

KANTAR



Department for
Digital, Culture,
Media & Sport

Community Organisers 2020 report



1. Summary

This report was commissioned by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to assess the Community Organisers Expansion Programme (COEP). The COEP launched in 2017 and trained 3,966 Community Organisers (COs) by March 2020. This takes the number of COs trained to nearly 10,500, after the original Community Organisers Programme (COP), delivered by the Cabinet Office from 2011-15, recruited 6,500. The Expansion is a second phase of the original programme and builds on its achievements and learning.

There are a number of strands to the expansion programme. In particular, 20 Social Action Hubs (locally rooted community organisations) in 20 different communities are each receiving funding for three years to train and support 100 people to learn about community organising and these areas form the focus of the Community Life Survey boost survey. These Social Action Hubs were selected because they worked in areas of deprivation or social or economic challenge and had the capacity to train people in community organising.

1.1 Approach

The Community Life Survey provides robust measures of social capital, loneliness and social action across England, but to analyse them at a local level requires additional survey interviews to be carried out. Kantar has therefore conducted an online and paper boost survey of the Community Life Survey, in the areas surrounding the new Social Action Hubs (SAHs) delivering the COEP. Each SAH was asked by Kantar to identify a number of LSOAs¹ where they were delivering the COEP and/or expected to be working in the coming year. Each SAH selected one or more LSOAs, however a number commented that this was difficult to do because of the nature of the Programme. It was not always easy to predict where people would come from to attend training courses – as some SAH publicise their courses across their whole area of operation (e.g. a county or town), whilst others respond reactively to requests for training from community groups or organisations and cannot predict where these might come from. **This means we should be cautious about the robustness of the boost survey sampling and the conclusions we draw from the boost survey.** A total of 943 interviews of adults aged 16+ across the hubs were undertaken between 8 January and 29 March 2020.

This boost survey repeats the methodology of the 2019 CO survey by using the same questionnaire and same SAH areas to provide a second snapshot in time. Concurrently, the survey was also asked of people in other areas of the country as part of the national Community Life Survey. This enabled a comparator group to be assembled comprising those living in non-CO areas, with responses weighted to match the population profile of the nineteen CO areas surveyed.

Both the 2019 and 2020 boost surveys were conducted in a time during which the SAHs were operational. We cannot therefore compare circumstances before the organisers started work with afterwards, nor can we prove any findings are the direct result of COs. In addition, the sample sizes within the individual areas are small, so it is difficult to detect differences both

¹ Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA) is a geographic area developed by the ONS from the census. More information can be found on the ONS census geography page: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/geography/ukgeographies/censusgeography#super-output-area-soa>

between individual areas and between an individual area vs. the comparator group. Reporting is therefore based on CO areas as a whole. It is also important to bear in mind that COs work had been ongoing before the start of the 2019 survey, and this work continued throughout the 2020 fieldwork period. Consequently, it is not easy to interpret the results as they do not form a 'baseline' in the traditional sense, but neither do they necessarily reflect the extent of work carried out in the areas and longer-term impacts of the programme. It is also not possible to know if other community organisations operate in the comparator areas with similar aims to COs. However, we can test for statistically significant differences² between CO areas and comparator areas at the time of our survey in order to see any differences in indicators of social capital, loneliness, and social action. We can also compare differences between the CO areas in 2020 with the previous year. We have referenced significant differences observed between 2019 and 2020 within the body of this report. Throughout this report, any reference to "significant" means a statistically significant difference at the 95% confidence interval.

Findings in this report may be influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown, as the fieldwork period ran from January 2020 to the end of March 2020.

1.2 Key findings

Overall, 12% of respondents local to the Social Action Hubs responded that they were aware of COs and 1% overall had some form of personal involvement, for example attending a training session or giving feedback about what they would like to change locally. These figures are similar to those found in 2019.

Respondents living in CO areas were significantly less likely to say that they had a strong sense of belonging to their immediate neighbourhood compared with the comparator group (53% and 57% respectively), though they were significantly more likely to feel satisfied with their local area as a place to live (68% and 64% respectively).

Respondents living in CO areas were significantly less likely to say they had 'no one' to count on to listen to them if they needed to talk (4%), compared with the comparator group (6%).

