editing and cleaning

CAPI routing and checks helped to ensure that the data needed little cleaning in data processing. Interviewers were able to record comments against questions where respondents had experienced difficulties providing an answer, or where the interviewer was uncertain how to code the response, and these were acted upon where a clear miscoding of a response had occurred.

There was an issue with the serial numbers that identified offenders being erroneously swapped during Wave 1 fieldwork. This occurred due to offenders' contact details not being available to interviewers at the start of the Wave 1 fieldwork process; these contact details would normally be used to double-check individuals' identities while, at the start of Wave 1,

cases were identified by case reference numbers and dates of birth until after the opt-out stage. This had implications for a few cases in Wave 2 fieldwork where the error in the serial numbers at Wave 1 were not discovered and corrected. This meant that there were some incorrect 'text fills'¹² in a small number of cases in relation to dates (which were in any case checked in the interview) and sample information that needed to be corrected in the final datasets in these cases. The available survey and administrative data items were compared to make these corrections.

The quality of the survey data could also be checked by comparing responses to the survey with the administrative data collected as part of the OMCCS, where both datasets covered the same information. These checks were not carried out systematically as part of the data cleaning process, but have been carried out for particular measures during analysis of the data.

¹² Where responses to previous questions in the survey were used to create the wording for subsequent questions.

7. Weighting

This chapter sets out the aims for the weighting scheme for the survey data, the approach taken and its effect on key estimates.

7.1 Background

As at Wave 1, the sample has been weighted to the population profile of Tier 2–4 offenders¹³ beginning Community Orders over the period of interest (October 2009 to December 2010). The aim of the weighting was to adjust the achieved sample to reflect the population of offenders and thereby minimise any bias in the survey results. The weights corrected for unequal selection probabilities at Wave 1 and for differential non-response at Waves 1, 2 and 3.

Two weights were derived, one for the Universal Dataset which includes only those offenders who consented to linking their survey responses to the administrative data (referred to as the ‘Universal Dataset sample’) and one for all those responding to Waves 2 and 3 (referred to as the ‘full sample’).

7.2 Method and choice of weighting targets

The most efficient way to derive the weights was to use calibration weighting. Calibration adjusts the sample to reflect the population profile on the target variables chosen. These included target variables used in creating the Wave 1 weights:

- region;
- sentence length;
- age (banded) by sex (six categories);
- ethnicity by sex (four categories);
- OGRS3 band;¹⁴
- OGP band;¹⁵
- OVP band.¹⁶

¹³ The OMCCS survey excludes Tier 1 offenders as they have minimal levels of interventions in their sentence.

¹⁴ A static model of risk of reoffending based largely on offending history.

¹⁵ The OASys General Reoffending Predictor (OGP) is a model of risk of reoffending that includes dynamic risk factors as assessed in OASys, and covers those offences not included in the OVP score, excluding sexual offences. Scores are grouped into low (less than a 33% chance of general reoffending), medium (between 34% and 66%), high (between 67% and 84%) and very high (85% or greater chance of general reoffending).

¹⁶ The OASys Violence Predictor (OVP) uses the responses given to certain OASys items (both static and dynamic) to give an indication of the likelihood of violent reoffending within two years of the commencement of their Community Order. Offences covered by this score are violence against the person, weapons, robbery, criminal damage and public order (‘violent-type’). Scores are banded into low (0%–29%), medium (30%–59%), high (60%–79%) and very high (80%–99%).

In addition, the following Wave 1 variables were chosen after non-response modelling found them to be significant predictors of response at Waves 2 and 3:

- whether the offender was taken back to court for breaching the Community Order;
- whether the Community Order involved unpaid work;
- whether the offender had help with drug treatment as part of the Community Order;
- whether the offender had any qualifications;
- how many children, under the age of 18, the offender had.

7.3 Trimming

After calibration, there were a handful of outlying weights which were trimmed back to the next largest weight (approximately 3.73 for the 'Universal Dataset' weights and approximately 3.66 for the 'all respondent' weights). This had a negligible effect on the final sample profile (see Section 7.4).

7.4 Comparison of the sample and population

Table 7.1 compares the final sample and population profiles (based on Form 20 returns held by the MoJ) on key variables. Any slight discrepancies were introduced by trimming; this mainly affects the proportion of high/very high risk offenders as these were the cases with large weights.

Table 7.1: Comparison of weighted Wave 2 and 3 samples and population estimates

	Population estimate %	Weighted Wave 2 and 3 Universal Dataset sample %	Weighted Wave 2 and 3 full sample %
Region			
North West	16.6	16.7	16.6
North East	8.1	8.1	8.1
Yorkshire and Humberside	11.9	12.0	11.9
East Midlands	8.1	8.1	8.1
East of England	7.8	7.8	7.8
West Midlands	11.1	11.1	11.1
South East	11.9	11.7	11.8
South West	6.8	6.8	6.8
London	11.4	11.2	11.4
Wales	6.3	6.3	6.3
Sentence length			
1–12 months	76.7	76.8	76.7
13–36 months	23.3	23.2	23.3
Age band by gender			
Male, aged 18–20	13.1	12.9	13.0
Male, aged 21–24	15.2	15.1	15.2
Male, aged 25–40	39.4	39.5	39.5
Male, aged 41+	16.3	16.4	16.3
Female, aged 18–24	4.6	4.6	4.6
Female, aged 25+	11.4	11.5	11.4
Gender by ethnicity			
White Male	72.8	72.8	72.8
BME Male	11.2	11.2	11.2
White Female	14.4	14.5	14.4
BME Female	1.6	1.6	1.6
Risk of reoffending (OGRS3)			
Low	40.6	40.8	40.7
Medium	31.6	31.7	31.6
High/ Very high	27.9	27.4	27.7
OGP band			
Low	38.9	39.1	n/a
Medium	36.5	36.7	
High/ Very high	24.6	24.2	
OVP band			
Low	51.3	51.6	n/a
Medium	40.5	40.7	
High/ Very high	8.2	7.7	
Whether taken back to court for breaching the Community Order			
Yes	9.5	9.2	9.4
No	90.5	90.8	90.6
Whether Community Order involved unpaid work			
Yes	70.4	70.5	70.5
No	29.6	29.5	29.5

