



Crime Survey
for England & Wales

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Technical Note (Y/E March 2022)



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1. CSEW Technical Note (YE March 2022)

1.1 Technical Note vs. Technical Report

This Technical Note summarises the return to face-to-face fieldwork following the suspension of the survey during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additional detail on specific sections may be found in the 2019-20 CSEW Technical Report.

Historically, the CSEW Technical Report has been published to reflect the full (12-month) CSEW fieldwork year, with April 2019 to March 2020 being the most recent publication. As such, in previous Technical Reports, the end of year response rate would be based on four full quarters of fieldwork.

However, all face-to-face fieldwork in England and Wales was put on hold in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with face-to-face fieldwork only re-starting again in October 2021. While the October 2022 CSEW data comprises of just two full quarters of fieldwork (up to YE March 2022), this is the first data published since the return to face-to-face fieldwork and therefore a brief Technical Note has been produced to accompany this.

This is not intended to replicate the detail contained in the annual Technical Report. Instead, a full report relating to the 2021-22 data will be made available in late 2023..

1.2 Sample design

The sample for YE March 2022 was selected on the same basis as the pre-pandemic CSEW sample. This was outlined in more detail in the 2019-2020 CSEW Technical Report, but a brief summary of the sample design is outlined below.

To summarise:

- Every police force area was divided into a set of geographically discrete sample strata, each with an approximately equal number of addresses.
- Each sample stratum was constructed from whole lower-level super output areas (LSOAs) so that population statistics could easily be generated for the sample stratum.
- In constructing the sample strata, the design team took account of geographical barriers and the primary road network to ensure that field assignments based upon sample stratum boundaries would be practical.
- The size of each sample stratum was governed by the requirement that approximately 32 addresses should be sampled from each stratum each year.

Each of the 1,639 sample strata is activated¹ once a year and has been allocated to a specific 'activation quarter'. Each activation quarter contains a (stratified) random subsample of the 1,639 sample strata, representative in terms of (i) expected victimisation rates, and (ii) spatial distribution. This minimises the risk of spurious quarter-by-quarter changes in CSEW estimates that are due solely to differences in sample

¹ By 'activated' we mean that a sample of addresses is drawn within the stratum, advance letters are sent, and field interviewers start work.

composition. Once constructed, the 1,639 strata were ranked by the geographical density of addresses within their borders:

- The densest third were classified as belonging to the 'high density segment'
- The least dense third were classified as belonging to the 'low density segment'
- The rest were classified as belonging to the 'mid density segment'^{2 3}

In the 'low density' strata, three geographically discrete sub-divisions were formed (A, B and C), each with an approximately equal number of addresses and constructed from whole LSOAs⁴. In the mid density strata, two sub-divisions (A and B) were formed on the same basis. No subdivision was carried out in the high-density strata. The combination of high-density strata plus the sub-divisions in the mid and low-density strata are termed 'sample units'. Just one sample unit per stratum is used per year following a sequence established in 2012. In most situations, a fieldwork assignment is based on one sample unit⁵.

1.3 Fieldwork

The pre-pandemic CSEW fieldwork process was discussed in detail in the 2019-20 Technical Report, but a brief summary of two specific changes necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic is outlined below.

1.3.1 Briefing of interviewers

Traditionally, all new interviewers working on the Crime Survey for England and Wales were required to attend a full day face-to-face briefing before they could work on the survey. However, as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic all face-to-face briefings were suspended in March 2020 and are yet to be reinstated.

Briefings with new interviewers were therefore held remotely between September 2021 and March 2022. New interviewers attended two remote briefings (held on the same day; morning and afternoon).

Briefings with existing interviewers were also held remotely, but they attended a shorter refresher briefing during this time.

1.3.2 Advance letter and leaflets

All selected addresses were sent a letter from the Office for National Statistics in advance of an interviewer calling at the address. This explained a little about the survey, why this particular address had been selected and telling the occupiers that an interviewer from Kantar Public would be calling in the next few weeks.

Included with the advance letter was a leaflet from the Office for National Statistics which provided people with some more details about the survey, including findings from the previous survey. The leaflet also tried to answer some questions that potential respondents might have such as issues relating to confidentiality. However, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, a second leaflet was included with the advance letter to reassure participants that interviewers were working in line with Government and Market Research Society guidelines to minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

² Kantar carried out a small degree of reallocation after this initial classification, essentially to allow a small number of police force areas to obtain the benefits of an unclustered sample over two years rather than three (and every year for the Metropolitan/City police force area).

³ It should be acknowledged that address density may change over time and that the classification of a stratum as high, mid or low density is specific to 2012.

⁴ Stratum subdivisions were designed to be as heterogeneous as possible in terms of crime rates but without forming awkward geographical shapes that would be difficult for interviewers to manage.