Respondents living in CO areas were significantly less likely to say that they felt it was very/quite important (51%) for them personally to be able to influence local decision making, compared with respondents in the comparator group (56%).

² If a finding is statistically significant it means that we can be confident that the differences seen in our sampled respondents are reflective of the population.

2. Introduction

Between 2011-15, the Cabinet Office delivered the Community Organisers Programme (COP), recruiting and training over 6,500 Community Organisers (COs) to build relationships and inspire local communities to deliver positive social and political change through collective action; bringing people together and supporting them to take action on the local issues that matter most to them. Community organising aims to support and build local community networks to drive change around the needs and priorities of local areas and ultimately create a broader movement for social change in communities.

In December 2015, the Minister for Civil Society announced the intention to increase the number of COs³ recruited to 10,000 by March 2020, an expansion of 3,500; representing a second phase of the original programme and building on the achievements and learning from the original programme. It aimed to do this by training more people to practise community organising in their communities, and by building a national community of practice for those involved in community organising. The expansion was achieved, with the programme training 3,966 new COs by March 2020, which brought the total to 10,466.

Social Action Hubs (SAHs) are locally rooted organisations committed to building networks of local people to act together to transform communities for good. The new network of 19 appointed SAHs discussed in this report comprises the most substantial part of the expansion programme to train new COs. SAHs vary a great deal. Some focus on a small neighbourhood or group of neighbourhoods, others work across whole counties – in a few specific villages or towns at a time – whilst others work across a city. Each SAH targets work on areas with specific needs or challenges.

The national Community Life Survey has been conducted by Kantar on behalf of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) since 2016-17, and the Cabinet Office between 2012 and 2016. The survey provides Official Statistics on issues that are key to encouraging social action and empowering communities, including volunteering, giving, community engagement, well-being and loneliness.

The key objectives of the survey are to:

- Provide robust, nationally representative data on behaviours and attitudes within communities, to inform and direct policy and action in these areas.
- Provide data of value to all users, including public bodies, external stakeholders and the public, engaging with end users to refine and develop the survey as appropriate.
- Underpin further research and debate on building stronger communities.

Many of the measures collected in the Community Life Survey relate closely to the work of COs. In particular, topic areas covered in the survey such as community cohesion, social action and volunteering align very closely with the aims of COs. Given this alignment between the two, the Community Life Survey represented an opportunity to provide insight into the differences the COs are making within local communities.

³ A small number of these COs will be full time paid professional community organisers. The remainder will be volunteers or those with another frontline role with people in communities.

2.1 Method

In early 2019, DCMS commissioned Kantar to carry out both the online and paper versions of the Community Life Survey in the 19 Social Action Hub areas training the majority of the 3,500 individuals as part of the COEP over the next 3 years. Following the 2019 Community Organisers survey, DCMS commissioned a second wave of the survey in 2020.

Kantar were provided with a list of postcodes covered by the SAHs which were filtered against the Postcode Address File and a systematic sample was drawn. At each address, all adults aged 16+ (up to a maximum of four) were invited to do the survey online or request a paper questionnaire version, and a £10 voucher was available for those completing the questionnaire. Two reminders were sent to each address. Two postal questionnaires and a pre-paid return envelope were included in the second reminder letters for c.80% of selected households.

The aim was to achieve 1,000 interviews overall across the CO areas. In total, 914 interviews were completed. The actual sample size was 943, as twenty-nine of the completed interviews were from two SAH areas that overlapped, and so were counted twice. Disclosure risks prevent us from identifying the areas in this report.

Further information can be found in the appendix at the end of this report.

2.2 Weighting

Interviews from the national 2019-20 Community Life Survey provided a benchmark against which to analyse the CO areas. During this period 10,243 interviews were completed on the national survey. This national sample of addresses has been more closely aligned with the profile of the sample of addresses drawn in the CO areas, based on the 2015 index of multiple deprivation (see the appendix for further details). Throughout the report this is referred to as the comparator group. Please note that this means the estimates are not the same as the main Community Life Survey data⁴.

The CO survey data have been weighted in a fashion aligned with the national survey. Further information can be found in the appendix at the end of this report.