Table 7.1: continued

	Population estimate %	Weighted Wave 2 and 3 Universal Dataset sample %	Weighted Wave 2 and 3 full sample %
Whether had help with drug treatment as part of Community Order			
Yes	83.9	83.9	83.8
No	16.1	16.1	16.2
Whether had any qualifications			
Yes	60.3	60.4	60.4
No	39.7	39.6	39.6
Number of children under the age of 18			
None	47.9	48.1	48.0
1 or more	52.1	51.9	52.0

7.5 Comparison of weighted estimates

Comparisons were made of weighted estimates from questions in the Wave 1 survey between the different samples available for analysis. This was done to provide reassurance that the weighting schemes developed for these different samples was successful in bringing them into line with one another, and with the population. The responses at Wave 1 among the following three samples were compared:

- the 'Weighted Wave 1 Universal Dataset' sample – offenders who responded at Wave 1 and consented to linking their survey responses to the administrative data at that wave;
- the 'Weighted Wave 2 and 3 Universal Dataset' sample – a sub-group of the first group offenders, covering those who responded at Wave 2 and/or 3 and who consented to linking their survey responses to the administrative data;
- the 'Weighted Wave 2 and 3 full sample' – all offenders who responded at Wave 2 and/or 3.

Table 7.2 shows the results of these comparisons for a selection of Wave 1 measures. In general, the weighting appears to have been successful; the Wave 1 estimates for offenders who also took part in Wave 2 and/or 3 were in line with those for offenders who took part in Wave 1 (but who may not have responded to a later wave).

Table 7.2 Comparison of weighted Wave 1 estimates using the different samples

Response at Wave 1	Weighted Wave 1 Universal Dataset sample %	Weighted Wave 2 and 3 Universal Dataset sample %	Weighted Wave 2 and 3 full sample %
Have you received any written warnings for not complying with your Community Order?			
Yes	33.3	33.2	33.6
No	66.7	66.8	66.4
How would you describe your relationship with your Offender Manager?			
Excellent/good	80.8	80.0	79.8
OK	16.8	17.5	17.4
Not very good/bad	2.3	2.5	2.7
Has your Community Order involved curfew and/or tagging?			
No	86.2	86.3	86.3
Yes	13.8	13.7	13.7
I have been sentenced to prison or community sentences several times			
No	78.4	79.4	80.0
Yes	21.6	20.6	20.0

8. Analysis of the Wave 2 and 3 data

The nature of the fieldwork design and the matching with administrative data presents some issues to be considered when carrying out analysis of the data. These will be explored more fully in the final technical report in the OMCCS series, which will also include full details of the administrative data collected, and in the reports on the study's findings. However, noted here are some considerations for the analysis of the longitudinal survey data that result from the nature of the fieldwork design described in previous chapters.

8.1 Dealing with variation between offenders in their survey reference periods

The original aim of the timing of fieldwork was to provide a standardised interview at a point about 13 months after the commencement of the sentence, with the final Wave 3 interview providing the 'standard 13-month' interview for a large proportion of the sample. As the final wave of interviews was stopped before all interviews were completed there is more variation in the timing of available interviews between offenders than anticipated. This will mean, for instance, that some offenders will have had more opportunity to complete aspects of their Community Order than others by their final survey interview. This was overcome in some instances by the use of questions that ask for dates (such as the start and end dates of requirements) to standardise time frames, for instance by creating measures such as 'started by six months into the sentence' rather than 'started by the Wave 2 interview'.

8.2 Combining the Wave 2 and Wave 3 data

Although most cases did not have a Wave 3 interview, Wave 3 can be combined with Wave 2 to provide information on the 'latest situation' for each offender. There will be greater variation in interview timings in this situation, so this may not always be appropriate, for instance where comparing the amount of contact different offenders had with Offender Managers at a similar point into their sentence.

8.3 'Full' sample versus those agreeing to data linking

There are different samples available for analysis, such as all those offenders who responded to Wave 2 and/or 3, and offenders who responded at Wave 2 and/or 3 and who consented to their survey responses being linked to the administrative data. The survey dataset that has been matched to the administrative data excludes those who did not give their permission for their data to be linked. Analysis to produce estimates that are based only on information gathered in the survey will benefit from a larger sample size if the full survey

sample (and the appropriate weight) is used, rather than the version of the sample that consented to data linking.

8.4 Status of the Wave 3 sample

A weight was not developed for the Wave 3 survey on its own and analysis should not be carried out on just the Wave 3 sample. This is because offenders who had a third interview before the fieldwork for Wave 3 was stopped were those who had relatively shorter sentences. This group will therefore not be fully representative of the wider cohort of offenders in the study.