⁵ Generally speaking, a high-density stratum will contain twice as many addresses as a subdivision within a mid-density stratum and three times as many addresses as a subdivision within a low-density stratum. However, geographically they will be of similar size. Consequently, sample units/fieldwork assignments are roughly equal in size too.

1.3.3 Q3 Card Protector experiment

Prior to the pandemic, a book of stamps was used as the standard incentive for the Crime Survey. However, as part of the development of the 2020-21 survey it was agreed that a split sample experiment should be introduced to look at the potential impact of using a card protector as an incentive. With the return to face-to-face in October 2021, the experiment ran across all sample issued in October – December 2021.

13,053 respondents were included in the experiment with 6,250 receiving card protectors and 6,803 receiving stamps. This slight imbalance was based on the number of card protectors that had been purchased at the time of the original experiment, whereas more serials were issued when fieldwork finally returned.

The experiment took place within assignment with half of the addresses sent a card protector and half sent a book of stamps, although some December assignments would have only received a book of stamps given the finite number of card protectors.

The response rates for the two experiment groups were broadly comparable; 41% among households receiving a card protector and 44% among households receiving the standard book of stamps. While this is a statistically significant difference, a response rate increase of c. 3% would have negligible impact on the reliability of the estimates produced. The marginally higher response rate achieved by issuing stamps must be balanced against the associated, and substantial, increase in costs. Given the higher cost of stamps compared to card protectors, there is no appreciable benefit in issuing stamps as an incentive.

All households in Q4 2021-22 received a book of stamps as their incentive, but all households in subsequent quarters, starting in Q1 2022-23, received a card protector as their incentive.

1.4 Overview of response rate for YE March 2022

It is acknowledged that the YE March 2022 RR was much lower than the historical CSEW RR. This is in part a reflection of the extended pause in fieldwork (March 2020 to September 2021), but in addition to this, the Omicron variant had a significant impact on fieldwork across Q3 and Q4 of 2021-22.

Given the exceptional circumstances it was agreed that fieldwork for both quarters should be extended beyond the traditional 6 months fieldwork period.

1.4.1 Core survey response and non-response

The response rate and non-response rate for the year ending March 2022 is shown in Table 1.1.

9,781 interviews were achieved across the two quarters, representing a final response rate of 44.1% based on all sample issued up to the end of March 2022.

Table 1.1 Core sample response rate and non-response outcomes, YE March 2022 issued sample

| | N | % of issued | % of eligible |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| TOTAL ISSUED ADDRESSES | 24,162 | 100 | |
| TOTAL DEADWOOD | 1,980 | 8.2 | |
| TOTAL ELIGIBLE ADDRESSES | 22,182 | 91.8 | 100.0 |
| Total non-contact | 2,406 | 10.0 | 10.8 |
| Total refusal | 8,633 | 35.7 | 38.9 |
| Total other unsuccessful ⁶ | 1,362 | 5.6 | 6.1 |
| TOTAL UNPRODUCTIVE | 12,401 | 51.3 | 55.9 |
| TOTAL INTERVIEWS | 9,781 | 40.5 | 44.1 |

1.5 Overview of adult survey

The adult survey, as launched in October 2021, was a modified version of the 2020-21 survey that was postponed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The main changes to the 2021-22 version of the survey were in relation to an expanded Experiences of the Police module, with the majority of the module also being asked of all (it had previously been asked of a subset of respondents only). The other main change to the 2021-22 version of the survey was an increased focus on computer misuse enabled fraud, with new questions added to the Fraud Victimization module to measure this.

1.6 Overview of weighting

The following weights have been calculated for the YE March 2022 CSEW data:

- A household weight for the core sample
- An individual adult weight for the core sample

In addition to these weights, the Office for National Statistics apply additional calibration weights once they receive the data so that the data reflect the population profile by age and gender within region.

The main variation from previous weighting processes was in relation to the non-response weight.

⁶ Total other unsuccessful includes cases where fieldwork was not yet completed to reflect the extensions to all 2021-22 fieldwork.

The non-response weight is derived from an analysis of the most recent twelve months of issued addresses. The responding addresses in the dataset to be weighted are added to this issued sample dataset to form a larger dataset.

For every case in this larger dataset a propensity score (the probability of being part of the issued sample dataset, given the case is part of the larger dataset) will be estimated via a logistic regression model. The non-response weight applied to each responding address is equal to its propensity score divided by one minus its propensity score.

This value is trimmed at the 99%ile and scaled so that its mean is equal to one divided by the estimated response rate for the dataset. The variables used in this model were determined in 2012 and are limited to geo-demographic variables attached to the sample frame.

While the propensity score approach described here is new from 2022 it is essentially a more stable version of the method used in previous years.