2.3 Analysis

The objective of this work was to assess a set of key indicators for the COEP. Questions from the CLS were selected based on their alignment with the COP Theory of Change (TOC)⁵. For each question, a comparison between the comparator group and CO areas (as a whole) has been made.

This survey is not intended to provide robust measures of the impact of the programme, however the findings still provide an insight to any differences observed, and when considered alongside other high-quality evidence may contribute to overall knowledge of impact. When interpreting the findings, it is important to bear in mind that COs work had been going on before the start of the 2019 survey, and this work continued throughout the 2020 fieldwork

⁴ The main Community Life Survey findings can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/community-life-survey-2018-19>

⁵ [Evaluation of the Community Organisers Programme, December 2015, p30](#)

period. Consequently, it is not easy to interpret the results as they do not form a 'baseline' in the traditional sense but neither do they necessarily reflect the extent of all work carried out in all areas, or the longer-term impact of the programme.

The sample sizes within the individual CO areas are small and therefore there are wide confidence intervals⁶ associated with individual-area estimates. This makes it difficult to detect differences both between individual areas, and between an individual area vs. the comparator group. Therefore, reporting is based on CO areas as a whole. Findings that have been highlighted as significant were statistically significant at the 5 per cent level or better and are flagged by an asterisk in tables. Findings in this report may be influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown, as the fieldwork period ran from January 2020 to the end of March 2020.

⁶ A confidence interval shows the extent to which the survey results would change if repeated multiple times.

3. Research findings

3.1 Awareness of Community Organisers

The 2020 CO survey contained the following description before asking respondents if they had heard of Community Organising:

Community Organising offers a way for people to improve their local community or effect social change. The role of a Community Organiser is to:

- *listen to local people*
- *support people to develop their power to act together for the common good*
- *help people take action on the local issues that are important to them*

Overall awareness of Community Organising was 12%⁷. This figure is in line with levels expected by the programme and has not significantly changed since the 2019 CO survey.

Respondents who said they had heard of Community Organising were then asked whether they had personally had any involvement with Community Organising in their local area in the last twelve months. One in six (17%) respondents asked said that they had been involved, which represents 1% of respondents overall⁸. While this might sound low, this figure is in line with the average expected by the programme across all the CO areas. This represents a non-significant increase of 1% from the 16% of respondents in the 2019 CO survey who said they had involvement. It is also worth noting that this represents recalled contact and involvement. It is possible that residents may have been involved in an event or initiative which was organised or catalysed by a Community Organiser but not been aware of ties to the programme.

3.2 Community cohesion and local area satisfaction

The CO programme aims to bring people together to take action around common concerns and overcome social injustice, while looking to develop a sustainable future for neighbourhood Community Organising. The national Community Life Survey includes a number of measures that aim to measure community cohesion and local area satisfaction, including:

- strength of belonging to an immediate neighbourhood,
- agreement that the local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together,
- overall satisfaction with the local area as a place to live.

The majority of respondents living in CO areas stated that they agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together (79%). Feelings were mixed however when respondents were asked how strongly they felt they belonged to their immediate neighbourhood (53% felt strongly that they belonged, while 47% did not feel strongly). Overall, respondents were generally satisfied with their local area as a place to live

⁷ Full question text: "Before today, had you heard of Community Organising?"

⁸ Full question text: "Have you PERSONALLY had any involvement with Community Organising in your local area in the last 12 months? For example, you may have been asked by a Community Organiser about what you want to change locally, got involved in a Community Organising campaign or attended some Community Organising training."

(68%), and only a small proportion (8%) felt that none of the people in their neighbourhood could be trusted.

Respondents living in CO areas were significantly less likely to feel that they strongly belonged to their immediate neighbourhood compared to the comparator group (53% and 57% respectively), though they were significantly more likely to feel satisfied with their local area as a place to live (68% and 64% respectively). The remaining measures of community cohesion were broadly the same across the CO areas and the comparator group, as can be seen in table 1.1. Levels of community cohesion and satisfaction with the local area have broadly remained the same since the 2019 CO survey.

Table 1.1: Community cohesion and local area satisfaction

Measure of cohesion		Community Organiser areas 2020	Comparator group
Strength of belonging to an immediate neighbourhood	Strongly (very or fairly)	53%*	57%*
	Not strongly (not very or not at all)	47%	44%
	<i>Unweighted base</i>	936	10,203
Agreement that the local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together	Agree (definitely or tend to)	79%	78%
	Disagree (definitely or tend to)	21%	22%
	<i>Unweighted base</i>	929	10,103
Overall satisfaction with the local area as a place to live	Satisfied (very or fairly)	68%*	64%*
	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	18%	21%
	Dissatisfied (very or fairly)	14%	16%
	<i>Unweighted base</i>	940	10,220
Thinking about the people who live in this neighbourhood, to what extent do you believe they can be trusted?	Many of the people can be trusted	23%	23%
	Some of the people can be trusted	34%	35%
	A few of the people can be trusted	35%	33%
	None of the people can be trusted	8%	9%

Measure of cohesion	Community Organiser areas 2020	Comparator group
	<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>936</i>
		<i>10,100</i>

3.3 Social capital and loneliness

A key objective of Community Organising is to develop relationships and networks within neighbourhoods. The national Community Life Survey contains a number of questions which look at respondents' support networks, companionships, and levels of loneliness, details of which can be found in table 1.2.

Respondents from both the CO areas and comparator group overwhelmingly agreed that there are people who would be there for them if they needed help (94% and 94% respectively). A majority of both samples also agreed that there are people they can call on if they wanted company or to socialise (92% and 91% respectively), and that they had at least one person they could count on to listen if they needed to talk (96% and 94% respectively). Respondents in the CO areas were significantly less likely to say they had 'no one' to listen to them if they needed to talk (4%), compared with the comparator group (6%)

Respondents living in CO areas were significantly less likely than those in the comparator group to feel lonely. With 44% of respondents living in CO areas saying that they hardly ever or never feel lonely compared with 49% of those in the comparator group.

The proportion of respondents living in CO areas who said that they 'never felt lonely' has significant decreased since the 2019 CO survey (22% vs. 18% respectively).

Table 1.2: Support networks, companionship and loneliness

Measure of networks, companionship and loneliness	Community Organiser areas 2020	Comparator group
If I needed help, there are people who would be there for me	Definitely agree	70%
	Tend to agree	24%
	Tend to disagree	4%
	Definitely disagree	2%
	<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>935</i>
If I wanted company or to socialise, there are people I can call on	Definitely agree	61%
	Tend to agree	30%
	Tend to disagree	7%

Measure of networks, companionship and loneliness		Community Organiser areas 2020	Comparator group
	Definitely disagree	2%	3%
	<i>Unweighted base</i>	927	10,132
Is there anyone who you can really count on to listen to you when you need to talk? ⁹	Yes, one person	23%	24%
	Yes, more than one person	73%	70%
	No one	4%*	6%*
	<i>Unweighted base</i>	669	7,835
How often do you feel lonely?	Often/always	8%	8%
	Some of the time	20%	20%
	Occasionally	28%	23%
	Hardly ever	22%*	29%*
	Never	22%*	20%*
	<i>Unweighted base</i>	922	10,066

3.4 Social action and community empowerment

Research suggests that many local communities do not believe they have or can develop collective power to improve their neighbourhoods and tackle problems¹⁰. As a result, the CO programme aims to build connections and beliefs among local people that they can collectively improve their neighbourhoods and tackle problems.

3.4.1 Local decision making

In the 12 months prior to completing the survey, just under half (47%) of respondents living in CO areas had taken part in any civic engagement.

⁹ This question was asked to online respondents only.

¹⁰ [Local Trust's 'The Future for Communities: Perspectives on power' July 2018. See pp47 to 49](#)

Civil Society Futures, the Independent Inquiry: Civil Society in England: Its current state and future opportunity, Nov 2018

[Commission on the Future of Localism, Locality 2018. Polling Findings](#) – findings were:

- 80% felt they have no control over decisions which affect the country
- 71% felt they have not much control over the important decisions that affect their neighbourhood

This includes having some involvement in civic participation, taking part in a consultation about local services or problems, or being a member of a group making decisions about local issues such as health, crime or education.

While respondents living in CO areas were no more likely than the comparator group to feel it is important (very or quite important) to be able to influence local decision making they were significantly less likely than the comparator group to say that it is very/quite important for them personally to be able to influence local decision making (51% and 56% respectively).

Participation in civic engagement across the CO areas has fallen by 12% since the 2019 survey. However, participation in civic engagement also fell between 2019 and 2020 in the comparator groups.

No other significant differences were observed between the CO areas and the comparator group. See table 1.3.

Respondents were also asked a number of statements about influencing local decision making. Overall, 28% of respondents living in CO areas believed that they can personally influence decision making in their local area, half (51%) said it was important to be able to influence local decisions, and 54% would like to be more involved in the decisions made by their council that affect their local area.

These figures are in line with those of the comparator group. See table 1.3.

Table 1.3: Local decision making

Measure of local decision making		Community Organiser areas 2020	Comparator group
Taken part in civic engagement in last 12 months (participation, consultation or action)	Yes	47%	44%
	No	53%	56%
	<i>Unweighted base</i>	943	10,243
Agreement that I can personally influence local decision making	Definitely agree	4%	5%
	Tend to agree	24%	24%
	Tend to disagree	44%	43%
	Definitely disagree	28%	29%
	<i>Unweighted base</i>	923	10,065
Importance of feeling able to influence local decision making	Very/Quite important	51%*	56%*
	Very important	14%	15%
	Quite important	37%	41%
	Not very important	35%	32%
	Not at all important	14%	13%
	<i>Unweighted base</i>	928	10,154
Whether would like to be more involved in local decision making ¹¹	Yes	54%	56%
	Depends on the issue	1%	1%

¹¹ This question was asked to online respondents only.

Measure of local decision making	Community Organiser areas 2020	Comparator group
	No	46%
	<i>Unweighted base</i>	665
		42%
		7,818

3.4.2 Influencing local decisions

When asked how they would go about influencing local decisions, the top answers given by respondents living in CO areas included: signing an online petition (34%), contacting the council (33%), contacting their MP (24%), attending a public meeting (24%), contacting their councillor (22%), and signing a paper petition (22%).

There were two significant differences observed between respondents living in CO areas and the comparator group. Respondents living in CO areas were more likely to report that they would influence local decisions by attending a public meeting (24%), compared with the comparator group (20%). In addition, respondents living in CO areas were less likely to report that they would influence local decisions by contacting their councillor (22%), compared with the comparator group (26%). See table 1.4.

Respondents were also asked what might make it easier for them to influence decisions in their local area. The top answers given by those living in CO areas included: if they knew what issues were being considered (34%), if they had more time (32%), if they could give their opinion online or via email (29%), if the council got in touch and asked them (23%), if they could get involved in an online group about local decision making (17%), and if they knew who their local councillor was (13%).

Significant differences were observed between the 2019 and 2020 CO areas in both how respondents living in these areas would influence local decisions and what would make it easier for them to do so. In the CO 2019 report, a higher proportion of respondents in the CO areas reported they would go about influencing local decisions using any of the responses available. Similarly, in 2019 a higher proportion of respondents in the CO areas reported that any of the responses available would make it easier to influence local decisions. However, there are factors beyond the CO programme that may be partially driving these differences in both years.

There were no other significant differences observed between respondents living in CO areas and the comparator group. See table 1.4.

Table 1.4: Influencing local decisions

Measure of local decision making	Community Organiser areas 2020	Comparator group
How would you go about influencing local	Sign an online petition	34%
	Contact the council/a council official	33%
		33%
		32%

Measure of local decision making	Community Organiser areas 2020	Comparator group	
decision making (top six answers given) ¹²	Contact my MP	24%	26%
	Attend a public meeting	24%*	20%*
	Contact my councillor	22%*	26%*
	Sign a paper petition	22%	21%
	<i>Unweighted base</i>	943	10,243
Which of these might make it easier to influence decisions in local area (top six answers given) ¹³	If I knew what issues were being considered	34%	34%
	If I had more time	32%	30%
	If I could give my opinion online/via email	29%	31%
	If the council got in touch with me and asked me	23%	24%
	If I could get involved in an online group making decisions about my local area	17%	15%
	If I knew who the local councillor was	13%	14%
	<i>Unweighted base</i>	943	10,243

¹² This question was asked to online respondents only.

¹³ This question was asked to online respondents only.

3.4.3 Social action

Social action, in the context of this report, is defined as a community project, event, or activity which local people proactively get together to initiate or support on an unpaid basis.

It is distinct from other forms of giving time in that it is driven and led by local people rather than through an existing group (as in formal volunteering) and tends to focus on a community need rather than the needs of an individual (as in informal volunteering). Examples could include organising a street party, preventing the closure of a local post office, helping to run a local playgroup, or improving local road safety.

Just under half of respondents (47%) living in CO areas agreed that people in their local area pull together to improve the neighbourhood. See table 1.5.

One in seven (14%) respondents living in CO areas said that they have personally been involved in social action in their community. However, a higher proportion are aware of social action in their communities (29%). These percentages are comparable with the comparator group. See table 1.5.

Table 1.5: Social action

Measure of local decision making		Community Organiser areas 2020	Comparator group
Agreement that people in the local area pull together to improve the neighbourhood	Agree (definitely/tend to)	47%	49%
	Disagree (tend to/definitely)	53%	51%
	<i>Unweighted base</i>	937	10,069
Involvement in social action in local area	Yes	14%	14%
	No	86%	86%
	<i>Unweighted base</i>	924	10,085
Awareness of social action in local area	Yes	29%	27%
	No	71%	73%
	<i>Unweighted base</i>	662	7,750

3.5 Volunteering

Formal volunteering is defined as unpaid help given as part of a group, club, or organisation to benefit others or the environment. Almost three in ten (28%) respondents living in CO areas stated that they had volunteered formally in the last twelve months.

The proportion of respondents volunteering informally was higher, with half (52%) of respondents living in CO areas saying that they volunteered on an informal basis in the last twelve months. Informal volunteering is volunteering on a more casual basis outside of an organisation.

There were no significant differences observed between those living in CO areas and the comparator group when looking at both formal and informal volunteering. However, when comparing the results to the 2019 CO survey, the percentage of respondents who said they volunteered on a formal basis in the last twelve months has significantly decreased (32% in 2019 to 28% in 2020). Levels of informal volunteering did not change.

Table 1.6: Volunteering

Measure of local decision making		Community Organiser areas 2020	Comparator group
Formal volunteering in the last 12 months	Yes	28%	31%
	No	72%	69%
	<i>Unweighted base</i>	943	10,243
Informal volunteering in the last 12 months	Yes	52%	50%
	No	48%	50%
	<i>Unweighted base</i>	943	10,243

4. Technical Appendix

4.1 Survey design

Kantar was commissioned by DCMS to run a version of its Community Life Survey in 19 locations, each of which is covered by a Community Organiser (CO).

For the purposes of the survey, each CO area was defined with reference to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Census Output Area (OA) geography, and was formed of a contiguous combination of whole LSOAs (the second smallest unit in the ONS hierarchy) following specifications from each CO.

The intention was to ensure c.1,000 completed questionnaires, with an approximately even number (53) per CO area, regardless of the relative number of households in each area. This was done to ensure that variance between CO areas could be understood but also because the relative importance of each CO area to the CO programme as a whole is not directly proportional to the number of households in the area.

The number of LSOAs in each CO area varied from 1 to 22 and the number of addresses from 648 to 18,032. Two of the areas overlapped; completed questionnaires in the overlap area count towards both CO area totals.

Disclosure risks prevent us from identifying the CO areas in this report.

4.2 Sampling of addresses and identification of the comparison sample

4.2.1 Sampling addresses

Within each CO area, Kantar drew a systematic random sample of addresses from the Royal Mail Postcode Address File, aiming for 53 completed questionnaires and maximal geographical dispersion. The number of addresses to sample in each CO area was calculated via a statistical model of response probability, using data from the 2018-19 Community Life Survey. This number was inflated by 25% to insure against the risk of over-estimating the area's mean response probability (a common mitigation against a genuine risk when applying a general model of response to specific locations). In addition, a 50% reserve sample was drawn at the same time (in the event, this was not used).

As noted above, there was one set of LSOAs that was part of two CO areas (61% of the first and 76% of the second). Addresses in this overlap area were sampled separately with a target total equal to 76% of the total number of addresses required for the second CO area. This overlap area was expected to yield c.40 completed questionnaires so the target number of completed questionnaires for all CO areas was reduced from 1,000 to 968, with c.40 expected to be used twice.¹⁴

In total, 3,672 addresses were sampled with another 1,836 allocated to the reserve pool. The number of 'main' sample addresses varied from 164 to 268 per CO area (reflecting different estimated response rates). Within each CO area, the addresses were sorted by LSOA code, then OA code, then postcode before a systematic random sample was drawn.

¹⁴ It was not reduced from 1,000 to 960 (an exact reduction of 40) because the two overlapping CO areas had different shares of addresses in the overlap area. Accommodating that in the sample design increased the target sample size from 1,000 to 1,008. 1,008-40 = 968.

4.2.2 Sampling within addresses

At each address, all adults aged 16+ were invited to complete the questionnaire, either online or on paper. A small minority of the sampled addresses will have contained more than one household. Multi-household addresses like this cannot be reliably identified in advance. Consequently, the 'sampled' household at each of these addresses was the household of whoever picked up the letter. This is unlikely to have caused meaningful sample bias due to the small number of addresses affected.

4.2.3 Identification of a comparison sample

To identify a comparison sample from within the national 2019-20 Community Life Survey dataset, Kantar profiled the CO areas as a group, giving each an equal weight. LSOA level statistics were used to quantify the profile of each CO area and thereby the CO 'super-area'.

The profile of each LSOA was represented by the 2015 index of multiple deprivation plus a set of six Census-derived 'principal component' scores, each reflecting a different aspect of that LSOA¹⁵. These seven variables were used as predictor terms in a logistic regression model, designed to find a 'propensity score' for each LSOA. The propensity score for any one LSOA is equal to the estimated probability that that LSOA is within the equal-weighted CO super-area if the only information we had were the seven LSOA-level profile variables. Naturally, this propensity score tends to be much higher than average for the LSOAs that are part of the CO super-area. The objective is to estimate importance weights that can be used with the national sample to ensure it has a similar propensity score distribution as the sample from the CO super-area.

Kantar tested several methods of doing this but settled on the computationally simple 'quintile points' approach because this achieved the best match overall – better than more complex algorithms – while also ensuring an effective sample size of c.2-3,000 for the comparison sample drawn from 2019-20 Community Life Survey.

Under the 'quintile points' approach, the LSOAs within the CO super-area are sorted in descending order of propensity score. Each LSOA has a weight that is (i) proportional to its address coverage within its CO area, and (ii) is scaled so that the weighted sum of addresses is the same in all CO areas. The (weighted) 20th, 40th, 60th and 80th percentile propensity scores within the CO super-area are noted, creating five approximately equal-sized groups of LSOAs that are defined by their upper and lower bound propensity scores. Once this is done, all LSOAs in England can be placed into one of these propensity score groups and the (address-weighted) distribution of propensity score groups compared to the (compound-weighted) distribution of propensity score groups in the CO super-area. The importance weight is simply a weight that would convert the all-England distribution of propensity score groups

¹⁵ A statistical technique called 'principal components analysis' (PCA) was used to form uncorrelated linear combinations ('principal components') of 42 LSOA-level Census proportions (e.g. % of 16-24s with degree-level qualifications). The first principal component accounts for as much variance as possible across the 42 input variables. Successive components explain the - progressively smaller - residual variance and are all (by design) uncorrelated with each other. These principal components were then 'rotated' using the *varimax* algorithm which seeks to minimise the number of input variables that have high correlations with each of the first *f* factors (*f* is user-specified but should explain a high percentage of the total variance; *f* = 6 in this case, explaining 77% of the total variance). The *varimax* rotation method simplifies interpretation compared to other rotation methods and compared to the initial (un-rotated) principal components.

into the CO super-area distribution of propensity score groups. The importance weights for each group are shown in table A1.

Table A1: Importance weights

Propensity score area groups	(A) Compound-weighted distribution in CO super-area	(B) Address-weighted distribution in England	(A/B) Importance weight for national survey respondents in these areas
Highest propensity scores	25%	3%	9.25
2 nd highest	21%	5%	3.84
Middle	27%	10%	2.69
2 nd lowest group	16%	28%	0.60
Lowest propensity scores	11%	54%	0.20

Each respondent in the national Community Life survey sample received a ‘comparison sample’ weight equal to their LSOA’s importance weight multiplied by their personal weight within the national sample. Descriptive statistics of this comparison sample weight are shown in table A2.

Table A2: Descriptive statistics for comparison sample weights

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	Design effect	Neff
2-mode comparison weight	10,243	0.03	21.30	1.00	1.51	3.27	3,136
Web-only comparison weight	7,849	0.04	24.94	1.00	1.70	3.91	2,009

4.3 Fieldwork

The standard model for the Community Life Survey is to send two reminders, each a fortnight apart, but with a third reminder in reserve (not used in this case). In the second reminder, two paper questionnaires are included for a targeted subset of addresses. The probability that the second reminder will contain the paper questionnaires is a function of the address’s (expected) online response rate:

- In the 40% of England with the lowest expected online response, all 2nd reminders include two paper questionnaires;
- In the 20% of England with mid-level expected online response, nearly half (46%) of 2nd reminders include two paper questionnaires;

- In the 40% of England with the highest expected online response, no 2nd reminders include two paper questionnaires.

In total, 88% of the sampled addresses in the operational areas were designated to have paper questionnaires included in the second reminder if required (3,221 out of 3,672).

In total, 914 questionnaires were completed compared to a target of 968, suggesting that the model-based estimated response probabilities had been reasonably accurate in aggregate. 29 of the completed 914 questionnaires contributed to the totals for two CO areas, taking the analysis sample size up to 943. 669 (71%) of these were online completions and 274 (29%) were paper completions. The expected distribution had been 62%/38%; relative to model expectations, the online response rate was higher than expected even if the overall response rate was not.

4.4 Weighting the CO area sample

Respondents to the CO area survey have been weighted in a fashion aligned with the national survey. To do this, Kantar used a two-part regression model to estimate the calibration weight that would have been applied to each case if it had been part of the national (Community Life Survey) sample. This gets around the problem of no contemporary population data for the CO super-area (as well as the relatively small respondent sample size). The same approach was used to generate a weight specific to the online subset of each sample.

Part one was to fit the expected number of completed questionnaires for each sampled address as a function of neighbourhood-level variables held for each address. This model is exactly the same as used for the national 2019-20 Community Life Survey sample. The part one weight is equal to $1/(\text{expected number of completed questionnaires} / \text{expected number of eligible individuals at the address})$. The last term - the expected number of eligible individuals at the address – is derived from an internal Kantar model, itself based on data from the 2015-17 ONS Crime Survey of England & Wales.

Part two was to fit an individual-level calibration factor (calibration weight divided by the part one weight) so that respondents in the CO area sample had the same calibration factors as respondents in the national survey sample. This is possible because the national survey sample calibration uses a generalised regression method to fit the calibration weights. The model it uses can then be applied to a new sample (in this case the CO area sample). The part two weight was equal to the part one weight multiplied by the modelled calibration factor.

Finally, the respondent data was scaled so that the sum of weights in each CO area was exactly equal.

Note that no address-level design weights have been applied because of (i) the equal probability sample design within each CO area and (ii) the decision to include data from each area in equal proportions.

The overall weighting efficiency was estimated at 84% (two-mode responding sample) and 78% (web responding sample). These are similar efficiencies to the national CLS sample (73% and 76% respectively). The greater the weighting efficiency, the lower the variation in weights and, consequently, the greater the precision of the survey estimates. In practice other design features (especially sample clustering) influence the precision of the survey estimates too so weighting efficiency is best treated as a *comparative* statistic. In this case, we can see that the

weights applied to the CO respondent sample are less variable than the weights applied to the national CLS sample and therefore have a smaller effect on precision.

In this report, Kantar has used specialist statistical software (the Complex Samples module within SPSS) to estimate sampling errors that account properly for the survey design and the weighting of the data.